# TITLE: EMPOWERING DOLWE ISLAND PROJECT (A project to Provide Quality Education and WASH Facilities for Marginalized Children)

**Introduction:**

This inspiring initiative empowers marginalized children on Dolwe Island, situated in the remote reaches of Lake Victoria in Namayingo district, Eastern Uganda. It focuses on expanding access to secondary education and essential Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities. This effort aims to address the pressing needs of the island's residents, with a particular focus on children, to pave the way for a brighter future.

Dolwe Island, part of the Bukooli Islands, lies approximately 6 hours away from the mainland, accessible via canoe or ferry. It spans around 25 square kilometers and is home to a population of at least 35,000 residents, with fishing as the primary source of livelihood. Despite its considerable population, Dolwe Island has only five government primary schools and one secondary school- Dolwe Parents Secondary School which was founded in 2021 by the community.

Due to the poverty levels on the island, most children drop out of school in primary and many don't continue to Secondary level. Only a handful of families are able to send their children to schools on the mainland, widening the educational divide. It is not uncommon to find young girls getting pregnant before their 16$^{th}$ birthday, thereby entering into unplanned marriages. The absence of nearby secondary schools has perpetuated this issue. Recognizing this educational gap, the community established Dolwe Parents Secondary School, currently with two classes, S1 and S2, on a single block. The rest of the classes (S.3 and S.4) could not be introduced due to lack of infrastructure and other educational requirements. The school has a low student population of 80, with 44 boys and 36 girls with 6 teachers (4 male and 2 female).

**Problem Statement:**

Dolwe Parents Secondary School is facing a critical lack of educational infrastructure which limits its capacity to only two classes. The existing classrooms are in a state of disrepair. In addition, the school also lacks scholastic materials, furniture, among others.

Compounding the above challenges, the school lacks sanitation facilities (toilets), requiring students and staff to travel half a kilometre to a nearby primary school that has toilets. This has resulted in instances of open defecation. This desperate situation has led to unfavourable learning conditions, high illiteracy rates and poor hygiene practices.

There is also increased cases of gender-based violence, early child marriage and rising crime, all of which perpetuate unequal access to resources and perpetuate the cycle of poverty. *Annex 1* attached shows the current state of the school.

**Proposed Project Interventions:**

Whereas there are several critical challenges, this project aims to focus on the following critical areas:

1) *Enhance Access to Quality Education:* This will be undertaken through putting in place a fully stocked library. This will however require slight expansion and securing of the existing room. The existing classrooms will also be given a better internal finishing before stocking them with desks and other required facilities for learning. The communities will also be sensitised about the benefits of educating children, and the dangers of early marriages.

It is worth noting that the Rotary Club of Bwebajja plans has commenced efforts to extend the existing classroom block to accommodate two extra classrooms for S.3 and S.4. However, this scope of work is a separate project, and not considered as part of this project.

2) *Improve Sanitation and Hygiene Facilities:* This will be addressed through provision of WASH facilities at the school including water harvesting systems and toilet facilities. These pit latrines will be specifically designed to accommodate the expected low water table in the area.

**Expected Results:**
We anticipate the following outcomes from our project:

- Increased enrolment of children for secondary school education through sensitisation.
- Improved quality of learning through better learning facilities.
- Improved sanitation and hygiene practices amongst students and teachers.
- Reduction of early pregnancies among girls.
- Reduced incidences of gender-based violence.

**Expected Beneficiaries:**
Beneficiaries of the project include: Children residing on Dolwe and surrounding islands who will gain access to quality secondary education, community members residing around the island, Parents of school-going children, local authorities, policymakers and vulnerable families.

**Proposed Budget:**
Below is the proposed budget for the Project for construction of a classroom block, renovation of existing block, installation of a water harvesting system and provision of scholastic materials.

| # | Cost Item | Amount (USD) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Scholastic Materials (desks, books etc) | 10,800 |
| 2. | Renovation works for Existing Classroom block | 6,000 |
| 3. | Construction of Toilet facilities | 6,500 |
| 4. | Training teachers and sensitisation of communities | 5,200 |
| 5. | Water Harvesting System (tanks and gutters) | 3,100 |
| 6. | Project Management | 2,600 |
| 7. | Monitoring and Evaluation (Vertical) | 500 |
| 8. | Publicity | 1,000 |
| 9. | Contingencies (10%) | 3,570 |
| | **Total** | **39, 270** |

**Funding Mechanism:**
The Rotary an Rotaract Clubs of Bwebajja will contribute USD 6,000 and USD 500 respectively. At least USD 1,000 will be contributed by the community.

**Conclusion:**
By enhancing the classroom infrastructure and WASH facilities at Dolwe Parents Secondary School, Rotary will be taking a significant step toward achieving inclusive education for all children. The provision of infrastructure, equipment, and support for this initiative will create a safer, more supportive, and equitable learning environment for all learners. Rotary's support can transform this vision into reality and uplift the marginalized children of Dolwe and the Island inhabitants towards a brighter future.

## Annex 1: Photos of Dolwe Parents Secondary School



Existing structure 1



Existing structure 2



Inside the classroom 1



Inside the classroom 2