

A WORD DOCUMENT – LIBERIAN SCENARIO

BACKGROUND

Liberia is a small English speaking country of 38, 350 square miles (111,370) square kilometers) located in West Africa. It is still recovering from the 14 years of an internal conflict that ended in 2003. Liberia is bounded by Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. The country is richly endowed with natural resources. Administratively, Liberia is divided into 3 regions (North-Central, South-East and South-West). The capital city, Monrovia, is in the South-Western Region.

Liberia has a current population of approximately 3.5 million (LISGIS, 2008) made up of 18 indigenous ethnic groups and the descendants of AMERICO Liberians who founded modern Liberia in the 1820s under the auspices of the American Colonization Society (ACS).

Approximately 40% of the population is Christian, another 40% practices traditional African religious and the remaining 20% is Muslim. (UN Common Country Assessment: Liberia, June 2006, P.4; National Human Development Report: Liberia, 2006, p.20)

THE EDUCATION SECTOR – AN OVERVIEW

- The over two decades of violent civil wars in Liberia caused widespread destruction to infrastructure, displacement of teaching and support staff and degradation of virtually all components of the education sector.
- Large number of schools buildings were burnt down or de-roofed; school chairs, desks, blackboard and the like were systematically looted. This accounts for a large number of youth to be out of school resulting to an overegged student population.

- However, since the advent of the comprehensive Peace Accord in 2003 and subsequent election of a new President, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2005, significant progress has been registered in the sector. The Government of Liberia budget allocation for Education grew steadily.
- In 2007/2008 fiscal year, the GOL spent between 11% and 13% of its recurrent budget on the education sector. Primary Education share of the sector budget was 29%. Much of the reconstruction initiatives were led by NGOs under the guidance of the Ministry of Education, in rehabilitating and in most cases, entirely reconstructing new school buildings. These NGOs, with the support from the Donor
- Community, have been substantially involved in the provision of infrastructural materials, etc, etc;

ACHIEVEMENT / SUCCESS

- One major achievement is the educational developments of the reform act 2011 entitled LIBERIAN CODE LAWS REVISED. The act stresses the management of the education sector. The act also calls for the decentralization of the sector.
- The construction of more than 284 new Schools
- Rehabilitation of three rural teacher Training Institutions
- Training of over 3000 Teachers

ACHIEVEMENT / SUCCESS

- Another achievement is the national curriculum revision process which included Peace, Human Rights and Citizenship.
- As result of the lessons learnt from the civil conflict the focus on peace building curricula include understanding our similiarities and differences; handling emotions, communication and skills in conflict resolution.

INOVATIONS

- Recruitment of Mathematics and Science teachers from neighboring countries.
- Decentralization of the education sector- the establishment of school boards management, county school systems and functional county educational officers in the 15 counties
- Setting up of a fully equipped decentralization Unit at the Ministry of Education
- Restructuring of the three Teacher Training Institutes

CHALLENGES

- Capacity development of schools Principals
- Curriculum Development and standardization
- Lack of effective M&E framework for school supervision
- Retention of students
- Increase in school enrollment at the primary level due to the free compulsory policy