

**THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE OF THE
ART OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE)**

NATIONAL REPORT OF LIBERIA

BY

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND PARTNERS

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NATIONAL REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE OF THE ART OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE)**

1.0 BACKGROUND AND COUNTRY SITUATION

Liberia has just emerged from 14 years of civil war. The war affected all aspects of the society. There was disruption of all social and economic systems. The escalation of the war, particularly during its last three years, 2001 -2003 brought the education sector to near total collapse. With the end of hostilities, in addition, a large(15,000 strong) UN Peace Keeping Force has been deployed to Liberia to ensure the return of relative peace nationwide. The relative peace has given rise to the conduct of a successful General and Presidential and Election in which a female. Her Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has become president.

The people of Liberia are estimated at 3.5million. The three largest of Liberia's fifteen (15) counties (Montserrado, Nimba and Bong) account for over sixty percent (60%) of the total population, with Montserrado alone having about thirty percent (30%). In terms of age distribution, the age group of 0 – 18 years account for 54.3% (of which ½ are female). This structure makes to Liberia fall within the “youthful age” category. The under 5 year old accounts for 14.6% of the population, while the primary school age population (6-12) is currently placed at 22.2% of the total.

On the economy, the structure of Liberia's economy is dualistic. It has a tradition that is predominantly agricultural, and which employs close to 70% of the population, which produces mainly for the subsistence needs of the population with interaction with the modern sector. The modern monetized sector, which is dominated by the production and export of iron ore, rubber and logs, diamond and gold, is foreign-controlled. The sector, which is the major source of export earnings and wage employment in the country, uses modern technology as well as trained manpower mostly from outside the communities. Diamond, gold and logs exploration and exportation were banned by a prolonged United Nations sanction due to corrupt use of these resources by the warring parties. The UN has lifted the ban on these resources due to the responsible leadership of this Government. Increase government revenue is giving rise to improvement in major social services, particularly education.

Despite the relatively bright outlook in the nation's economy, development and activities nationwide, Liberia is faced with widespread poverty and illiteracy. The UNDP Human Development Reports for 1999 and 2000 rated Liberia 158 and 156 respectively out of total of 174 countries. The effect of the long civil war has further reduced this rating. Thus, the issues of access, opportunities, equity, education and other social services remain major constraints to post-war recovery and development.

The Government and partners have initiated programs and projects to revive the education sector. To this extent, there is now a high demand on education at all levels in post-war Liberia. Due to the goodwill of the International Community, damaged schools have been rehabilitated, equipped and furnished across the country. Untrained teachers are given the opportunity for training at the teachers training institutes with better incentives and salaries.

The educational system of the country, guided by the Education Act of 2002 is organized under eight levels: Early Childhood Care and Education, Primary Education, Junior and Secondary Education, Adult and Non-formal Education, Higher Education, Teacher Education, and Vocational and Technical Education.

The organization and management of schools is the responsibility of the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Education. However there is a high degree of partnership between the Government of Liberia and private bodies (community and individual groups). The Ministry of Education is responsible for the overall control, but the various levels and types are coordinated in collaboration with a variety of advisory bodies and councils.

The Government of Liberia first declared its commitment to adult education and literacy in particular in 1950 by a presidential proclamation. A lot of initiatives had been made and several small projects launched with foreign aids such as the UNESCO Fundamental Education Center in Klay (1953 – 1957), the Kononia of Liberia and the USAID sponsored Rural Area Development, in the Zorzor and Gbarnga districts respectively, the UNESCO Functional Literacy Project for Mine Workers in Yekepa (1970) including the UNESCO/UNDP Community School Program in which literacy was included as an integrated component (1974- 1976). These activities were all implemented by the Ministry of Education.

1.1 DESCRIPTION

Government considers the provision of Basic Education (literacy) as its basic obligation under the overall umbrella that education is a fundamental human right. Illiteracy is equated to economic backwardness and this perpetuates ignorance, poverty and disease. Non-Formal Education therefore, aims at developing the entire educational potential of an individual outside the formal school system, and focuses its attention on illiterates fifteen (15) years old and above as its target group to vow a level of training from 0 to the 9th grade.

Adult and Non-Formal Education in Liberia covers not only educational activities for adults, but also for adolescence, young men and women, normally those fifteen (15) years old and above. It covers all organized activities at all levels, the basic literacy and secondary levels (literacy, post-literacy activities, apprenticeship, or on-the-job training, extension services, vocational courses, youth training, etc).

The program is run from six sources: (1) the Ministry of Education; (2) other Government ministries and agencies that see adult education and literacy as necessary component of their development program; (3) Religious organization for evangelical outreach; (4) some of the large concession/companies for their own workers both to upgrade their performance and fringe benefit of employment; (5) voluntary, non-governmental organizations, private individuals and community groups that feel the need to help their community members and the citizens at large to improve their standard of living; and (6) language (vernacular) associations for the promotion of learning to read and write in these languages to preserve their various languages and culture.

2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR ALE

1. The Ministry of Education is the Government agency responsible for coordinating and monitoring all adult and non formal education efforts regardless of their funding and administration. Within the Ministry of Education, responsibility for the planning, implementation, supervision, monitoring and coordination of programs for adult and non-formal education in Liberia is that of the Division of Adult Education. The Division of Adult Education shall, among other things, ensure that:
 - i. There is Non-formal education programs including mass literacy activities as appropriate;
 - ii. Individuals with special needs, disadvantaged youths and women are prioritized in access to adult and non-formal education programs as appropriate;
 - iii. The facilities, pedagogy, staffing and staff compensation of all adult and / or non-formal education programs are commensurate with the levels, goals and objectives of the programs nationwide.
2. Adult education as defined above shall be available in Liberia to all above the age of fifteen years who wish to enroll/ participate in any relevant program offered. In this regard, adult and literacy education programs and services shall be operated in all counties of Liberia. By 2015 the literacy rate shall be reduced by a minimum of 50% of its value in 2008. It includes the Accelerated Learning Program and Non-formal adult education programs within the given definition of non formal education programs that shall be operated in all counties of Liberia.
3. All entities, government and non-governmental organizations, wishing to embark on programs of adult and or non-formal education must seek and receive clearance from the Ministry of Education. Those entities that have already commenced operation without prior clearance are to seek clearance within one month of notification of their status or face closure and take-over by the GOL. All adult and / or non-formal education programs found to be unsatisfactory shall be allowed three months / one semester to correct those issues preventing them from receiving clearance after which they shall also face closure and take-over by the GOL

4. Institutions offering non-formal education and vocational programs must possess teaching / learning environments that are safe, hygienic and conducive to learning. They must also possess staff with working / practical skills and a minimum of three years of experience on the skill being taught. Each institution must seek and obtain two years clearance to operate after obtaining the initially clearance to commence a program / operate an institution. All institutions shall be subject to full inspections / quality assurance visits for a minimum of once every two years.
5. The accelerated Learning Program (ALP) shall continue to be provided for the holistic needs of older children (i.e. children above the primary school age of eleven plus years), former combatants, and children associated with the fighting forces. It shall provide them with life skills, including literacy and numeracy. It shall also be subject to a comprehensive annual evaluation in order to determine its strengths, weaknesses and its future direction.
6. The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) shall not replace or be a substitute for formal pre-school and or primary school programs for children of primary school age.
7. Non-formal education programs for adults shall be encouraged to include elementary elements of small business development and management skills and partners shall be sought to provide graduates of these programs with micro-credit loans.
8. The MOE shall continue to encourage the investment of its partners in NFE and Adult Education Programs.

3.0 Quality of Adult Learning and Education, Provision, Participation and Achievement

3.1 The Accelerated Learning Program

The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) established in 1998, targets primary school children who have overgrown the entry age of 6 years and are not in school. The normal 6 years curriculum of primary school was condensed and structured to enable children in this category to pursue and complete their primary education in three years.

Several achievements were made during the year 2007. These achievements included close collaboration among implementing partners and the Ministry of Education (MOE) at the national level a large number of ALP Level III students supported by UNICEF to sit for the National Primary School Certificate Examination administered by WAEC. Additionally, a total of 499 schools implemented the ALP while 92 M O E Master Trainers (TOT) facilitated in the Pre-service and In-service teacher training. A total of 2,585 teachers taught in ALP Classes. There was nearly gender parity in the numbers participating in the program. Out of the total of 53,697 registered ALP learners, 46.11% were female.

However, the ALP continues to experience challenges along the way. Some of these challenges included the dropping - out of students and low attendance rates as well as drop - out rates not systematically recorded. The reasons for this varied from: need to work for parents at home, being self supporting students, distance to school, migration, pregnancy, cultural ceremonies, poor teacher attendance, large class sizes, lack of school feeding programme and the heavy rainy season. Other challenges included the fact that 77.9% of the ALP teachers lacked teaching qualifications and had only completed high school.

The way forward for this program could include strengthening ALP supervision and monitoring through EOs, PTAs and School Management Committees (SMCs); removal younger learners from the ALP and enrolling them into the conventional schools; establishing mechanisms for and monitoring adherence to core competencies for the ALP provided by the various Implementing Partners (IPs); strengthen the EMIS to include education resource tracking for ALP.

Between 1999 and 2003 ALP enrolled 16,203 students and graduated 7,020. Most of the former ex-combatants and war affected youths, both boys and girls who are beyond the age of the ALP are still without educational opportunity. Therefore, Creative Associates International Inc. a USAID supported NGO and the Ministry of Education have included another version known as ALPP (Accelerated Learning Program Plus) to cater to learners from 18 years to 35 years. This category is the adult education level. The training of Trainer Curriculum includes some aspect of adult learning. To date, the ALPP program is being run in six (6) of the fifteen (15) counties.

3.2 UNESCO IFIT PROJECT

There is also the Community Education and Vocational Skills Training Centers (CEVSTCs) sponsored by the Italy Fund in Trust (IFIT) through UNESCO. This program caters to war-affected women and youths in rural communities where educational facilities are lacking. For 2006/2007 fifteen (15) centers were opened with a total enrollment of 1,889; 1, 435 female and 454 male. During the 2007/2008 academic year, the entire country will be covered with a total of forty-five (45) centers.

3.3 ASSISTED ENROLMENT PROGRAM 1998

Due to the prolonged civil war in the country, when both public and private educational facilities were damaged, parents who wanted to send their children to school could not, due to the lack of these facilities. There were a large number of school age children who could not enroll in the few schools available. The private schools which were available hiked up tuition, making it impossible for the ordinary parents to pay their children school fees. To encourage large enrolment, the Government, through the Ministry of Education came up with the Assisted Enrolment Program Scheme. Under this scheme tuition was abolished in all public primary schools, and drastically reduced in private primary schools.

3.4 FREE AND COMPULSORY PRIMARY EDUCATION

In 2002 the Free and Compulsory Education Law was enacted to commence in 2005 for all public primary schools. Here private schools are requested to minimize/reduce their fees in order to assist in the enrolment of all primary school age going children.

3.5 NATIONAL MASS LITERACY PROGRAM

The National Mass Literacy Program was launched in 1999 as a consequence of grave concern by Government over the very high illiteracy rate in the country. The program was organized employing the three pronged approach/strategy, the Media Approach aiming at the involvement and the use of all media to sensitized every Liberian and the people of the country on the issues, programs, processes and benefit of mass literacy and the debilitating effect of illiteracy on the national reconstruction process; the National Voluntary Literacy Transfer (NVLT or operation “Each-One-Teach-One”) is aimed at involving every literate Liberian and have him/her responsible to make one other Liberian literate within the program period, and third the National Mass/Functional Literacy Classes (NMLC), a modified form of the existing semi-formal literacy classes is to be made available in every local community to offer literacy skills.

Due to the ever increasing high illiteracy rate as a result of the low enrollment of school age children and the prolonged civil crisis, coupled with the urge to quickly reduce the rate in order to meet some of our development goals, the Task Force, in 2004 launched a new initiative called the “Each-One-Teach-Ten” initiative. The fact that the “Each-One-Teach-One” approach was overwhelmingly accepted by the large turn-up and the lack of literate people to accommodate them, each literate person is being empowered to teach ten other persons.

This initiative was launched in several of the Internally Displaced People Camps in the country.

There was also a “Quick Impact Literacy Program” that we were pursuing and soliciting support for. With the approach of the General and Presidential elections there is hope that every Liberian will be casting his/her vote. The primary motive of this program was to help learners make informed judgment and be able to use the pen to select their candidate.

3.6 YOUTH EDUCATION FOR LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

Program implemented by national and international non-governmental organizations include Basic Literacy Programs, Functional Literacy, and Life Skills Programs for war-affected youths and adults. An apparent example of such program is

The “Youth Education for Life Skills (YES) Program which targeted war-affected youths in rural and para-urban areas in Liberia was sponsored by USAID under the Liberian Transition Initiative. This training program was carried out in more than 600 villages and communities over an 18-month period. There were six implementing partners including Mercy Corps International, Action Aid Liberia, World Vision Liberia, Search for Common Grounds, the National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL), and the Peace Building Resource Center.

Due to the fact that literacy rates in Liberia is very low as a result of the prolonged civil crisis the YES Program, in addition to sharing important life skills, is also addressing illiteracy by providing literacy and numeracy training opportunities for these youths, between the ages of 18 and 35.

3.7 LIBERIA EDUCATION TRUST (LET)

The Liberia Education Trust, a Liberian-US initiative is catering to only female both young and old. For young girls, scholarships are offered for them to attend any school of their choice from secondary to university levels of education. For literacy, LET supported twelve (12) local NGOs for the 2006/2007 academic period to make one hundred (100) non-literate adult women literate each. In all, there were one thousand three hundred (1,300) participants that completed the basic literacy level course.

3.8 LIBERIAN TRANSLATION AND LITERACY ORGANIZATION (LIBTRALO)

LIBTRALO exists to undertake translation into all the languages of Liberia and to offer the opportunity for all to read and write their own vernacular languages and encourage Scripture use.

GOALS:

- Network and cooperate with other institutions and agencies committed to development of mother tongue educational materials, translation, child and adult literacy work and Scripture use.
- Encourage ownership of translation, literacy and scripture in use by churches, Christian organizations and communities in Liberia.
- Encourage and promote Scripture Use through vernacular media.
- Ensure that language analysis is done and to develop adequate orthographies for Liberian languages and improve those that are inadequate.
- Provide adult literacy training and expert advice for Liberian languages.
- Ensure that basic literacy materials and literature are available to encourage reading and promote the use of Liberia languages.
- Encourage study and research in the field of linguistic, translation and related fields as will further the objectives of LIBTRALO.
- Encourage ownership of translation and scripture in use by churches, Christian organizations and communities in Liberia.
- Encourage local ownership of literacy work among the language communities.
- Engage in income generating activities for the sustenance of the work of literacy, translation and scripture use.
- Encourage and promote Scripture Use through vernacular media.

- Undertake public awareness among the membership, Christian community and the general public through radio and other forms of media.
- Print materials for both adult literacy and formal education.

3.9 NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF LIBERIA (NAEAL)

National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL)) is a national NGO, non profit & voluntary education and development organization of literacy associations, institutions and individuals actively involved in the field of literacy, adult education and community development in Liberia. NAEAL was organized and incorporated in 1977, through the initiatives taken by missionaries and religious organizations & institutions, the Ministry of Education as well as private groups of Liberians to forge a common coordinating body for adult literacy in Liberia. After several years of working in communities & churches, the narrow confines of literacy to winning and converting believers was broken to involve literacy and community education leading to greater popular participation in national development at village, community, district, and county levels.

NAEAL has credible records and long experience in promoting literacy & community development in Liberia, and has provided over the years services in partnership with the Ministry of Education, local and international organizations, the UN systems particularly in rural areas.

MISSION STATEMENT

- NAEAL seeks to empower people through adult education and literacy in order to sustain community development in Liberia.

VISION STATEMENT

- To develop and promote a nationwide functional adult education & literacy programs so that adults and out of school youths can acquire basic skills which will enable them understand their environment and contribute to their own social transformation and communities.

KEY PROGRAM SECTORS

- Adult Literacy and education
- Community Development
- Institutional capacity building
- Conflict mediation and Peace building
- Networking and Adult Literacy Resource Development

METHODOLOGY

- NAEAL uses the REFLECT methodology as its main approach in implementing all of its Key Programme Sectors. REFLECT is a fusion of the theoretical framework of the renowned Brazilian Educator Paulo Freire (Founder of Adult Learning) theory and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Tools/ methods: Questionnaires, checklists; focus groups discussions, observation and feedback

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK CHART

Programme (name and brief description)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below)			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one/s from below)			c) Target group/s	d) Programme cost	e) Funding source
	Public/ State	CSO/ NGO	Private	General competencies	Technical skills	Knowledge generation, innovation			
MOE	STATE			Literacy	Skill training		Both Male and Female		GOL / DONORS
LIBTRALO		NGO		Literacy			Indigenous		LBT/churches & Community donations
NAEAL		NGO		Literacy	Social analysis skills		Male and female (high priority on women and girls in Simi urban and rural communities.	\$28,765.72USD \$45,000.00USD	CONCERN-Liberia Program (Montserrado) Finish Refugee Council-Liberia (Bomi and Cape Mount)
LET		NGO		Literacy			Women and girls		Donor
CREATIVE		NGO		Literacy			Both M/F		USAID
DEN-L		NGO		Adult education and DELTA training,			Community Base (M & F)	\$18,450.00USD	Donors/Limited Community contributions

5. ADULT EDUCATORS/FACILITATORS' STATUS AND TRAINING.

- The minimum educational standard has been secondary education/high school graduate. Periodically, refresher training workshops are held by the Ministry of Education and its local and international partners and stakeholders.
- Adult education has not acquired such professional status as yet. There were plans prior to the civil conflict to establish an Institute at the University of Liberia.
- The proportion of adult education facilitators to teaching personnel may be placed at 5 to 1.
- The terms of employment and remuneration in ALE is largely considered part-time and voluntary officially by the Government of Liberia. These conditions of service have been inherited by local and international partners.
- In recent time, policy guidelines are being initiated and executed to promote gender sensitivity and balance in areas of employment, educational opportunities, as well as, ascendancy to leadership positions of trust, at local, regional and national levels. For example; the recruitment for the military and police outfits preferences have been made for 30% allotted for females.

6 RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND GOOD PRACTICE

- Several needs assessment Surveys have been undertaken. Specifically to determine the participation of women in adult learning and education, training needs and identification of types of life skills provision.
- The major question addressed has been to bring women into adult learning and education and community development program and activities.
- The key finding derived revealed institutional and cultural marginalization and discrimination of the female populations, who constitute a large percentage of overall population. Illiteracy is high among the females as compared to males.