A recent documentary about a community development project in Haiti interviewed a young woman trainee. The person interviewing was so impressed, he asked, “Can I come back and help?” The young lady being interviewed paused and said:

“You can come…but then you must leave. Show us how to do it then let US do the work!”

We are dedicated to helping people to find safe water sources. We don’t tell people what to do, and don’t bring expensive equipment. We work alongside, advising, encouraging, training, developing. That’s our approach....

Our WFLI seminars have been held in seven locations this year, Cambodia, Thailand, Burkina Faso, Switzerland, Uganda, Hawaii and Malawi. We are delighted to get feedback from these locations of enthusiastic trainees already solving water and sanitation problems, and teaching others how to use the same techniques.

In Cambodia, Jeff and Davey, (WFLI staff) ran a seminar that included the building of several bio-sand filters. Organisms that feed on pathogenic bacteria live and grow in a sand column and water passing through is 98% clean at the end of the process. Amazing!

Later on in the year, they did another seminar in Northern Thailand, and the news from there is exciting, many people back in their communities building systems to clean the water.
Sebastien, one of our French speaking WFLI staff was able to run a water seminar under challenging conditions in a remote location (12 hour bus ride) in Burkina Faso. Later in the year, one of the trainees (Christian Yanogo) successfully built a rain catchment system at a high school in the capital, Ouagadougou (yes that is the real name...).

Richard, a WFLI staff member who has taught in our seminars for several years was able to run a seminar in the Malawi, partly in town and partly out in the villages. In spite of tremendous challenges, he was able to successfully complete the training there.

Aaron and Heidi on our WFLI staff realized a dream of several years, to start projects and training in Uganda. They went as a family with their two teenage children, Jensen and Maryn to Arua in the North of Uganda. They not only trained people, they built several rain catchment systems, and a particularly good step was to build a large underground tank with training by Charles and Vedaste from our WFL Rwanda project who came by bus to help out. Aaron and Heidi were able to travel into South Sudan and complete a water system there too.
Nick and Jen Greener have worked in Rwanda as WFLI staff for five years, and are taking a well earned sabbatical in the last half of 2013. They have done remarkable projects in orphanages, schools and clinics, and they have a Rwandan work crew whom they have trained who can build catchment systems anywhere.

Many schools have built hand washing stations, where WFLI has installed a water supply. Nick and Jen will be going back to Africa in January 2014 to extend the work into neighboring countries beyond Rwanda. This will mean several more new projects and more training in places where there are severe needs for water, sanitation, and health education.

Our WFLI staff member in Kosovo, Arben Hoti has helped to set up Water for Life Kosovo, the first government approved water related NGO in the nation. We have worked in one village helping them upgrade their wells for six years. Now there is a second one we would like to work in. We also are partnering with Rotary International to bring a safe water supply to 68 village schools with no water, and 300 village schools where the water is highly contaminated.
The Board of Directors of WFLI has really helped us to focus in on our specific goals as an organization. We are going to be referring to ourselves much more as Water for Life Institute. This has always been our full name, but to distinguish ourselves from many other organizations with similar names, we will now be using the “Institute” word more often in our materials. The Board identified four areas for us to focus on: developing our training seminars, setting up a good internship program (anything from 8 weeks to a year), moving into research to improve the techniques we use, and supporting long term projects that will eventually be local and self supporting.

We are so thankful for the financial support we have received in 2013. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. As always, 100% of your contributions go directly to the work, not to offices or salaries. We are stretching into new areas in 2014, so your financial support is more important than ever!

Personal Note from Derek: I was in Africa in September, and was talking to a group of African students about the challenge of carrying heavy water jars on your head. Kate appeared at my door later on, and said “Do you mean like THIS?” I could barely lift this basin, but she carried it on her head with ease. Wow.....