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Columbia Water Center at Work Across the Globe

Water partnerships under way in Brazil, Mali, Ethiopia and India

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Special Correspondent

New York — The Columbia Water Center (CWC), based at Columbia University's Earth Institute in New York, is focused on sustainable development projects throughout the world, including partners in India, Brazil, Mali and Ethiopia.

With support from the PepsiCo Foundation and others, CWC initiatives address problems of water supply, access to water and other ramifications of scarce water resources.

In Brazil, CWC's partnership with the Federal University of Ceará in the northeast portion of the country has allowed the center to break ground on a water supply system that will serve 500 people living in a rural area. With its partners, CWC is also collecting analytic data on the region to improve reservoir operations.

"Our goal is to improve efficiency and reduce the amount of water that's lost or wasted," said Dan Stellar, assistant director at the CWC, which was founded in 2008.

In Mali, the CWC installed large pumps that improved the amount of water available to farmers for their crops.

The center is looking to work more extensively with Malian farmers to help them grow higher-value cash crops, Stellar said. CWC's efforts in Mali coincide with the Millennium Villages project, which is a collaboration between the Earth Institute, the nonprofit group Millennium Promise, and the United Nations Development Programme. The project is dedicated to ending extreme poverty in Africa.

Also in conjunction with Millennium Villages, CWC pioneered an infrastructure project in Ethiopia, improving the reliability of water for household and agricultural use, Stellar said. Funding for CWC's work in Ethiopia came from a grant from the Ceil and Michael E. Pulitzer Foundation.

Projects in China remain in preliminary research stages. In India, the CWC works alongside Punjab Agricultural University and Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural University to [develop farming techniques to save water](#) while producing high-value crops.

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