



# Liberia

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## Country Snapshot

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Population:</b>                      | 3.8 million                  |
| <b>Life expectancy at birth:</b>        | 58 years                     |
| <b>Adult literacy rate:</b>             | 56%                          |
| <b>Access to improved water source:</b> | 64%                          |
| <b>GDP per capita (PPP)*:</b>           | US\$400                      |
| <b>Infant mortality rate:</b>           | 100 per 1,000 live births    |
| <b>Maternal mortality rate:</b>         | 1200 per 100,000 live births |
| <b>HIV prevalence:</b>                  | 1.7%                         |

Sources: UNICEF State of the World's Children Report 2010, \*UNDP Human Development Report 2010

**Program Overview** CARE Liberia restarted operations in September 2008 after a hiatus of about 25 years. It has since opened offices in Monrovia and Gbarnga, Bong County, and launched a food and income security program in February 2009. Its ultimate goal is consolidated peace through a more productive, fair, and cohesive society, and ensured food security and quality of life for vulnerable women and youth. As operations re-establish, CARE Liberia is focusing on one program area, food and income security, with complementary projects in women's economic empowerment, access to water and sanitation, and urban and conservation agriculture.

### Women's Economic Empowerment

In January 2010, a project began to improve the livelihoods of 300 war-affected women in 4 districts in Bong County through poultry production. The two-year project will provide improved breeds of poultry to nutrition of families by increasing access to animal protein. It will also improve business and marketing skills to empower the targeted women with the opportunity to increase their income by selling poultry and poultry products.

### Sustainable Access to Water and Sanitation

In February 2009, CARE Liberia launched a project to improve health and sustainable livelihoods of vulnerable and war-affected men, women, and children through an integrated water and sanitation program. The two-year project works with local partners to target almost 12,800 individuals in Bong County. There are three key objectives: First, to increase access to sustainable and equitable potable water supply and sanitation services in war-affected rural communities. Second, to build capacities through training and technical assistance for reconstruction and development of war-affected communities and enhanced governance of water and sanitation. Finally, to reduce water- and sanitation-related disease (including diarrhea). To promote changes in hygiene and sanitation behaviours, the project conducted training-of-trainers workshops and 12 community training sessions, and set up 12 school health clubs. Fifteen wells were selected for rehabilitation and 84 water management committee members were elected to operate and maintain the facilities. Project

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staff conducted three public health promotion training workshops. By the end of January 2010, 32 water-rights focal persons (31 percent women) had completed the training, six clean-day campaigns have been held and thus far 70 individuals have dug their own pits for latrines. In addition, 27 water-pump mechanics (20 percent women) were trained on pump installation, maintenance and repairs, and trouble-shooting for preventive maintenance.

### Conservation Agriculture

The goal of this project is to revitalize agriculture to improve food security and income in an environmentally sustainable way for 4,000 farming households in Jorquelleh, Kpail, Panta, and Suakoko districts. The project objectives are to: improve crop yields and soil fertility; improve drying, storage facilities, and processing to reduce losses; strengthen capacities and collaboration to expand conservation agriculture; create awareness about conservation agriculture at the national and regional level; and ensure that marginalized groups (including women, youth, immigrants, and returned refugees and combatants) also benefit from specific support, including informal, longer-term land-use rights.

The project emphasizes building the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, which encourages farmer field schools as an extension methodology. Therefore, the project is also adding to the number of these schools, and has already reached one third of its target (1,338 farmers out of 4,000). It has also provided income opportunities for 893 farmers through community-based village savings and loan associations.

In year one, CARE provided 142 kilograms of improved Nerica rice seed to 35 field schools and established 35 demonstration plots with 1,338 participants; 54 percent are women. Two staff trainings and 224 farmer trainings on conservation agriculture were conducted. These included training sessions for 77 lead farmers and their deputies that were organized in all four districts. The project team held 145 community meetings to introduce the project and inform communities about the negative environmental impacts of slash-and-burn farming.

The project procured and distributed assorted agricultural tools, soil testing kits, 192 bundles of improved cassava varieties, 44 kg of cowpeas, 40 kg of pigeon peas, and 32 kg of maize seed.

A training-of-trainers workshop on savings and loan methodology was conducted for 17 staff from CARE and its partners. The project formed 32 associations, totaling 893 members, of which 77 percent are women. The team also held 46 community awareness meetings on land-use rights for the marginalized, and as a result, 26 land-use agreements were signed by town chiefs, youth representatives, elders, development chair-people, and lead farmers.

### Urban/Peri-Urban Agriculture in Liberia

Greater Monrovia and Gbarnga Town are home to vulnerable urban communities and peri-urban producers, mainly women and youth. CARE's agriculture project in these areas began in December 2009 to work with partners to reduce poverty. The specific objective is to achieve sustainable food security by improving urban agriculture and nutrition of the most vulnerable. The project plans to train facilitators and unemployed youth to disseminate a set of techniques to producers that will increase diversification and add value. The project will also ensure that urban agriculture is recognized by the Government of Liberia as an important strategy for food and income security.

Using CARE's village savings and loan methodology, almost 400 vulnerable women and youth were able to save over US\$10,600 in less than a year, which enabled targeted producers to start new or expand existing businesses and increase income. The project also established viable links between vulnerable producers and key buyers, e.g., hotels, restaurants and caterers.

### Major Donors

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