



# Advancing Youth Project



## USAID's Advancing Youth Project Quarterly Report 1



**Submitted by Education Development Center, Inc.**

Cooperative Agreement AID-669-A-11-00001

**Quarter 1: October to December 2011**

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Education Development Center, Inc. for the USAID/Advancing Youth Project, Cooperative Agreement No. AID-669-A-11-00001. This report is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development. The contents are the sole responsibility of Education Development Center, Inc., and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

**Acronyms**

ABE - Alternative Basic Education

ALP - Accelerated Learning Program

CEO - County Education Officer

CESLY – Core Education Skills for Liberia Youth Program

DEO - District Education Officer

EO - Education Officer

GoL – Government of Liberia

KRTTI - Kakata Regional Teacher Training Institute

LRC – Learning Resource Center

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MoE – Ministry of Education

MoYS - Ministry of Youth and Sports

NFE - Nonformal Education

OSF - Open Society Foundation

YMCA – Young Men’s Christian Association

ZRTTI - Zorzor Regional Teacher Training Institute

# Contents

---

1. Project Start-Up and Operational Issues .....	6
1.1. Office Space.....	6
1.2. Recruitment of Staff.....	6
1.3. Establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan.....	7
1.4. County Assessment and Site Selection.....	7
1.5. Sub-grants with Mercy Corps and YMCA .....	8
1.6. Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned.....	8
1.7. Forthcoming Tasks.....	9
1.7.1. Office Space.....	9
1.7.2. Additional interviews .....	9
1.7.3. 100 Day Planning Period Continues .....	9
2. Result 1: Increased institutional capacity to plan, budget, deliver and measure Alternative Basic Education for youth .....	10
2.1. MoE Coordination – Meetings and Reports.....	10
2.2. Education Sector Development Committee Meeting .....	11
2.3. Youth Reconciliation Meetings – MoE, LINSU and FLY .....	11
2.4. Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned.....	11
2.5. Forthcoming Tasks.....	11
2.5.1. Improve MoE Coordination.....	11
2.5.2. Set research agenda and select appropriate M&E tools.....	11
2.5.3. Conduct capacity assessment of ABE system.....	12
2.5.4. Identify teacher audio support needs.....	12
2.5.5. Determine selection criteria and role of community structures to support and monitor ABE .....	12
3. Result 2: Increased access to relevant basic education and life, work, and technical skills training for out-of-school youth .....	13
3.1. Establishment of Level 2 Preparation Courses.....	13
3.2. Youth Summit.....	13

## Advancing Youth Quarterly Report 1 - Oct-Dec 2011

3.3. Facilitator Training Preparations .....	13
3.4. Curriculum Development .....	14
3.5. Lighting Solutions .....	14
3.6. Partner Coordination.....	15
3.7. Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned.....	15
3.8. Forthcoming Tasks.....	15
3.8.1. Youth Summits for students from Lofa, Bong and Nimba .....	15
3.8.2. Training of Master Trainers.....	16
3.8.3. Recruitment of Facilitators.....	16
3.8.4. Training of Facilitators.....	16
3.8.5. Curriculum Development Continues.....	16
3.8.6. Classes continue and start of Level 2 .....	16
3.8.7. Assess the health education opportunities and establish partnerships as appropriate.....	16
3.8.8. Develop partnerships with RTTIs .....	17
3.8.9. Technology-based learning and assessment.....	17
3.8.10. Lighting Solutions .....	17
4. Result 3: Increased access to sustainable livelihood pathways for targeted youth.....	18
4.1. Mapping Assessment .....	18
4.2. Partner Coordination.....	18
4.3. NGOs providing skills training .....	18
4.4. Forthcoming Tasks.....	19
4.4.1. Labor Market Assessment.....	19
4.4.2. Partner Coordination .....	19
4.4.3. Public Private Partnerships .....	19
5. Conclusions.....	19
6. Success Story .....	20
6.1. Improved Literacy & Numeracy leads to greater economic independence for Liberian women.....	20
6.2. “Even if you know a trade, you need to be educated” - Vocational training isn’t enough.....	21
6.3. Youth Participate in New Project Design .....	21
7. Annexes .....	22

## Project overview

---

Many of the youth in post-conflict Liberia face a variety of challenges. Fourteen years of war devastated the education system, meaning that many youth lack basic literacy and numeracy as well as other skills necessary to enjoy a healthy, happy, productive and economically sound life.

In response to these challenges, USAID's Advancing Youth Project is working with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to develop and pilot an Alternative Basic Education (ABE) curriculum that offers these youth the knowledge and skills they currently lack. Working largely with MoE teachers, the program offers literacy, numeracy, work readiness, and health and other life skills programming for students with zero or extremely low literacy levels. In addition, youth clubs associated with ABE programs will provide social and educational opportunities as well as peer support for strengthening academic and livelihood skills. Advancing Youth will also help youth enrolled in ABE classes find practical, work-based learning, skills training, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities.

An award under the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) 3 Leader Award, the project's overall goal is to "enhance the capacity of governmental and nongovernmental institutions to provide increased access to quality alternative basic education services, social and leadership development and livelihoods for youth and young adults, ages 13-35 who are un-schooled or out of school and have no or marginal literacy and numeracy skills".

As such, Advancing Youth also works with the MoE to ensure that ABE classes are integrated into the educational structure of Liberia to develop the policies and institutional capacity necessary to ensure that the MoE can implement quality ABE programs after the end of the project.

In addition, Advancing Youth aims to provide increased access to sustainable livelihood pathways for targeted youth, liaising with training providers, employers, other projects, etc. to identify possible options for building technical skills and gaining first hand work experience.

Advancing Youth aims to increase the impact of United States Government funds through leveraging partnerships with other organizations including Chevron and the Open Society Foundation (OSF). Advancing Youth will seek additional partnerships over the course of the project.

Advancing Youth continues the work started under USAID's Core Education Skills for Liberian Youth (CESLY) project which developed and piloted the first level of the ABE curriculum. Advancing Youth will work with many of the MoE schools in which CESLY worked, continuing to train the same teachers and principals. The project will work in Bong, Lofa, Montserrado and Nimba during the first year with a possible expansion into Grand Bassa for the start of the next school year.

Over 10,000 direct beneficiaries, plus multiple thousands of indirect beneficiaries will gain from the educational, social and livelihood components of the project.

Advancing Youth is implemented on behalf of USAID by Education Development Center, with the support of Mercy Corps and the YMCA of Liberia.

# Progress toward results

---

## 1. Project Start-Up and Operational Issues

During the startup phase, Advancing Youth carried out a variety of both operational and technical tasks. The cooperative agreement stipulated that during the first 100 days of the project (until the end of January 2012), the project would carry out a number of assessments and consultations which would result in a Life of Project Strategic Plan with accompanying work plans and a PMP. The details of the various assessments undertaken prior to December 31, 2011 and planned for January 2012 are outlined below.

### 1.1. Office Space

In addition to technical issues, a variety of operational tasks also had to be completed. In terms of physical space, the project began operations on day one of the project in the former CESLY office, located in the YMCA building as its main office. Offices in the counties will be reopened in January 2012. Until the re-opening of the offices, Advancing Youth staff is posted in Monrovia and will travel to the counties to conduct assessments and other activities.

### 1.2. Recruitment of Staff

EDC used the start of the project to examine the competencies of all previous CESLY staff and compared those against the skills required for new Advancing Youth positions. However, Advancing Youth also wanted to assess the skills of other Liberians who were seeking work and therefore advertised all positions via newspapers, outside the office and via the Government of Liberia's eMansion website. As expected there were a significant number of candidates, though many unfortunately did not have some or many of the qualifications or attributes listed as required in the Terms of Reference. After short listing the most qualified candidates, including previous staff and new applicants, interview panels were established. During this process, many of the previous staff were judged to be sufficiently competent and experienced to perform the tasks required and other new staff with good skills was identified as well. The majority of the positions in head office were filled during this period including the senior technical, operational and financial staff.

Interviews were also carried out for the Learning Resource Center (LRC) Team Leaders by a panel including the COP and two DCOPs. There was a pool of qualified candidates, both internal and external, and the closure of two of the CESLY LRCs (in Grand Gedeh and Maryland) meant that the staff from these offices was also seeking employment. Four suitable candidates were identified, all of whom had worked under CESLY. In addition, LRC Admin/Finance Officers and ABE Coordinators were also identified and recruited.

The recruitment process did offer insight into the issues related to the management of the program. Whilst many candidates displayed excellent skills, it is apparent that there is a requirement for ongoing capacity building efforts within the project, such as on the job training and mentoring.

Sub-grantees Mercy Corps and YMCA also have staffing responsibilities for the project. The key personnel proposed by Mercy Corps, Jeffrey Tines for the Livelihoods Development Team Leader position, withdrew his availability following the confirmation of the award. Mercy Corps subsequently identified an alternative candidate, Mathew Ndote, who was approved as key personnel by USAID in

Advancing Youth Quarterly Report 1 - Oct-Dec 2011

December. The Mercy Corps national staff member, Varney Gaie, who will work as the Livelihoods Development Coordinator, is available to start as soon as the sub-grant is signed (see below). He participated in the Montserrado Youth Summit along with the Mercy Corps Country Director in December 2011.

The YMCA, in coordination with the Advancing Youth DCOP for Programs, identified two candidates for the Community Outreach Team Leader and Youth Development Coordinator positions. Both staff were able to partake in the Montserrado Youth Summit and will begin with the project full-time in January 2012. YMCA HR staff together with the LRC Team Leaders will identify candidates for the positions of Field Placement Coordinator and Field Youth Development Coordinator in January 2012.

### **1.3. Establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan**

Advancing Youth hired one of the M&E staff from the CESLY project to establish the M&E system. The PMP and indicator tracking systems are being developed in coordination with support from EDC home office. Target indicator information has been provided to USAID for FY12, FY13 and FY14.

### **1.4. County Assessment and Site Selection**

During December 2011, assessments were carried out by the LRC staff in Bong, Lofa, Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa counties. Each team was accompanied by two MoE staff seconded by the Bureau of Basic and Secondary Education. In some counties, DEOs and/or other local MoE staff accompanied the teams on school and community visits. The purpose of the assessment was to gather data to help determine the selection of Advancing Youth ABE sites. Selection criteria included:

1. Counties are included in the Government of Liberia's economic development corridor and USAID priority counties;
2. Presence of viable, stable local skills training partners;
3. Presence of potential private sector partners, international, national, or local;
4. District is the population center of the county and/or densely populated;
5. Feasibility of grouping ABE programs into clusters, for teacher support, youth activities, and other program-related events;
6. District provides opportunities for a balance between communities/schools that have implemented ALP or NFE programs during the past 2 years and communities that have not been served;
7. County and/or District Education Officers have experience with or are supportive of implementing alternative basic education (including accelerated learning) for older youth.

Using the criteria of proximity to population centers, feasibility of clustering, and strong demonstrated commitment from learners and teaching staff, the teams assessed all the NFE sites under the CESLY project and determined that 49 sites were eligible to re-start immediately with Level 2 preparation courses. See Annex A for a list of current ABE sites. In addition, the teams visited a total of 120 school sites and held initial meetings to determine the level of interest of potential learners. This information will be considered, along with other information on livelihoods opportunities, in the selection of new sites to start in August 2012. The selection of new sites will be conducted during the forthcoming months following the establishment of any new key MoE appointees together with the information gained during the Labor Market Assessment.

The assessments also looked at county and district MoE capacity-building needs, as self reported by EOs, as well as mapping the CBOs and NGOs active in education, health, and skills training in each county to assess possible partnership opportunities. The assessment teams conducted interviews with 35 CEOs

Advancing Youth Quarterly Report 1 - Oct-Dec 2011

and DEOs about their experiences working with CESLY, recommendations for future activities, and capacity-building needs. CEOs and DEOs all expressed an interest in collaborating with Advancing Youth Project and pledged commitment to involvement. They said they wanted to be involved in activities such as the selection of facilitators and learners, materials distribution, monitoring, curriculum development, and training. However, there was also a call for logistical support, for example providing gasoline and incentive payments.

Some EOs emphasized that teachers should not be taken out of schools for training when classes are in session. EOs were happy to hear that the LRCs would re-open in January, and some called for local citizens to have more access to the LRCs.

In terms of capacity-building for themselves and their staff, the skills most often mentioned were monitoring and computer literacy.

The assessment teams identified a variety of potential partners who were working in the areas of health, education and skills training. This information will be combined with the results of market mapping to identify high opportunity districts for new ABE sites.

### **1.5. Sub-grants with Mercy Corps and YMCA**

Appropriate financial documentation was received from both Mercy Corps and YMCA during the reporting period, to enable EDC to process the sub-grants. With regard to the YMCA grant, following submission of the necessary documents and some minor contractual discussions, the agreement has been signed.

Mercy Corps negotiated some changes that took longer than envisioned to resolve and hence the grant was not signed in time for the planned Labor Market Assessment, originally scheduled for December 2011. Contingency plans were put into place to ensure that a mapping exercise could be carried out in early January 2012. The Mercy Corps sub-grant is expected to be signed in early January.

### **1.6. Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned**

Core challenges affecting the first quarter of project operations were related to the Presidential runoff, the holiday season and delays in sub-contracting. Through these challenges, the Advancing Youth staff team continued to build its flexibility and resilience which will contribute to the ongoing success of the project in years to come.

During the reporting period the primary challenge was the security, logistical and electoral issues around the runoff Presidential election. The election period provided, and will continue to provide, significant challenges due to the tensions around security, together with the uncertainty over any changes in MoE appointments by the President following the inauguration on January 16, 2012.

The Christmas holiday period also added to the challenge of starting up a project. Schools wound down prior to the Christmas break, many staff from stakeholders were on leave and offices closed. Recruitment of students was also affected by the holiday period (see below).

Contractual negotiations prevented the some activities from taking place as planned which required alternative plans to be implemented.

Advancing Youth Quarterly Report 1 - Oct-Dec 2011

Staff recruitment proceeded relatively well. However, the necessity of providing staff training was reinforced during the interview process. During the forthcoming months, supervisors will make assessments of areas in which staff skills need to be improved.

General security issues also provided challenges. The youth disturbances prior to Christmas, leading to the riots on December 23, 2011, required the office to close down and staff to be sent home.

## **1.7. Forthcoming Tasks**

### **1.7.1. Office Space**

During the reporting period, Advancing Youth considered a variety of space options to suit the needs of the main office and the LRCs that provide field offices for the project. In the coming months leases will be renewed or new office space will be confirmed.

Specifically, the lease for the Montserrado Learning Resource Center (LRC) field office, currently located in a building owned by Monrovia City Council, will expire in 2012. The YMCA building which houses the main Advancing Youth country office does not provide sufficient space to house both the country office and the Montserrado LRC staff and hence alternative solutions will have to be found.

The other LRCs are currently located in the offices of the County Education Officer (CEOs) in Bong and Nimba, and in a private house in Lofa. Advancing Youth plans to reopen the LRCs in the second week of January 2012 and we plan to re-open offices in the same locations. However, we will also look for alternate spaces given the likelihood that the MoE will require the space formerly used by CESLY in the CEO offices. If Grand Bassa is selected, further discussions on the location of the office are required, since the CEO's office is inaccessible to the population of the town.

### **1.7.2. Additional interviews**

Further recruitment needs to take place for positions which remain open, including the IT Administrator. Interviews for additional M&E staff are also ongoing. It is apparent that substantial capacity building needs to be carried out to ensure that M&E functions can be completed successfully, which may require additional Technical Assistance from the EDC Home Office.

### **1.7.3. 100 Day Planning Period Continues**

During January 2012, the 100 day planning period will continue with a labor mapping exercise, Youth Summits, training of Master Trainers, training of ABE Facilitators and a final design workshop all due to be held. At the end of the 100 day planning period, the Life of Agreement Strategic Plan and first annual workplan will be submitted.

## **2. Result 1: Increased institutional capacity to plan, budget, deliver and measure Alternative Basic Education for youth**

The project is designed around three overarching result areas. The first of these is to increase the institutional capacity of organizations, including the MoE, international and national NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs).

### **2.1. MoE Coordination – Meetings and Reports**

During the period under review Advancing Youth held meetings the Minister of Education together with the USAID Education Team Leader as well as meetings with the Bureau of Basic and Secondary Education, the Bureau of Science, Vocational Technical and Inclusive Education and the Bureau of Teacher Education and the Center of Excellence and Curriculum Development.

At the meeting with the Minister, he the Minister expressed support for the program, the requirement to be integrated within the MoE structure and the importance of youth in the GoL's strategy. Discussion also centered around the establishment of Youth Reconciliation meetings (see below).

Assistant Minister for Basic and Secondary Education Felicia Doe–Sumah was very proactive in supporting the establishment of the program. She identified MoE counterparts to accompany the County Assessment teams and also to attend the Youth Summits. In addition, she identified five MoE curriculum experts to participate in the January 6, 2012 curriculum Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting. The ECOWAS Curriculum Specialist assigned with MOE was also invited to participate in the curriculum review process.

Assistant Minister Doe-Sumah also resolved issues around the non-payment of stipends when questioned by principals in Montserrado county and approved the proposed dates for the Master Trainer Training Workshop and the In-Service Teacher Training sessions in January 2012. She stated that she will set a date for a regular, monthly coordination meeting. Future discussions on payment of principal stipends will be held during the next reporting period.

Advancing Youth also met with the Acting Executive Director of the Center for Excellence, Roselyn Swaray, and discussed ways to strengthen collaboration and communication between the division and Advancing Youth. A set of the approved Level I curriculum was presented to Mrs. Swaray. Following that a list of curriculum specialists from MOE was presented to Advancing Youth.

On November 22, 2011, Elice Browne, the MoE Donor Coordinator, met with the Advancing Youth to acquaint herself with project activities. Advancing Youth staff gave an overview of the project, discussed coordination issues and expressed the project's commitment to the work of the Education Sector Development Committee.

In addition to meetings, Advancing Youth shares its weekly and quarterly reports with relevant staff within the MoE. MoE staff who accompany Advancing Youth on field trips also participate in the drafting of trip reports which are shared with both the MoE and Advancing Youth.

## **2.2. Education Sector Development Committee Meeting**

On November 30, 2011, Advancing Youth participated in the Education Sector Meeting which brought together education stakeholders, including the Government of Liberia, donors and Liberian and international organizations implementing education programs to enhance strategic collaboration and coordination with the MoE. The meeting signaled a collaborative effort among partners to transition from emergency response to strategic planning for sustainability. In order to accomplish this endeavor, the MoE is implementing an education sector mapping exercise of current activities to establish which programs are operating where, to improve coordination and to improve its capacity to effectively plan, manage and monitor future programs.

## **2.3. Youth Reconciliation Meetings – MoE, LINSU and FLY**

In a meeting with USAID and Advancing Youth Project, the Minister of Education requested support for a Youth Peace Building Project aimed at giving youth the opportunity to partake in peace and reconciliation focused seminars and discuss their hopes and aspirations. The MoE plans to organize the events in coordination with the Liberian National Student Union (LINSU) and the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY). Following the initial meeting, further discussions were held with representatives of the MoE, LINSU and FLY to plan and expand details of the concept. Advancing Youth is currently waiting for feedback from the MoE on this meeting, including additional planning and a proposed budget.

## **2.4. Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned**

Payment of stipends to principals was a significant issue faced by the project. Under CESLY, both teachers and principals had received a stipend of \$50 per month for the additional work that they are required to do above their regular teaching duties. Under Advancing Youth, currently there are plans to pay the stipend to the teachers but not to the principals. In order to ensure that principals give the necessary support to the ABE program, this issue needs to be discussed further and a plan to address this will be drafted in January 2012.

In the period over Christmas and up to the inauguration, the MoE has been in a state of flux with many staff on leave. Once any new MoE appointments have come on board, the process of consensus-building on key decision points can continue.

## **2.5. Forthcoming Tasks**

### **2.5.1. Improve MoE Coordination**

In order to ensure that the ABE program is fully integrated within the MoE it is necessary for the project to meet regularly with MoE staff at various levels. In addition to specific meetings with MoE management, the project currently has an office on the 7<sup>th</sup> Floor of the MoE and will be holding regular meetings at this office, which relevant MoE staff will attend. Advancing Youth also plans to improve coordination with the MoE via the secondment of a staff member into the Division of Alternative Basic Education. Further discussions on the modalities of this secondment are required.

### **2.5.2. Set research agenda and select appropriate M&E tools**

In order to both assess the impact of the Advancing Youth ABE program and to build the capacity of the MoE, it will be necessary to discuss with the MoE the specific issues that M&E activities should target. The project will assess impact on issues such as student improvements in literacy and numeracy as well as the impact of work readiness and livelihood components. Other areas of interest to the MoE are likely to include teaching skills and staff capacity improvements. MoE focal persons need to be assigned to the

Advancing Youth Quarterly Report 1 - Oct-Dec 2011

project to ensure that the MoE is integrated into the M&E system, including assessments, from the beginning.

EDC is creating a literacy assessment tool for out of school youth which will be available to be piloted in Liberia in January. The Out-of-school Literacy Assessment (OLA) is based on EGRA together with other input from literacy tests similar to UNESCO's LAMP assessment of comprehension (ability to perform tasks with real-life texts) and the Adult Basic Learning Exam (published by Pearson).

### **2.5.3. Conduct capacity assessment of ABE system**

As noted above, results of the County Assessment indicate that monitoring and computer literacy are two areas where local EOs requested capacity-building. We also identified potential NGO partners with experience and interest in delivering adult education to out-of-school youth and other community members.

Further elaboration of the ABE capacity building plan, including specific milestones and targets, will continue in February when we expect any new MoE appointees to be on board.

### **2.5.4. Identify teacher audio support needs**

During the January training of Master Trainers and facilitators, we will ask participants to identify the content areas, teaching methodologies and other areas such as classroom management where they need additional support. This, in conjunction with information on teacher performance from CESLY, will inform our plans for providing additional audio support to teachers.

### **2.5.5. Determine selection criteria and role of community structures to support and monitor ABE**

During the County Assessment the teams met with EOs and County School Board members to obtain their input on the most appropriate community structures to support ABE. Most suggested involving local PTAs, and some mentioned the ABE Committees active under CESLY.

The importance of a community-based recruitment and retention strategy was highlighted during the Monrovia Youth Summit where youth suggested holding community meetings to explain the project, involving community leaders in problem-solving. They also said they wanted to be more like "regular" students and be more closely aligned with formal school activities. This buttresses the idea of involving PTAs but also highlights the need for broader community participation, as envisioned in the County Alliance proposed in the original project description.

In the next quarter, Advancing Youth will concentrate on working with PTAs to motivate potential students to enroll in both Level 1 and Level 2 of the program. Staff will also identify existing youth and community structures which could help to both support and monitor the progress of ABE classes.

### **3. Result 2: Increased access to relevant basic education and life, work, and technical skills training for out-of-school youth**

The second result area concerns the development and delivery of ABE programs to out-of-school youth, initially via MoE teachers but also potentially via other actors such as NGOs.

#### **3.1. Establishment of Level 2 Preparation Courses**

Advancing Youth is continuing the piloting of the ABE curriculum that was started under CESLY. As such LRC staff visited schools which had operated as CESLY NFE sites to determine whether the sites were suitable to continue the program. Teams considered the interest from students, teachers and principals, reports from CESLY on previous engagement in the program from the school management and geographical location of the school. The LRC Team Leaders then held discussions with the CEOs on the establishment of a Level 2 Preparation Course in these schools to review Level 1 materials and ensure that students were prepared for the more difficult material that would be faced in Level 2. The Preparation Course operates for 30 instructional days, continuing to the start of the new Level 2 classes on February 20 2012.



Enrollment was lower than had been envisioned. As of December 31, 2011 1,542 students had enrolled for the preparation course. Of these 1,542, 1,257 were previous CESLY students and 285 were new learners enrolled in 48 schools in the 4 counties. Within these schools, an additional 1,253 learners had originally registered for the CESLY NFE classes. Team Leaders reported that the Christmas period contributed to the relatively low enrollment figures and they expected the figures to rise when recruitment continued in the new year.

#### **3.2. Youth Summit**

On December 16 and 17, Advancing Youth held the first Youth Summit at the Arkade Hotel in Monrovia with 10 youth who had been part of the CESLY NFE program. The Youth Summits are aimed at obtaining feedback from selected youth on key challenges and potential solutions for recruitment, retention and achievement in ABE, as well as livelihoods development. In addition, youth summit participants will participate in focus group discussions concerning psychosocial needs and gender-based violence. This information will feed into the final Advancing Youth Project design and into ongoing operational practices.

The findings from the Montserrado Youth Summit are included in Annex B.

#### **3.3. Facilitator Training Preparations**

Due to the time that the project started it was not possible to conduct training of facilitators during the long school break in the summer. In order to minimize the impact on the school calendar, the week

Advancing Youth Quarterly Report 1 - Oct-Dec 2011

between the third and fourth marking periods, which falls between 20 and 29 January 2012, was selected as the most appropriate time to conduct the training. There is a teacher professional development period scheduled at this time, together with the mid-year break. This period is the only one according to the MoE calendar when training would be possible. The MoE gave approval for the training to be held at this time.

### 3.4. Curriculum Development

Curriculum Development for Level 2 Semester 1 has been ongoing. The draft of the Numeracy and Life skills curriculum to be submitted to the technical working group in January was completed during the reporting period. The Literacy Technical Advisor based in the US continued to integrate the Work Readiness materials into Level 2 Literacy. Lessons 1 through 16 were drafted and reviewed internally by the Teaching and Learning Team during the reporting period. These materials, together with additional Semester 1 lessons, will be reviewed by the technical group in January.

### 3.5. Lighting Solutions

Lighting proved to be a significant problem under the CESLY project. Due to the fact that the youth attending the classes have to make a living during the day, the classes are scheduled in the evening after dark. The lighting systems used under CESLY proved to be inadequate and the cause of both complaints and dropouts. Under CESLY some alternative options were investigated, including the installation of a large solar panel at one school. Whilst providing excellent lighting, this was an overly expensive option.

During the reporting period, discussions were held with DLight, a manufacturer of lights which have proved popular in similar settings. DLight provided sample lights which will be installed in a pilot school. Various other options have also been identified and orders have been placed with two importers, one commercial and the other an NGO working through a church group. Upon receipt of the lights they will be installed in Advancing Youth schools and carefully monitored to determine their long-term viability.

Advancing Youth also received spare parts from the USAID/LESSP for Taa Bora lights, the model of light previously used under the CESLY project. Whilst not an ideal option, the Taa Bora lights can provide a

backup to other solar lighting solutions. As such the broken lights from schools have been returned to Monrovia for repair. The main cause of problems included the relatively complicated design that required high levels of dexterity to assemble, together with the extreme weather in Liberia, including heat and humidity that cause components to rust.



### **3.6. Partner Coordination**

During the reporting period Advancing Youth participated in coordination meetings involving other stakeholders with the aim of increasing the impact and extent of ABE programs.

On November 30, 2011, Advancing Youth and UNICEF discussed ways to foster a more collaborative plan on Youth strategies. The possibility of utilizing Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) youth centers as possible venues for training was discussed. At that meeting we exchanged peace building and psycho-social curriculum materials useful for developing youth activities. UNICEF also shared their Peacebuilding Curriculum with Advancing Youth which will be reviewed to see how it can fit in with higher levels of the curriculum.

On November 23-25, 2011, Advancing Youth attended a 3 day workshop organized by the Ministry of Education and Sight Savers for stakeholders on Inclusive Education. The workshop advocated actions to allow blind and physically challenged students to attend classes. Resolutions included the following points: 1) county education boards to be inclusive of individuals with disabilities , 2) teacher training to include content on teaching learners with disabilities, 3) increased support for schools for the blind and deaf, and 4) increased financial support for special education.

There is presently no data and information on how many Advancing Youth teachers and learners are visually impaired or physically challenged. However, in Grand Gedeh County during the mobilization of learners for the CESLY Project, some learners requested eye glasses to help them see and read better. This may be reflective of similar problems with teachers and learners in other counties with sight and other physical impairments.

Advancing Youth Project will aim to include marginalized and disadvantaged members of the society as far as possible. For instance the inclusion of Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) in the Advancing Youth curriculum will benefit students with sight problems.

### **3.7. Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned**

Challenges faced included the runoff of the election in November which was followed shortly by the Christmas break. According to reports from the LRC Team Leaders, many students were not interested in enrolling at this time of year and hence enrollment levels were lower than estimated. The Team Leaders all suggest that enrollment figures will increase in the new year. In the future, if new classes are due to start in January rather than at the start of the academic year in August/September, it will be necessary to carry out enrollment in the middle of the autumn semester.

The timeline for the start of the project also provided a challenge in that teacher training could not be held during school holidays. Negotiations were required with the central ministry on the most appropriate time to hold the teacher training and this was communicated to the CEOs and DEOs. Despite the careful selection of the most appropriate time with the minimum of disruption to schools, there may yet be issues around attendance of teachers at the training.

### **3.8. Forthcoming Tasks**

#### **3.8.1. Youth Summits for students from Lofa, Bong and Nimba**

The Youth Summit for Montserrado will be followed with summits for students from Lofa, to be conducted in Zorzor at the RTTI, and from Bong and Nimba, to be conducted in Gbarnga at the Catholic Compound. Results from both summits will be analyzed and included in the strategic plan.

### **3.8.2. Training of Master Trainers**

The training of Master Trainers will take place at Kakata RTTI in early January. All Master Trainers have received previous training on how to train others. This training will be reinforced, as will content knowledge. Master Trainers will practice micro teaching to gain experience in delivering the lessons and also practice observing and assessing others giving lessons.

### **3.8.3. Recruitment of Facilitators**

Level 1 and Level 2 facilitators will be recruited in the next quarter. For Level 1 classes, each class will have two facilitators. Facilitators will be required to co-teach and both be in the class at all times during the 3 sessions per week. Level 1 classes tend to have students with a wide range of abilities, and the two teachers will work together to manage the mixed level learners. At level two, learners will be entering with more similar literacy levels and one teacher will deliver all subjects. The MoE has approved a competitive teacher recruitment process for new facilitators. Teachers will fill out an application form detailing their training and experience, and write a short essay. Applications will be reviewed by the school principal, the DEO or other relevant MoE officer, and an Advancing Youth staff member. This team will then recommend the teachers to be selected.

### **3.8.4. Training of Facilitators**

The Training of Facilitators will take place in the last week of January in four counties. MoE and Advancing Youth staff will organize and conduct the training sessions.

### **3.8.5. Curriculum Development Continues**

The development of the curriculum for Level 2 will continue. In January, the Working Group (TWG), comprising of stakeholders in the ABE system, will review the draft materials and make final comments prior to printing and distribution for field testing.

### **3.8.6. Classes continue and start of Level 2**

Following the end of the Training of Facilitators, the facilitators will continue with the Preparatory Course until February 20. During this time, additional recruitment of students will be ongoing. Students who were previously with CESLY will be tested to ensure that they have the skills necessary to progress to Level 2. Level 1 will again be open to any learner.

### **3.8.7. Assess the health education opportunities and establish partnerships as appropriate**

Meetings will be held with USAID Health officials to assess linkages around health education opportunities and to begin to establish partnerships, both with USAID programs and other health providers.



Advancing Youth Quarterly Report 1 - Oct-Dec 2011

### **3.8.8. Develop partnerships with RTTIs**

Based on the pilot ABE training delivered to Zorzor RTTI teachers carried out under CESLY, further discussions will take place with the Director of ZRTTI to develop a partnership. This will include issues such as establishing an ABE site at ZRTTI which both benefits the youth of the area and allows faculty and trainee teachers to gain experience working with older learners. As the RTTI curriculum is revised, it is hoped that ABE training could be included into the general C Certificate training, either for all students or as an optional topic.

### **3.8.9. Technology-based learning and assessment**

Discussions with Lonestar will be held in January to develop further opportunities around the use of SMS for provision of information to teachers, collation of data, etc.

The Out-of-School Literacy Assessment (OLA) will be piloted in February. If the initial pilot is successful, options for collating data via tablet computers or laptops will be explored.

### **3.8.10. Lighting Solutions**

The lights for the schools have been ordered. However, one of the suppliers is currently experiencing shipping problems from China to Liberia. Delivery date is uncertain at this point. The second supplier is due to receive delivery of the lights by air-freight and expected delivery is by the end of January 2012.

## **4. Result 3: Increased access to sustainable livelihood pathways for targeted youth**

Providing Liberian youth with the basic education skills necessary to succeed in today's world is just the first step of the project. It is also vital that youth gain opportunities to develop real-life work experience through internships, training opportunities and job placements.

### **4.1. Mapping Assessment**

The livelihood component of the project needs to have accurate information on the options open to young people in the various counties. With regard to the choice of Advancing Youth schools, the selection of localities with the best prospects for employment means that youth can graduate from the program with both literacy and numeracy skills and a realistic chance of some form of employment. In order to provide input into the Life of Project Strategic Plan, Advancing Youth plans to conduct a limited Mapping Assessment in January 2012. In order to prepare for this assessment, YMCA has identified 2 youth assessors in each of the counties, each with a minimum of High School education. The assessors will be trained in early January 2012 and deployed to collect data for inclusion into the project plan.

### **4.2. Partner Coordination**

Advancing Youth is planning to develop partnerships with other organizations to increase the impact of the project. Mercy Corps has already reached agreement with Chevron for a youth-related project and an MoU is due to be signed in February between Chevron, USAID, Mercy Corps and EDC.

Additional discussions have been held with World ORT, an NGO which received funds through the Open Society Foundation (OSF) between 2010-2012 and which were leveraged through USAID funds to provide training opportunities to graduates from the USAID/ALP PLUS and USAID/CESLY programs. World ORT is likely to receive additional funding from OSF and Advancing Youth has discussed ways to collaborate further to provide additional training and skills development opportunities.

Advancing Youth also attended a presentation by the World Bank YES project which included a request for proposals to operate small pilot projects. Advancing Youth partners reviewed the pilot project documentation and decided not to bid on the pilot due to the timelines of the proposal process and the scale of the pilots. There exists the possibility of collaboration with whichever organizations implement either the pilot projects or the full-scale projects which are due to be launched in mid 2012.

### **4.3. NGOs providing skills training**

During the county assessment carried out in December 2011, an assessment of NGOs which have skills training experience was conducted. This information will be included in the overall livelihoods design with the possibility of developing connections to provide training options for students and graduates of both CESLY and Advancing Youth.

#### **4.4. Forthcoming Tasks**

##### **4.4.1. Labor Market Assessment**

Mercy Corps staff are currently collaborating with EDC staff in the US to review Mercy Corps' assessment tools and determine the extent to which they can be adapted to the Liberian context. The labor market assessment is planned to take place in February/March 2012.

##### **4.4.2. Partner Coordination**

Advancing Youth will continue to investigate possible partnerships. For instance USAID's Food and Enterprise Development (FED) project may provide possibilities for agriculture-related training for students.

In addition it will be necessary to coordinate with other education projects. The Liberian Teacher Training Project works in MoE schools, some of which are also working with Advancing Youth and as such the projects will investigate possible collaboration.

##### **4.4.3. Public Private Partnerships**

Prior to the planned signing of an MoU between Chevron, USAID, EDC and Mercy Corps, discussions will be required to ensure that the Advancing Youth program goals can be matched to Chevron's anticipated goals.

Additional potential public-private partnerships initially identified during the CESLY project need to be developed further.

## **5. Conclusions**

Despite the challenges of working during elections and the holiday season, Advancing Youth had a very rapid start-up in the first two months of the project. We were able to interview and select experienced CESLY staff as well as qualified new staff members who will form a strong, integrated team. We re-started classes by offering Level 2 preparatory courses, and made significant progress on Level 2 curriculum development. We also conducted the key consultations and assessments required to refine and finalize the project design.

# Success Stories

---

## 6. Success Story

### 6.1. Improved Literacy & Numeracy leads to greater economic independence for Liberian women

“My family is always complaining that I’m making market and there is no benefit,” says Mamie Cooper. “Since I joined the program, I learned how to read and write. I learned savings. I started saving 500 dollars every week. One day, I brought home 30,800 Liberty. My family said – ‘these people can really do well for you. You never used to keep money, you used to eat it. Now you’re the one saving’.”

Like Mamie, many of the women in USAID’s Advancing Youth adult program make a living by selling things in the market. During the day, they spread out their wares and hope to make a few hundred Liberian dollars, about 3 or 4 US dollars. Then at night, they go to a local primary school and attend literacy classes. In class, they learn how to sound out and trace letters, and eventually words, until they can read and write simple paragraphs. They learn to recognize numbers, and do basic calculations. And they learn about money management. They learn the difference between principal and profit, how to budget, and how to set aside savings. For many women, learning basic financial management has not only improved the immediate standard of living for themselves and their families, but it has given them the confidence to plan for bigger things.

Mamie wants to use her savings to become a nurse someday. Another participant, Jacqueline, says that she’s saved so much that her boyfriend is now coming to her for loans. She’s agreed to lend him some money - but only after setting down the terms in a written contract. “I’ll build a house before he does,” she proclaims. Yet another young woman, Betsy, says that learning to better manage her money has helped her send her two children to school. She doesn’t get any help from the children’s father. “I’m by myself,” she says. “But anything a man can do, I can do.”

There is often a price to pay for depending on others for income. “If a man does everything, he expects you to pay him back with a child,” says Betsy. She says that some women, those who aren’t strong enough to go to night school, are even forced to go on the street. And even if they are not engaged in prostitution, she says that many women have children from multiple partners. As one of Betsy’s friends says, you can eat well that way.

But the young women in USAID’s Advancing Youth classes have bigger aspirations. Mamie, Jacqueline and Betsy all want to continue their schooling. When asked if they think that youth in Liberia will be able to attain their goals for the future, they are upbeat. “Yes, it just takes hard work and planning.” They should know. They’ve taken the first step.

USAID’s Advancing Youth Project is the successor to USAID’s Core Education Skills for Liberian Youth project (CESLY) which ran from August 2009 to October 2011. Advancing Youth continues to work with

the Ministry of Education in many of the communities that CESLY operated in, providing an alternative basic education curriculum including literacy, numeracy, life skills and work readiness skills, together with linkages to training and employment opportunities.

## **6.2. “Even if you know a trade, you need to be educated” - Vocational training isn’t enough**

Peter has always had an eye out for a good opportunity. After the war, he took advantage of the training offered through the government’s Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program to learn mechanics. But when he went to find a job, he was turned down time after time because of his lack of education. “In a sense, a trade is an education,” he says. “But in every aspect of the trade you have to know how to read and write.”

So when Peter heard about USAID’s adult education classes, he decided to give it a try. He works at a local garage during the day, and attends classes from 6:00 to 9:30 pm. Under USAID’s Core Educational Skills for Liberian Youth (CESLY) program, he completed the first level and plans to continue on to the more advanced level two classes under USAID’s Advancing Youth Project.

Some of his friends make fun of him for going to school at his age. “Because of my level, they can mock me,” he says. “I shouldn’t be going to school, I should continue my work” is what they say. But Peter doesn’t pay any attention to them. “Even if you work hard, the people who know how to read and write will make more money than you. I know school will be beneficial for me.”

Peter’s commitment to studying while working is already starting to pay off. Due to his higher level of education, he has been put in charge of supervising other mechanics at the garage. As he gets more proficient at reading, writing and math, he’ll have the skills to move into higher management, inventory, sales and other aspects of running a business. As Peter says, “Even if you know a trade, you need to be educated.”

USAID’s Advancing Youth Project is the successor to USAID’s Core Education Skills for Liberian Youth project (CESLY) which ran from August 2009 to October 2011. Advancing Youth continues to work with the Ministry of Education in many of the communities that CESLY operated in, providing an alternative basic education curriculum including literacy, numeracy, lifeskills and work readiness skills, together with linkages to training and employment opportunities.

## **6.3. Youth Participate in New Project Design**

“In order for us to help one another to stay in school; we need a youth club”. Those were the words of the youth during the Montserrado youth summit held from December 16-17, 2011 at the Hotel Arkade in Monrovia.

Ten youth, aged 20 to 33 years old were invited to discuss their experiences, insights and suggestions during a two-day workshop to feed into the design of the new USAID/ Advancing Youth project. The youth had all previously been enrolled in the USAID/Core Educational Skills for Liberian Youth (CESLY) program, which offered education and livelihood opportunities to youth in Liberia. A central purpose of

## Advancing Youth Quarterly Report 1 - Oct-Dec 2011

the summit was to gather information on issues observed and experienced during the CESLY program, which need to be addressed in Advancing Youth. This included feedback on strategies to boost recruitment and retention and to gather information on youth expectations concerning livelihoods.

Both the CESLY and the Advancing Youth classes take place in Ministry of Education schools during the evening, generally from 6pm to 9.30pm, three days per week. Evening classes are necessary because the learners are largely engaged in economic activity during the day. Although the youth reported that attendance at the classes increased the respect of their peers, retention of youth in the program has been problematic as many find it difficult to study after a long day working. During the Youth Summit, the youth advocated for the formulation of youth clubs as a method to help them to stay together in the program. The attendees at the Summit said that activities such as visits by peers to learners who had dropped out to encourage them to return would increase the retention rate. They also suggested that sports competitions, study activities, social events, community projects, and peer learning support where all methods that would help boost both enrolment and retention.

Attendees also mentioned other aspects of the program that were important for securing their ongoing attendance. The program integrates numeracy with work readiness themes to provide real-life examples to support academic learning. The students highlighted their increased understanding of money and how to handle it successfully was a component of the class which they particularly enjoyed and found relevant. They also discussed the requirement for livelihood training to be integrated into the program, to give them the skills necessary to find employment, and the necessity for flexibility in the courses so that they can make their own choices, rather than be dictated to.

The summits provided an opportunity for soliciting ideas from the learners and ensured their involvement in the design of the new project. Advancing Youth will continue to hold Youth Summits with learners from all counties in which the project operates in order to gain feedback and ensure that the design of the ABE system meets the needs of the youth of Liberia.

## 7. Annexes

A - List of ABE schools/sites operating

B – Montserrado Youth Summit Overview

## Annex A

### List of 49 Schools/Sites Selected for Level 2 Preparation Courses

County	District	School	
<b>Bong</b>	Fuamah	Dobli Island Community School	
		Lawana Public School	
		Pentecostal Public School	
	Kokoyah	Cammue Donkpoh Public School	
		Dolobia Public School ( <b>2 sites</b> )	
		Gbarta Public School	
	Panta-Kpaai	Corporal G. Woah Elem./ Jr. High Sch	
		Garmu Public School	
		Dolokelen Paye Elementary School	
		Shankpoway Public School	
	Suakoko	Flomo Wenneh Elementary School	
	Zota	K. Diabolo	
	Panta Kpaai	Kpanyah	
<b>Lofa</b>	Foya	KpaKio Public	
	Kolahun	Massabolahun	
		Savalahun	
	Salayea	Gbanway	
		Sucromu	
		Telemu	
		Yarpuah	
	Zorzor	Yeala	
	Voinjama	Balakpalasu	
		Lawalazu	
		Luyeama	
	<b>Montserrado</b>	Careysburg	C. H. Henry Public
		Left Bank	Euphemia Barclay Elementary School
Harrisburg Public School			
William G. Kpollah			
Greater Monrovia I		Gaye Town Elementary School	
Greater Monrovia II		C. D. B. King Elementary School	
		Logan Town Public School ( <b>2 sites</b> )	
		Point Four Elementary School	
Right Bank		Kpallah Elementary School	
		Arthington Public School	
Todee		Goba Town Elementary School	

County	District	School
Nimba	Bain-garr	J. W. Pearson
		Tondin
	Saclapea II	Gbahn
	Gbehlay-Geh	Karnplay
		Kialay
	Sanniquellie	Gbapa
		Gbobayee
		Sopea
	Yarpea-Mah	Borsonnor
	Twah River	Behplay
		Garplay
		Kpairplay

## Annex B

# Montserrat Youth Summit Overview

December 16 and 17, 2011

## Purpose

The main purpose of the summit was to gather general information on issues that need to be addressed in the new Advancing Youth Program, obtain feedback on recruitment and retention strategies, and gather information on expectations concerning livelihoods.

## Participants

Principals and teachers from NFE schools in Montserrat County recommended 10 learners to attend the summit. There were 6 women and 4 men, ranging from 19 to 28 years old. Eight completed Level 1, and 2 dropped out.

Note: We will conduct additional summits with youth from Lofa, Bong and Nimba. Then we will compile all results. Both summits are scheduled for mid January 2012.

## Summary of Montserrat Results

**Most learners were recruited by a trusted person.** These included family members, community members and teachers/principals. Most required convincing by the recruiter that they weren't too old, would benefit from the program, etc.

**The biggest un-met expectation was that they would learn a trade** followed by the misconception that there would be a stipend. Learners emphasized that learning a trade or skill while studying would help retention.

**Expectations that were met were both social**, such as increased respect from peers and ability to talk in public, **and educational**, such as learning how to read, write, spell, save money, take care of surroundings, etc. Money management was highlighted as an important skill learned, with one learner reporting that she had saved over \$400 from her small business due to the skills learned in the program.

**Mixed levels of learner ability was one main reason for learner drop-out.** Some found the material too hard and the pace too fast, while others said that some had dropped because the level was too low.

**Having good teachers was another key reason for either attending or dropping out.** Learners wanted teachers to be more patient, spend more time on reading in class, review their homework,

follow up on lessons, and not to go on to new material until everyone had understood. Some were also told by teachers not to write in the workbooks. Some learners said they would like more class time, ie. 4 or even 5 times a week.

**Attitudes of men in their lives had a big impact on women’s interest in learning and attendance.**

Some women said that they joined because their partners threatened to leave them for educated women, others had friends who left the program because their spouse prevented them from attending night classes.

**Poor lighting inhibited learning**, either because the lights weren’t working or because the school principal was requesting money to fuel the generator. Learners suggested solar lighting.

**Learners liked the idea of forming clubs for peer support and being responsible for others.** Ideas for club activities included visitations (to encourage learners who weren’t coming), sports competitions, study activities, social events, community projects, recruitment, tracking attendance. They wanted T-shirts or IDs as ways to identify and unite the clubs.

**All learners were engaged in income-generating activities; most were selling.** Selling was perceived as the easiest thing to do as it does not require much capital and one can earn something every day. Other activities like farming take time to get income, or require skills like mechanics.

**Most learners wanted to enter a trade; their ideas of trades were dictated mostly by what they saw in their communities/ what their friends did.** A few learners said they wanted to go to secondary school; three female learners wanted to become nurses (2) and journalist (1). Learners noted that they would not be able to earn money while learning a trade, which was a major barrier.

## Potential implications for project design:

1. As we know from other assessments and field information, lighting solutions are vital. So the upcoming pilot of different solar options should give us good information on viable solutions.
2. Level 2 curriculum materials do address some of the learner’s concerns, ie. providing ways for teachers to address multi-level classes, using the workbook in class as well as at home, instructing teachers to review homework, having teachers stop and assess student learning. Curriculum development will have to continue to take these issues into consideration, and we’ll have to follow up and reinforce in teacher training.
3. More attention must be paid to recruitment strategies, such as youth campaigns, involving community leaders, ensuring buy-in from families and communities. We must ensure good orientation to learners and teachers, so that there are no misperceptions concerning stipends and access to vocational technical skills training.
4. Youth clubs could offer a good opportunity for learners to take a more pro-active role in their own learning and should definitely be piloted.

5. Integrating livelihoods opportunities at an early stage will help recruitment and retention, but learners must be exposed to a wider variety of occupations and income-generating options. Learners will also require some source of income while they are in training.

## RAW NOTES:

The following includes questions and responses as noted during the summit, as well as a table summarizing responses during a discussion on livelihood options.

### How did you hear about the classes?

Family members (3). One woman's cousin who was in primary school where night classes were held; one man's sister who had heard about it in the market; one man's wife convinced him to go.

Community members (3) One ex-combatant who was taking voc-tech heard through a friend; another woman from a member at church; another woman from someone in the community.

Principal, teacher (3) or current student (1). One man through a friend in the class; 2 women from school principal; one market woman from teacher who kept coming to convince her.

### What did you hear that attracted you to the program? (3 groups)

- It's free (2 individuals mentioned in intro)
- They said I would learn a trade (came up in 2 groups)
- Learn to read and write (but husband a challenge said he'd leave if she learned book)—came up in all three groups
- To learn trade, you need book
- Spelling
- To be able to talk, express yourself
- Platform for further education, ie. JSS
- Add value to you in the society
- Placement and training (it can make you to be a driver)

### What did you expect?

- Learn how read, write, spell
- Talk in public
- Learn a trade (soap-making, sewing, driving)
- Expected to have good teacher; teachers on time
- Make friends
- Reading books
- Good lighting system
- Free copybook and pencil
- Small stipend
- To be useful in society; to be seen like others
- Help prepare for JSS

### **Were your expectations met?**

- Yes, read small and write and discuss other things
- But hard to spell and pronounce
- Didn't get as much reading as they wanted
- No trade; people even came to take name (made some drop); not a driver, as expected—came up in all three groups
- After 9 months trade will be coming, but none came
- No stipend
- Problem with Taa Bora lights
- Problem with one teacher not coming because lived far and salary small
- Thought there was money for projects that was diverted
- Can copy notes and exchange numbers with friends
- Helped me be somebody among friends

### **What do you remember most? Benefits?**

#### Women:

- Write, recognize letters
- Money management—how to save, don't mix principal and profit
- How to encourage customers
- Spell market-related words
- Learned more about how to keep surroundings clean, take care of their families
- Divide sums

#### Men:

- He encouraged others to come
- Learners are reason for program
- Teachers are there to guide them
- Knows the difference between illiterate and literate
- Know numbers, ie. cell phone
- To go to work on time
- How to plan, apportion time and money

### **Challenges and Why left? (note—in one class out of about 50 students, only about 20 remain)**

#### Women:

- No financial support to take care of domestic needs
- Nobody to help with lessons at home
- Ashamed, if friends laugh at them in class
- Lessons too many or too hard, ie. Sonie's story too hard
- Husband jealousy
- Expectations not met
- No interest

- Too much domestic work to take care of children and husband
- Need to do farming work and get income from it
- Transportation
- Had to pay for gasoline for generator (but program was supposed to be free)
- Some teachers weren't good—wouldn't answer questions, don't have patience
- Some say lessons are below their standard

#### Men

- Principal made them pay for gas money for generator
- Boss sent person on assignment so couldn't go to class
- No transportation to get to classes
- No way to study at home because no light
- Number of days isn't enough—better to go 4 times a week like prep course

#### **Why left?**

##### Men:

- Left for job with income
- No stipend
- Some women got pregnant
- No family support

#### **Why stayed?**

##### Women:

- Have mindset and are committed
- Husband said he'd leave if woman wasn't educated
- Others experienced family break-up because man left for college graduate
- Stay to see the end—don't know what it is
- Liked teaching, good facilitators, follow them at home
- Disliked irregular lighting situation, pay for gas for generator

##### Men:

- To continue education
- Add value to them, got more community respect, can interact more freely with peers
- Will provide job opportunity at the end of the day
- No parental support, so this opportunity to change their lives
- In Liberia, people don't respect you if you don't know how to read and write
- So others won't manage money for you
- Family support, little brothers and sisters help teach lesson
- Free schooling

#### **Group discussion:**

What kinds of people should come to the program?

- Those who don't know how to read and write
- People who want to go to school but don't have money
- Vagabonds
- Youth up to 30- 40

What should learners do to be successful?

- Encourage others and peer teaching
- Pay attention to lesson
- Ask people to show you if I don't know
- Put what you are learning into practice
- Depends on your seriousness
- Strong to stand up against opposition—friends making fun of me but I go anyway

Role Plays—recruitment strategy

- Friends should encourage each other
- Myself, I'm in the program (ie. role model) . Be an example for others.
- Visitation to houses
- Share materials like books, etc with others
- Should bring a trade, skills
- Emphasize that they can get FREE materials, copybook, pencils, reading materials
- Emphasize that you aren't too old to go to school—lots of older people in school
- Suggestion from Varney – do drama for community? Yes. Show movie? Yes.
- Lady teacher should counsel man to come to school, too, so not jealous
- Suggestion from Marcus—bring together whole community at once so men don't object
- Suggestion from Moses—teacher to meet with boss to give leave
- Suggestion from Charles—public recognition of families to give support
- Suggestion from Varney and Paye—use influential people

### **Retention Strategy (7 things that will help people stay)**

#### Men

1. Provide materials (again, idea that there would be sewing machines but nobody brought it)
2. Provide stipend (rumor that we'd get a certain amount every month)
3. Train people in skills areas
4. Better teachers
5. Success in class will make us stay
6. Do things together, extra sessions
7. No gas fee
8. Treat people at their levels, ie. if you already know how to write don't teach us again

#### Women

1. Need lighting—same issue of paying for gasoline
2. Adding trade school but bring along with classes, don't wait until the end

3. Good teachers—patient, paying attention to them
4. Better curriculum—ie. was too easy for some, more things added in the curriculum—science, other subjects. Others say lessons are hard
5. Teacher salaries to be paid on time so they can come to class
6. More school materials. Need bag to carry materials
7. Separate out learners who are ahead from those who are behind. (Rolling enrollment?? Did new people keep coming in?)
8. More time to practice
9. Individualized attention
10. Study class on other 2 days

Suggestion from Marcus—orientation process to ensure that there are no rumors

### **What we can do for each other to help people stay?**

#### Women

1. Organize dramas to reach out to community to recruit
2. Have T-shirts to identify ourselves (we can collect \$\$)
3. Do visitations—individually and collectively—if others don't come to class
4. Helping in times of need—if you have copybooks you can share, collect \$\$ in times of bereavement
5. Games and activities to encourage attendance. Form kickball teams
6. Teaching one another
7. Encourage each other, for example advice to single women

(Note: Issue of childcare didn't seem to be a big issue. Either leave kids, find others to look after, or carry with them)

#### Men

1. Visitation (as individual or group)
2. Form friendships so can account for each other
3. Class leadership to track attendance
4. Personally encourage each other, call those who don't come
5. Class T-shirts to identify as part of program
6. Social gatherings—opening or closing programs
7. Sports teams
8. Collect \$\$ to help each other out
9. ID cards

How to bring together?

- Exchange phone numbers
- Form club to organize

## Income-generating activities

General discussion came up with the following list:

Activity	Doing now	Your friends	Would like to do most	Comments
Selling	5	5	1	Easiest thing to do, no opportunity to learn other skills like driving, with a trade you can't earn while you learn, need immediate cash for house rent, no family support for other things
Soap making		5		
Hair dressing				
Agriculture	1	5	1	Some not able to do or it's too hard. If you put your time into it, it can be good. No schooling, but know farming through father. Cassava, greens. Can earn in one month.  Would you do ag if in rural area? Yes.
Driving		6	1	
Tailoring		8		
Mechanic	2	3	4	Saw opportunity so got training via DDR.
Pastry	1	2		Learned baking through aunty
Masonry	1	4		Both dad and mom died. Saw friend doing, so joined
Carpentry		1		
Shoe repairing		4		
Animal husbandry		5		
Computer work		2		
Bike riding		3		
Phone repair		7		
Tire repair		2		
Nurse			2	
Journalist			1	

Why choose one trade over another?

- Makes money
- I can get there (have transport)

What can the program do to help you reach your goals?

- School materials (more books, copybooks)
- Students must pay attention and you must monitor

- Recommend us to NGOs for skills training
- Good teachers, especially for work readiness
- Life skills like cleaning community, interacting with colleagues, raise children well
- Patient teachers
- Must follow up on absent learners
- Need to know how to read and write
- Need good lighting like solar
- ABE should unify us—have T-shirts, competitions
- Do class project like clean up hospital, people will know us
- Give ID cards
- Learners can track attendance and report by cell phone. Most have phone, but don't use texting
- Increase to 4 or even 5 days a week
- Don't switch teachers
- Strategies for multi-level classes: divide into fast and slow learners so each teacher takes one, divide by level in class and assign different work, give practice according to level
- Don't continue until all understand lesson
- Review homework in class and explain mistakes
- Students need more time to practice reading in class
- Connect lessons to each other, ie. don't start Sonie's Story, then stop
- Teachers say don't write in workbook, doesn't belong to student
- Some teachers made students do entire workbook in one night
- Test took LOOONG
- Graduation card, ceremony