



## Improving Health and Educational Opportunities in Cameroon, West Africa

Until recently students at St. Theresia nursery school in Kumbo, Cameroon, used the playground to relieve themselves. They simply had no other choice. Now, thanks to a project helping to improve health and sanitation conditions in Kumbo schools, students at St. Theresia have latrines and a source of safe water, enabling them to play and learn in a cleaner environment.

In March 2009, Life and Water Development Group—Cameroon and Thirst Relief International began a 24-month project aimed at improving the health of schoolchildren in 65 schools in Cameroon. In a country where one in ten children die before age five, often from water- and sanitation-related diseases, this project is critical for protecting young students' health and educational futures.

(Little Green Data Book 2008) Cameroon also faces an unemployment rate of 30 percent, making access to education even more crucial for young people. (CIA World Factbook)

Instead of drinking water from contaminated buckets or taps, students served by this project will enjoy water purified by low-cost biosand filters. Instead of using the playground to relieve themselves, they will have access to clean, private latrines. Students will also have the opportunity to join health and hygiene clubs where they will be inspired to wash their hands and keep their water sources and latrines clean. Improved conditions at the schools will contribute to fewer student illnesses and absences from school.

The Kumbo schools project is removing barriers to education and helping pave the way for students to learn and achieve a brighter, healthier future.

### Project Snapshot

**Intervention:** Water filters, latrines, and health education at nursery and primary schools

**Length:** 24 months

**Location:** Kumbo, Cameroon

**Budget:** \$260,265

**Schools targeted:** 65

**People impacted:** 21,000

**Average cost per school:** \$4,000



### Water and Health

Water-related illness produces the loss of 443 million school days each year.

Every year some 1.8 million children die as a result of diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation.

This corresponds to 4,900 deaths each day.

Unclean water is the world's second biggest cause of death for children.

Close to half of all people in developing countries suffer at any given time from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits.

Poor health associated with lack of water and sanitation undermines productivity and economic growth, trapping vulnerable households in cycles of poverty.

Some 1.1 billion people in the developing world do not have access to a minimal amount of clean water.

Some 2.6 billion people—half the developing world's population—do