## THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## PIT PARTY

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**SANITATION** 

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WATER

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1.1 billion of the poorest people in our world lack the most basic stuff of life: safe drinking water.

The water crisis is an uprecedented health threat, costing millions of lives per year. But it's not only a health issue. Water holds implications for every area of life. Without this essential ingredient, other development initiatives fall flat.

Clean water paves the way for hygiene and sanitation. The simple act of washing hands with soap reduces deaths from diarrhea by more than 40%.

Safe sanitation reduces the number by another 30%, yet 2.6 billion people on our planet don't have access to even one adequate latrine.

An issue with important implications for human development and global poverty reduction is how to manage water resources to meet rising food needs while protecting the access of poor and vulnerable people to the water that sustains their livelihoods.

-UNDP, 2006

Improving community health is almost impossible without safe drinking water.

Nearly 90 percent of all diseases in the world are caused by a combination of unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene; half of the hospital beds in the world are filled by people suffering from a water-related condition.

Clean water and sanitation are among the most powerful preventative medicines for reducing child mortality.
They are to diarrhea what immunization is to killer diseases such as measles or polio: a mechanism for reducing risk and averting death.

-UNDP, 2006

Water-related diseases cost 443 million school days a year.

**EDUCATION** 

Children who suffer from constant water-related illnesses carry the disadvantages into school. Poor health directly reduces cognitive potential and indirectly undermines schooling through absenteeism, attention deficits, and early drop-out.

Over half of all schools worldwide lack safe water and sanitation, jeopardizing the health and education of millions of schoolchildren. Most of the 115 million children currently out of school are girls. Many are denied their place in the classroom by lack of access to decent toilets at school, or the daily chore of walking miles to collect water.

- UNICEF, 2005

If everyone in the world had access to basic water and sanitation services, the reduction in diarrheal disease would save the health sector alone \$11.6 billion in treatment costs and people would gain over 5.6 billion productive days per year. In sub-Saharan Africa, 40 billion hours of labor are wasted each year carrying water over long distances.

Water is essential for personal enterprises such as vegetable gardens, food confection, and laundry services. In many cases, small businesses have no formal right to the water they use and are at the mercy of larger economic and political players for their water usage.

Water management is a key factor in the global battle to remove the scourge of extreme poverty and to build secure and prosperous lives for hundreds of millions of people in the developing world.

- World Health Organization, 2007

When the potential economic gains of providing basic, low-cost water and sanitation facilities are added together, the developing world could save as much as \$263 billion a year.

- UNICEF, 2007

## The "Bottom Billion" and The Poverty Trap

THE

"BOTTOM

**BILLION'** 

The majority of the 5 billion people in the "developing world" are getting richer at an unprecedented rate. However, The poorest of the poor are trapped. Civil wars, lack of naural resources, and bad governance are all contributing factors to the perennial poverty of this "bottom billion."

When poverty is extreme, the poor do not have the ability—by themselves—to get out of their situation. The statistics indicate a two-way relationship between extreme poverty and lack of access to safe water. About two-thirds of those without access to safe water live on less than \$2 a day. Half of these—roughly equivalent to the population of the United States—live on less than \$1 a day. Even pooling their resources, these communities will never be able to afford a well for safe water.

Access to clean water is the foundation for other forms of development. Without easy access to water that is safe, countless hours are spent in water collection, household income is spent on purchasing water and medical treatment for water-related diseases. These factors contribute to keeping people trapped in poverty.

Safe, clean water removes the single heaviest burden from the lives of the poorest in our world. Not having to deal with this daily crisis means time for school and work, life and health, and allows individuals and cummunities to plan for tomorrow.