

Case | Training programme, Nairobi & Dubai

Grundfos partnership helps to keep crucial ICRC training project alive

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Possibility in every drop



The Grundfos Foundation has made a major contribution to ensuring that even in a war zone such as Sudan or Gaza, vulnerable civilians still have access to drinking water and basic sanitation.

It has provided the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with funding to support a project, based in Dubai and Nairobi, in which the Swiss-based humanitarian organisation trains its engineers from around the world in the design and implementation of energy-efficient water pumping and supply systems.

Due to the significant financial and funding challenges faced by the ICRC, the two-year training programme from September 2021 to the end of 2023 almost got postponed, or severely curtailed, had the Grundfos Foundation not come to the rescue.

The energy and water knowledge-sharing hubs that the ICRC is developing in Dubai and Nairobi support the crucial, specialised work the organisation's engineers must do — supplying water and sanitation in conditions of great hardship in war- and violence-ravaged zones.

Martin Skovrup Bertelsen, Portfolio Coordinator at the Grundfos Foundation, says the ICRC is a good fit with the capacity-development aims of the foundation.

The funding problem for a project like the engineer-training programme, Bertelsen explains, is that its model of long-term benefits might not appeal to donor governments because these usually want to see a short-term outcome measured in the number of people who will be reached quickly.

Not a quick fix, but an enduring one

“Telling them that what we’re going to do is train engineers to better implement and better design systems is a long-term approach that might not be seen as providing immediate, critical humanitarian assistance. Sometimes this is a more difficult space for governments to fund.”

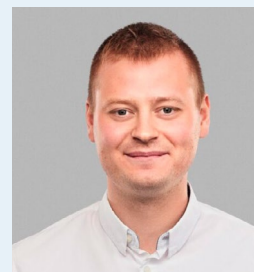
Bertelsen says the project made sense for the foundation. “We saw that there’s a lack of

finance here, it’s a gap where we can help.” He stresses that for the foundation, it’s crucial to build local capacity to maintain water systems for the long term. “We see the indicators that really make a difference as: Can you make it sustainable? Can you build it long term? How can you build up capacity to maintain the water systems? This project is one of our first ventures into that space.”

The two Rs of a good water system: Resilience and Robustness

Laurent Wismer, WatHab Energy, Partnerships and Knowledge Manager for the ICRC in Geneva, says the essential qualities of water systems in conflict zones are resilience and robustness.

And that places a premium on the skills of the engineers. “There is often a lack of know-how in the country,” Wismer says, noting that any conflict is usually accompanied by a brain drain. “And then it’s even more complicated because you need to understand how to work



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Grundfos, with its extensive experience of providing pumping solutions to suit all conditions, including in the developing world, is well placed to help with equipment and expertise.

Feroz Khan Mohammed Jaffer, Regional Market Development Manager: Groundwater at Grundfos in Dubai, says the company’s contribution to the ICRC training included supplying submersible and solar-powered pumps for one of the five-day modules, “energy-efficient borehole pumping systems”. “It was a training to understand groundwater and solar-pumping systems,” he says.

“Grundfos was also involved in co-creating the training content and materials,” and the company made its training facility in Dubai available for the training in the UAE. “There were five trainers involved from Grundfos in the training in both Dubai and Nairobi.”

Potential for wider involvement

Wisner says his vision is to extend the knowledge hub models so other major humanitarian organisations can benefit. The idea with the just-completed Grundfos-funded programme was “to have a flagship

training that can be promoted to other organisations”, he says.

Bertelsen agrees. “If we can prove this has a good effect, it could spread. There’s a lack of finance in the sector. So diverting funds into projects like this is extremely important,” he says.

The Grundfos Foundation funding meant the ICRC was able to design two “blended” training courses with remote learning and in-person components; set up an electromechanical pump laboratory in a shipping container; organise a total of 11 training sessions attended by 147 people; and hire a project manager for 16 months.

“Despite ICRC budget cuts, the project successfully reached the targeted number of beneficiaries and achieved high-quality training,” the final ICRC report said.

“We hope that the successful implementation of this pilot experience will encourage the foundation to support the ICRC with a second grant period and ensure a long-term commitment to the project. The ICRC extends its gratitude for the support of the Grundfos Foundation.”



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WatHab Energy, Geneva



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SafeWater is a strategic business unit within Grundfos that leads the Grundfos Water Access ambition, aimed at providing access to water for people in need. To achieve this, SafeWater collaborates closely with multi-sector partners, including the world's leading humanitarian and development aid organisations, banks and financing institutions, investors, and governments, to transform underserved communities through commercially viable and smart water solutions that contribute to a better future for all.

The organization also seeks to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.

Organisations included:

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) helps people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything it can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. The organization also seeks to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening

humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.

The Grundfos Foundation (Poul Due Jensen Foundation) is a Danish commercial foundation. Grundfos' founder, Poul Due Jensen, created the Foundation on 19 May 1975. With 88 % of the shares, the Foundation is the majority shareholder in Grundfos, a

world leader in pumps, water solutions and services. The Grundfos Foundation supports philanthropic purposes within three strategic areas: Water, Research and Inclusion.

Grundfos pioneers solutions to the world's water and climate challenges and improves the quality of life for people. As a leading global pump and water solutions company,

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