



# Assessing Opportunities for University Outreach in Liberia's 4-H Program

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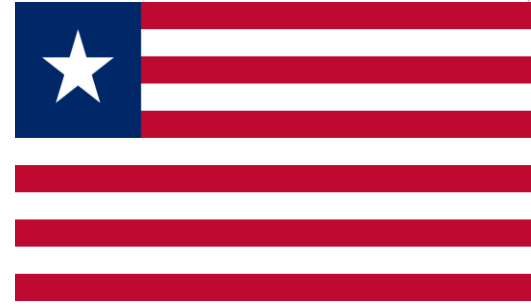
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# Facts about Liberia



- ▶ Liberia, with its capitol city, Monrovia and a 300 mile southern Atlantic Ocean coast line is located on the West Coast of Africa with Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast as neighbors on the west, north, and east, respectively.
- ▶ Returned freed slaves from the United States in the early 1800s were resettled by the American Colonization Society in Liberia. They set up a western styled administrative structure, with initial resistances from the indigenes, but subsequently announced independence on July 26, 1847. Liberia is therefore considered the first Independent Country in Africa.
- ▶ Is 43,000 square miles (111,000 sq. kilometers)

- ▶ Total population is estimated at 4.5m (2015) with 70% of the populace working as value chain actors in the Agriculture Sector which accounts for approximately 40% of the Nation's GDP.
- ▶ Of particular relevance to our thematic focus is the fact that the youth make up more than 65 % of the population.
- ▶ Resulting from Liberia's 15 year civil war (1999-2003) are issues of violence, disunity, absence of rule of law, diminished capacities, displacement, destruction of institutions and infrastructure and other attendant elements associated with such conflicts. Our female and youth populations have been hardest hit and are unemployed, without skills and not in school.

- ▶ Liberia is endowed with ecologies and natural resource to sustain agriculture and has more than adequate rainfall and the greater portion (35 %) of the remainder of the upper guinea forest.
- ▶ Historical emphasis has been placed on large multinational concessions in rubber, oil palm and iron ore extraction whereas there has been, traditionally, very low investment or support to food production systems which are predominantly run by 70% of the population.
- ▶ These people constitute ones described as slash/burn shifting culture subsistent farmers farming on average less than a hectare of land and growing rice followed by cassava as the staples.

- ▶ Youth development programs and modules such as the 4-H and other best practices can be key in providing some solutions to these problems.
- ▶ At present Liberia education system, with assistance from development partners, has developed and sanctioned an agriculture curricula for elementary/primary, middle/junior secondary and high /senior secondary schools but this is yet to be fully implemented.
- ▶ This provides a good place to start were the 4-H Liberia program and the Universities to develop training concepts and joint implementation frameworks within the tertiary agriculture extension/youth empowerment/development curricula to coordinate/guide the process and ensure impact.





# BRIEF HISTORY OF 4-H IN LIBERIA

- ❑ Was brought to Liberia by U.S. Peace Corps volunteers that worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education in the 1960s.
- ❑ The first 4-H Club was established in Maryland County (one of 15 counties) by a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer named Sandy Covey.
- ❑ Because of its success, the Ministries of Agriculture and Education adopted 4-H clubs in schools.
- ❑ At its height 4-H had a membership of 27,000 young people in 1950 clubs.
- ❑ 4-H activity ground to halt in the late 70s and the 80s as Liberia headed to its next 20 years of internal strife.
- ❑ It was reestablished in 2006 as National NGO



# Mission Statement 4-H Liberia

4-H Liberia empowers young people to become self-sufficient citizens by developing their potential in premiere leadership, agricultural sustainability and essential life skills.





## Vision Statement

As these young people mature, equipped with the knowledge and skills to be productive citizens, Mama Liberia will develop into a wholesome, functioning, democratic society with an abundance of domestic food production.



# Current 4-H Liberia Activities

- ▶ Partnership with USADF
  - ▶ Establish 72 Enterprise School Gardens in 6 of the 15 Counties
  - ▶ Each Clubs has approximately 25-30 members
- ▶ Partnership with AgriCorps
  - ▶ To train field staff, national staff, volunteers, club advisors in 4-H activities and agriculture education
- ▶ Establishing Linkage with the University Systems beginning with the Department of Agriculture Extension Education of the College of Agriculture and Forestry at the University of Liberia. The College presently has 35 full/part time faculty and approximately 4500 students



# Need for Youth Engagement: Challenges

- ▶ Youth unemployment
  - ▶ 43% of total population unemployed,
  - ▶ 69% of ages 15-24 unemployed
- ▶ Volunteerism
- ▶ Current youth programs
  - ▶ Majority of our current national youth programs do not cover PYD
- ▶ Food Security
  - ▶ Student mindset towards agriculture
  - ▶ Aging farming population

# Department of Agriculture Extension Education University of Liberia

- ▶ The Department of Agriculture Extension Education is one of six departments of the William R. Tolbert Jr. College of Agriculture and Forestry of the University of Liberia. The others are General Forestry, General Agriculture, Wood Science and Technology, Agronomy and Home Science and Community Development.
- ▶ Since its establishment in the early 1970s it has operated as a non-degree granting department. The curricula of all of the general and specific departments within the college is being reviewed at present with an eye to granting undergraduate degrees as well as short term relevant certificate and diploma courses.



# Department of Agriculture Extension Education University of Liberia

- ▶ The curricula for the department contemplates mainstreaming the tenets of youth outreach and 4-H programs therein. Agricorp Liberia and 4-H Liberia will participate in the validation of the final product.
- ▶ The Department currently offers courses in *Rural Sociology* , *Agriculture Extension* , *Extension Teaching Methods* and a *six credit Outreach Field Practice*.

# Department of Extension University of Liberia

- ▶ Department previously offered short term service courses in various agricultural disciplines ranging from three weeks to three months to develop youth and young adult for job placement. This was discontinued but will be integrated in the new dispensation.
- ▶ The Department is drafting a curriculum for ***Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degrees in Agricultural Extension and Agriculture Economics.***
- ▶ ***A New program to design 4 H teaching method into Extension program***

# University Outreach in 4-H Liberia's Program: Opportunities

- ▶ Agriculture and extensions student interns to 4-H Liberia
- ▶ Students putting on youth activities/trainings as extension class requirement
- ▶ Collegiate 4-H clubs
  - ▶ Using learning by doing to train future 4-H advisors
- ▶ 4-H Liberia becomes part of University extension program under Ministry of Agriculture
  - ▶ Incorporate 4-H in to extension education

# University Outreach in 4-H Liberia's Program: Opportunities

- ▶ Establish an office space at the University of Liberia to host 4-H Programs
- ▶ One person from the University of Liberia to serve on the 4-H Liberia Board
- ▶ Establishing a demonstration garden to train field staff, advisors, volunteer and students



# Next Steps to Consider

- ▶ Continue to develop the 4-H Liberia Board of Directors
- ▶ Establish a National Platform
- ▶ Strengthening linkage for enhancing collaboration with potential local and international partners including universities

Thank you for listening

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