2026 Impact Report

Water, close to home



What 96,000 people, 214 water points, and one stubborn idea — that clean water should be ordinary — added up to this year.

A letter from the director

The first thing you learn in this work is that water is never just water. In Tembe, where **Clearwater** drilled its first borehole eleven years ago, the well is also a schedule: girls who once walked two hours to the river now walk eight minutes, and the difference shows up in school ledgers, in clinic charts, in the plain arithmetic of a day. This year I watched that arithmetic repeat itself two hundred and fourteen times, in four districts, in two countries.

It was not an easy year. Fuel costs rose, a drilling rig sat in customs for nine weeks, and in March we shut down a filter line that was not meeting our own bacteriological standard. We tell you these things first because trust is the only durable currency a nonprofit has, and because the numbers that follow mean more once you know they survived an honest accounting.

What follows is the year as we saw it: the numbers first, then the programs behind them, then the money, then the promises we are prepared to make for 2027. Thank you for standing with us — none of this is ours alone.

The year in numbers

Every figure on this page traces back to a sensor reading, a signed maintenance log, or a household survey with a name and a date on it. We count conservatively: a water point is "serving" only if it flowed on the day we checked without notice, and a family is "reached" only after a second visit confirms the habit stuck.

214
new water points brought online

96,400
people with water close to home

$8.4M
invested directly in the field

Three numbers we watch more nervously than any others — durability, adoption, and understanding — because they decide whether this year's work still matters in ten years:[a]

[a] Functionality verified by unannounced site checks in April and October; adoption and knowledge figures from the annual household and school surveys (n = 2,140 households, 88 schools).

86%

of wells drilled since 2019 were still flowing at an unannounced check

71%

of households in filter districts now treat every drinking litre at home

93%

of students passed the safe-water practices check at year end

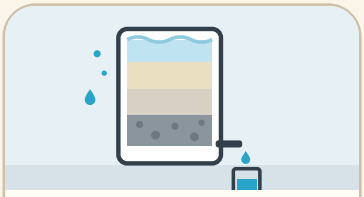
Programs in the field

A water point that fails in year three is worse than one that was never drilled, because a village reorganizes its life around it and then loses it twice. So our three programs are really one program — get water close to people, make it safe at the shelf, and teach the habits that keep it safe — run by local crews who stay long after the ribbon is cut.



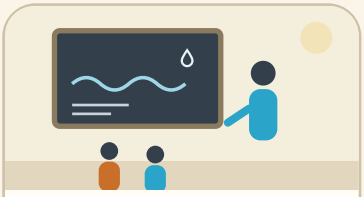
Wells

128 new boreholes and 86 rehabilitations, each with a trained water committee and a signed spare-parts contract.



Filtration

8,214 biosand filters built in-district by local masons; families pay a tenth of cost, and own them outright.



Education

96 schools running the safe-water curriculum; 41,000 children taught by teachers we trained, not by us.

Wells that keep working

Drilling is the cheap part. The real product is the maintenance economy around a well: a committee that collects fees, a mechanic within a day's ride, a parts shelf in the district town, and a sensor that tattles the moment flow stops. Every 2026 well shipped with all four.

> *"The pump is not the gift. The gift is that my daughters are at school this morning instead of at the river." — Amina K., water committee chair, Tembe*

Safe at the shelf

Water that leaves a well clean can arrive at a cup dirty, so the second program follows the water home. Biosand filters are slow, heavy, unglamorous technology — and they are what families keep using in year five, which is the only benchmark we trust.

> What did not work: the ceramic-pot filter we piloted in 2025 cleared our lab tests and failed in kitchens — cracked lids, slow flow, quiet abandonment. We stopped the line in March, refunded our partners, and moved the budget to biosand units, which families already know how to live with.

Teaching the habit

Hardware without habit is a museum piece. The school curriculum runs eight lessons a term, taught by local teachers with materials in three languages, and it works: knowledge scores rose from 61 to 93 percent over the school year.[b] The children audit their own schools' water points, and their checklists go to the district office — the youngest inspectors we have ever employed.

Where each program stands against its 2026 goal:

Program	2026 goal	Progress
Wells & rehabilitation	140 water points	**84%**
Household filtration	10,000 filters	**82%**
School education	120 schools	**80%**

Four districts, one habit

The year looked different in each place we work, and the same in the one way that matters — the water kept running. Four districts, in the order we first reached them.

[b] Assessed with the eight-item safe-water practices check, administered before and after the school year in all 96 program schools.

Tembe

Eleven years on, the first borehole still runs; the school it fed now sends its girls on to secondary.

Nkota

Forty water committees and a solar filter line — the district that taught us to price the spare parts before the drill bites.

Rusale

Where the ceramic pilot failed and biosand held; households here now treat every drinking litre by plain habit.

Highlands

Newest and hardest — nine boreholes across scattered hamlets, each with a mechanic who lives within a day's ride.

Financials

We publish the same statements our auditors see, at the same level of detail, because donors are partners and partners read footnotes. Ninety cents of every dollar went to the field this year; the rest kept the lights on and the

sensors reporting. Our reserve now covers four months of operations — deliberate, not idle.[c]

Total revenue **$9.6M**

Program spending **$8.4M**

Fundraising **$0.7M**

Administration **$0.5M**

Reserve at year end **$2.1M**

Where the program dollars went, by allocation:

Allocation	Amount	Share
Wells & rehabilitation	$4.3M	51%
Household filtration	$2.2M	26%
School education	$1.1M	13%
Monitoring & evaluation	$0.8M	10%

The road ahead

[c] Audited by Rothwell & Frame LLP. The full FY2026 statements and Form 990 are available on our website.

THE SECOND DECADE

is where water lasts

Next year we will drill fewer wells than we could and maintain more than we must, because the field keeps teaching the same lesson: durability is bought in the second decade, not the first. Three commitments shape the 2027 plan, and we intend to be held to them in next year's report.

1. **Finish what we start** — Every water point from 2026 gets a funded ten-year maintenance plan and a named mechanic before we drill anything new.
2. **Measure in public** — Monthly sensor uptime for every well goes on the website — the failures too, within thirty days of finding them.
3. **Hand over the keys** — By the end of 2028, every district program will be led and budgeted by staff who live in that district.

Clean water is not a miracle; it is a habit a community keeps, an invoice somebody pays, a valve somebody greases. Thank you for paying for the unglamorous parts. They are the ones that last.

Leah Mwangi

Executive Director · The Clearwater Initiative · Nairobi & Seattle