

Water for Health and Wealth: Multiple Use Services



What are Multiple Use Services?

MUS are water services tailored to meet impoverished households' multiple needs, ranging from drinking, hygiene and sanitation to food production and income generation. Existing approaches to water service delivery typically focus on providing water for a single use—for example, drinking or irrigation. MUS have significant advantages over single-use services—they generate greater income, health and other benefits and enhance sustainability.

Meet Maina

Maina is 35 years old. She has six children. Her time is spent caring for the needs of her family by fetching water from the nearby river for drinking and cooking. She spends 45 minutes per trip to fetch this water, which is contaminated and unsafe for drinking. By MUS standards, she has no service. [Watch as Maina climbs the MUS ladder:](#)

Level 1: Limited amount of water supports cooking, drinking and very basic hygiene.

With basic domestic service, Maina gets water from a safe water source within 25 minutes. Because the water is clean and closer, she fetches more, and her family's health improves, incidents of diarrhea decline, and her kids attend school regularly. They still bathe in the river and have no toilet. Maina takes her cow to the public standpipe where animals may contaminate the drinking water.

Cost*:
\$60-90

No Extra Income

Level 2: More and closer water supports domestic use and some productive activities, such as a community garden.

At Level 2, Maina's family and neighbors get daily access to more water from an improved source that is within 15 minutes of their homes. They see improvements in health. Now use the water for a small community garden and keep a few cows. The women earn extra income by selling vegetables at the local market.

Cost*:
\$95-115

Extra Income:
\$25/yr

Level 3: Water is within 5 minutes and available for home and productive ac-

At Level 3, productivity increases and there is a link to markets. With water within 5 minutes of their home, Maina grows vegetables in a small plot and keeps a few goats and chickens in addition to cows. The children are eating better than ever. With the extra income, Maina easily pays back her share of the community loan that paid for the system.

Cost*:
\$55-105

Extra Income:
\$60/yr

Level 4: Piped schemes to individual households support domestic and most productive needs.

With this final investment, Maina now has her own pipe to her house. She has enough water for cooking, cleaning and maintaining her household. With the added income from the livestock and home garden, and increased access to water, her family has installed a toilet.

Cost*:
\$140

Extra Income:
\$70/yr

MUS isn't an all or nothing approach.

Access to safe and sustainable water supplies is central to improving the health and livelihoods of the three billion people in developing countries living on less than \$2/day.

Stepwise improvements in water services translate into real improvements in health, incomes and quality of life.

*Illustrative per capita costs and annual income benefits after upkeep. See Renwick, et. al., 2007 "Multiple-use water services: assessing the state of knowledge" for more details (www.winrockwater.org).

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