



INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EDUCATION

Decades of poor governance and civil war interrupted and devastated Liberia’s formal public education system and created a tremendous need for informal, accelerated learning opportunities for ex-combatant and noncombatant youth and young adults. An estimated 52% of the population can read and write. Major USAID investments in education averaging over \$20 million per year, including assistance from the US President’s Africa Education Initiative and Initiative for Expanding Education, are increasing school enrollments and improving the quality of education through sector planning and restructuring, teacher training to replenish the depleted ranks of qualified teachers, and the provision of needed equipment, materials and infrastructure rehabilitation.

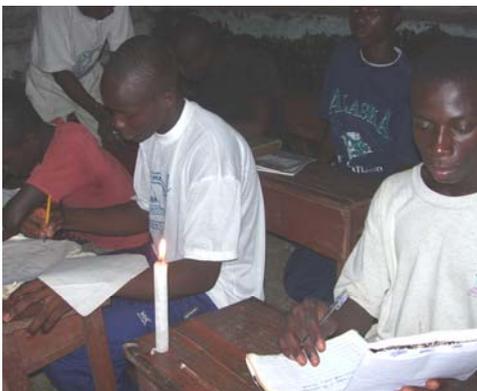
EDUCATION SYSTEM CHALLENGES: QUALIFIED TEACHERS, FINANCING, MANAGEMENT CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Teacher compensation as salaries are currently too low to attract and maintain skilled individuals within the system
- Financial resources and government revenues to pay for critical sector improvements (e.g. buildings, staff training, and materials)
- Decentralization in order to effectively provide free basic education to the more than 800,000 children of primary school age throughout Liberia’s 15 counties
- Management capacity development to improve overall management of the education system. In addition, management and supervision systems must be rebuilt to support effective organizational management, communication, and accountability.

USAID EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAMS

USAID support is filling gaps in human resource capacity, as many professionals have not benefited from advanced training and skills development in more than 15 years. In 2009, capacity-building support is extending to tertiary level institutions. USAID provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to enhance the institution’s monitoring and evaluation capabilities.

EDUCATION PROGRAM	
FY2009	US\$
Basic Education	24,680,000
Higher Education	1,927,000



Liberian students at school

CORE EDUCATION SKILLS FOR

LIBERIAN YOUTH (CESLY) condenses the usual six years of primary education into three. The program is geared toward some 67,000 over-aged or out-of-school youth who have missed the opportunity to participate in formal schooling and also integrates life skills, such as parenting classes (integrated with child care), conflict resolution and civic education. In addition, CESLY has a significant community mobilization component to create and engage local parent/teacher associations (PTAs), and through service learning encourage program graduates to conduct community development projects.

THE LIBERIA TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM (LTTP) upgrades institutional and staff capacity of the University of Liberia and rural teacher training colleges, develops enhanced standards for teacher accreditation, and institutes competency-based criteria to evaluate the skills of current and future teachers. Teachers are trained in new child-focused methodologies and student monitoring techniques to improve the quality of instruction.

USAID assistance also includes the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure in the education sector through renovation of two teacher training institutes located in Kakata, Margibi County and Zorzor, Lofa County.

FORECAST is a participant training and human capacity development program designed to provide 500 Liberians working in public service with access to professional development training. Training opportunities include certificate, degree, and professional accreditation programs.

EARLY GRADE READING ASSESSMENT (EGRA) PLUS: LIBERIA assesses and improves student reading skills and reading instruction. Activities provide information on causes of poor reading levels, students receive plenty of reading materials, and teachers receive toolkits, systematic training, support, and supervision. The project includes training and collaboration with Ministry of Education staff on early grade assessment and the use of data to drive teaching improvement. EGRA Plus: Liberia is working with 180 schools.

AMBASSADORS' GIRLS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (AGSP) funded through the US President's Africa Education Initiative (AEI) benefit needy children who would otherwise have to forego schooling. Recipients have school fees paid and receive uniforms, books, school supplies, raincoats and shoes. Where resources are lacking, textbooks have been provided to classrooms. Recipients have the support of mentors who also engage parents and communities. In 2008, 610 boys joined the scholarship program.



Liberian girls walk to school

ALFALIT INTERNATIONAL IN LIBERIA is a faith-based grassroots organization and movement that provides literacy education to Liberia's most needy adults in underserved areas and urban communities across five counties where illiteracy is prevalent. Alfalit receives funding from the US President's Africa Education Initiative. Currently over 7,000 adults are enrolled in literacy classes.

MILLION BOOK MARCH FOR LITERACY is a books-for-school libraries program funded by the US Presidents' Africa Education Initiative that delivers 1 million new and used books to 1700 school libraries across Liberia and trains teachers at those schools in library management.

Key Partners in FY 2009

- Government of Liberia: Ministry of Education
- University of Liberia

Projects and Implementing Partners:

- Academy for Education Development (AED) with partners International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Mississippi Consortium for International Development : Liberia Teacher Training Program(LTTP)
- Education Development Center: Core Education Skills for Liberian Youth (CESLY) and Learning Resource Centers(LRC)
- Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and partner Liberian Education Trust (LET): Early Grade Reading Assessment Plus-Liberia (EGRA Plus), President's Initiative for Expanding Education (PIEE)
- World Education and partners Children Assistance Program (Monsterrado county) and DEN_L (Bong County) : Ambassador's Girl's Scholarship Program (AGSP), President's Africa Education Initiative (AEI)
- Books for Africa and Visions in Action: Million Book Distribution and Library training, President's Africa Education Initiative (AEI)
- Alfalit International/Liberia: Adult literacy, President's Africa Education Initiative (AEI)
- Academy for Educational Development (AED): FORECAST Participant Training