

International
Labour
Organization



The ILO in Liberia

Liberia and decent work



Since the 14-year civil war, which ended in 2003, Liberia has made significant progress towards securing peace, building the economy, improving social services, and engaging in wide-scale infrastructure reconstruction and development. Liberia was one of the world's fastest growing economies with an estimated 8.7% growth rate in 2013. However, the Ebola crisis has eroded some of these important gains. In 2014, growth was down to 1%.

91% of young workers are in informal employment and lack vocational training, employment opportunities and access to adequate health care. Many of them were deprived of basic education opportunities during the conflict. Youth unemployment, particularly high among ex-combatants, remains a major threat to peace and stability in Liberia.

Women constitute the majority of smallholder producers and it is estimated that they produce approximately 60% of agricultural products and carry out more than 80% of trading activities in rural areas. Yet women remain among the most disadvantaged, disproportionately clustered in the least productive sectors.

Liberia is an ILO member since its creation in 1919 and **has ratified 25 international labour Conventions.**

The Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Liberia was designed to assist the Government, employers' and workers' organizations in achieving decent work objectives and it is aligned with the **UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2013-2017**. It will be launched in the second quarter of 2016 covering the period 2016 – 2019.

Key challenges

- **63.8%** live below the poverty line, with **47.9%** living in extreme poverty.
- **18.8%** of males are unemployed and **34.2%** for females.
- **68%** of employment in the informal economy, **74.4%** of women.

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Tripartite constituents

Government: Ministry of Labour

Workers' organization: Liberia Labour Congress (LLC)

Employers' organization: Liberia Chamber of Commerce (LCC)

Find out more

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The Decent Work Country Programme priorities are

- 1 Acceleration of job recovery, decent and productive employment creation and sustaining enterprises
- 2 Strengthening of social dialogue and protection of employers and workers' rights through the domestication of International Labour Standards and improved labour market governance
- 3 Enhancing and Extending the coverage of Social Protection

Main actions and key results

Strengthening agriculture-based livelihoods of vulnerable population through markets and road accessibility, skills training and employment creation

The ILO and FAO are implementing the economic security component of a larger UN project focusing on addressing the multisectoral demands of people's human security in the target regions of Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland Counties through improving road accessibility, income generation, and increasing food production. The capacities of the Ministry of public works

were built on the use of labour-based technology in infrastructure development and maintenance.

Furthermore, the ILO supported the establishment of an employment services Bureau within the Ministry of Labour. The Bureau currently plays an intermediary role in providing information on available vacancies and matching these with appropriately qualified job seekers.

70 jobs were created through support to a Waste management and recycling project with the partnership of the Monrovia City Cooperation. The ILO has built the capacities of over 30 small contractors on the use of labour-based technologies. These contractors are now implementing projects across the country and employing local people to build feeder roads and maintain local roads.



Development and assenting of the Decent Work Law

The Decent Work Bill, which was developed by the tripartite partners in collaboration with the ILO was passed into Law in June 2015, the country's first labour law since the 1950s. The formulation of the law was supported by the ILO through technical, financial and advisory services. The ILO promoted and facilitated an extensive process of consultations between the government,

employers and workers across Liberia. These consultation processes enriched and improved the new law in many ways, and will serve as a solid basis for the law to realize its potential to make a major contribution to the rule of law and good governance in Liberia.

It is the first labour law in the world that refers to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda

directly in its title and includes a clear statement of its purposes. Among others, this means an environment that helps to create quality jobs, and allows all workers to exercise their rights at work. The new law is also intended to promote economic development and growth, including by reducing obstacles to efficient business competition.

Promoting social dialogue for peace building and good governance



The ILO has over the years undertaken a number of capacity building activities targeted at improving the capacities of the social partners namely the Liberia Labour Congress and Liberia Chambers of Commerce. This has involved support to the reconstruction of premises, which had been damaged during the war, training of respective staff, and provision of IT and other logistical equipment.

As a result, the new **National Tripartite Council** was created and brings together representatives of employers, workers

and the government to advise the Minister of Labour on labour market issues and the implementation of the new labour law. The National Tripartite Council will help to institutionalize and to promote social dialogue between civil society and the government. The new law also includes a framework to establish strong and independent employer and worker organizations allowing them to engage in effective collective bargaining over conditions of employment and work.



SUCCESS STORY: COMMUNITY BASED TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME GENERATION

The ILO implemented the “training for rural economic empowerment (TREE)” tool in two counties: Grand Cape Mount and Buchanan. The TREE methodology uses a systems approach to identify emerging and potential employment, income generation and small business opportunities and deliver training in practical skills and business management.

The project benefited more than 550 families (women and youths) in the targeted areas through the provision of support to the creation of income generating activities in soap making, fishing and fish processing and, transportation.

Upgrading Water and Sanitation Systems Incorporating Skills-Based Training and Employment for Youth in Ebola Affected Slum Communities

As part of the post Ebola recovery strategy, the ILO is collaborating with UNICEF, the UN-Habitat country office and Monrovia authorities to roll out a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) pilot project in Clara Town, one of four communities identified to benefit, subject to continued funding. An important element of the WASH programme is the ILO’s focus on a labour intensive approach with skills training in project implementation.

The ILO project is expected to expand basic sanitation, improve environmental conditions and hygiene, and promote youth employment in the slum communities of Monrovia. As well as improving

water and sanitation quality, the ILO programme will also focus on the handling of solid waste management. To promote community engagement with the pilot, a two day launch and

workshop was held in early March in Clara Town with invited local community leaders, women’s groups, youth representatives and others, gathered to learn the objectives and expectations of the project, as well as discussing the employment opportunities it will offer.

According to Bestman Toe, President, Slum Dwellers Association of Liberia, *“It’s in the interest of the community, especially the youth, who are the bulk [of people] facing high unemployment rates... with this project there will be skills training of several kinds and this will also empower them to have a job in the future. And that will give a clear sign to the rest of this community of Clara Town”*



Next steps

The ILO looks forward to supporting Liberia through the post Ebola recovery process with specific focus on job creation for the youths, extending the coverage of social protection, eliminating the worst forms of child labour, developing skills and promoting social dialogue. The ILO will also be working with the tripartite to launch the new DWCP.

Following the assenting of the Law, the ILO is working with the constituents in

designing a communication strategy whose objective will be to sensitive workers, employers and other stakeholders on the provisions of the new law.

The future program in the pipeline includes projects to support job creation through slum upgrading and reconstruction of infrastructure and a social protection flagship program.

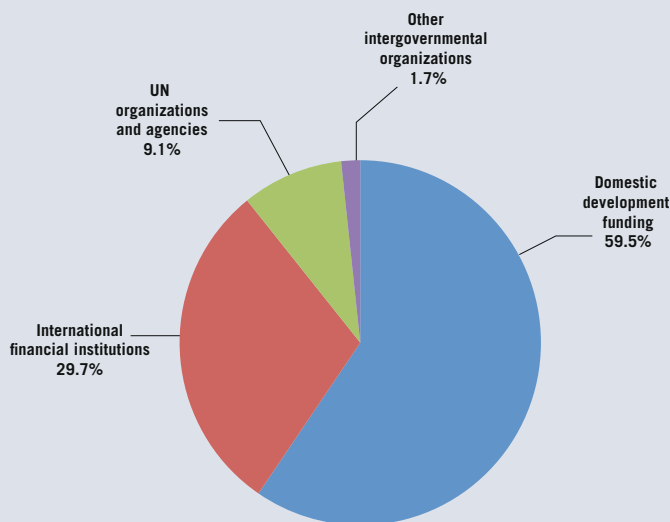


Partnership for decent work

The DWCP is aligned with the UNDAF for Liberia. For example, the UNDAF's Peace and reconciliation outcome, aims to strengthening capacities, systems and structures for dialogue, mediation and conflict resolution (including alternative dispute resolution) at national, county, and community levels through community-based peace committees for conflict monitoring, mediation and response and enhanced youth and women's participation in the reconciliation dialogue.

The ILO, in collaboration with the consortium partners (ECOWAS, IOM, ICMPD), seeks to maximise the development potential of free movement of persons and migration in West Africa by supporting the effective implementation of the ECOWAS Free Movement of Persons' Protocols and the ECOWAS Regional Migration Policy. The project covers the 15 Members of ECOWAS, including Liberia and it is funded by the European Union (2014-2017).

Major ILO resource partners in Liberia (2012-2015)



THE ILO AND DECENT WORK — A MANDATE FOR PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity.

Today, the ILO helps advance the creation of decent work and the economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress. Its tripartite structure provides a unique platform for promoting decent work for all women and men.

Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.

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