The Hippo Water Roller

Designers: Pettie Petzer and Johan Jonker (1991) – South Africa
Manufacturer: Imvubu Projects cc (trading as Hippo Water Roller Project, South Africa)
Dimensions: Drum & Cap – 50 x 50 x 65 cm, Handle – 2 x 70 x 100 cm
Materials: Polyethylene (UV stabilized), Mild Steel (electroplated)
Contact: www.hipporoller.org admin@hipporoller.org
Used in: South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Congo, DRC (Zaire), Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia & Zimbabwe

Description: The Hippo Water Roller, a barrel-shaped container created to transport 90 liters (24 gal) of water at one time, was purposely designed to alleviate the suffering caused by a lack of access to water. Its innovative design allows water to be placed ‘inside the wheel’ resulting in an effective weight of just 10 kg (22 pounds) on level ground. Approximately five times the usual volume of water can be collected in much less time and with far less effort, transforming water collection from a daily chore to a task performed only a few times a week.

The United Nations says 1 Billion people lack adequate access to safe drinking water. The task of collecting water is most often endured by women & children who walk an average of 6 km (3.7 miles) each day to retrieve water for their families by carrying heavy 20 liter (5 gal) buckets on their heads. This daily task is time and energy consuming and contributes to serious health and musculoskeletal problems over the long term.

Approximately 45,000 Hippo Water Rollers have been distributed to date positively impacting in excess of 300,000 people. The consequence of improved access to water has many positive social impact benefits including improvements to hygiene & health, higher morale & energy levels and improved opportunities for education & economic productivity, a key component in poverty alleviation efforts.

To date, more than 7 Billion liters of water have already been ‘rolled’ over a combined distance of 500 Million km (conservative estimates). Much more needs to be done!