

NEWS RELEASE

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Design Outreach, President of Malawi Meet to Discuss Water Poverty Crisis

International meeting focuses on need for continuous safe water access in Malawian communities

COLUMBUS, OHIO, July 12, 2022. [Design Outreach](#) (DO), a Christian humanitarian engineering nonprofit organization seeking to alleviate global poverty by creating life-sustaining technology, has conducted a high-level meeting with the President of Malawi, His Excellency Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, and Malawi's Minister of Water and Sanitation, Abida Sidik Mia. The DO team, led by Co-founder and CEO Dr. Greg Bixler, discussed solutions to the problem of non-functioning hand pumps in Africa and how DO is working hard to scale LifePump™—an innovative new hand pump which is proven to reach water at greater depths and last longer than traditional hand pumps—to help thirsty communities in rural Malawi.

“Design Outreach’s work in helping to change the status quo is receiving international attention—the attention of leaders at the highest levels of government,” said Bixler. “Our meeting with Pres. Chakwera was incredibly gratifying. We’re united in our concern regarding water poverty in Africa, and we all recognize that water access must be made reliable, 100 percent of the time. Today 40 percent of hand pumps are not functioning in Malawi, and the majority of functioning pumps only operate 80 or 90 percent of the time. We find this unacceptable, because people need water every single day.”

DO’s scheduled 30-minute meeting with Pres. Chakwera stretched to nearly an hour after the DO team presented visual documentation of the progress made in Zolomondo, Malawi, over an eight-year period where LifePump has never broken down. DO highlighted community development that has taken place in the Zolomondo community since the LifePump installation in 2013.

“This was very exciting for us,” said Bixler. “We were able to show Pres. Chakwera and his staff the children thriving in Zolomondo today who might not be here had it not been for the LifePump installed there eight years ago. We’ve been able to watch these children grow up, and President Chakwera understood why this accomplishment was so meaningful for Zolomondo and the country of Malawi.”

The problem of unsafe drinking water continues to plague many developing communities around the world. A UNICEF [study](#) finds that unsafe drinking water, sanitation, and hand hygiene cause the deaths of an estimated 829,000 people each year. In fact, “the deaths of 297,000 children aged under 5 years could be avoided each year if these risk factors were addressed.”

“Clean water is an absolute priority in rural areas of Malawi, as it is in most developing countries,” said DO Regional Field Director Dr. Beatrice Chisenga. “If you ask communities, ‘Do you want a school, a bridge, a clinic, water,’ they will always opt for water.”

Bixler said that his meeting with Pres. Chakwera provides further validation of DO’s work, and that more communities in Malawi will benefit after receiving a LifePump.

To date, 183 LifePumps have been installed globally across Africa, Central America, and the Caribbean. Bixler estimates that LifePumps providing years of continuous drinking water have impacted the lives of more than 100,000 people globally.

“We’re looking forward to scaling up in Malawi soon,” said Bixler, “and our plan is to install 1,000 LifePumps globally by 2024, with a majority being in Malawi.”

[Read more](#) about LifePump.

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ABOUT DESIGN OUTREACH

Design Outreach (DO) is a Christian humanitarian engineering nonprofit organization seeking to create life-sustaining technology that alleviates global poverty. DO focuses on innovative products that improve the lives of the most marginalized and vulnerable people living in rural communities in developing countries. For more information, visit doutreach.org.

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BIO

Greg Bixler, Ph.D., P.E.
Co-founder and CEO, Design Outreach

In 2010, Greg Bixler and Abe Wright co-founded Design Outreach, a non-profit organization dedicated to alleviating global water poverty.

With degrees in mechanical engineering, Dr. Bixler brings almost two decades of professional experience to his work. Prior to launching Design Outreach, he served as an engineering advisor at the Global Water Institute as well as an engineering lecturer at Ohio State University. He has also worked as a research scientist at Battelle Memorial Institute, where he garnered three outstanding performance awards.

Dr. Bixler has traveled to 26 countries as part of his humanitarian endeavors. He currently teaches a graduate level humanitarian engineering course at Ohio State University.

Dr. Bixler has used his background in mechanical engineering to lead a team of volunteer engineers in the design and development of the LifePump, a hand pump designed to reach water at greater depths—and last longer—than traditional hand pumps. LifePumps are designed, tested, and manufactured in Ohio.

Leading a global team of sixteen staff members and a volunteer base of 60 dedicated individuals, Dr. Bixler heads up Design Outreach's Field Programs Division, which has overseen the installation of LifePumps across Africa, the Caribbean, and Central America, providing safe drinking water for thousands of people.

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