



# LIFE WATER CANADA

## 2024 FALL NEWSLETTER



### A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Practice makes Perfect!

My nephew and his family visited me this year. His son is passionate about rock climbing. At every opportunity I saw him exercising his upper body and toe and ankle muscles to prepare for his next adventure. Similarly, our overseas partners have been constantly working to tighten and strengthen their efforts to improve both efficiency and productivity. It hasn't all been smooth sailing, but if you don't have problems, you aren't trying hard enough, right?! As you read on, you will see the growth of the local teams. They are maturing, and their passion and efforts are yielding incredible results!

I hope this newsletter will be a catalyst of encouragement for you as you read how your donations have helped the teams' work go from being a dream to a tangible and life-changing reality. Thank you for believing in us!

*Lynda Sebela*



### THE YEAR SO FAR

July 1, 2024 - September 30, 2024

All teams have been hard at work this fiscal quarter, delivering quality reporting and forward-thinking, creative solutions for the challenges in their day-to-day tasks. These experienced teams provide an efficient workflow, and we are seeing the benefits of this more and more each month.

### DAN'S FAVORITE NUMBER – \$0.13

So far this fiscal year, our project beneficiaries are reporting an average water savings of \$0.13 per day, per person. That number may sound small – after all, what can you do with just thirteen cents? To put it into perspective, you must understand that in most of the regions we work, the average person lives on about one dollar a day. So that thirteen cents represents 13% of their average income. With that in mind, it is no longer such a small number. That can be the difference between eating or not, going to school or not, seeing a doctor or not. I am thankful that one ripple effect of our work is families no longer having to choose between safe potable water and other necessities of life. That thirteen cents represents one less hard decision that must be made.

#### FISCAL 2025 PROJECTS (through Q1)

NEW WELLS	61
REHABILITATED WELLS	57
PUMP REPAIRS	977
COMMUNITY WASHROOMS	4
HEALTH + HYGIENE	418
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,517</b>



### 2024 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

This report is larger and more comprehensive than past years, and covers both who we are as an organization and what we accomplished this year. Writing it allowed us a chance to step back and look at our work within the bigger picture of WASH programming and global impact. We share some of the challenges and lessons we learned throughout the year and hear directly from each team's PC (project coordinator) in their own words. Scan the QR code to read more! →



## TACKLING PERIOD POVERTY: *How Lifewater Canada is Empowering Women and Girls*

Period poverty – the lack of access to menstrual products, adequate sanitation facilities, and essential education on managing menstrual health – affects millions of women and girls around the world. This issue has far-reaching consequences, causing many to miss school or work, and leading to negative health and emotional outcomes. Moreover, period poverty increases the likelihood of gender-based violence, as many women and girls feel forced to stay home due to a lack of care essentials.

In countries like Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, and Haiti, a significant percentage of women are affected by period poverty. In both Kenya and Haiti, for example, 65% of women cannot afford basic necessities like menstrual products, pain medication, or even underwear, which severely impacts their hygiene, dignity, and mental well-being. In the regions where Lifewater Canada operates, this challenge is compounded by limited access to clean water and hygiene facilities. Without them, many women and girls are forced to use unsafe alternatives, such as dirty rags or newspapers, increasing their risk of infections. It also leads to more school absences, with some girls resorting to risky behaviors, like transactional sex, to afford menstrual products. This exposes them to further risks such as pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, and gender-based violence.

Our partners at STADA in Kenya are actively working to change this. They provide women and girls with “Dignity Kits” – five reusable pads packaged in a durable zippered bag. Along with the kits, Health and Hygiene seminars focusing on women’s health are held, offering valuable education on menstrual hygiene management (MHM). To date, STADA has distributed over 16,300 kits, leading to a 74% decrease in school absenteeism and a 55% improvement in academic performance among girls.

This month, STS-Liberia plans to launch a similar Dignity Kit program, with our partners in Nigeria to follow in the new year. These efforts are enabling girls to stay in school, remain healthy, and avoid the risks of teenage pregnancies and infections.

Empowering women and girls through the distribution of Dignity Kits is part of Lifewater Canada’s broader mission. In addition to providing access to clean water, we focus on building sanitation facilities and delivering essential health and hygiene education. Together, these initiatives ensure that women and girls in Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, and Haiti have the tools they need to live healthier, more dignified lives.



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

We plan to host our second International Conference in March of 2025. Held in Liberia, it will see drillers, repair technicians, and program coordinators come together from all seven of our teams. While relationships and networking will be a part of this event, the focus will be on training in techniques and procedures for both field and office work. We hope that this event will coincide with the launch of L-Linc’s new drilling rig and drill team (Lifewater Rural) that will be working in the remote areas of Liberia. This will also be the first event since the COVID-19 pandemic to which we will be able to send a volunteer team. So if you have a relevant skill – writing, computer/office skills, photography, welding, drilling, fabrication, etc. – that may be of value during training, and want to use that skill in a way that can better this world, please reach out. We’d love to hear from you!



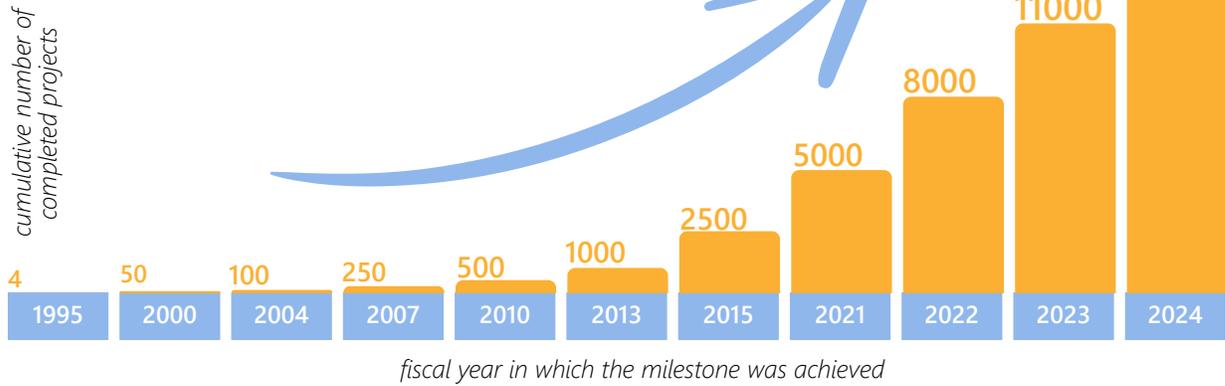
### DID YOU HEAR?

We refreshed our website! Look for more features to come in early 2025.

Going forward, you may notice some changes to both our project types and nation reporting. For example, handwash stations and latrines will collectively be called “washrooms” and rainwater catchments will be installed for handwashing purposes only. Dignity Kits will now be a project type of their own, and we will look to report our projects by *team* rather than by nation. For more, read our [Annual Impact Report](#).

# SUSTAINING TEAM GROWTH

During fiscal 2020, we completed 652 projects. That number grew to 960 in fiscal 2021, and reached 6,391 in fiscal 2024! While we have spent a substantial amount of time over the years working with our international partners to increase their capacity, we have now reached the point of needing to address our own Canadian personnel to continue to steward donations and support our partners well. While our President, Lynda Gehrels, remains a full-time unpaid volunteer, we have gradually added paid staff members to keep up with the inflow of funding and projects. Within Lifewater Canada, we now have 4 full-time and 5 part-time employees working from their homes in various areas of operation and specialty. Despite this internal growth, we are continuing to carefully balance our workload with our expenses, finishing last fiscal year with an overhead of only 8.1%.



In 2022 we began an ambitious venture to create a custom truck-mounted drill rig that was agile enough to reach the mountainous villages of rural Kenya, while powerful enough to drill deep down to the underground aquifers. The enormous success of this team led us to build a similar rig in Nigeria in Spring 2024, and now we set our eyes to where Lifewater began, in Liberia.

Lifewater Canada's first well, drilled in 1995 in **Jacob's Town**, Liberia is still operational today and serves a bustling neighbourhood in what was once a small collection of people finding refuge from the ongoing Liberian Civil War. The extensive change and growth that Jacob's Town has undergone stands as an apt symbol for our growth as well. When Lifewater Canada began, we had a strategy to "complete the easy ones first". Resources were low and travel was difficult, so it made sense to target locations that would help the most people and have the highest chance of success possible. But now, with blueprints from Kenya and Nigeria in hand, we have the ability to make the **hard ones easy** and reach those places that were not possible before.

As a new team in Liberia is formed, hope abounds in our long-serving partners as they envision bringing clean water to their fellow rural citizens for the first time. With eagerness and a little bravado, they plan to drill their first well in the northern-most village in Liberia – Vonema. With only a single dirt road accessing the village, the farming community is home to roughly 2,000 people who have never had access to clean water. Hope is now in sight for safe water that will transform their community, a hope our team looks to spread to all rural communities in Liberia.



## FISCAL 2025 SO FAR

*snapshot*

335,761

**TOTAL HUMAN IMPACT**  
combined number of nation-reported beneficiaries

118,668

**HOURS SAVED PER DAY**  
or 106 minutes per day per household saved in water hauling duties

\$0.13

**DAILY WATER SAVINGS**  
daily savings per person from their previous water costs

124,489

**SCHOOL DAYS RECOVERED**  
or 995,913 hours each month where children (usually girls) were in school rather than fetching water

\$1,059,450

**TOTAL MONTHLY IMPACT**  
average monthly water savings (USD) per household x number of households

# HAITI *STEADY*



**LIFEWATER D'HAITI:** Our partner in Haiti, a small team of 6 led by Hanania Orelus, continues to steadily progress in management, documentation, and maintenance, resulting in very strong project numbers for the first quarter of fiscal 2025. With the successful completion of 14 new wells and 281 pump repairs in the last three months, they have kicked off the year at a record-breaking pace. In many ways, we can attribute the steadily increasing success of this team to a dramatic increase in their own local sense of pride and responsibility. For years Lifewater d'Haiti relied very heavily on the in-country presence of international volunteers, but as this became impossible to maintain – first with COVID, and now with the intense national security situation – this team began to realize that the responsibility to succeed was in their hands. This steady growth has extended into areas of maintenance, procurement, and local purchasing. While the situation remains bleak on a national level, Lifewater d'Haiti is proving that even difficult situations can be used for good, as they continue to use the blessing of safe and accessible water to bring hope to the people of Haiti.

It is challenging to write about one of our Liberian teams without mentioning the other – as both our oldest team, L-Linc (Lifewater Liberia Inc) and our newest, STS (Service-to-Servants) Lifewater work seamlessly together across the nation. The introduction of STS has been revitalizing for L-Linc and for all of the projects and people involved. Working as 'sister' teams, the two have a reborn vision of nationwide impact with excellence. A vision we are proud to partner with them in achieving.

**LIFEWATER LIBERIA INC:** The first quarter of our fiscal year has seen the completion of 23 wells and 15 well rehabilitations by L-Linc, our original partner. This is a tremendous feat considering the state of the team under the previous Board of Directors not long ago. The new Board has provided tremendous vision and support to the staff. The team has made advancements in all areas, completely renovating their office and compound, nearly finished renovating their workers' housing, and making great strides to repair or replace their aging equipment. Shortly before our fiscal 2025 year began, they bought a new LS200 portable drilling rig (which they equally shared the cost of with Lifewater Canada), and now are saving toward the purchase of a truck-mounted LS300+, similar to those we have built in Kenya and Nigeria. An exciting milestone for this team is that, for the first time in years, L-Linc is a debt-free entity, successfully discharging all the accumulated debts carried by the previous board. This is truly a case of "everything rises and falls on leadership", with the men and women on the Board having a rejuvenating effect on the attitude and performance of all management and staff.

We are excited to share with you plans to launch a third team in Liberia, referred to as "Team Rural". Operating as a branch of L-Linc, this team's vision is to bring safe water to the rural communities of northern Liberia. Development is ongoing with a goal to see them operational in Spring 2025.



# LIBERIA *TRANSFORMED*

**STS-LIFEWATER:** This team has consistently reached their targets for the first three months of the year, completing 600 pump repairs, 1 washroom, and 317 community A&E (Assessment and Education) programs. These programs expand on Health & Hygiene seminars to also holistically examine a community's WASH needs. They have also introduced a Monitoring and Evaluation team to revisit completed project sites in order to measure the long-term impact of WASH programs. All of these projects and studies are now being reported with our prototype electronic field reporting tool, allowing teams to enter information digitally and in the moment, reducing paper use and the risk of lost information. As of this writing, Dignity Kits have been ordered and team training has been arranged for a pilot program in Menstrual Health Management (MHM). And the biggest news of the quarter? Joe Sloan, project coordinator, has successfully received the STS team's official WASH Clearance from the National Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Commission, allowing for specialized clearances to customs and duty fees, as well as freeing the team to work anywhere in Liberia within the WASH sector.

# KENYA *GROWTH*

**THE LIFEWATER KENYA:** With three teams operating in Kenya, and all being intertwined in some way, the overall impact of the work is hard to separate on a 'per team' basis. Our original Kenya team, TLK (The Lifewater Kenya), has low numbers on paper, but huge impact, as they handle much of the behind-the-scenes work for our other teams. From training to customs clearing, TLK has touched everything we do in Kenya, acting as a parent and mentor to the other 'more productive' teams. Now, TLK has shifted a generation, with a well-executed succession plan that sees Reverend David Maina's son, Sammy, taking over the operation of their WASH programming. As of July 1, the team has put back into service their old, but very well maintained, drill, and are now producing two new wells every month in the Nakuru region. They are also poised to relaunch their pump repair program. We are excited and thankful for this team and encouraged by the growth it brings to Kenya's WASH sector.

**STAWISHA DADA:** This group continues to impress us with their growth. Even when it has been painful, they have taken challenges for what they are – an opportunity to grow and become better. We are proud to say that STADA is better than ever before, despite their overall production numbers being down. To start this year, they have completed 13 new wells, 12 rehabilitations, 88 pump repairs, and 31 Health and Hygiene seminars. After taking the time to do some internal restructuring and streamline their WASH programming, they are now heavily focused on better practices, better policies, better pictures, and better documentation. In short, they are focusing on continuing to do what they do – only better. From our perspective, it takes maturity to focus on internal growth, especially when that internal growth is not reflected in external production. What makes it even more impressive, is that this growth is being done by such a young team, not only young in their work with Lifewater, but young in age, with the majority of the team under the age of 30.

# NIGERIA *SOARING*



## LIFEWATER R.E.S.C.U.E KENYA:

Despite some difficult times over the last few months, including an unexpected drilling shutdown while awaiting replacement parts from a manufacturer defect, this small group has stayed intensely focused on helping the people of Mwingi in Kitui County. Faced with the prospect of an extended hiatus from drilling, the team decided to expand their programming, rather than stop entirely. The drill team was trained in pump repair and began a county-wide assessment, identifying hand pumps that were out of service. Though there are precious few pumps in the region, they were able to find and repair 40 pumps and rehabilitate 10 wells. They also built their first washroom and introduced H&H seminars with community assessments, completing 40 in the first quarter. This is impressive, as given the choice to take a break or adapt and learn, this team chose to learn. Thankfully, the replacement parts have now arrived and been installed, and in addition to maintaining their work in repairs, rehabs, H&H, and sanitation, these drillers will be back in the field, bringing hope in the form of safe water to this desperate area.



**LIFEWATER HYGIENE INITIATIVE OF NIGERIA:** LHIN, led by Dr. Hosea Apeh, continue to exceed everything asked of them. This team is precise in every way, reaching every target for every project type every month. Three months into our fiscal year, they have provided 24 new wells, 30 rehabilitated wells, 180 pump repairs, and 3 washrooms – exactly what was planned. Above and beyond this, they hired and trained a team to begin offering stand-alone Health & Hygiene workshops, and have now completed 25, following the model of STS-Liberia by including community assessments. After two members of Lifewater Canada made an overseas training trip to fabricate and assemble their new LS300+ rig, the local team took the knowledge gained and applied it to the refurbishment and truck-mounting of Hosea's father's original drill. With two fully operational rigs and hardworking teams, this marks the first time that Nigeria has not had to rely on either a rented rig or a third-party crew to keep up with their work, leading to improved long-term quality and affordability. Our congratulations to this team, and to Hosea, who was recently named the Dean of Education in his day job at the University of Abuja!

# MARK YOUR NEXT MILESTONE WITH US

When most of us hit birthday milestones, we're content to celebrate with a party or a nice vacation with family and friends. Franz Rempel from Steinbach, Manitoba, wanted to do something more impactful. With his 52nd birthday approaching, Franz invited family and friends to help him raise \$52,000 – or \$1,000 for every year of his life – for Lifewater Canada. "My goal is to raise \$26,000 from others," he said. "(My wife) Hanh and I will match whatever amount I can raise." Franz's generous family members and friends responded enthusiastically – contributing even more than what he'd targeted, for a final campaign total surpassing \$54,000. It resulted in 10 new wells, each of which is providing safe water to hundreds of families.

Originally from Mexico, Franz saw how crucial water is for not only drinking and other household needs, but also for growing food. "It struck me how much more valuable and productive our land was, (depending on) whether we had access to water or not. Because of this, it made me concerned for others who might not have access."

Do you share in our concern for people without safe water? Not everyone can raise as much as Franz, but anyone can take the same initiative. To organize your own campaign, you can email family and friends inviting them to donate through our [website](#) or through [CanadaHelps](#), as they enable you to create a campaign page, share the details with your contacts, and track your progress. We also offer many fundraising ideas and resources under the 'GET INVOLVED' tab of our website.



## PARTNER WITH US

**HOST A LIVE EVENT:** Lifewater Canada staff and volunteers are available for live events and presentations. Contact us to find out how we can be a part of your fundraising event.

**MONTHLY GIVING:** Want to have a growing impact? Consider giving monthly! It gives us a steady foundation to send support and keep safe water flowing. You can set it up easily through CanadaHelps at:

[www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/lifewater-canada](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/lifewater-canada)

**PLANNED GIVING:** Most of us are not able to be as generous as we would like – we have bills to pay! You can however, include Lifewater Canada in your will. There are great tax advantages with this type of estate planning. Please call us at 807-622-4848 to learn more.

**SECURITIES DONATIONS:** Donate stocks, mutual funds, or other securities to Lifewater Canada and receive a significant tax credit. Learn how by clicking the 'DONATE' tab on our website.

### PROJECT COSTS:

Wells	\$5,500	Latrines	\$3,500-6,500*
Rehabs	\$1,500	H&H	\$100
Repairs	\$125		*(depends on size and/or nation)



Mosaics are images made up of many individual pieces of stone, glass or ceramic. Their beauty comes from these small pieces working together to create one finished product. Each piece is unique and adds something special to the result.

Lifewater is deeply blessed with a mosaic of supporters who bring their unique skills and ideas to the table. There are many donors who help to raise money for the work of our overseas teams, each in their own way. There are children who have run lemonade stands, coin drives and garage sales. Sunday school groups and school classes have held car washes or sold crafts. Adults have organized concerts, dances and plays. Windows have been washed, yard work has been done, and many kilometers have been walked or biked. Some of these stories are posted on our website under "[Donor Profiles](#)", and if you haven't yet had the opportunity to read them, we encourage you to do so! They are both fun and inspirational.

If you would like support turning your fundraising idea into reality, please reach out to our newest employee – Betty-Ann! She would love to work with you to see your ideas come to life. Thank you to each and every one who has worked hard to raise the support needed to keep our work going! You have contributed your special piece to the mosaic, and the end result is beautiful!



### CONTACT US:

Lifewater Canada  
457 Heather Crescent,  
Thunder Bay, ON, P7E 5L1  
807.622.4848  
[info@lifewater.ca](mailto:info@lifewater.ca)