

DelAgua Uses doForms to Help

Ensure Safer Drinking Water for Millions

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We are a company that collects a lot of our data through doForms. I have about 25 field staff, and whatever task I give them, they say, ‘well, can you just build a form?’ It’s much easier than doing spreadsheets or emails or Word documents. So we do all of our tracking, from vehicle maintenance to repair and replacement to anything you can imagine, not just our projects, through doForms. ”

— Christina Barstow, DelAgua

In 2006 DelAgua expanded its original mission, which was manufacturing and distributing water testing kits, to become a “one-stop-shop” for all laboratory and life science requirements. It also began running large-scale programs to increase its impact on the health and welfare of rural populations. Two of these projects were a cookstove and water filter distribution and tracking project in the western part of Rwanda, and a public drinking water testing project in the State of West Bengal, India.

doForms plays an integral role in the execution of each of these programs. It is used on smartphones in the field as the mobile app for collecting massive amounts of field data to ensure usage compliance and improve accountability, and to be able to scale quickly to highly populated areas. On the backend, it is used to consolidate and view data. Analytics tools can pull data from doForms and important reports generated.

Tracking uptake and usage of cookstoves and filters in Rwanda

Two of the leading causes of death worldwide in children under five are diarrheal disease and pneumonia. People often drink untreated water, while indoor wood-fueled stoves built on three stones (“3-stone fires”) are often used for cooking, and the smoke generated contributes to respiratory risks in the household. This is what DelAgua aimed to understand and combat in Rwanda.

DelAgua undertook a large-scale program to distribute and monitor the use of household water filters and modern cookstoves in the western province of Rwanda. Tracking the successful introduction, adoption, and usage of filters and stoves was vital to the ongoing success of this health program. And, because this project also earned UN carbon credits, complete and accurate documentation of the program was and continues to be absolutely vital to meet auditor requirements.



Description:

DelAgua began manufacturing and distributing water testing kits in 1985. These kits have been used worldwide in more than 150 countries to help improve the quality of drinking water in rural areas and in disaster or emergency situations.

Website:

www.delagua.org

doForms enables large-scale data collection and fast transmission

DelAgua employed 850 community health workers, equipped with smartphones plus doForms, to distribute the filters and stoves, train the people on their use, and monitor usage. The community health workers would go house-to-house and, using doForms on their phones, complete a baseline demographics form, train and educate using the doForms photo feature. Once the household members have been trained, the community health workers then monitor the uptake and usage of the cookstoves and filters, using photos, location and time stamp features. “doForms had a lot of experience building mobile surveys and the platform was intuitive,” says Christina, Senior Program Manager for DelAgua. “doForms was also willing to work with us. They spent a lot of time collaborating.”

DelAgua never considered launching the program without planning to use doForms. “We have a few hundred thousand households and we do multiple forms for each household. When you’re collecting that much data, it’s unfathomable to think about that much paperwork,” explained Christina Barstow, Senior Program Manager for Rwanda Project for DelAgua. “We had 850 community health workers all doing forms and sending them back at the same time. We had to track all that in real-time. doForms provides a mobile platform that allowed us to run the campaign this way, get updates frequently and be able to be much more efficient than paper.”

Improving water testing accessibility and accountability in West Bengal, India

Sickness and mortality rates from waterborne illness remain significant in India, with the government recording 10.7 million illnesses in 2013 and as many as 400,000 deaths. Because of this, national regulations have been established, requiring every rural public drinking source be tested once per year for chemical contaminants and twice/year for microbiological ones. With more than five million public drinking water sources across India, this is a daunting task.

DelAgua launched a water-testing program in West Bengal, India focusing on 7300 public drinking water sites over a 4-month period. The scale and time- sensitivity of this type of work requires various types of mobile technology including mobile testing systems, independent cellular enabled quality assurance sensors, a smartphone based data entry application and online data management and dissemination. doForms was used as the mobile data collection app and data management solution.

Speed of data access and verifiable data accuracy, thanks to doForms

“doForms aids in ensuring the accountability in the program”, explained Christian Snoad, Senior Program Manager for DelAgua. “With doForms, we can use the GPS, photo and time stamp when samples are taken and when they reach the testing locale. Knowing these data is important when testing for microbiological contamination. We also take photos of the results – the plate.” Another way doForms helps with accountability and efficiency is its features that help improve data accuracy. DelAgua uses conditional lookup tables in its field data collection forms to restrict the data choices to the type of testing equipment being used. This reduces errors in the data to the point that no data cleaning is required. “We don’t need to employ anyone to clean the data”, says Snoad.

In addition to accountability, doForms is used to increase the speed with which data is transmitted and analyzed. With doForms, data accessibility is near real-time. When dealing with possible bacterial contamination of drinking water, this knowledge increases the responsiveness with which health authorities can take action. Snoad sums it up, “It’s not just about removing the paper. doForms increases the response time. We can take action quicker.”



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— Christian Snoad,
Senior Program Manager



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