

E-PARCC

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

Syracuse University

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration

The Last Well: Changing Lives of Liberians through Collaboration

TEACHING NOTE

SYNOPSIS

The case is about a Texas-based non-profit The Last Well's (TLW) commitment to bring clean water to all inhabitants of Liberia and to spread the Christian Gospel along the way. Liberia has long been known as one of the poorest countries in the world with a high incidence of death each year due to severe lack of safe water. While much progress has been made to solve the water crisis and improve the lives of Liberians, many challenges still remain unaddressed in the country. Todd Phillips (Philips) founded TLW in 2008 to address the issue of safe water and to spread the Gospel in Liberia. The case discusses TLW's mission, vision, strategy, progress, and achievements in Liberia.

This case was written by Debapratim Purkayastha and Benudhar Sahu of IFCAI Foundation for Higher Education. It was the winning case in E-PARCC's 2019-2020 **Glendal E. and Alice D. Wright Prize Fund for Conflict and Collaboration Case Studies in International Development**. The case is intended for classroom discussion and not to suggest either effective or ineffective responses to the situation depicted. It may be copied as many times as needed, provided that the authors and E-PARCC are given full credit. E-PARCC is a project of the Collaborative Governance Initiative, Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration- a research, teaching and practice center within Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/parcc_eparcc.aspx

TLW joined forces with many organizations and stakeholders to bring about changes in Liberia's water system. Through collaborative partnerships with other organizations, TLW put together a road map to ensure that its vision of providing safe drinking water to Liberian households within a walking distance of 15 minutes was accomplished. It believed that the collaborative approach could provide a lasting solution to the water problem in the country. The case provides rich insights into effective partner engagement, mobilization, and utilization of resources and a collaborative effort to meet the ambitious water and Gospel goals.

With the mapping of available water sources in Liberia, construction of wells and hand pumps, managing the delivery of water filters, and training on their installation and usage at the community level, TLW came closer to accomplishing its goal. The organization reached more than two million Liberians in five counties in Liberia through 8,000 water projects in ten years (2009-2019). Phillips was optimistic that he would meet TLW's goal by the deadline (end of 2020) and he believed that with the completion of the project, Liberia would become the first developing country in the world to have universal access to clean drinking water and that the Gospel would have reached every Liberian. However, the project still had almost 1 million people left to reach in more than 4,000 communities.

Phillips undertook several fundraising initiatives to help bringing the organization closer to achieving its mission. The case highlights his determination to raise funds by drawing the attention of the donors to the fact that while they had an abundance of safe drinking water in America, Liberians were deprived of this basic necessity. The case offers insights into the impact of the collaborative partnership model on achieving the project goal and focuses on sustainability of the water system in Liberia beyond 2020.

TEACHING OBJECTIVES AND TARGET AUDIENCE

This case is designed to enable students to:

- Understand how collaboration helped The Last Well in tackling the problem of safe water in Liberia.
- Understand the magnitude of the problem of safe water in a transition and conflict country in the developing world, and how TLW is trying to tackle it.

- Understand how collaborative partnership can bring about changes in Liberia's water system.
- Evaluate the impact of TLW's activities on the lives of Liberians.
- Analyze the key factors to enable TLW to achieve its mission and ensure sustainability of the water system in Liberia beyond 2020.

This case is meant for undergraduate and graduate programs in international development/ NGO management. This case can also be used in Management Development Programs for practitioners in charities, NGOs, and social ventures.

IMMEDIATE ISSUES

- How can Phillips achieve his organization's mission of providing safe drinking water and spread the Gospel in Liberia by the end of 2020?
- How can TLW attract more donors while fending off detractors who have been trying to undermine its work in Liberia?
- How can the water project be made sustainable in Liberia once TLW leaves the country after completion of its goal?

LINKAGES TO THEORY

The case deals with basic issues such as: NGO management, NGOs in international development, collaboration, collaborative problem-solving, mobilizing funds, livelihood generation, impact assessment, project sustainability, and so forth.

The following readings are suggested to support class discussion of the case:

1. Bloom, P. N., & Dees, G. (2008). Cultivate your ecosystem. *Stanford social innovation review*, 6(1), 47-53.
2. EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model, EPA-300-R-06-002, June 2008.

3. Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Status Report on the Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: A Framework to Ensure Local Problem-Solving, EPA 300-R-02-001, February 2002.
4. Fowler, A. (2013). Striking a balance: A guide to enhancing the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations in international development. Routledge.
5. Gray, B. (1989). Collaborating: Finding common ground for multiparty problems.
6. Herzer, D., & Nunnenkamp, P. (2013). Private donations, government grants, commercial activities, and fundraising: Cointegration and causality for NGOs in international development cooperation. *World Development*, 46, 234-251.
7. Lank, E. (2005). Collaborative advantage: How organisations win by working together. Springer.
8. McKay, M. M., & Paikoff, R. L. (2012). Community collaborative partnerships: The foundation for HIV prevention research efforts. Routledge.
9. Morfaw, J. N. (2011). Project Sustainability: A Comprehensive Guide To Sustaining Projects, Systems And Organizations In A Competitive Marketplace. iUniverse.
10. Mulder, M. (2014). Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home. Orca Book Publishers.
11. Purkayastha, D., Tripathy, T. and Das, B. (2020), "Understanding the ecosystem of microfinance institutions in India", *Social Enterprise Journal*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-08-2019-0063>
12. The United Nations World Water Development Report 2019: Leaving No One Behind. Volume 2019 of World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP). UNESCO Publishing, 2019.

TEACHING APPROACH AND STRATEGY

The case enables a rich classroom discussion on how TLW was founded, how it managed partnerships to achieve its mission in Liberia, and whether the collaboration would help the organization achieve its goal. The instructor can start the case discussion by asking the students about the water crisis situation in Liberia and how the Liberian government efforts failed to address the problem in the early days before TLW intervened with its change model. The students may be asked to analyze the elements and stages of the collaborative partnership model in working to find a solution to the water problem in Liberia. The students are required to evaluate the impact of the TLW project on the community. The instructor can take the class discussion forward with a debate and discussion on whether TLW can achieve its mission within the deadline and what the fate of the project will be after the donors leave the project. In this context, the students may be asked to evaluate the sustainability of the TLW project by employing some sustainability factors to know whether the Liberians can continue the project without outside intervention. Finally, the instructor may summarize the discussion by sharing with the students the key takeaways of the TLW project in Liberia and its implications for other community-based organizations.

SUGGESTED SESSION PLAN

Discussion Questions		Time
Introduction		05 minutes
Q 1	What prompted Todd Phillips to think about the need to provide safe drinking water in Liberia?	10 minutes
Q 2	Discuss TLW's model to provide safe drinking water in Liberia.	15 minutes
Q 3	What is collaborative partnership? How does it help The Last Well in solving the water shortage issue in Liberia?	15 minutes
Q 4	Assess the impact of The Last Well project on the lives of Liberians.	10 minutes
Q 5	Can The Last Well achieve its mission by 2020?	10 minutes
Q 6	Evaluate the sustainability of the water project in Liberia, beyond 2020.	10 minutes
Q 7	What lessons can The Last Well teach other organizations working for the community?	10 minutes
Summary		05 minutes
Total		90 minutes

*Distribution of case 2-3 days in advance of the class.

ANALYSIS

1. What prompted Todd Phillips to think about the need to provide safe drinking water in Liberia?

A group of Christian youths led by Phillips at Frontline Church in Washington DC decided to focus on philanthropic activities. Phillips asked two simple questions:

- I. What is the greatest need in the world?
- II. Where is the most challenging place in the world?

Under his leadership, they zeroed in on the problem of water (which they found to be the greatest need in the world) and on Liberia, the second poorest country and the most miserable place in the world according to the CIA, as the most challenging place in the world.

Water is Earth's most precious resource, something that every living thing needs to survive. Michelle Mulder in her book *'Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home'* (Mulder, 2014) said "A person can live for weeks without food, but only a few days without water. The human brain is 75 percent water. Blood has even more water in it, and even our bones are 20 percent water. No wonder we need to drink so often." While people living in the developed world take drinking water for granted, millions of people across the globe find access to clean water a daily challenge, and children are often the ones responsible for carrying water to their homes (Mulder, 2014). According to the United Nations' World Water Development Report 2019, three out of ten people in the world do not have access to safe drinking water (WWAP, 2019). Almost half of those people drinking water from unprotected sources live in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Liberia.

Liberia had been facing water shortage problems since a 14-year civil war that destroyed the country's water resource infrastructure. Following years of civil war, providing the people access to safe drinking water and having a coordinated health response became the key priorities of the World Health Organization's (WHO) work in the country. Numerous reasons including an increase in pollution, the destruction of river catchments, and accidental water pollution, posed challenges in coordinating a comprehensive solution to the water problem

in the country. Liberia had long been noted as one of the poorest countries of the world, struggling amid government corruption and the Ebola crisis. Lack of access to clean and safe drinking water in the country caused untold misery for its residents, forcing many into abject poverty. Water scarcity had corroded the basic infrastructure of Liberia as follows:

Water and Health: Unsafe drinking water was the major health hazard for Liberians. Each year, thousands of Liberians died from waterborne diseases including cholera and diarrhea, and a lot more became sick. Of all the water related fatalities in the country, 90% were children under the age of five (see Case Exhibit II). Unsafe water is a leading cause of mother and child mortality in developing nations.

Water and Education: Children and women were the most vulnerable to the effects of unsafe drinking water. According to a WHO and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report, in three quarters of households without access to drinking water on their premises, women and girls have the primary responsibility for collecting water. Many girls in Liberia were deprived of an education as they spent hours each day on collecting drinking water for their families. Many dropped out of school due to lack of water and sanitation.

Water and Safety: In the absence of a safe water source nearby, women and children in Liberia had to walk countless miles to fetch water from dangerous rivers and polluted water sources or pay a high price to vendors.

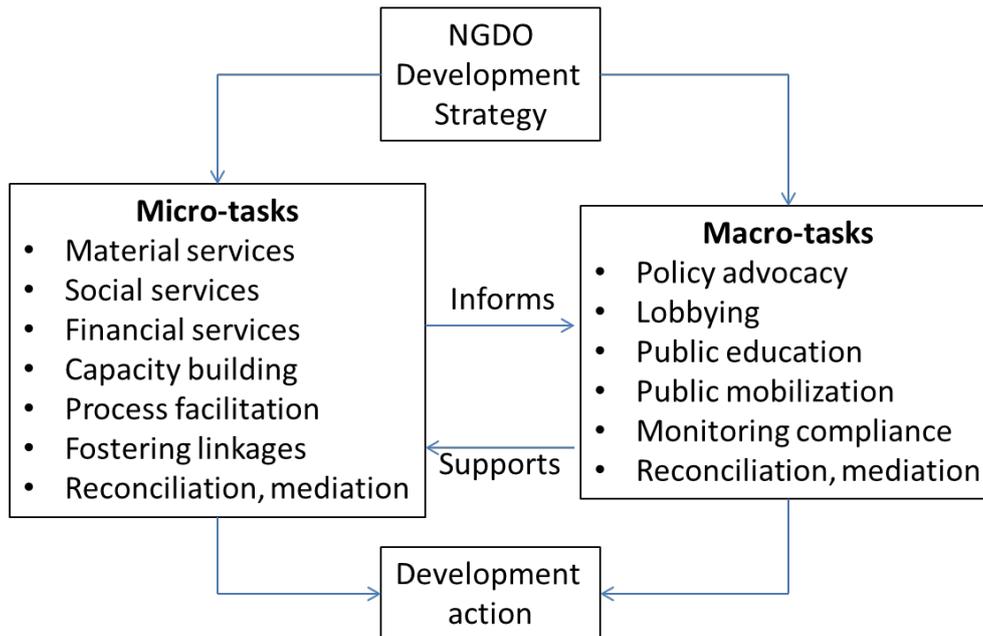
Water and Poverty: When women were engaged in collecting water for most of the time in a day, they could not earn their livelihood, while students without education were not fit to work outside of the home. Unable to earn an income, both women and children contributed to the vicious cycle of poverty in the country.

In addition, Liberia government's slow progress in implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and its low investment in the water sector were some reasons that intensified the water crisis and related challenges in the country. All these reasons compelled Phillips and his team to start the non-profit TLW with the mission of eliminating water scarcity and taking the Gospel to the entire nation of Liberia. TLW focused on ensuring that all the residents of the country had access to safe drinking water, which is in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.

2. Discuss TLW’s model to provide safe drinking water in Liberia.

TLW is a non-governmental development organization (NGDO) engaged in the arena of safe water. These organizations have an important role to play in international development. NGDOs such as TLW engage in typical tasks that impact the micro- and macro-levels of development (see Teaching Note Exhibit I).

Teaching Note Exhibit I:NGDOs in International Development



Adapted from Fowler, A. (2013). Striking a balance: A guide to enhancing the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations in international development. Routledge.

TLW is engaged in nearly all the tasks directly or indirectly, except in ‘reconciliation, mediation’, as this item is related to emergency and relief work.

Among micro-level tasks, TLW provides material services such as hardware for water supplies. The act of providing water, considered a public good, is in itself a social service. TLW provides regular funds to local partners for scaling up their operations and also covers their overheads. It works with its local partners to build their capacity by imparting skills and knowledge to them. TLW also focuses on the links between the beneficiaries and the local partners (community-based organizations) – horizontal links between partners and vertical links between the CBOs and higher organizations. It uses a number of Christian faith-based

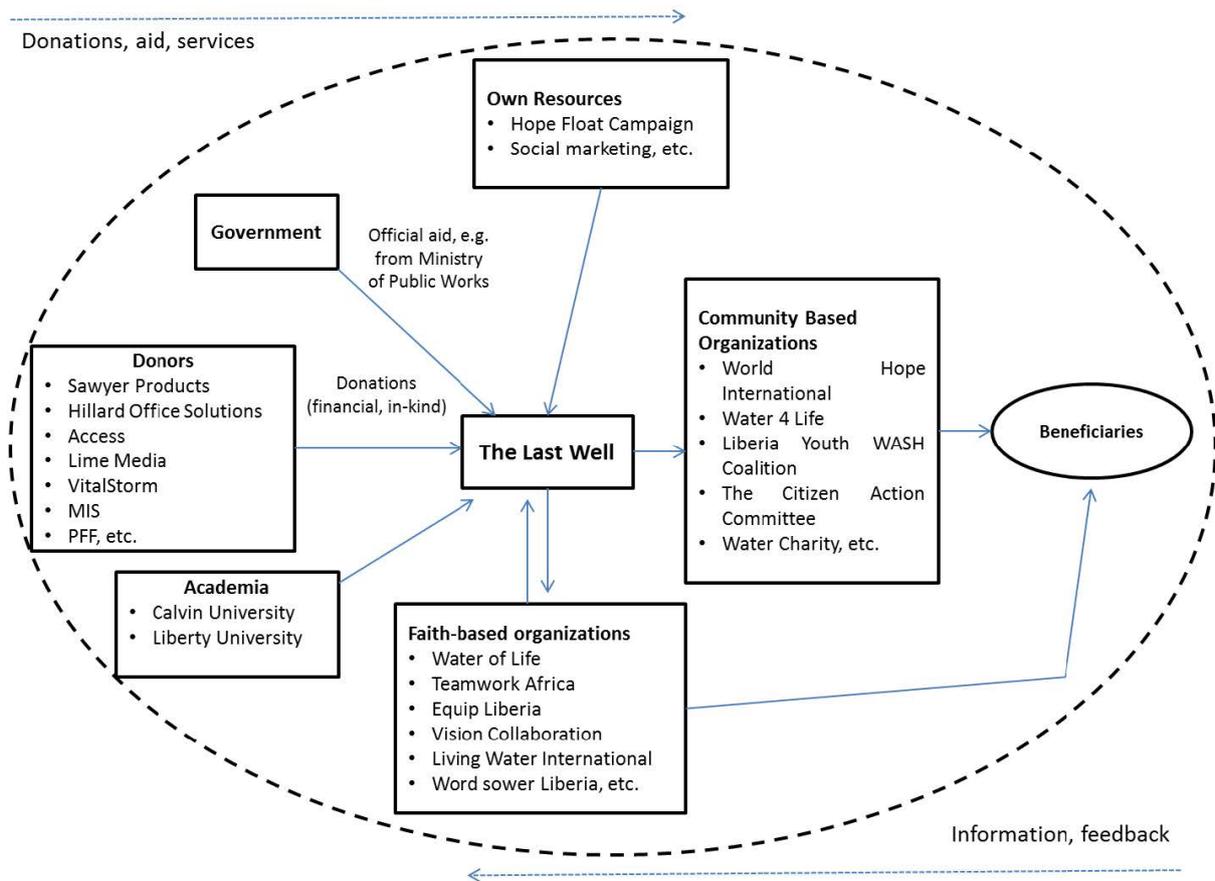
organizations for resource mobilization, though the benefits of the projects are for people of all faiths.

At the macro level, TLW works to mobilize funds from resource providers and influence power holders and structures. TLW's main contribution has been in mobilizing resources (financial as well as non-financial). Charities such as TLW do not recover the cost of what they provide to their clients or beneficiaries, so they have to raise finances on an ongoing basis from other sources, loosely termed donors. Fundraising and mobilizing private donations are important activities for NGDOs involved in international development, and the NGDOs can help scale up foreign aid efforts by mobilizing private donations (Herzer and Nunnenkamp, 2013). The water problem is collocated with severe poverty but the solutions are not. To address the water problem faced by communities in Liberia, TLW has mostly raised funds from Northern countries, though it has been also able to do so in Liberia.

In order to consolidate social change, TLW has to also work with local partners to engage in public advocacy to influence the general public as well as policy makers (lobbying). Its media campaigns (e.g., the Hope Float campaign) can be seen as a type of public education with mobilizing purpose and effect, and can be used to support both advocacy and lobbying efforts. Its campaigns build knowledge, understanding, and motivation among the public to encourage them to engage actively with the problems faced by marginalized populations who do not have access to safe water.

It is critical for NGDOs like TLW to manage relationships in two primary directions – with primary stakeholders (beneficiaries) and with funders (donors) – and in many secondary directions, such as community-based organizations (CBOs), government, public, etc. TLW is a north NGDO that collaborates with local organizations (south NGDOs or other community based organizations) to deliver its services in Liberia (see Teaching Note Exhibit II).

Teaching Note Exhibit II: TLW's Collaboration Model



3. What is collaborative partnership? How does it help The Last Well in solving the water shortage issue in Liberia?

Collaboration is an open and inclusive process wherein a broad array of diverse entities come together to find solutions to common issues and problems. Barbara Gray, Professor at The Pennsylvania State University, defines collaboration as “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.” (Gray, 1989) While collaboration takes many different forms, every type of collaboration addresses two key issues – the need for individual human beings to engage with one another and the need for their organizations to involve with them and with the collaborative process (Lank, 2005). Partnership is a relationship created through an expressed or implied commitment between two or more parties who join together and pull out their resources to achieve the

common goal. The collaborative partnership process is mostly used when a problem goes beyond the ability of a single individual or group to handle. At the same time, partner organizations realize the urgency of the problem and are interested in coming to the table to discuss it and find a solution.

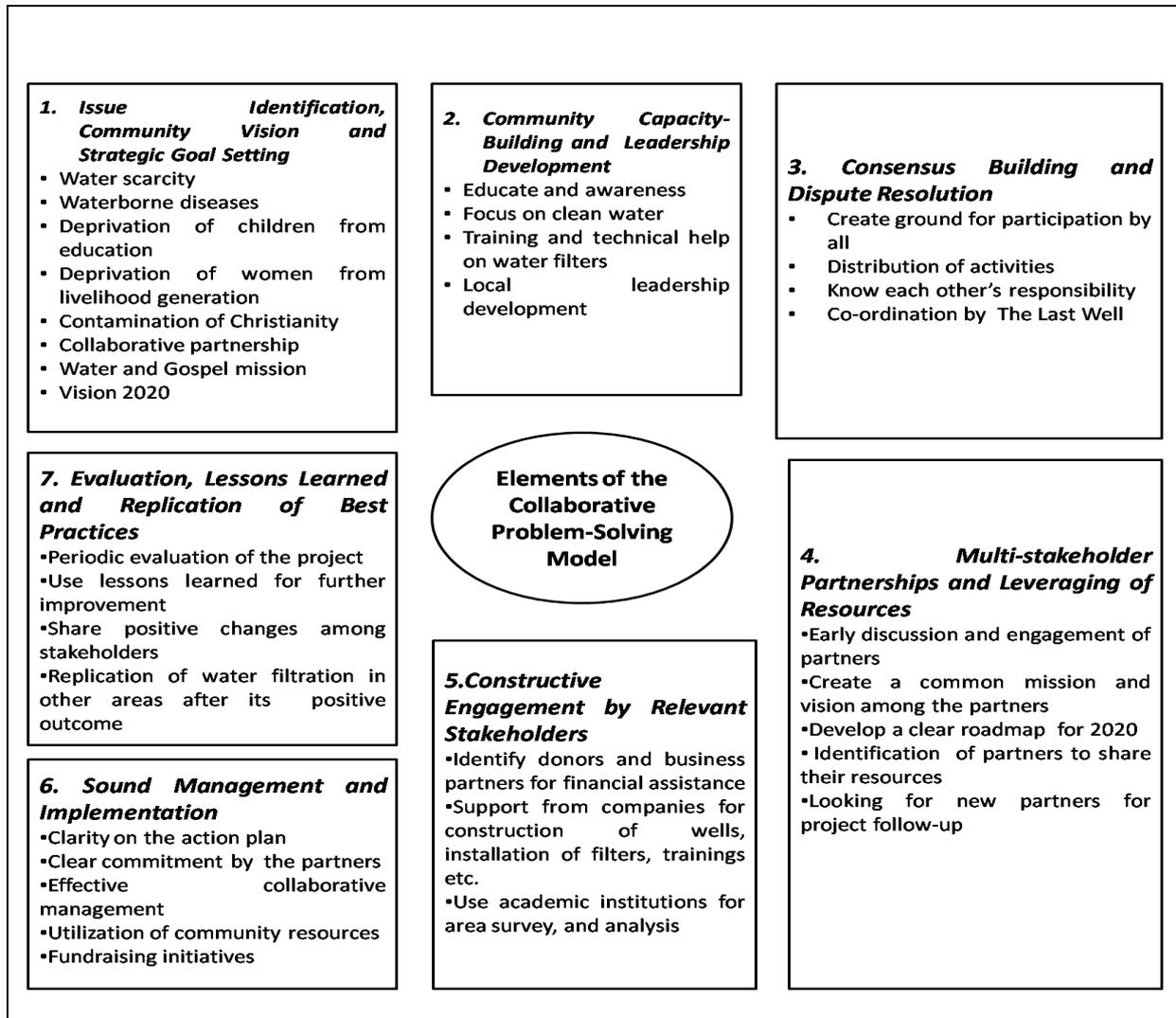
In Liberia, water shortage and related problems remain a big challenge and the government efforts have not had a significant impact on the issue. Realizing the urgency of the water shortage situation and what Phillips called “contamination” of Christianity in the country, TLW has taken the initiative to provide access to clean water and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with every Liberian, border to border, by 2020.

Elements of Collaborative Problem-Solving Model

TLW has undertaken a collaborative problem-solving model, a systematic, community-based approach to find a solution to the water crisis in Liberia. TLW’s collaborative problem-solving model can be analyzed by applying the US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model (EPA, June 2008), which has identified the following seven elements (See Teaching Note Exhibit III).

Teaching Note Exhibit III

Elements of Collaborative Problem-Solving Model



Source: www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-04/documents/ejproblemcollaborativesolvingmodel.pdf

1. Issue Identification, Community Vision, and Strategic Goal Setting: Water shortage was a key issue in Liberia as a vast majority of the Liberians were impacted by it. Dirty and contaminated water was the main reason for many deaths in the country. Women and children were the most vulnerable to the water problem as it was their responsibility to collect water for their families. It prevented the children from attending the schools while the women were deprived of livelihoods. TLW noticed that like water, Christianity in Liberia had “contamination issues” as many Christians had little understanding of a relationship with God and salvation through Christ. To address these problems, TLW collaborated with

stakeholders with the vision of providing drinking water within a walking distance of 15 minutes to all Liberians. The organization set for itself the goal of bringing safe drinking water and spreading the Gospel to all Liberians by 2020.

2. Community Capacity-Building and Leadership Development: TLW devoted considerable time and resources to educating and spreading awareness among community residents about the hazards of drinking contaminated water and focused on the need to get clean drinking water for Liberians. The organization engaged 150 Liberians with training on GIS data collection to collect data on water resources in the country and trained the residents on the use of water filters.

3. Consensus Building and Dispute Resolution: TLW engaged many field partners, faith-based organizations, government departments, and diverse other companies. The partners know what specific activities to focus on, given their expertise. TLW coordinated their efforts and built consensus among the partners in the larger interests of working for the Liberians.

4. Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships and Leveraging of Resources: TLW had the advantage of working with a collaborative partnership model. Its ministry and business partners in the US and Liberia helped the organization move closer to reaching its mission. Liberia-based partners provided matching grants and their field team helped in drilling wells and spreading the Gospel to villagers, while its business partnerships helped in spreading awareness of the organization's mission and working for fundraising in the US. The partner organizations used the GIS Cloud system that accomplished real-time collaborative mapping, incorporating:

- Field workers, who collected data using mobile data collection, and reported from the field;
- Engineers and managers, who utilized the data and teams on the ground to administer the process;
- Decision makers, who worked with accurate information in real time; and
- The public, who had to respond to a simple two-way communication map portal.

5. **Constructive Engagement by Relevant Stakeholders:** TLW's other partners such as businesses, academia, civic organizations, and government departments, played a crucial role in assisting in the collaborative partnership. Sawyer Products committed to distributing nearly 120,000 donated Sawyer water filters to facilitate households in Liberia to get clean water. The company conducted country-wide surveys to track the distribution of filter systems and trained and supported teams in installing water filters in the country. Calvin University students, in partnership with TLW and Sawyer, played a key role in a research project on the impact of water filters in Liberia that led to profound advancements in public health systems globally.

6. **Sound Management and Implementation:** TLW developed an action plan with clear goals and a fixed timeframe to achieve its mission and reach out to the Liberians by 2020 (see case Exhibit VI). Phillips led the water and Gospel movement. He aimed to cover the entire nation of Liberia with his mission, for which he had mobilized donations (both cash and non-cash) through several fundraising initiatives.

7. **Evaluation, Lessons Learned, and Replication of Best Practices:** TLW started evaluating the water resources in Liberia at the very beginning to determine the existing resources and the actions needed to meet the accomplished goals. After the distribution of water filters among the people, Calvin University students assessed and analyzed the data to find out the impact of the water filters on the people. The positive outcome of the impact assessment study impressed TLW and its partners alike, and they went in for a replication of the model to cover the entire nation and reach the goal. The successful implementation of the water project in Liberia can be replicated, ultimately, to more people worldwide.

Development of Collaborative Partnerships

The goal of bringing water to all Liberians required a broad range of collaboration and community trust. Engaging partners in such a collaborative effort is considered vital for solving local, national and global challenges. But every stage of collaborative partnership needs specific tasks to be fulfilled to achieve the shared vision. McKay and Paikoff (2012) have explained five stages in the development of a collaborative partnership, which has been followed by TLW to accomplish its goal (see Teaching Note Exhibit IV).

Teaching Note Exhibit IV: Development of Collaborative Partnerships: Stages and Tasks



Source: McKay, M. M., & Paikoff, R. L. (2012). Community collaborative partnerships: The foundation for HIV prevention research efforts. Routledge.

1. Development of Trust between the Partners: TLW coordinated the implementation of the water project and oversaw data collection and filter distribution in the field. It partnered with Sawyer Products that donated the filter systems and trained and educated partners on the GIS data collection and the usage of filters in the field. Calvin University students joined hands with TLW as well as Sawyer to analyze the data and report on filter use and the impact of the filters on the health and well-being of the Liberians. This collaborative partnership developed in the various partners trust in each other's expertise in the relevant area and was moved by a common mission – to provide access to safe drinking water and offer the Gospel to Liberians.

2. Information Exchange: In the TLW project, the multi-sector partners had their own priorities and sub-goals, but they worked together to achieve the common goal of bringing clean water in Liberia. For instance, TLW aimed to spread the Gospel throughout Liberia, Sawyer wanted organizations to use its water filters to provide clean water to other areas of the world, while Calvin University students sought to use their learning in the class for a water research project. TLW created a common platform, wherein the partners shared their information and expertise for the betterment of the community.

3. Shared Decision Making: The collaborative partnership allows each partner to contribute meaningfully and participate in the decision making process. The water movement reached the people at the grassroots level, who shared their experience and benefits of the project with other communities. After finding out about the positive impact of the water filters on the overall health of the people through feedback from the water users in the country, TLW was optimistic that it was well set to achieve its mission.

4. Leadership Development: TLW aimed to achieve its objective under the leadership of Phillips. His passion for eradicating water-borne diseases and sharing the Gospel of Jesus in Liberia through the provision of clean drinking water invited a number of organizations and institutions from various backgrounds to join the movement. Phillips leveraged the expertise of the organizations to fulfil his ambitious goal in the country. He took initiatives to raise funds and spread awareness, for which he lived on a barge on a lake in Dallas and resolved not to return home until he had raised the funds to reach his mission. TLW also set up leaders in Liberia, inside TLW (e.g. Abdul Hafiz Koroma, Doc Lawson), and also at the ground level in the communities to dig and maintain the wells. It also banked on the leadership present in the faith-based organizations in local communities for resource mobilization and for providing various kinds of logistical support to its mission.

5. Transfer of Ownership: TLW worked with the local community and invested in both the community and student researchers to develop sustainable water solution efforts in the country. The organization in partnership with other stakeholders focused on the training and awareness of local people on the installation and use of water filters. TLW partners also trained the church leaders using much needed biblical resources so that they could carry out the work without the help of outsiders.

4. Assess the impact of The Last Well project on the lives of Liberians.

Global cost-benefit studies reveal that water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services provide good socio-economic returns compared with their costs, with a global average benefit-cost of 5.5 for improved sanitation and 2.0 for improved drinking water (WWAP, 2019). It is likely that the benefits of improved WASH services for vulnerable groups would

change their self perceived social status and dignity in the community. The UN’s Human Right to Water and Sanitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognize safe drinking water and sanitation as basic human rights, as they are indispensable to sustaining healthy livelihoods and are fundamental to maintaining the dignity of human life (WWAP, 2019).

Historically, there has never been a developing country in which every citizen has had access to safe drinking water and where waterborne illnesses have been eradicated. TLW was determined to provide access to drinking water and eradicate waterborne diseases in Liberia. Phillips believed that nothing transformed a community more than access to safe drinking water. TLW made a drastic impact on the quality of life of Liberians by meeting their basic requirement for clean drinking water. Here, the instructor may ask the students to focus on TLW’s strategy and assess the impact of the project on the Liberians (see Teaching Note Exhibit V).

Teaching Note Exhibit V: The Last Well’s Strategy and Impact Assessment

PROJECT	
The Last Well in Liberia, South Africa	
STRATEGY	
The Problem	More than half of Liberia’s population lacked access to safe drinking water in 2008. The majority of people in Liberia died due to waterborne diseases including diarrhea, malaria, and cholera.
Mission	The TLW is dedicated to bringing clean water to all of Liberia and access to the Gospel, by the year 2020.
Clients Served	All residents in Liberia who do not have access to clean drinking water within a walking distance of 15 minutes from their home and have not heard the Gospel.
Solution	The TLW project aims to reach every Liberian with safe-drinking water and to share the Gospel with them through a collaborative partnership model that involves international and local NGOs, church planting organizations, companies, academic institutions, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry of Health.
Year Plan (2019-2020)	TLW aims to reach the remaining almost one million people in Liberia border-to-border with safe drinking water and the Gospel.
IMPACT	
Fund Raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLW’s business partners and donors have contributed to the overall fund requirement of the project. • It has undertaken several initiatives to raise funds to fulfil its mission. The organization raised funds of US\$226,024 in financial year 2018, up 23% from US\$184,467 fund raised in financial year

	<p>2016 (see Case Exhibit V).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phillips brought hopes of clean water closer to Liberia by living on the water himself (see Hope Floats Campaign Video Links*). • The Hope Float campaign invited the attention of many companies like Hilliard Office Solutions and Lime Media that committed to supporting the organization’s initiative for solving the water shortage crisis in Liberia.
Awareness Raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phillips has continued raising awareness around the cause of water scarcity and waterborne illnesses and death in Liberia. • TLW’s business partners have helped to create awareness about the organization’s ambitious goal to take water and the Gospel border-to-border in Liberia.
Knowledge Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLW ensures that beneficiaries have sufficient knowledge to operate the water filters, for which it conducts trainings and capacity-building activities. • The organization ensures that the trained people conduct periodic follow-ups, revisiting villages to find out about the installation and use of filters by the people.
Health Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean water sources have brought a positive shift in the health condition of people, particularly women and children, who are the most vulnerable. Liberians using Sawyer water filters have experienced a significant fall in the incidence of waterborne illness-related diarrhea compared to non-users. • With the installation of wells, hand pumps, and household filters, children have got the opportunity to grow and thrive. The time they spend on water collection has fallen from six hours (each way) to half an hour in all. • The outcome of significant improvement in the health condition of Liberians and the drastic fall in reported cases of diarrhea has resulted in further funding of the TLW project, as well as its expansion in other areas.
Saving Lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before TLW’s intervention in the country, nearly 50% people lacked access to drinking water and were vulnerable to waterborne diseases. • TLW helped combat the Ebola outbreak by bringing clean water to save 250,000 Liberians. • With the provision of safe drinking water from wells and water filtration, deaths related to waterborne illnesses came down drastically, resulting in 70,000 lives being saved.
Employment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLW’s investment in water projects has created employment opportunities for Liberian contractors, who are engaged in drilling and servicing the wells. • It has trained and engaged local people for distribution and service of water filters. • It has helped young women and children to get the education that they deserve, supporting their livelihood.

Water Availability and Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over ten years (2009-2019), TLW has provided safe drinking water to over 2 million Liberians across the country, through the construction, rehabilitation, and distribution of the water filter systems. • It has brought great relief to the people of Liberia as it provides safe and clean drinking water.
Spread of Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gospel is preached in Liberian communities, which are connected to a local or regional Christian pastor and church planters. • TLW partners have trained the church leaders with the requisite biblical resources to share the message of Jesus even as they provide clean drinking water.
Supporting Government Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through collaborative partnerships, TLW mobilizes funds, resources, expertise, and infrastructure to support the Liberian government's efforts to provide access to drinking water to all people. • It has supported the government's water project by constructing and distributing water filters to people across the country. • The Liberian government through its Ministry of Public Works partners with TLW to accomplish the organization's vision 2020, which has also become the government's priority.
* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2BoXtwlCaU&feature=youtu.be	

Source: Compiled from various sources

The class instructor may ask the students to identify the key measures of the TLW project and how effectively the project logic will be applied to meet its goal in Liberia (see Teaching Note Exhibit VI).

Teaching Note Exhibit VI: Identifying Measures and Key Questions Using The Last Well Project

	Measures	Key Questions
Objectives	To provide every Liberian access to clean water within a walking distance of 15 minutes, with every project serving a community of 600 people, and preaching the Gospel in every community they serve.	→ How satisfied are stakeholders with the project objectives? Are these the right objectives?
Process	Work in a collaborative partnership process, TLW partners with faith-based organizations, NGOs, educational institutions, corporate sectors, government agencies, and the local community to achieve its objective.	→ How satisfied are participants with the coordination between stakeholders?

Outputs	Has provided safe drinking water to over 2 million Liberians through the water project and preached the Gospel in these communities.	→ How satisfied are stakeholders with the project activity? Are these the right and timely activities?
Institutional Effects	Greater cooperation and resource sharing will emerge between all stakeholders to achieve the common goal.	→ What are the effects of collaborative partnership?
Environmental* and Other Outcomes	Children being protected from using contaminated water sources, availability of clean safe water, improvement in health and education of women and children, engagement of local youth through skill training.	→ Are the outcomes sufficient to address the underlying issues of TLW project?
*Environmental outcomes includes environmental, public health, social and quality of life outcomes		

Source: <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi/500004FZ.PDF?Dockey=500004FZ.PDF>

5. Can The Last Well achieve its mission by 2020?

The mission of TLW in Liberia is clear and consistent. Phillips is committed to eradicating waterborne illnesses in Liberia and to sharing the Gospel with every village that is transformed through the provision of clean drinking water by the year 2020. After 10 years of the project (2009-2019), TLW has served more than 2 million Liberians in the rural communities with water and the Gospel through over 8,000 water projects. However, the project has to cover the remaining almost one million Liberians by the end of the decade to achieve its mission. TLW has already reached 10 counties as per its road map to 2020 and has on-going projects in Lofa, Nimba, Margibi, and River Gee counties, targeting to provide several thousand persons with safe drinking water by December 2019 (see Case Exhibit VI).

But the question arises whether TLW will be able to achieve its ambitious goal by the deadline. There are some management success factors in a project, and if those factors are used efficiently they can streamline the entire project life-cycle to deliver timely project completion within the budget. The TLW project in Liberia can be assessed taking into account the following five management factors:

Active Sponsorship: Sponsors' engagement in the project from the very beginning makes sense in terms of the company's overall strategy. Research data says that companies having active sponsors for at least 75% of the project will have a success rate of 74% compared to

an average success rate of 63% for companies with less active sponsors. TLW's business partners and the ministry in the US and Liberia are the key resources for the organization. While the Liberia-based partners provide matching grants and cost sharing programs, its business partnerships are engaged in fundraising in the US. TLW organizes fundraising programs to raise funds to complete its mission. Besides, Phillips himself has monitored a series of fundraising initiatives since the beginning of TLW and he launched the Operation Hope Floats to raise US\$2.29 million to bring the organization one step closer to meeting its goal.

Team Dynamic: It is necessary that the project staff, resource persons, and all stakeholders of the project participate actively to form a dynamic team. The team members must have a similar vision for the project and work toward achieving its overall success. TLW's partners including non-profit organizations, research institutions, faith-based organizations, and local community, have expressed their commitment to working with the organization for their common goal. The business partners engaged in fundraising activities and academic partners helped in mapping out the country; the NGO partners installed water filters and trained water users; the local teams shared the Christian message with the communities. The TLW project has the advantage of assigning the right people to the right aspect of the project and it ensures that they blend well together to achieve the mission. TLW has also been able to fend off some serious criticism against its model from the WASH Commission by virtue of its track record of driving change on the ground. A number of civil society bodies came out in support of TLW when it was targeted by the WASH Commission.

Smart Planning: Comprehensive planning from the very beginning of the project is crucial to meeting the deadline, staying focused and knowing which direction the project is going. Planning helps in creating a realistic time scale and in arriving at an accurate cost estimate, which give a clear picture of the milestones and deliverables, making the things simple as the project progresses. From the Case Exhibit VI, it is clear that TLW has a clear road map to achieve its vision 2020. The organization has targeted reaching 900,000 people in 4,000 communities belonging to 15 counties in Liberia, with the project estimated to cost US\$31 million.

Open Communication: Open communication between all the stakeholders is important to keep the team informed about the status of the project. Good communication can help

redress grievances and remove obstacles at any level of the project that may negatively impact other parts as well. In the TLW project, partner organizations communicate with each other on behalf of TLW that monitors the overall progress of the project. Through their regular follow-ups, they collect feedback from the community people in Liberia, incorporate appropriate measures accordingly, and share with them the means to find solutions to their water problem. This helps them in building a better relationship with customers and stakeholders of the project.

Risk Management Plan: A project should have a well defined risk management action plan to handle any unforeseen event that can arise at any time. While TLW ensures that 100% of its operations and fundraising budget are covered by a group of donors, the organization makes every effort under the leadership of Phillips to raise funds, so that the objective of the project may not be hindered due to fund scarcity. The organization has assigned responsibilities to partner organizations to look after their area of expertise in the project and manage the related risks arising out of their activities.

In addition to these, the Liberian government is also committed to providing safe drinking water to all people on a priority basis. The government has partnered with TLW to ensure that its vision 2020 to provide safe drinking water within a walking distance of 15 minutes is fulfilled. To support TLW's goal, the Ministry of Public Works has given 30,000 water filters for 230,000 people in Liberia's five counties.

Achieving the project objectives within the deadline of December 2020 still looks daunting. This is considering the fact that it took TLW around a decade to reach 2 million people, and it will be mighty challenging for TLW to reach the remaining 900,000 in a year's time. However, we have to realize that the magnitude of the problem that TLW is trying to solve is huge. So it doesn't really matter if TLW misses its target by a few months or even years. What's more important is that it achieves its target of providing border-to-border access to safe water, and does it in way that there is sustainability of the water system in Liberia beyond 2020 or when TLW withdraws from the country.

Its more immediate concern should be to introspect on what went wrong with its interactions with the WASH Commission (or specifically with WASH Commission's CEO Bobby Whitfield). The WASH Commission made some serious allegations in December 2019 that had the potential to undermine LTW's mission, outreach, and resource mobilization

efforts. It is not unusual for NGOs like TLW to face detractors – called ‘opponents and problem makers’ in the ecosystem (Bloom and Dees, 2008; Purkayastha, et. al., 2020). Sometimes NGOs may inadvertently antagonize powerful actors in the local political economy like people in the government or bureaucrats who are embarrassed to see that so much is being done by a foreign player in their constituency and that major things are happening in their constituency without their “blessing” (Purkayastha, et. al., 2020). Other government and civil society bodies vociferously coming out in support of TLW give further credence to this view, and calls into question the motivation behind the WASH Commission’s report on TLW.

Nevertheless, TLW would have to see if there are some lacunae in its monitoring of local partners who are in charge of digging/ rehabilitating wells and ensuring their maintenance. TLW would have to understand the importance of monitoring compliance. It could even think of investing in sensors which would help it to garner real-time data about water flow and take prompt action in case the water flow is thinning. TLW should focus on identifying and capturing key metrics relating to its impact and reporting them to the donors on an ongoing basis. NGOs often find it very difficult to quantify the social value created. For instance, are there any clear benchmarks for digging and drilling wells? With careful study, it may be possible to determine levels of efficiency and impact that can be communicated to the donors and other stakeholders (such as government) to make educated choices, and help differentiate TLW in the eyes of these stakeholders. This will increase cost, but will also enable TLW to demonstrate its impact and sustainability, and in turn, help it mobilize more resources.

6. Evaluate the sustainability of the water project in Liberia, beyond 2020.

Sustainability is an integrated process that involves social, economic, cultural, legal, political, environmental, health, financial, and a host of other factors that facilitate continuity of an organization, system, or structure in a marketplace. Sustainability of a project implies continuing to perform and deliver project benefits to the target group after termination of the donor support. Therefore, integrating a sustainability plan in the on-going project can be an effective way to ensure long-term impact.

Following the completion of the TLW project by the end of 2020 when everyone will have access to safe drinking water, a big challenge may be to sustain the benefits of the project in the days after.

Sustainability of the water project in Liberia can be measured through the following sustainability factors (Morfaw, 2011):

Financial capital: TLW has invited its partners, government, and private entrepreneurs to invest in the water sector. That will help in creating financial resources for continuity of the water project, beyond 2020.

Manufacturing capital: The partner organizations and their technical teams have installed units like wells, hand pumps, and household filters to provide clean water to the Liberians. The use and repair of these units will be monitored by local people who have been well trained by the organization.

Natural capital: The water project covers all the 15 counties in Liberia. The Liberian government supports TLW's mission in mapping out water resources in the country to provide a solution to the safe drinking water problem. The government is likely to continue supporting the water project to speed up the nation's pace of development, including a promise to provide people access to drinking water.

Human capital: TLW's partners provide training to the local people on the installation and use of filters in households, which may become an asset for the local people to use their skill for further follow-up of the project. The partner organizations also provide the requisite biblical resources and training to the local church leader so that Liberians can carry on with the mission of spreading the Gospel to every community.

Social desirability: Water shortage was the key issue in Liberia and the central government found it difficult to find a solution to the problem. When the water project started, the local government, community, civil society groups, and institutions came up to support the humanitarian cause in the larger interests of society. We have seen how civil society activists came out in support of TLW when the WASH Commission tried to undermine its achievements in late 2019. Safe drinking water is needed by the Liberians, and they are likely to continue supporting the project even after the termination of outside support.

Cultural acceptability: Through the water project, TLW aims to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire nation of Liberia, where the majority of the people practice Christianity. However, irrespective of the religious belief of Liberians, TLW is committed to providing drinking water to all Liberians.

Economic sustainability: TLW's social marketing strategy will create a platform for young Liberians to be trained and to learn skills in various kinds of vocations that will help them to earn their livelihood in their own locality.

Technical feasibility: The life of the devices used in the project is around 15 years and can be prolonged with better maintenance. Phillips plans to graduate the water project from the provision of free water to social marketing, which will equip unskilled Liberians with proper skills to help infrastructure development and maintenance in the country.

Political expediency: TLW is working in line with the Liberian government's water and sanitation mission. The government's low investment in the water sector and its failure to find solutions to the water problem prompted partner organizations led by Phillips to start the water project in the country. Impressed by the outcome of the project, government departments and many counties of Liberia are committed to continue giving unconditional support and to working for the water project in the country. This is despite the WASH Commission's damning investigative report on TLW.

Operational viability: TLW focuses on investment in water and other areas in the Liberian economy, which may bring about job opportunities for local people, contribute to infrastructure development, and promote the economy of the country.

Environmentally rebuts: The construction of wells and hand pumps has helped Liberians get safe drinking water, besides protecting the environment and natural water resources from being exploited for household purposes. Liberians are likely to promote the use of safe drinking water to improve the health and education of women and children and provide employment opportunities to local youth.

In addition to these advantages, the following things should be taken care of to ensure that the provision of safe drinking water will continue for Liberians in a sustainable way:

- TLW and its partners need to work together with the beneficiary communities to develop a roadmap to sustain the project beyond 2020;

- The Liberians should consider TLW's vision to provide clean drinking water for all the residents as their own vision;
- The beneficiaries should fix personal accountability and take ownership of the water bodies, including wells and hand pumps;
- The field partners, including community people in charge of well construction and water filter installation should demonstrate trust and integrity to get things done.

While the water crisis in Liberia is serious, the stakeholders including the local community and government with their fair knowledge of the country's history can focus on how Liberians can become in the near future a thriving country with clean, healthy water with much to offer the world.

7. What lessons can The Last Well teach other organizations working for the community?

TLW has made great strides in ensuring that more and more people in Liberia get safe, clean water to use and drink. From TLW's project in Liberia, the community-based organizations can learn the following lessons:

Partnerships for Change: It is quite clear that TLW has become a perfect candidate to partner with for bringing about a change in people's lives. Despite their own agenda, ideology, sub-goals and communication difficulties, the stakeholders partnered with TLW to achieve its mission. The impact that the organization has had in Liberia is reflected in the stories of health improvement of the people who have never known anything but disease-ridden, contaminated water. Getting access to safe and clean water at their doorsteps has changed the lives of Liberians.

Do Something New: The organization has a mission to provide safe drinking water and offer the Gospel to every Liberian by the end of the decade. At the same time, it promotes the next generation of Christ-followers to carry out God's purpose for the Church and to be the change agent for the world, regardless of need.

Building up Relationship between Faith-based and Secular Entities: TLW partnered with both faith-based and secular organizations to achieve its mission in Liberia. A number of faith-based health and social welfare NGOs working for Liberians such as Equip Liberia, Wordsower Liberia, Living Water International, Teamwork Africa, Vision Collaboration,

Water of Life, and Christian Revival Church Association (CRCA) supported TLW in the construction of wells in the counties of Margibi, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, and River Cess. Besides, other organizations like research institutions, corporations, non-profit entities, and field partners also came forward to assist TLW in the larger interest of the community in Liberia. The partnership with many stakeholders resulted in sharing and utilizing their expertise, mobilization of funds, and result-driven research to know the impact of the program in the field.

Water Filtering System: The water filtration systems have changed the quality of water and saved people from waterborne diseases in Liberia. Water filters have become so valuable for the Liberians that they consider them their most treasured possessions.

The Right Approach: Multi-sectoral partnership can be considered as the best way to combine all the resources of all the partners and optimize the use of each partner's expertise to effectively address the global water problem or health challenges. TLW has joined hands with many partners and utilized their expertise and resources to efficiently manage the water problem in Liberia.

Making the Impossible Possible: Where the Liberian government failed to address the country's water problem, TLW has tried to settle the issue through collaborative partnerships. Based on the information gathered through GIS mapping, organizations have been able to collect the data that was unknown to the government itself for the most part. The program involves construction of new wells, well repairs to rehabilitate boreholes and hand pumps, and other efforts in association with the government agencies and community. The facilitating organizations conduct follow-ups, revisiting areas to ensure that beneficiaries get the advantage of the water systems and are aware of its use.

Transformation for At-risk Communities: Access to safe drinking water is a vital part for the transformation of communities at risk in Liberia. TLW's initiative for clean water not only helps provide clean water to save the lives of Liberians, it also makes it possible for families to earn their livelihood and for schools to thrive.

Collaborative and Interdisciplinary: At the CWIC project, students from a diversity of fields such as public health, mathematics and statistics, and geography, have established a model

to identify solutions to Liberia's water problem. The project challenges students to put their faith and education into practice, fostering tangible changes in people's lives.

Out of the Box Stunt: To reach his organization's goal, Phillips opted to prove his commitment through an unconventional fundraiser. After living on a barge in the middle of a lake for 27 days, he achieved his goal. This stunt was unique as the newsworthy nature of the campaign gained it widespread attention. A Facebook live series and donors' commitment to the cause helped Phillips to make his outrageous stunt a major success. NGOs can leverage social media and new technology to create a buzz around their mission and attract new donors who share their values.

The magnitude of the problem of providing safe water in a transition and conflict country in the developing world is huge. It is not possible for even the most well-meaning parties with good resources to tackle this problem easily. So, the best chance of tackling such problems is through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

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