



Dining for Women

**Program Fact Sheet**  
**Women's Earth Alliance (WEA), Liberia and Sierra Leone**  
**March 2012**

**Women's Earth Alliance 2012 West African Water Training Program**

**Website:** [www.womensearthalliance.org](http://www.womensearthalliance.org)

**Mission:** WEA partners with community-based organizations globally to encourage local solutions to issues of water, food, land, and climate change by providing women with trainings, resources, and advocacy support. WEA's programs are based on the belief that when women thrive, communities, the environment, and future generations thrive.



**About the Organization:** WEA helps women secure their rights and safety and remove barriers to full participation in society by supporting them in addressing the environmental issues impacting their lives. And, by bringing women's leadership to these critical environmental issues, WEA brings vital voices, perspectives and participation to addressing the greatest and most basic challenges of our time.

WEA's Women and Water Training Model grew out of the Global Women's Water Initiative. This was the work of three organizations: Women's Earth Alliance, A Single Drop, and Crabgrass. WEA helps women in rural sub-Saharan Africa to design and implement solutions to water and sanitation problems. It builds on the expertise of these women and trains them to implement water technologies which will improve access to clean water and sanitation and therefore improve health conditions in their communities.



The results of this collaboration since 2007 include training 45 teams of African women, and providing \$55,000+ in seed funding for water and sanitation projects in eleven African countries, including those in East and West Africa and in South Africa. In 2012, fifteen teams of local women leaders from Liberia and Sierra Leone will undergo a week of training, and receive continued financial and technical support for one year. The Women and Water Training program not only builds on the participation of local women leaders, as both trainers and participants, but also offers fellowships to female experts in development from outside Africa. These women can themselves learn from the project so that its results become part of international expertise on issues of development.

**Where They Work:** WEA in combination with A Single Drop and Crabgrass, have operated water related projects in sub-Saharan African countries including: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Rwanda, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Liberia, and Cameroon. These countries share problems of political instability, poverty and poor public health including lack of access to clean water. The DFW grant will provide training in Liberia for women from Liberia and Sierra Leone.

**History of the Region:** Until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, most African countries were colonial dependencies ruled by European countries. After independence, the people in these countries were inexperienced in self-government, uneducated, and economically dependent on the former colonial mother country or, in the case of Liberia, on its close relationship with the United States. Often ruled by dictators who did little to provide for their people's well-being, many African countries also suffered long periods of civil strife which left the population even more impoverished.



Both Liberia and Sierra Leone are in West Africa and both were settled by freed slaves; Liberia was established in 1848 by freed slaves from the United States and Sierra Leone was established in the late 1700s as a British colony also populated by freed slaves.

### Liberia

Official Name: [Republic of Liberia](#); Population (2011): 3.786 million; Area 111,369 sq km (43,000 sq.mil), slightly larger than Ohio; 70% of the population are engaged in agriculture, the GDP per capita is \$500 (2010) and life expectancy is 57 years. Led

for many years by an oligarchy dominated by the military, Liberia experienced many years of civil war, which ended in 2003; at that time the country's security was in the hands of a UN peacekeeping force. In 2005 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president; she is the only women to lead an African country and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 for her work in reconstructing and reconciling the country'.

### Sierra Leone

Official Name: [Republic of Sierra Leone](#); area: 71,740 sq. km. (29,925 sq. mi.); slightly smaller than South Carolina; population (2010): 5.848 million; 52.5% of the population is engaged in agriculture, the GDP per capita is \$326 (2010) and life expectancy is 48 years.

Sierra Leone borders Liberia in West Africa. Established as a British colony in the late 1700s, Sierra Leone became independent in



1961. After independence the country remained in the British Commonwealth and was for many years a one-party state. It has undergone military coups and civil conflict. The latter was declared over in 2002.

**Life Challenges:** For women to enjoy economic, social and political security, they need access to the basic resources of food, water and land – access which is far too often limited. In many societies, women also hold primary responsibility for management of food, water and land within the household. Drinking contaminated water breeds disease and, of course, hinders education and economic progress. Thus, an essential building-block for public health and economic development is access to clean water. In their unique position, women can experience both the unequal burden of work to secure and prepare the family's food and water as well as the vulnerability which results from traditional gender roles at home and gender discrimination in society.

As water stewards and farmers, women around the world are also particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Women in underserved communities find themselves on the front lines of climate impacts, often witnessing their water sources and traditional land bases shift or disappear because of a dangerous mix of changing temperatures and structural inequalities. Women are greatly at risk of the effects of climate change and are important contributors to addressing climate resiliency.

**The Project:** The 2012 Women and Water Training will introduce WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) planning strategies, appropriate technologies, entrepreneurial, and leadership skills to 15 teams of grassroots women from Liberia and Sierra Leone so they can gain self-sufficiency around issues of water and sanitation and implement water projects in their communities. Beginning with a week of hands-on training, the Training will continue providing financial, technical, and networking support to each team and their organizations throughout the course of a year.



**Trainings focus on technologies that make sense.** Women participants provide input on several choices of appropriate, low-cost, low-tech, and locally-sourced technologies. This could include solar cookers made from reused cardboard boxes, household water filters using rocks and sand, rainwater harvesting off of rooftops, and composting toilets that create garden fertilizer.

The 2012 Women and Water Training Project will spend approximately \$176,240 of which \$40,000 will come from Dining for Women. DFW will provide program seed funding for 10 women participant teams from 10 different communities in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It will also cover some of the refresher training costs when

participants return to their communities to implement the water and sanitation projects about which they have learned. Trainers will travel to each village to assist in the implementation of the water technologies and WASH trainings within the community. DFW funds raised beyond the \$40,000 requested will be applied to the refresher training programs.

**Why We Love This Program:** 1.1 billion people in developing countries have inadequate access to water. Millions of women and girls spend several hours daily collecting water. WEA’s holistic approach is to train women and groups with the knowledge to implement water-related solutions through appropriate available technologies, action planning, seed funding and leadership development. This will empower them to improve their communities’ health, self-reliance, and resilience to climate change, and to advance women’s rights to food, water, sanitation, and land.

WEA helps women secure their rights and safety and remove barriers to full participation in society by supporting them in addressing the environmental issues impacting their lives. And, by bringing women’s leadership to these critical environmental issues, WEA brings vital voices, perspectives and participation to addressing the greatest and most basic challenges of our time.

Simply said, this program empowers women. Rather than talking down to local women, it recruits women leaders from their communities, pairs them with each other so that peer learning takes place, and involves them in evaluating the program’s success. Feedback from the program is then used in designing future programs. Reliance on the women’s own experiences in and knowledge of their communities makes success more likely.

**Project Budget**  
**Grant Requested: \$40,000**

Project Budget Item	Total Budget	Funded by DFW
Personnel including WEA Africa director and Global Women’s Water Initiative director	\$17,500	
Seed grant to launch water and sanitation initiatives	\$23,000	\$15,000
Training expenses including site visits, travel, trainers, local partner fee, room & board, supplies, etc.	\$85,890	
Refresher trainings to 15 communities (materials, trainer fees, travel, etc.)	\$ 50,000	\$23,500
DVD production and mailing	\$1,500	\$1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$177,890</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

**How the organization measures DFW impact:**

To measure the program’s impact, WEA will incorporate feedback from participants, trainers, global peers and partners through reflection periods and daily evaluations during the training, and each phase of their project development. To date, three

WEA's Women and Water Trainings in 2008, 2010 and 2011 have yielded the following results\*:

- 45 teams of African women leaders trained to launch viable water projects
- 41 seed grants to women launching sustainable, local water projects in 11 African communities
- 7 teams able to access additional funding to expand their programs
- 2 peer evaluations to strengthen training program for future years
- 2,000 people accessing improved water through rainwater harvesting system
- 980 people with access to sanitation through the Eco San Toilet
- 300 people with access to clean water through Biosand Water Filter
- Over 290 additional people trained by Women and Water Participants
- 7,940 people benefitting from WASH Education outreach facilitated by participants
- 8 teams who have formed water committees in their target communities

*\*The 2011 program is still in progress and impact on the ground has not yet been measured.*

The additional criteria that will be measured includes:

- Improvements in attendance of girls in school
  - Reductions in violence against women
  - Increased participation of women in water and sanitation sector
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## ***Voices: From the women who have been served by Women's Earth Alliance***

***Mildred Mklanda***, 2011 East Africa Women and Water Training Ferro-cement tank trainer from Zimbabwe

"People didn't just come to this training to learn, or maybe some did to understand things they had not experienced in their past. They came armed with their own experiences. They are all teachers and I have benefited immensely from that."

***Elizabeth Obiero***, GWWI BSF Trainer, 2011 Trainer-in-Training and 2008 GWWI Grassroots Training Participant

"Since the East Africa Women and Water training, I have attended two more water trainings—with Lifewater and World Vision. I am testing water sources in and around my community with the GWWI water testing kits and have promoted the use of solar cooking at the Centre of Disease Control (CDC) in Kisumu, Kenya. I shared stories of GWWI with my organization and they now understand what women can do. I want to congratulate my sisters for their hard work. I now trust and believe that women can make changes."

***Grace Kyoma***, 2011 East Africa Women and Water Training Participant from Western Uganda

"We have tons of rainfall in Fort Portal and the terrain is quite hilly. To get water you climb over a large hill and drop into the valley and then climb over the next hill to fill your jerry can because we don't have any nearby springs. To return to the village you have to go up and up with the full jerry can. Some of us are aging and it can take over 30 minutes to come up. I think because we now have this rainwater harvesting system I will never have to do that again. Now, I will never have to walk because I can use the tank during the rainy and dry season."

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.state.gov>