

...I can live without electricity, but I can't live without water

When a village water committee comes to Hombres y Mujeres en Accion to talk with Amilcar, he guides them through the steps necessary for us to support a project. We require official legal documents proving the community owns a water spring, the engineer's study and a current budget. The families are required to contribute 25 -30% of the cost of the construction materials and provide their labor to dig ditches, build the distribution tank, improve the spring and install the pipes to each home.

A water committee consists of 5 to 7 elected volunteers, depending on the size of the village. They usually work for four or five years trying to buy a water spring or find land for a distribution tank. They invest their time and money into a water project hoping someone will help them. An elderly man in Sajcap serving six years on their water committee said to us "I know I won't walk here for long but I know my grandchildren will have water."

Village water projects range between \$25,000 to \$90,000, depending on the distance from the spring to the distribution tank (sometimes as far away as 8 miles) and the number of families benefiting (from 50 to 250 families). Each families' portion could be upwards of \$150. They will save for months to make their contribution. A woman in Sajcau told us "I can live without electricity, but I can't live without water."

There are several components that go into creating a water project. The local mayor donates skilled masons, donors contribute financial support, an engineer and plumbers supervise construction, and Amilcar coordinates payments and communicates with the entire village. Forty to 100 men work digging ditches, connecting pipes, and carrying bags of cement, sand and gravel on their backs up steep paths to build the tank. All of the construction is done by hand and usually takes about four months. When finished, we celebrate with the entire community, acknowledging donors, and honoring the accomplishments of every family.

Water is vital to life and health. Please contact us to learn more how about you can build a water project:
peopleforguatemala@gmail.com

