



COUNTRY PROFILE



Children, especially girls, whose lives have been interrupted by conflict, now have a chance to catch up on their education, as a result of USAID-sponsored rehabilitation of schools, teacher training, and increased access to quality education.

OVERVIEW

Peaceful elections in 2005 and the inauguration of Africa's first female head of state in 2006 ushered in a period of hope and high expectations for Liberia's recovery and development after decades of poor governance and destabilization. The consequences of 14 years of brutal conflict constitute huge challenges to the recovery, reform, and rebuilding process. The Government of Liberia, with the support of international partners—of which the United States is the largest bilateral donor—is slowly restoring public confidence in political, social, economic, and judicial institutions while addressing the regional disparity and bad governance that contributed to the conflict.



PROGRAMS

PEACE AND SECURITY

Working across nearly all of Liberia's 15 counties to aid the transition from relief to development, USAID has helped communities create economic opportunities to reintegrate internally displaced people, ex-combatants, and any others affected by the war. Other U.S. government assistance supports the development and training of new military and civilian police forces.

GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

USAID supported Liberia's 2005 elections, and in an effort to build a sustainable election management, is supporting all aspects of the electoral process leading up to the 2011 elections. With USAID assistance, civil society organizations are increasing advocacy activities related to elections, corruption, conflict mitigation, and human rights. Support to rule of law focuses on training law students, lawyers, judges and court personnel to improve the quality of the justice system. USAID also works to create policy conditions needed for the economy to grow.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

Devastated health facilities and a diminished health care workforce challenge the Government of Liberia's ability to provide basic health services. Women and newborns are at particular risk due to high fertility rates, malaria, HIV/AIDS, poor sanitation and hygiene, and lack of safe birthing services. USAID is assisting organizations in delivering essential health services to underserved areas. USAID also contributes to national health planning, training of health professionals, and refurbishing facilities. Liberia is a focus country for the President's Malaria Initiative.

LIBERIA SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1847
Population: 3.49 million (2008)
GDP per person: \$185 (yr)

Source: U.S. State Department

USAID IN LIBERIA

<http://liberia.usaid.gov>



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LIBERIA

COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EDUCATION

Decades of poor governance and civil war left Liberia's education system in ruins. Infrastructure, systems, policies, and human and material resources were destroyed and fell decades behind the rest of the world. USAID has supported the Ministry of Education with programs critical to rebuilding the education system. USAID focuses primarily on increasing equitable access to education and improving the quality of instruction. Formal and informal education programs equip Liberian youth and adults with basic literacy, numeracy, life and work readiness skills; training programs rebuild a cadre of trained and certified primary school teachers; and early reading interventions target primary school students. Classroom materials and assistance to the Ministry also support Liberia's 10-year Education Sector Plan. In 2008, USAID began addressing higher education needs, focusing on improving the quality and relevance of academic programs most critical to Liberia's development challenges.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

USAID supports sustainable, inclusive development by rehabilitating rural infrastructure, improving food security, strengthening local capacity, and revitalizing expanding economic opportunities. USAID assists in developing market-friendly policies and strategies that boost food production and marketing, and enhance policy and regulatory frameworks.

Unemployment among youth population is a major concern, as unmet frustrations may serve as a justification for a return to conflict and crime. Therefore, USAID supports workforce development skills that help young women and men acquire marketable skills and or start their own businesses.

Agriculture is critical to economic development and is the source of income for 70 percent of Liberia's people. USAID focuses on conserving protected areas; rehabilitating small rubber, cocoa, and palm farms; providing livestock; and conducting training in business and marketing. In addition, USAID runs a non-emergency food program for vulnerable groups and school children at risk of dropping out of school.

In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, USAID helps improve natural resource management policies and increase the transparent and legitimate use, ownership, and commercialization of forest products and the protection of Liberia's biodiversity. USAID's clean energy initiatives—such as promoting solar, biomass and small hydroelectricity renewable technologies—increases the accessibility of electricity while mitigating adverse affects to the environment.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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