



## Water and Sanitation for Schools in Liberia

### Organization Introduction:

IDEAS for Us Liberia is run in partnership with a sister non profit organization known as Youth Exploring Solutions Liberia. Both of these groups are facilitated by a local leader in sustainability, Stephen Lavalah, a community organizer, team leader, public speaker, lawyer, environmental justice advocate, passionate climate activist, and an ocean champion dedicated to ensuring a greener, safer, healthier, and cleaner environment for all.

IDEAS for Us Liberia is an active and dedicated branch of the larger non profit organization called IDEAS for Us. IDEAS For Us (IDEAS) is an Orlando-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and accredited NGO of the United Nations. Our mission is to develop, fund, and scale solutions to the world's most pressing environmental challenges. All of our environmental action projects and programs align with the sustainable focus areas of Energy, Water, Food, Waste, and Ecology as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. IDEAS For Us achieves this model by engaging the community in monthly education events and eco action projects that work to solve global issues with local solutions. This model has expanded to 8 international branches, reaching Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nepal, Romania, Rwanda, and Uganda. In these branches, local leaders engage their community in educational events to create local solutions to global climate challenges, then these solutions are carried out in the form of action projects to mobilize volunteers and implement long term climate solutions.

### Background Information:

IDEAS began when a group of passionate university students made the choice to stop talking about environmental issues and begin the very difficult work of solving them. Founded in June of 2008 at the University of Central Florida (UCF), IDEAS began as a student-led organization called I.D.E.A.S. - an acronym that stood for Intellectual Decisions on Environmental Awareness Solutions. With a major focus on action, I.D.E.A.S soon gained recognition by fellow students for their tenacity and dedication to solving environmental issues on campus. In time, on and off-campus media recognized the student group for their impact and the concept organically spread around the United States. In 2011, IDEAS For Us officially became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization called IDEAS For Us and their work received the Champions of Change award from President Barack Obama. In 2012, IDEAS began the lengthy process of becoming an official NGO of the United Nations and from 2013 - 2016 they held consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 2016, that status was upgraded and IDEAS now holds special consultative status and is a recognized observer organization of UNFCCC.

Since its inception, IDEAS for Us has worked diligently to bring the model to rural communities to empower leaders to implement sustainable solutions to locally identified issues. The IDEAS for Us Liberia branch is the 2nd African branch to form in IDEAS history, and since its launch in 2013, IDEAS For Liberia has been one of our most active. The origins of IDEAS For Liberia can be traced back to Stephen Lavalah, esq. who became a

celebrated IREX Fellow and traveled to the United States to live with IDEAS founders Chris Castro and Clayton Louis Ferrara. There he trained and studied for four months the art of community organizing, sustainable development, and building a mindset around resilience. Upon returning home, launched the “Building a Sustainable Liberia” project that will take decades to complete. The branch currently holds non profit certification in Liberia, allowing them to create programming and seek funds to carry out these environmental action and educational initiatives. IDEAS For Liberia now stands as a unified force to help people, heal the planet, and build prosperity for current and future generations.

### **Project Summary:**

Access to proper sanitation and clean drinking water is a basic human right that still a quarter of the world's population is still deprived of, an issue that presents itself mostly in rural communities. IDEAS for Us plans approach this locally in Liberia by implementing WASH (Water and Sanitation for Health) facilities in the rural Wolala Public School in order to improve the education and livelihoods of the Liberian youth, while also educating them on proper sanitation techniques in a workshop held on the day of installation.

### **Problem and Solution:**

The country of Liberia is suffering from a lack of drinking water and sanitation as high as 90% of the population<sup>1</sup>. With over 1.1 million people without access to clean drinking water, and 3.7 million<sup>2</sup> people without proper sanitation, deaths from waterborne illnesses are in the thousands every year. Water quality continues to degrade as most people without proper sanitation practice open defecation. The problems caused by the lack of sanitation and clean water cost millions of dollars a year to the Liberian government and people due to epidemic outbreaks, lack of tourism, cognitive impairment, poor water quality, and costs of funerals<sup>3</sup>. Many organizations such as Water Aid and Charity waters are bringing water sources to populated communities, but many rural areas are left unhelped. IDEAS for Us Liberia has identified a school that would benefit immensely from the installation of a WASH facility. Young people are still developing cognitively, and not having proper drinking water impairs that process. While at school, thousands of young people will have access to clean, safe drinking water and proper sanitation. This water will be accessible to students and teachers during the school day, and to take home for the evening. This long term climate solution will be initially installed and implemented by IDEAS for Us Liberia team members, along with hired experts to bring the project to the students. The longevity of this project will be ensured by school administrators that have previously agreed to the assignment. In order to ensure the maintenance of the WASH station, the school will be provided with \$300 to maintain the equipment. Finally, during the installation process, IDEAS for Us Liberia and Youth Exploring Solutions will host a workshop to educate students on proper sanitation techniques and disease eradication procedures. Serving to both educate and empower the youth of Liberia.

### **Funding Requirements:**

IDEAS for Us Liberia is requesting a donation of \$3,000 to construct two WASH stations (5 handwashing and 5 drinking water stations) for the school of Wolala Public School to fund the purchase, installation and upkeep of the stations.

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene. <https://www.unicef.org/liberia/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

<sup>2</sup> Water4. Liberia. <https://www.unicef.org/liberia/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

<sup>3</sup> Water and Sanitation Program. Economic Impacts of Poor Sanitation in Africa. <https://www.wsp.org/sites/wsp/files/publications/WSP-ESI-Liberia.pdf>

### Organization's Expertise:

Our branch leader has experience implementing several long term climate solutions and organizing large scale projects. An important aspect of the IDEAS model is working with partners. We will employ local experts in the installation process and upkeep of the WASH facilities in order to stimulate the economy and ensure longevity.

### Expected Challenges and how they will be overcome:

A potential challenge for this program is the durability and security of the Wash Station. These needs will be met by keeping the facility indoors, behind locked doors to keep it safe when school is not in session. The facility will also be maintained with the allocated fund of \$200 for hiring maintenance and replacing equipment if it breaks. As the leaders of the community and the school have already expressed great interest in this program, there should be no issues with the implementation of the WASH stations.

### Project Goals: Project Objectives:

1. Diminish the number of waterborne illnesses in the Gibi District by providing clean water to staff and students of Wolala Public School.
2. Improve the performance of students and teachers in the Wolala Public school by providing basic needs.
3. Increase overall sanitation practices throughout the district by educating students and staff on proper sanitation techniques and how to avoid contracting diseases.
4. Stimulate the economy by providing students the resources they need to succeed in school and therefore the workforce.
5. Develop the standard of living in Liberia by including clean water and hand washing stations in schools.

### Project Objectives:

- Install two WASH Facilities in Wolala Public school for the use of students and staff members.
- Host quarterly sanitation workshops to educate students on proper sanitation techniques and disease prevention.
- Determine the productivity growth from the WASH Facility Installation by taking two assessments before the installation and quarterly assessments after the project is implemented to determine the improvement in performance.
- Assess the number of waterborne illnesses prior and after the installation of the facility to determine success.

### Timetable:

**August 2021:** First assessment of districts waterborne illness cases and the productivity of Wolala Public School.

**September 2021:** Install the two WASH Facilities in the Wolala Public School.

**December 2021:** Take the first quarterly assessment of the performance of the school and the number of waterborne illnesses reported.

**March 2022:** Take the second quarterly assessment to determine the productivity of the project.

**June 2022:** Take the third quarterly assessment, including possible repairs and maintenance needs. Report the numbers and needs to stakeholders.

### Project Personnel and Material Resources to Be Utilized

The implementation of the WASH Facilities will be administered by Stephen Lavalah, the branch manager of IDEAS for Us Liberia, alongside the Wolala Public School administration. Together they will oversee the implementation and assessments of the impact on the students and faculty. The construction and installation

process of the WASH facilities will be done by a local contractor in consultation with the National Water Sanitation & Hygiene Commission to ensure adherence to established standards. The construction will use local materials and other equipment will be purchased from local vendors with approved records of selling durable equipment. The school will be required to contribute sand, rock and other materials within the community. A Local Steering Committee would be established. The committee will comprise of a school administrator, two teachers (one science teacher and an art teacher), the president of the Parents Teachers' Association (PTA), two parents (one male and one female), community leadership (one male and one female) and two members of the women organization within the location of the school. IDEAS For Us - Liberia and Youth Exploring Solutions will serve as ex-official on the committee. The committee will have terms of reference and leadership structure. IDEAS For Us - Liberia in partnership with Youth Exploring Solutions will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the school. The Local Steering Committee will help with construction and maintenance, as well as monitoring and evaluation. A technical working group to constant maintenance will be set up with members drawn from the school, community leadership and religious institutions. The selection will be gender sensitive taking into consideration more women and girls including people with disabilities and physically challenged individuals, and vulnerable and disadvantaged youth.

### Budget:

Name	Description	Cost	Funding Source
<b>WASH Station</b>	Construction and installation of two WASH facilities 5hand washing and 5 drinking water stations in Wolala Public School	<b>\$2200</b>	Friends of Liberia
<b>Operational and Transportation Cost</b>	Internet connectivity, refreshment, and transportation	<b>\$600.00</b>	Friends of Liberia
<b>Maintenance</b>	The upkeep costs of the facility for the first year will be given to the administrators of the school so as to have maintained facilities and consistent data when measuring the productivity of the project.	<b>\$200.00</b>	Friends of Liberia
<b>Longevity of project</b>	This project will provide thousands of students and teachers water and sanitation in school for the next several years. The long term expansion and maintenance of	<b>\$1000+</b>	IDEAS for Us Solutions Fund

	these facilities will be ensured by the IDEAS for Us Solutions fund, sourced by large donors and crowd funds.		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$4000</b>	

**Project Evaluation:**

Quarterly evaluations will be taken of the schools improvement since the installation of the WASH Facilities. The progress will be assessed by overall improvement of grades, morale from students, and by taking surveys from staff and students on their satisfaction. These will be done 4 times per year along with maintenance and filtration check ins with the facilities.

**Project Sustainability:**

After the initial funding of the WASH facilities, they are expected to be functional for 5-7 years, helping thousands of students and staff improve their lives in the interim. The longevity of the program will be ensured by the IDEAS for Us Liberia Branch manager as he is frequently partnering with this school in various activities such as clean ups, tree plantings, and educational workshops. He is invested in the wellbeing of the school and will continue to ensure success of this program. Once the initial funds are secured, IDEAS for us will seek funding for expansion and continual success of the program. If the expansion is not funded, IDEAS for Us Solutions Fund will ensure the maintenance of the WASH Stations for the remainder for as long as they are functional.