INTRO: Thank you…in this brief presentation I hope to give you a thumb nail sketch, identifying KEY ELEMENTS of the OK Clean Water Project

For starters – NAME - OKCWP highlights the COLLABORATION that is the basis of the BEGINNING and the CONTINUATION of the Project: O- OTTAWA, Canada and K – KUMBO, NWR of Cameroon Hence the name O K C W P. Title reflects the PARTNERTSHIP. that started. b/c of QUESTIONS asked - first, in a small publication with the theme of water in 2002 asking for stories about water challenges and problems in ordinary lives. Stories followed from 17 mothers in one village who told of their struggles to raise children with no access to clean pipe borne water even though the village had a pipe borne water system!

QUESTIONS FOLLOWED: WHY?. How can this be? What’s the problem? AND THEN… HOW CAN WE HELP? asked a small group of women in Ottawa. The answer came with enough money to help 17 women pay for the pipes and installation needed to connect them to the village water system.

Good news spreads! NEXT QUESTION came from a leader in a nearby village: do you bring water to villages?

An answer to that question led to the official start of the partnership known as the OK CLEAN WATER PROJECT – thanks to the generous and committed support of a group in Ottawa, Canada.

As of today, there are 44 villages that have participated in the OK project ranging from small grants to whole village projects. KEY to the project was a local water engineer who knew the area and many of the villages plus a coordinator with ties to both Ottawa and Kumbo and gradually a third person who became the liaison with the village water management committees.

As the project grew so did the elements of the program. From the very beginning- for ALL- ALL the meetings, visits and work, the new projects, the maintenance the record keeping ,the operative theme was ALWAYS – EDUCATION for SUSTAINABILITY! EVERY project was clearly a VILLAGE WATER PROJECT planned to meet their needs and operated by their local Village Water Management Committee. OWNERSHIP of the project was key to sustainability. Everyone was involved including the women and men, who dug the trenches for the pipes., laid the pipes, backfilled the trenches, and carried material needed to build the water tanks. The SYSTEM INC LUDES a catchment, a storage tank and finally the water pump in the village itself usually serving 6-16 families. The project has the advantage of the hilly terrain of the NWR so that gravity provides all the power needed for the water to flow. from the spring of water down to a catchment down again to a storage tank and finally down to the stand tap in the village. Obviously, the distance varies considerably.

In time, handbooks were developed for the on-going education for sustainability at meetings and as guides for the members of the village WMC. These handbooks now include a Constitution of OKCWP Kumbo, Internal Rules and Regulations for Village Water Supply Schemes, and a Management Guide

At a glance, the project began 1n 2003, the handing over to the Cameroonian staff of two - A Country Director, and A Community Liaison Officer took place in August 2016. Due to the outbreak of political violence in the NWR starting in September that same year carrying out activities became increasing difficult. When the new Country Director died suddenly in 2020 , the Community Liaison Officer had the experience and skills needed to provide the leadership to continue to do what is possible given the on-going political struggle in the NWR. Currently these efforts include agroforestry, the planting of water friendly trees to protect the catchment area and improve water yield.

I hope some of these words or ideas resonate with your own experiences or questions.