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LIBERIA YOUTH FRAGILITY ASSESSMENT

April 2009

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Prepared by:

Gary Walker, Chief of Party

Jane C. Millar Wood, Ph.D.

Eric Allemano, Ph.D.

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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List of Acronyms

ACE	Agriculture for Children's Empowerment (ACDI/VOCA)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGOA	Africa Growth and Opportunities Act
AITB	Agricultural and Industrial Training Bureau
ALP	Accelerated Learning Program
ALPP	Accelerated Learning Program Plus
ARD	Associates for Rural Development
AU	African Union
BDOTC	Business and Domestic Occupations Training Center
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
BWI	Booker Washington Institute
CAAS	Comprehensive Assessment of the Agriculture Sector
CAC	County Agricultural Coordinator
CBPB	Community-based Peace Building and Development Project
CFSNS	Comprehensive Food Security and Nutritional Survey
COTR	Cognizant Officer - Technical Representative (USAID)
COYELI	Comprehensive Youth Education for Livelihoods Initiative
CVTC	Community Vocational Training Center
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire
CYC	County Youth Coordinator
D&G	Democracy and Governance
D4D	Diamonds for Development
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DP	Development Partner
EFT	Education and Fragility Tool
EPAG	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FLE	Family Life Education
FLY	Federation of Liberian Youth
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program
GOL	Government of Liberia
IAS	Informal Apprenticeship Systems
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILI	Institutional Linkages Initiative
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JPYEE	Joint Program for Youth Employment and Empowerment
LACE	Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment
LCIP	Liberia Community Infrastructure Project
LDHS	Liberia Demographic and Health Survey

LEAP	Liberia Employment Action Plan
LEDFC	Liberia Enterprise Development Finance Company
LEEP	Liberia Emergency Employment Program
LIAP	Liberia Integrated Assistance Program
LIFZA	Liberia Industrial Free Zone Authority
LISGIS	Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LOIC	Liberia Opportunities and Industrialization Centers
LPERP	Liberia Primary Education Reform Project
LRCFP	Land Rights and Community Forestry Program
LTTP	Liberia Teacher Training Project
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guaranty Agency
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MOL	Ministry of Labor
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MRU	Mano River Union
MVTC	Monrovia Vocational and Technical Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIC	National Investment Commission
NPFL	National Patriotic Forces of Liberia
NYP	National Youth Policy
NYPAP	National Youth Policy Action Plan
NYPIC	National Youth Policy Implementation Committee
NYVS	National Youth Volunteer Service
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID)
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSI	Population Services International
RAP	Rural Artisans Project
RC	Resident Coordinator
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOW	Scope of Work
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SSVSI	South-South Vocational Synergies Initiative
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TASMOA	Technical Assistance Support to Ministry of Agriculture
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOCI	United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WAMSSA	West Africa Mineral Sector Social Assessment

WHO	World Health Organization
YFA	Youth Fragility Assessment
YOJT	Youth On-the-Job Training Program

On March 19, 2009 the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj, stated before a UN meeting in New York that:

"Massive youth unemployment and current job lay-offs constitute a real security concern, and the problem is likely to increase if some of the anticipated foreign investment in Liberia, as now feared, will be delayed or scaled down [due to the international economic crisis]."

Ms. Løj warned that "without regular and stable jobs, more Liberians, especially the younger generation, could be tempted by the easy money associated with illegal economic activities or potentially by those wanting to recruit for subversive activities once again." (as quoted in All Africa.com 19 March 2009)

This Assessment is one attempt to respond to these concerns.

Preface

The Youth Fragility Assessment (YFA) was carried out from mid-January to mid-March 2009 by JBS/Aguirre, an international consulting firm with the support of Associates for Global Change (AGC), a US-based consulting group and Subah-Belleh Associates (SBA), a Liberian consulting firm. The assessment is based on: a) a review of documents that survey and analyze Liberia's post-war situation, b) a survey of 600 youth conducted in Monrovia and two smaller cities (Kakata and Buchanan); c) input from half day Youth Focus Groups that brought together dozens of youth leaders in Monrovia and Buchanan; and d) meetings with representatives of local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International NGOs (INGOs), Government of Liberia (GOL) ministries and agencies and a wide range of development partners, including most UN agencies.

The international YFA team was led by Dr. Jane Millar-Wood and Mr. Gary A. Walker. Dr. Eric Allemano served as the Research Specialist with oversight responsibility for the survey and focused on survey results in Section 2 and the health sector. The survey methodology is described in Annex B. The JBS/Aguirre home office Assessment Director, Dr. Roger Rasnake, provided invaluable technical and management support to the team. Ms. Trish Hernandez of JBS International provided technical support to develop the statistical information emanating from the survey.

SBA provided two Liberian consultants, Ms. Myrline Keculah and Mr. Guzesh Subah, who joined the team during its time in the country and provided invaluable insights into youth fragility issues. Three interviewers, Mr. Vandalark Patricks, Mr. Lansana Sirleaf and Ms. Rosine Trinity conducted the 600 interviews. Data was entered and checked by the data entry clerks, Mr. Joseph Bruce and Mr. Reuben Siaka. The SBA sub-contract was managed by Mr. Pewu Subah, a founding Partner at SBA.

Program assistance, survey supervision, research and administrative support were provided by Mr. Gentry Taylor, a local consultant retained by AGC.

The YFA team worked in Liberia under the purview of Dr. Margaret Sancho-Morris, the USAID/Liberia Education Team Leader, and was supported by Ms. Miriam White, the USAID COTR. Dr. Yolande Miller-Grandvaux, Senior Education Advisor, USAID/EGAT Office of Education, worked with the YFA team during one week in Liberia and helped clarify the parameters and focus of the assessment.

The YFA team would like to thank the many people in Liberia who gave freely of their time and expertise to help the team understand the complex realities confronting Liberian youth. Many of the ideas and recommendations in this assessment emanate from them as well as from the insights provided by youth through the survey and the more in-depth youth focus group meetings. However, any errors, omissions or shortcomings in this document are entirely the responsibility of the authors.

Executive Summary

Poverty, ignorance and disease. The three great scourges of the human race stalk the Liberian people, cripple the hopes of young minds and make weary those who struggle against the forces that have so tragically distorted a nation. Poverty in its most extreme and dismaying forms afflicts 48% of Liberia's people. An epidemic of war-fueled ignorance is reflected in the education statistics but given meaning in the eyes of 23 year olds trying to learn the alphabet, in the tears of teenage mothers who did not understand the consequences of their actions and in the blank faces of traumatized youth who are young only in body. Disease kills and maims in great numbers – half die before age 45 and the wailing for those youth for whom fragility has become death forms a cacophony of grief. Yes, Liberia is a fragile state. Yes, its people suffer the consequences of war and the frustrations of dreams denied. A survey has been done – the latest of several. All reveal the unsurprising truth that youth really do not demand much. In fact, they simply wish for a normal life – the kind of life that comes with access to food, shelter, education, health care and the prospect of some day earning an income, even a modest one. For many, this is the impossible dream. For the government and its development partners the challenge is to make it possible, soon and for everyone.

A fragile state has been defined as one where “governments and state structures lack capacity and/or political will to deliver safety and security, good governance and poverty reduction to their citizens.” Liberia fits this definition of a “fragile state” since, despite having the requisite political will; it lacks the capacity to deliver basic services to its citizens. Unless that capacity is developed soon and the international community continues to bolster the country in the meantime, the fragile conditions in the country risk a return to violent conflict, an eventuality that would threaten U.S. national security interests and produce serious development and humanitarian costs. Education, broadly defined, can help mitigate fragility and reduce the threat of renewed conflict. However, much of the investment in education will be lost if it does not lead to sustainable livelihoods. Education is a vital tool for reducing the impact of fragility, but poverty is the underlying threat that education must confront.

The YFA has assessed the drivers of fragility, considered them in relationship to current realities in the formal and non-formal education sectors and made recommendations based upon the findings of the Assessment Survey, the observations of local leaders and youth representatives and the considerable store of recent analysis contained in documentation produced by the GOL, development partners and others. To a remarkable degree, there is a broad consensus about current needs and gaps. The Minister of Education, local NGO leaders with extensive contacts with youth and YFA respondents told the YFA team repeatedly that youth want to be engaged in a process that equips them with skills that will empower them to earn incomes to sustain themselves and their families.

Many youth expressed their frustrations with activities that lead to certificates but not jobs; with meetings that sensitize them or counsel them but do not give them a way to feed themselves and with well-meaning people, who enter their lives, ask questions, sympathize and then disappear. The clear message from the YFA is that youth want to “Get Ready” for the transition to adulthood by acquiring basic skills, want to “Get Set” by gaining bankable skills in

demand in Liberia and then want to “Go” into the workforce to obtain a sustainable livelihood. The YFA recommends that USAID support this process and not a stand-alone project or series of activities. This can be done by integrating USAID’s assistance into the National Youth Policy Action Plan (NYPAP) framework, by supporting elements of the UN Joint Program on Youth Employment and Empowerment (JPYEE) and by funding a Comprehensive Youth Education for Livelihoods Initiative (COYELI).

COYELI would fund activities that form part of the process of transition from youth to adulthood and from learner to worker. The COYELI contractor(s) would start with the NYPAP/JPYEE framework, review gaps and opportunities, identify where USAID can add value and build synergies within that framework and then articulate a package of parallel interventions consistent with NYPAP goals that will scale up efforts to reach much larger numbers of urban and rural at-risk youth. Some of these efforts would build the capacity of local partners to sustain COYELI initiatives long term, but most support would be provided directly to youth at risk, in many cases through their own youth organizations.

The YFA, as with the USAID 2006 Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Assessment, found that the most frequent request from youth is for vocational skills training. In Liberia, many vocational training centers were destroyed during the war, about 84% of trainers are unqualified, the few functioning training centers have little or no training equipment, government policy in this area is unclear and there is no standardization of instruction or a nationally-recognized system of certification. Training is uncoordinated, much of it is of short duration, it is mostly not linked to market demand and most trainees are on their own after receiving a certificate or, at best, a tool kit. With few entrepreneurial skills and no income to fall back on, many youth end up selling their tool kits and become frustrated and sometimes angry. This is the vicious circle that COYELI must help break. The Government of Liberia (GOL) is well aware of this problem but the Ministry of Education (MOE) has serious internal capacity issues and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) has only about 25 professional staff to address the needs of a youth cohort aged 15-35 that constitutes 28% of the population; about 1 million youths.

In order for youth to enter, especially, the higher vocational and technical areas, they must first be literate and have some basic arithmetic skills. The formal school system has grown rapidly to accommodate the demand for primary education but an entire generation has grown up during the 14 years of war almost entirely without access to education, except in refugee and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. The USAID-funded ALP has helped to close this gap but many ALP graduates also say that after leaving ALP they lack bankable skills. There are, of course, many thousands of others who have yet to benefit from any special programs. The COYELI will need to examine the link between basic education and skills training and consider the comparative advantages and disadvantages of building skills training into the formal academic education system versus leaving it to NGOs and vocational institutions such as the Monrovia Vocational and Technical Center (MVTC).

There is also a critical need for skills-to-work assistance in agriculture and for off-farm rural livelihoods. Only 3% of Liberian youth express any interest in farming, the average age of farmers is now over 55 and urban migration continues unabated. One NGO leader noted that

as soon as youth at his rural training center learn a bankable skill, they leave for Monrovia in hopes of finding salaried employment. Rural skills training without rural retention incentives can actually worsen the rural skill exodus. The YFA has concluded that addressing youth attitudes to farming and rural life is a priority and that the best approach is to combine skills training with incentives and coaching to ensure success in smallholder food crops, in tree crops and in forestry and fisheries.

The YFA also highlights concern for the up to 50,000 artisanal miners engaged in gold and diamond mining. Most of those involved in this difficult work are youths and there is a high concentration of ex-combatants among them. Post-war attitudinal problems, if unaddressed, could be a flashpoint if artisanal miners insist on mining in concession areas controlled legally by large mining companies. Unplanned settlement in and around major mining sites will also exacerbate fragility. Increased basic education opportunities at mine sites will build a foundation for technical skills development and people living adjacent to mines will see more easily the connection between literacy and income earning potential. COYELI should examine how skills training in proximity to artisanal mining sites could upgrade miners' skills or help them to move into different types of work.

In each of the areas cited above, health education and strategies to increase access to health services need to be integrated into COYELI activities. Both in-school and out-of-school youth often have a weak grasp of the causes of disease, nutrition, basic hygiene and sanitation. HIV/AIDS awareness activities are critical but must not crowd out adequate attention and resources for other serious risks such as typhoid, malaria, tetanus, etc.

The YFA has its limitations but it does serve to provide a profile of risk and fragility, a portrait of the realities now confronting youth in Liberia and a set of findings and recommendations that point toward actions USAID could take to use education to mitigate fragility and help ensure Liberia's transition to long-term peace and prosperity.

1. Introduction

The Liberia Youth Fragility Assessment (YFA) Scope of Work (SOW) asks three basic questions: how does education (including youth development) contribute to fragility; how does fragility affect education (including youth development), and how can education and youth development mitigate fragility and promote stability? USAID in Liberia is now moving from relief to development and is committed to addressing the root causes of fragility and conflict. The education sector, according to the SOW, “must address and mitigate the likelihood of return to conflict” by a) providing psycho-social support; b) strengthening safety and security in schools, which includes combating gender-based violence; c) providing livelihoods skills development; d) providing transitional education services to fill gaps; e) building the capacity of NGOs to supplement education service delivery; e) reducing corruption in education; f) working to ensure inclusiveness and equity (e.g., ethnicity, geography, physical disabilities); g) engaging youth actively in reconciliation and reconstruction processes and h) helping youth play leadership roles in society.

Education in Liberia is defined in the YFA SOW as encompassing “formal and non-formal education services” while “youth development” is defined as including “both in-school and out-of-school youth with emphasis on knowledge and life skills education¹, workforce and livelihoods development, civic engagement and protection.” The SOW further indicates that these components should enable youth to make the transition to productive adulthood and that this process includes the psycho-social healing so essential to post-war Liberia.

This Introductory Section explains the concept of fragility as used by USAID and other development partners; links the concept to education by referring to key academic work on the topic and then outlines the categories established by USAID’s Education and Fragility Tool (EFT).² The Introduction then introduces the key drivers of fragility in Liberia and briefly indicates how, in combination, they affect youth and education in Liberia. Finally, the Introduction briefly summarizes key drivers of fragility in health since health was added to the YFA SOW as a sector that both contributes to and can mitigate fragility.

Section 2 presents the results of the YFA Survey of 609 youths. It reveals youth attitudes and knowledge of education, health and other areas and demonstrates the effects of the drivers of fragility on youth. It also complements findings from the youth focus groups that are presented throughout the Assessment and provides context for understanding the comments of various

¹ Life Skills education refers to an interactive process of teaching and learning which enables learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and skills which support the adoption of healthful behaviors. Depending on the setting and the learner population, life skills may provide practical tools and materials on HIV/AIDS prevention, health, human rights and social issues as well as violence prevention, peace building and education for sustainable development. Life skills education is readily adaptable to children and youth in both formal and non-formal educational settings.

² Office of Education, USAID. “Education and Fragility: an Assessment Tool,” September 2006.

stakeholders and analyses in other documents. USAID fragility “domains³” were used to group Survey responses.

Section 3 considers the context for mitigating fragility in light of the survey-based findings in Section 2. It reviews the Government of Liberia’s (GOL) enabling policy environment and examines the programmatic context in light of the GOL National Youth Policy Action Plan (NYPAP) and the UN Joint Program for Youth Employment and Empowerment (JPYEE). It also notes some key initiatives of other development partners.

Section 4 sets out a conceptual framework that can be used both to identify gaps in current and planned education initiatives and to pinpoint opportunities where education can be used to mitigate fragility. The key assumption driving the proposed framework is that a holistic and coordinated process is needed. The process should support the key pillars of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and other major government policies while being effectively and efficiently integrated with other key programs aimed at reducing fragility that focus on education for sustainable livelihoods. One or more new stand-alone projects, no matter how well designed, cannot have the same impact as coherent support for a more unified, national School-to-Skills-to-Work continuum⁴. Section 5 argues that youth first need to “Get Ready” by gaining basic education and life skills, then to “Get Set” by learning bankable skills through vocational, technical, agricultural, entrepreneurial and other skill sets in order to “Go” into the workforce equipped to generate a sustainable livelihood for themselves and their families. Section 5 then suggests options that USAID can consider in the formal and non-formal education sectors, including “youth development”.

1.1 The Concept of a Fragile State and its Implications for Development⁵

In 2004 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) defined a fragile state as one where “governments and state structures lack capacity and/or political will to deliver safety and security, good governance, and poverty reduction to their citizens”⁶. In 2005 USAID developed a Fragile States Strategy⁷ that recognizes that violent conflict threatens U.S. national security and produces serious development and humanitarian costs. Despite subsequent USAID terminology changes, the concepts of fragility and conflict are being used to respond to the programming and funding needs of weak and failed states. Liberia fits the OECD definition of a “fragile state” since, despite having the requisite political will; it lacks the capacity to deliver basic services to its citizens.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ This conclusion is not confined to Liberia. The Morocco Cross Sectoral Youth Assessment Report of December 1, 2007, for example, stated: “One of the most commonly identified shortcomings in the Moroccan youth serving sector is a lack of capacity to deliver systematic, step-by-step development interventions. Most groups’ technical capacity (and funding) is geared towards the delivery of one-off activities or short interventions, rather than multipart sequenced offerings. This is true within both the government and non-government sectors. (p. 50).

⁵ See: Miller-Grandvaux, Yolande Dr., “Education and Fragility: A New Framework”, January 2009.

⁶ OECD, “State Building in Fragile States,” Cooperation Directorate. 2008.

⁷ USAID, “Fragile States Strategy”, Feb. 2005.

1.1.1 Fragility and Implications for Education

Since 1990, the concept of Education for All (EFA) has focused on achieving universal primary education while focusing on access and quality issues. Education in Liberia confronts the same challenges as those in many other developing countries, but there are also more acute difficulties resulting from 14 years of war and from some of the underlying economic and social causes of war. One analysis summarized the main patterns of fragility in education⁸ in fragile states as those shown in Box I.

The types of education-related fragility listed in Box I can obviously be mitigated by effective education interventions designed to address these specific patterns. The challenge is to make such fragility-targeted education country-specific, sub-sector specific and linked to outcomes that optimize the prospects for enhanced stability. Section 4 of this Assessment makes recommendations in this regard for Liberia. The broader conceptual framework within which fragility-targeted education interventions can be programmed has been described by a 2008 study⁹ commissioned by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) to investigate the effects of education on fragility.

The main question asked by the INEE study was: How can the provision of quality education mitigate fragility? The study concluded that education is a resource that can mitigate fragility. It asserted that the education provided by the State is necessary to overcome fragility and that education can enhance social cohesion; reduce the risk of civil unrest and violent conflict and is highly desired by populations affected by state fragility. The study also found that secondary education is effective in overcoming fragility; perceived inadequate educational service often becomes a grievance that exacerbates state fragility; education systems can be a prime site of corruption and are a suitable place to establish transparency; political manipulation of educational provision and content may increase state fragility and peace education can have positive effects on students' attitudes.

These conclusions are reinforced by the findings of this YFA as subsequent Sections will demonstrate. They are also viewed through the USAID EFT optic to ensure that findings are conflict-sensitive and understood in the Liberian context.

⁸ Buckland, Peter, "The Forced Migration Review" as quoted in Miller-Grandvaux, *op. cit.*

⁹ See: Oxford University, Conflict and Education Research Group, www.ineesite.org/educationandfragility.

Box 1: Patterns of Fragility in Education

(Each statement is followed by an estimate of its relevance to current education in Liberia: high, medium or low)

- The inability of states to fund either capital or recurrent education expenditure. **High**
- A weak or non-existent management of service delivery marked by corruption, rent seeking and lack of transparency **High**
- Discrimination and exclusion of specific groups in school have led to blatant inequities **Low**
- Stifled public engagement and schools that are no longer supported by government or parents **Low**
- Government authorities are no longer seen as useful, trustworthy or legitimate by the people **Medium**
- The chronic or post-conflict shortages of qualified teachers who have fled or been killed, or who remain or return but cannot or do not want to teach **High**
- Violence against educators as evidenced by abductions, torture, and murders of education staff, teachers, officials and students **Low**
- Violence taking the place of negotiations in problem-solving processes whether in schools or in education policy arenas **Low**
- The large numbers of war-affected youth, demobilized soldiers and young people who have not had access to or have not completed basic education **High**
- School fees or bribes or sexual exploitation used in exchange for access, retention and performance of students **High**
- Serious under-funding of skills training for youth although it may prevent recruitment into military or criminal activity. **High**
- The weak interface between education development and humanitarian assistance **Medium**
- The neglect of secondary and tertiary education **Medium High**
- The need for adult education programs and accelerated learning opportunities **High**
- Poor or non-existent reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons into mainstream national education systems. **Low**

The USAID Education and Fragility Framework mentioned above facilitates education assessment and programming in fragile states. In September 2006, USAID released its Education and Fragility Assessment Tool (EFT) to operationalize its findings. The EFT “is particularly concerned with issues of legitimacy and effectiveness pertaining to four domains: economic, governance, social and security. The EFT also targets the root causes of fragility and focuses on organized violence, corruption, exclusion and elitism, transitional dynamics, insufficient capacity and public disengagement.” As USAID states, “Each of these are root causes of fragility or conflict that can be addressed through education.” In this YFA the EFT has been applied to the Liberian context within the overall fragility conceptual framework outlined above.

Box 2: Which Youth are “Fragile”?

Some youth fall into two or more categories

- Street youth
- Out-of-school idle youth
- Teenaged mothers
- HIV-affected youth
- Abused children
- Orphans
- Commercial sex workers
- Child laborers (age 15-18)
- Disabled youth
- Inadequately reintegrated Ex-combatants
- Youth with war-induced psycho-social problems
- Youth in households (about 48% of all households) living in “extreme poverty”

1.1.2 Fragility and Health

Like the rest of the population, youth lack adequate access to basic health care services. In addition, most existing services are not “youth-friendly,” particularly in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, including pregnancy prevention, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) treatment and HIV/AIDS-related services. Overall, the health sector remains highly fragile and is only gradually recovering from the destruction of infrastructure, dislocation of health personnel and the massive looting of equipment, drugs and medical supplies. It is not yet attuned to youth needs, despite the opening of new or renovated health centers in various counties.

The health of youth is confronted by several major challenges arising from fragility:

- Post-traumatic stress disorders are common. The demobilization and rehabilitation of former combatants removed their weapons without adequately addressing their mental state. The repercussions include sexual violence and aggressive and violent behavior throughout society. Although a rape law enacted in December 2005 made rape a crime with a maximum of a life sentence for those found guilty, rape cases have continued to rise according to rights groups. Half of reported rape cases are attacks against teenage girls between the ages of 10 and 15.
- The lack of mental health services has made it more difficult to address anti-social behavior and may be contributing to an increase in the consumption of illegal drugs.
- Teen-age motherhood is on the rise. Over one-quarter of girls aged 15-19 have already had a child. Besides the risks of poor health outcomes and possible death, early childbearing is associated with lower educational attainment. This, in turn, is associated with lower earning potential, higher dependency ratios and higher rates of poverty.
- HIV/AIDS is a serious risk to youth. Although youth generally have fairly good knowledge of risk factors and means of preventing infection, high-risk behavior is rampant.
- Weak institutional management capacity and inadequate resources have led to minimal garbage removal services and non-functioning sewage systems leading to the spread of upper respiratory infections and diarrhea, as well as more serious diseases like typhoid fever and malaria. River blindness is also on the rise in rural areas.
- Overall, access to health services remains poor due to wartime destruction of the health infrastructure, severe health human capacity constraints and poverty.

1.1.3 The Youth Paradigm

In Liberia, “youth” is defined by the GOL as those between the ages of 15-35. The government’s rationale behind such a broad definition of youth is that 14 years of warfare have left “over-age youth” ill-equipped to cope in a post-war society. Therefore, the government

has decided to focus resources on this age cohort. The difficulty with trying to target youth in this way is that those who fall within this age range represent a large share of the total population¹⁰. The definition of “youth” is arbitrary and the differences among sub-sets (e.g., those aged 15-18 versus those over age 25; males and females, urban and rural) are probably as great as any common problems arising from their age alone. Further, it is difficult to design a program that benefits only “youth”. Imagine a family where the father is 33 years old, his wife is 36 and they have three children aged 11, 14 and 17. Any project trying to assist the mother and the oldest child this year and then add the 14 year old next year while excluding support to the mother and youngest child would probably create more problems than it solved. The drivers of fragility that affect youth and education do not affect all youth equally and also affect those below age 15 and above 35. Initiatives to address fragility may be designed to focus especially on at-risk youth but many drivers of fragility affect everyone. Some fragility drivers may be addressed more effectively, for example, by using at-risk households as the foundation for program design.

Despite these cautions, an assessment of how the drivers of fragility affect youth and education can be valuable since the age cohort in question faces acute and particular problems because so many came of age during the war and many were combatants. Understanding the interconnections between fragility, youth and education can help improve program design but the limitations of the concept should be recognized and made explicit to avoid efforts to force assistance into a preconceived category. Liberians, like people everywhere, have multiple aspects to their identity: ethnicity, religion, political party, etc. The primary identity of most Liberians is centered on family rather than age and many households are themselves fragile and in need of targeted assistance. In fact, it could be argued that fragile households are a key driver of youth fragility since traditionally the family has been the principal source of security and well-being for youth.

1.2 Key Drivers of Fragility in Post-War Liberia

The key drivers of fragility are summarized below and are grouped by theme according to USAID’s EFT. Not all drivers fit neatly into a particular thematic area. Therefore, each one is classified according to its primary characteristic. The fragile and complex context in which the education sector operates needs to be well-understood in order for USAID to design a strategic and integrated approach to youth and education. The specific implications of these drivers of fragility for education will be assessed in subsequent sections and amplified in light of the results of the youth survey and youth focus group discussions held in February 2009.

1.2.1 Economic Drivers of Fragility

- **Poverty.** Tensions in Liberia are often driven by extreme poverty and linked to the fierce competition for resources. A recent UN report stated that “the high number of unemployed or under-employed youth remains a particular challenge, since they constitute

¹⁰ Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS), 2007, p.8.

a volatile group that could be used by spoilers seeking to undermine stability.”¹¹ A recent report from the International Crisis Group (ICG) states bluntly that the “most serious (risk to stability) is probably unemployment.”¹² The December 2007 Core Welfare Indicators’ Questionnaire (CWIQ) found that 63.8% of Liberians live below the poverty line (1.7 million people) and of these 1.3 million (48% of the total population) live in “extreme poverty,” defined as less than 0.50 US cents per day. Per capita income was estimated as \$221 for 2008. Clearly, improved livelihoods could be a powerful tool for mitigating multiple drivers of fragility.

- Land disputes. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission completed a “conflict mapping survey” in October 2008 and identified land and property disputes as key threats to Liberia’s fragile peace. Several violent land confrontations have occurred in the past six months resulting in several deaths and burned villages. The Eighteenth Report of the UN Secretary-General states the implications of this succinctly: “If not resolved, such tensions and conflicts could be manipulated for political and other motives, particularly in the period leading up to the 2011 elections.” The ICG calls it “the most explosive issue in Liberia today.”
- Size of the youth cohort and high dependency ratio. The Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS) estimates that 28% of Liberians are aged 15-35 and that the urban Total Fertility Rate is 5.2 compared to the rural rate of 6.2. Life expectancy is around 45 years. The high child dependency ratio caused by a high birth/high death rate is a major fragility driver since relatively few adults must care for a large number of children. The war has simply exacerbated this reality by adding more orphans and disabled people to the youth cohort.
- A weak agricultural sector. Most farmers are over age 55 and only 4% of youth indicated any interest in agriculture in a 2006 UNDP survey¹³. Agricultural extension services are minimal. Incentives to enter the sector and opportunities for agricultural skills training are also very limited. At the same time, the majority of youth reside in rural areas; agriculture is the sector with the greatest potential for increasing sustainable livelihoods and agriculture, forestry and fisheries contributed over 61.4% of GDP in 2008¹⁴.

¹¹ “Eighteenth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia” (New York: UN Security Council, February 10, 2009), p. 3.

¹² International Crisis Group (ICG), “Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform”, (London: Report No. 148, January 13, 2009), p. 5. The 2007 LDHS estimated the unemployment rate for all females at roughly 40%, with the rates for those aged 15-19 and 20-24 running at 64% and 46%, respectively. The comparable rate for all males was 22%. For those in the two youth age brackets noted, the rates were 48% and 30%, respectively. Unemployment rates in urban areas were more than double those in rural areas. These numbers are to be treated with caution since unemployment figures vary widely and depend on definition. Other estimates put the unemployment rate as high as 85%.

¹³ These points were mentioned as matters of great concern both by the FAO Country Representative in an interview on February 23, 2009 and by the Minister of Agriculture in an interview on February 16, 2009.

¹⁴ Central Bank of Liberia “Annual Report for 2008”, (Monrovia: GOL, January 27, 2009), p. 31.

- Rising food prices, especially the price of rice (the staple food), can lead to food riots¹⁵ and can be exploited by those with ethnic, factional or other motives. While the GOL has temporarily removed the tax on imported rice and local rice production is increasing, in 2008 rice imports by value represented 61% of all food imports (compared to 46% in 2007) and 15.8% of total imports (compared to 12% in 2007). The fragility implication at the household level is clear when, for example, a secondary teacher earns US\$70 per month while a 50kg bag of imported rice sells for about US\$33, about two weeks wages.
- The impact of a decline in resource transfers from overseas due to the worldwide economic recession¹⁶ (these totaled US\$163 million or 25.8% of GDP in 2006).
- The impact of slower economic growth caused by the global recession. The Central Bank of Liberia predicts real GDP growth in 2009 to slow to 6-7%. This is still a healthy growth rate and is expected to be fueled by the resumption of logging, increased mining activities and a rebound in agricultural production. However, the Central Bank warns that a continued world economic slow-down could depress Liberia's growth further. For example, rubber exports through November 2008 represented 86% of total exports by value while production fell by almost 35% due to ageing rubber trees.¹⁷ Firestone, the major rubber producer, also predicted¹⁸ continuing declining demand and possible further layoffs of workers in 2009 since their largest buyer is the overseas automotive industry whose rubber purchases declined on average by 25% in the last quarter of 2008¹⁹.

1.2.2 Governance Drivers of Fragility

- Weak ministerial capacity. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is a large ministry and its capacity for governance is among the weakest in Liberia. An education policy is still being developed, a definitive organization chart is not available, over 600 ghost workers were removed but there is still no definitive personnel list, information on the sector from the MOE is scanty and incomplete and there are major human capacity limitations that make these weaknesses difficult to rectify. School Management Committees have not yet realized their potential due to a lack of financial and human resources and other problems. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) have somewhat more capacity but their responsibilities are far greater than their ability to address them.

¹⁵ The rice riots of 1979 were widely seen as the event that precipitated the overthrow of Liberia's government and installation of the Samuel Doe government.

¹⁶ A decline is predicted both by the "Eighteenth Progress Report ..." *op. cit.*, p. 4, and by the Central Bank of Liberia, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹⁷ Central Bank of Liberia. *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 40.

¹⁸ Interview with senior Firestone official, February 17, 2009. The world price of rubber has fallen precipitously in the last few months and there have been a few disturbances recently at rubber plantations over layoffs and reduced salaries.

¹⁹ BBC Television Business News Report, March 16, 2009.

- Weak judiciary. Fragility in the judiciary arises from human resource constraints, inadequate funding, equipment shortages, corruption, and problems with case flow management. The latter results in large numbers of prisoners in pre-trial detention for lengthy periods and in conditions of severe over crowding and with minimal health and food services. There have also been scores of prison breaks leaving dangerous criminals to return to the streets.
- Liberia National Police. The ICG describes LNP problems with human resource management, procurement, accounting and logistics as “serious and dire.”²⁰ The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) reported similar problems adding that the LNP “has not yet reached operational effectiveness, cannot ensure public safety and cannot yet carry out even routine patrols without UNMIL support.”²¹ These views were echoed in YFA focus groups with pervasive distrust of the police being evident. Some youth in these groups said there is no point in calling the police after a robbery since the police will “ask the person calling for money for fuel and “tips” but not recover stolen goods or find the culprits, thereby taking the victim’s money and wasting his or her time.”

1.2.3 Security Factors Driving Fragility

- The lack of reintegration of many ex-combatants. The UNMIL reintegration program will be completed in April 2009. However, as UNMIL acknowledges, “many ex-combatants stay connected through local networks and some are involved in illegal activities, including illicit mining and rubber tapping.”²² In addition, the DDR program has been repeatedly faulted for providing short-term assistance that often had no lasting impact as many ex-combatants only received three months of training and a tool kit, many of which were then sold for food. More seriously, some other attempts at reintegration with longer time horizons and direct links to income-producing activities have also failed.²³
- Unstable sub-region. A joint assessment by UNMIL and the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) found that approximately 1,500 to 2,000 Liberian ex-combatants remain in western Côte d’Ivoire near the Liberian border. UNMIL and UNOCI are concerned and have increased their border monitoring as a consequence. UNMIL also has noted “increasing numbers of unsubstantiated newspaper reports” of infiltration of armed men from both Guinea and Côte d’Ivoire, causing public and security forces anxiety. At the same time, elections in Côte d’Ivoire have been postponed and the disarmament process limited, leaving armed Ivorian militias in western Côte d’Ivoire. The death of the president of Guinea in December 2008 and subsequent military coup d’état in that country means that two of Liberia’s neighboring states are very fragile with possible implications for Liberia

²⁰ ICG, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

²¹ Eighteenth Progress Report ...” *op. cit.*, p. 6.

²² “Eighteenth Progress Report ...” *op. cit.*, p 5.

²³ For example, an FAO project for ex-combatants initially worked well with up to 16,000 eggs produced daily. Conflict over how to manage and share project income then led to disruptions and the collapse of the project. The chickens were sold by the ex-combatants, funds spent and then there was a re-emergence of a sense of “ex-combatant entitlement” as they requested more funds from FAO. Interview with FAO on February 16, 2009.

in 2009 and beyond.²⁴ Recent politically-inspired riots in neighboring Sierra Leone's capital of Freetown²⁵ are also a reminder of fragility in that country whose 10-year civil war ended in 2002. All UN troops have withdrawn from that country leaving the reconstituted national police and military to maintain stability.

1.2.4 Social Factors Driving Fragility

- Low levels of social cohesion flow from post-war resentments and tensions; disruptive internal migration; families splintered due to the war; youth seeking instant gratification in urban areas where traditional social controls are weaker; psycho-social problems related to war trauma; an acute sense of entitlement among many ex-combatants; intense competition within many communities for control of externally introduced new assets; negative attitudes and behavior towards women; and disabled individuals sometimes seen as an additional economic burden more than as family members with special needs.
- Low levels of literacy (55%) and a “war generation” that mostly missed attending school during the 14-year civil conflict has produced a generation that is less educated than the one before it.
- Homelessness. An unknown but substantial number of youth survive by living in market places, on beaches or in abandoned buildings and cars. This very fragile youth sub-set is also often involved in petty trading, petty theft, abusing drugs and alcohol and involved in rape and gender-based violence.
- Drug and alcohol abuse. Drug-related crime is reported to be on the increase with cross-border networks that UNMIL notes could also “be utilized for other purposes, including trafficking in light weapons.”

1.2.5 Public (Civil Society) Factors Driving Fragility

- Civil Society capacity constraints. While local NGOs, religious organizations, the media and advocacy groups have modest resources, they are, for the most part, engaged in public discourse. Private suppliers of education and health services are welcomed and provide part of the overall supply of social goods. Government is not able to satisfy demand and the society is used to having non-State actors in these fields. Therefore, public “disengagement” is not a fragility factor in Liberia.

²⁴ “Eighteenth Progress Report ...” *op. cit.*, p 3.

²⁵ From March 14 to 16, shops were closed in the central business district, the opposition political party's headquarters was set on fire, 17 people were injured and the government has shut down two politically-based radio stations for causing incitement to violence.

1.2.6 Corruption Factors Driving Fragility

- Corruption is prevalent in many institutions that impact youth, including the police department, schools (where money or sexual favors may be required for getting good grades) and health clinics. This raises the cost of education and health care services and drives out the poorest of the poor for whom “free services” are not free. Paying bribes to obtain employment is also a problem.

1.2.7 Human and Institutional Capacity Factors Driving Fragility

- A severe shortage of educated, skilled and experienced civil servants, including in the MOE, Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), MOYS and other key ministries. This reality limits the ability of the public sector to deliver basic social services. A shortage of qualified teachers, health care professionals at all levels and technical and vocational teachers limits the ability of government to expand the education sector.
- Poor quality of the workforce at all levels. Many university graduates have difficulty with written English and leave tertiary institutions without marketable skills or education. Many primary and secondary school graduates have only a rudimentary level of education due to the large number of unqualified teachers, inadequate numbers of textbooks and teaching materials and the practice of many teachers going physically to Monrovia to collect wages which can result in their absence from the classroom for up to a full week every month.

1.2.8 Fragility and Organized Violence

- Violent crime. Spectacular armed robberies have riveted the public’s attention and demonstrated the limited capacity and will of the police to maintain order. UNMIL has had to intervene several times to keep order. ICG interviews with police and security personnel in June 2008 have suggested that some of this may be organized by factions seeking to spark a public reaction that would reverberate against the government. At the same time, vigilantism via local self-defense patrols may be another source of violence and greater fragility since some have been known to kill alleged thieves when caught.
- High levels of gender-based violence, including rape. Such violence occurs within households, in the streets and at schools. In youth focus groups young women repeatedly expressed their fears and shared experiences.

1.2.9 Exclusion and Fragility

- Ethnic tensions. There is virtually no exclusion from access to education based on ethnicity. There have been periodic ethnically-based disturbances between the Mandingo and a few

other ethnic groups and there is a legacy of ethnic particularisms from the recent war when many militias were ethnically based but this has not resulted in ethnically-based exclusion from schools.

- **Religious tensions.** Some Americo-Liberians engaged in forced Christianization through the 1970s and there was a religious requirement for public office with Muslims (about 20% of the population) largely excluded from government posts prior to 1980. Christianity is openly promoted in schools and robust evangelism is a widespread phenomenon. Despite this, religious conflict has been minimal and religious tensions, when they surface, are more a by-product of ethnic or land issues than of theological differences. There are sometimes conflicts between traditional religious practices and both Christian and Muslim beliefs.
- **Gender Issues.** Girls are not excluded from access to education. In fact, numerous programs exist to boost girls' enrolment rates and at primary and secondary levels there is virtually no gender gap. Girls are more disadvantaged from traditional cultural norms and notions of gender roles at home and in the workforce. The adult female literacy rate is however much lower (40% vs. 70%).

When the full range of risks confronting Liberia are taken together, it is no wonder that UNMIL has decided with respect to its current police strength of 1,226 not to “undertake any significant reductions in the police advisory strength of the Mission and to maintain all seven formed police units, given their critical backstopping capability, until after the 2011 elections.”²⁶ Similarly, the expected level of 8,225 peace keepers will also be retained through sometime in 2011. In effect, the drivers of fragility are a pressing reality for a well-intentioned but struggling government that, to escape a post-UNMIL collapse, needs to use all internal and external resources effectively to mitigate fragility and offer hope and results especially to youth who, as in most world conflicts, can be either the engine of war or a critical asset for peace and development. USAID can help drive down fragility through the strategic application of education and training assets, thereby helping youth to turn away from the violence, war and terrorism that can so easily spill across borders and even leap over oceans.

2. Survey Findings: Linkages between Fragility and Youth and Education

2.1 Introduction: The Youth, Education and Fragility Survey

The youth fragility survey of 609 urban youths aged 15-35 was conducted over three weeks in February 2009. See Annex B for a description of the survey methodology.

The urban youth surveyed for the YFA reflect many of the characteristics of the general youth population. The sample was evenly divided between male and female. Respondents were divided into three age brackets: 15-18, 19-25, and 26-35. Slightly more than 35% of the

²⁶ “Eighteenth Progress Report ...” *op. cit.*, p15.

respondents were interviewed in each of the first two age brackets; 29% of the respondents were in the oldest age bracket. The vast majority (87%) were never married. Those who had married were mostly in the oldest (26-35) age bracket. Nearly 40% of respondents reported having one or more children. Roughly 7% reported having a physical handicap.²⁷ Eighty percent of respondents reported “yes” to having been a refugee, IDP, or both during the civil war. Most respondents (roughly 80%) had lived in the location in which they were interviewed for two years or more.

The discussion in this section is based primarily on the results of the Survey described above. These results are supplemented by the findings of other surveys recently undertaken in Liberia that address youth issues as well as feedback from two youth focus groups, meetings with NGOs and with development partners. These additional data sources reaffirmed the results of the youth survey and enhanced the understanding of the status and circumstances of youth in Liberia today. Taken together these activities paint a portrait of the youth demographic in Liberia in terms of their current economic and educational circumstances, their perceptions of government and civil society and their aspirations.

²⁷ The survey design specified that handicapped respondents should represent approximately 7% of the sample to represent the assumed percentage of handicapped individuals in the general population.

2.2 Economic Fragility, Youth and Education

2.2.1 The Youth Demographic Context

Box 3: Population Distribution by County²⁸		
County	Population	% Total Population
Bomi	82,036	2.4
Bong	328,919	9.4
Gbarpolu	83,758	2.4
Grand Bassa	224,839	6.5
Grand Cape Mt.	129,055	3.7
Grand Gedeh	126,146	3.6
Grand Kru	57,106	1.6
Lofa	270,114	7.8
Margibi	199,689	5.7
Maryland	136,404	3.9
Montserrado	1,144,806	32.8
Nimba	468,088	13.4
River Cess	65,862	1.9
River Gee	67,318	1.9
Sinoe	104,932	3.0
TOTAL	3,489,072	200

Understanding Survey results and the linkages between the drivers of fragility and youth and education requires a grasp of the broader demographic context of “youth” as a distinct group in Liberia. Liberia has a very youthful population. Children 14 and younger constitute slightly more than 47% of the population.²⁹ Youth, officially defined as those individuals between the ages of 15 and 35 years, comprise roughly 28% of the population.³⁰ This means that 75% of Liberia’s population is under the age of 35, with the median age being 18 years.³¹ Just under half of the population is male. Youth (ages 15-34) are 25% of the total rural population and 33% of the urban population.

With the exception of those under age 5,

virtually all children and youth in Liberia were traumatized in some way by the 14 years of civil strife. Many are ex-combatants who, for various reasons have yet to reintegrate fully into society.

As shown by the Survey, the “youth” demographic is not monolithic. Hence, efforts to address youth, education and economic fragility need to be attuned to a broad range of circumstances, including youth in- and out-of school, youth at home still supported by parents and youth married/unmarried (and often un- or under-employed) with families of their own, youth who have a basic education with literacy and numeracy skills and those who do not, youth who have a marketable skill and those who have none. The question of what type of education program is needed for whom, how, where and when it is offered and by whom has multiple, and complex, answers.

The 2007 LDHS conducted by the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) provides considerable data on youth sub-groups. Monrovia is the most densely populated area in the country. This concentration of youth creates particular needs and

Box 4: Population by Age Group (2007)	
Age Group	% of Total Population
0-14	47.2
15-19	8.0
20-24	7.9
25-34	12.2
+ 35	24.7
Total	100

²⁸ Source: GOL “2008 National Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Results”, p.6.

²⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>.

³⁰ The LDHS notes that there is an “implausibly large drop-off” between ages 10-14 and ages 15-19. This may be a result of the interviewers underestimating respondents’ ages. GOL, Liberia Demographic and Health (DHS) Survey 2007, p. 8. Also, while national policy defines “youth” as between the ages of 15-35, the DHS Survey had its “break” point at age 34. Thus some of the percentages above are approximate.

³¹ LDHS, *op. cit.* 2007.

demands in the capital city for both health and education services. Three counties - Montserrado, Nimba and Bong - account for 56% of the total population. The population of Montserrado (including Monrovia) has more than doubled since 1984 while that of a number of other counties has steadily declined, reflecting a strong pattern of urban migration. Dense populations are also found in Margibi, Maryland, Bomi and Nimba counties where infrastructure is better and considerable mining and agricultural activity is undertaken. Sparsely populated areas such as Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, River Cess, River Gee and Sinoe have limited physical infrastructure and social amenities and thus few employment opportunities. There are only 18 urban areas with populations of 5,000 or more people. These demographic realities have implications for developing a quality and equitable education strategy and should be recalled by USAID when targeting youth sub-sets for fragility mitigation initiatives.

2.2.2 Youth, Education and Employment

Youth are aware of, and sensitive to, the issues of education and unemployment, both of which are intertwined with economic fragility and poverty. Youth who participated in the focus groups and NGO meetings noted that few sustainable employment opportunities are available for young people. They appreciate the importance of education as a pre-requisite to improving their employment options.

Seventy percent of youth in the survey identified “education and skills” as the most important factor in getting a job. Ninety percent stated that education and training were “very important” to earning money. Ironically, they also cited the lack of relevance of formal education in Liberia and the inadequacy of short-term training programs which had no link to sustainable livelihoods. In this regard, they noted the many job training programs that had been offered in recent years by NGOs and development partners had effectively led nowhere because the training was insufficient and/or inappropriate for the actual job market in Liberia. Youth interviewed repeatedly stated that there was virtually no follow-up or support (e.g. career counseling, mentoring) for youth once the training was completed. Interestingly, nearly 50% of youth in the survey thought that school in Liberia prepared youth for jobs “very well” while another 34% thought it prepared youth “somewhat”. Areas suggested for future job training included agro-processing, tourism, driving, tailoring, and soap making. Youth also suggested that internships and mentoring programs should be an integral part of education and programs to enable youth to obtain practical job experience.

The youth survey offered insights into issues of youth, education and economic fragility. Roughly half (297) of all survey respondents indicated that they had an occupation (job) of some kind. The majority with jobs were involved in petty trading. Many worked, for example, as “wheelbarrow boys” who sell both food and non-food products from the wheelbarrows they push around the city streets. About 24% (72) of those with jobs indicated that they had a vocation or trade. Hairdressing, auto repair, masonry and carpentry were the trades named most frequently. A quarter of those with jobs said they worked in the formal sector working in offices, commerce and communications. Twice as many men than women were engaged in office work while the situation was reversed in the case of commerce and communications where twice as many women were employed in that sub-sector. Forty percent of those with an

occupation also reported that they had attended school so the link between school and income was apparent for some.

In terms of finding work, both survey respondents (26%) and focus group participants noted the importance of the “who know you” (connections) system. A few respondents said that a “bribe” was often expected to be made in connection with getting a job. Eighty two percent of survey respondents stated that jobs in Liberia were “very hard to get”. Only 18% of respondents indicated that they had been required to work without pay since the end of the war. Of these youth respondents, 62% were male.

Of the 51% of youth in the survey who had no occupation, the majority (58%) relied on their family for support. Overall, 57 % of youth interviewed said that they received no financial help from anyone. Twelve percent indicated that they received financial assistance from relatives abroad while 22% of respondents received assistance from their families. In terms of living accommodations, roughly one-third of the youth interviewed rented a room, 44.5% reported living with family and 12% with friends. Two-thirds of those renting a place paid US\$10 or less per month for rent. Only 2% of respondents reported living “on the street”. This small percentage may not be representative of the entire population.

The survey and the outcome of focus groups do not represent the views of the largest segment of employed youth, i.e. those who work in agriculture, because the Survey was only conducted in urban areas.³²

Primary education in Liberia is officially free. As a consequence, many primary school age children enroll in school. However, as noted earlier, the elements that contribute to a quality education - sufficient classrooms, well-trained and adequate numbers of teachers, the availability of textbooks and other learning materials, etc. - are in short supply. Hence, poverty limits youth’s access to quality education. As was stated in the Buchanan focus group, “There is only one high school in the whole county (in which Buchanan is located) and schools are not supported in terms of materials and qualified instructors.” Moreover, internet and communication services are not readily available for young people. In sum, the physical and institutional infrastructure of the education sector is impoverished and hinders access to education.

Poverty affects access to education in other ways. Many youth missed the opportunity to begin and/or complete primary school because of the civil war. They are now too old for primary school but there are few free alternatives that can provide them with a basic education. Secondary and tertiary institutions are not free and poor youth cannot afford the costs (either direct or opportunity costs) of continuing their education. The Survey questionnaire at the end asked youth informants if they had any additional comments. A large number responded that the government (or development partners) should provide free education and training programs for all youth.

³² The Scope of Work for the LYFA specified that the survey and focus groups were to be carried out only in urban areas.

Data from the LDHS affirmed the link between poverty and access to education and comments from the survey respondents. The lowest two wealth quintiles for both males and females had the highest percentage of people with “no education”. The proportion of females with no education decreases from 77% among those in the lowest wealth quintile to 28% among those in the highest wealth quintile. The two lowest quintiles also had lower completion rates for primary school and substantially lower rates for transition to, or completion of, secondary school or higher for both males and females.

The survey intentionally sought out students to interview to gain an understanding of their education and/or vocational (skill) training experiences. Eighty-seven percent of the youth interviewed currently, or at some time in the past, attended school. Of the 75 youth in the survey who had never attended school, 60% were female. A variety of reasons were cited by youth for never attending school including the war/conflict (10.7%), family responsibilities (14.7%) and cost (4%).

In terms of years of schooling completed, nearly a third of the sample had completed junior high (grade 9), 29.8% had completed high school and 20% had at least begun their university education. Forty percent of those attending school also reported having an occupation. Of those who had tertiary education experience, business and social science, law and literature were the most frequently cited areas of study.

With regards to vocational skill training, 28% of respondents had attended skill training programs. The most frequently cited skill areas were: masonry/carpentry (11.5%), hairdressing and tailoring (each 13.3%) and auto repair (15%). “Other” types of training were cited by 28% of respondents. Slightly more males (53%) than females (47%) had participated in vocational training programs with the choice of training programs following traditional patterns along the gender divide (e.g., males taking auto repair and masonry courses and females taking tailoring and hairdressing courses). Two-thirds of the respondents who took skill training programs reported that they lasted up to six months (28.6%) or up to one year (35.1%). Seventy percent of those in training reported completing their programs. Unfortunately, more than half of the trained respondents (54%) reported that their training did not lead to paid work.

A small percentage of respondents (17%) indicated that they had been an apprentice. While the numbers were small, the specific types of apprenticeships most frequently cited were masonry/carpentry, hospitality/service and hairdressing. The duration of apprenticeships varied from one month to a year or more. About one-third of respondents who had undertaken apprenticeships reported durations of up to one year. Fifty-six percent of respondents who had undertaken an apprenticeship reported that it led to paid work.

In sum, youth have had some access to education but it has generally not been of high quality, has not met the test of relevance, especially for older youth, and has been free only at the primary level, thus making it very difficult for overage youth to participate.

2.2.3 Corruption

The Survey explored youth perceptions of corruption overall and with respect to teachers demanding money from students. Male and female respondents felt almost equally that corruption is increasing in Liberia. While 62.6% saw corruption increasing, 14.3% believed it was decreasing and 8.6% said it was the same or did not know (14.5%). Relatively few respondents reported that they were often or sometimes victims of corruption (15.8% and 17.7% respectively). Slightly over half declared that they had “never” been victims of corruption (50.6%). Male-female differences were negligible. It is possible that in responding to the second question, the respondents may have conceptualized corruption as primarily a high-level affair among politicians and business people.

According to the EFT, corruption can be an educational issue when teachers or principals demand payment from students for good grades, learning materials or the right to take an examination. Similarly, sexual exploitation of students by teachers is another form of corruption in education. Respondents were asked, “How serious were/are your teachers in trying to help you learn?” Despite anecdotal evidence of teachers demanding money from students, relatively few of the survey respondents agreed with the statement that teachers “Didn’t try very hard and mostly tried to get money from us.” Of the 527 respondents who were in school or had ever been to school, only 18.4% agreed with the statement. Of these, nearly 60% were male.

In conclusion, the survey presents evidence that urban youth in Liberia are very aware of corruption and perceive that it is getting worse. However, few respondents seem to feel that it affects them personally, either in general or in a school setting.

2.2.4 Civic Engagement

Civic engagement was probed in the Survey to measure a sense of “belonging” to a community and its institutions since this is central to the idea of worsening youth fragility.

Box 5: Indicators of civic engagement used in the survey	
Personal involvement in organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership in organizations; - Active organizational membership in terms of taking a leadership role or receiving training to support organizational functions; - Frequency of participation in organizational activities; - Interest in expanding or diversifying organizational membership.
Perceptions of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Views of the quality of governmental efforts to improve the lives of citizens; - Voting in an election.
Openness to diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Friendships with members of other ethnic groups.

Organizational membership. Churches were the type of formal organization with the largest membership among respondents. Of the 432 respondents (71% of the sample) who stated that they were members of a church, 55% were female. A much smaller number (9.5%) said they were members of a mosque. For mosques, the respondents answering in the affirmative were

mainly male (38, compared to 20 females). Few respondents stated that they were members of secular organizations. Overall, 25% of males and 20% of females claimed membership in an organization of any type.

Box 6: Organizational Membership	# Males	# Females	Total
Political party	24	11	35
Sports team	50	18	68
International club (ex. Rotary)	0	0	0
Women's organization	3	28	31
Youth or student group	35	26	61
Other type of organization	19	16	35

Only in the cases of sports teams and youth or student groups did as much as 10% of the sample claim membership in an organization. Overall, the majority in these categories was male, except in the category, "Women's groups." None claimed membership in an international club.

Active organizational membership. Less than a quarter of the sample that was a member of an organization claimed to have held a leadership position. The responses were fairly evenly divided among males and females, with males showing a slightly greater tendency to have had a leadership position. About 25% of men and 22% of women received some training from organizations where they are members. Those respondents who stated that they were members of an organization generally claimed to participate actively (67%). Women were likelier than men to participate actively (71% versus 63% respectively). Of those respondents who were not members of an organization (about 30%), very few expressed interest in joining an organization.

Political engagement. To assess their degree of political engagement, respondents were asked if they had voted in the 2006 presidential election. Slightly more than half (53.1%) voted (57% of males compared with 49.2% of females).

From the perspective of age groups, the oldest group (ages 26-35) had the largest number and percentage of voters (81%). Respondents aged 19-25 voted to a lesser extent (74.1%). Among the 15-18 year-olds, only 9.3% voted. In theory, this would mean that 9.3% of voters were 18 years of age because one must be at least 18 to vote in Liberia. However, there is uncertainty about people's ages and it is not impossible that under-aged persons managed to register to vote in 2006. By far, the most frequent reason cited for not voting was "other."

Acceptance of diversity. Ethnic cleavages exacerbated the Liberian civil war. For that reason, Survey respondents were asked if they had close friends among other ethnic groups and if they spoke a Liberian language other than their own. The sample was ethnically diverse, although Basse, Kpelle and Lorma speakers made up 68.6% of the sample. Speakers of other languages (Gio, Kru, Mandingo, Mano and Vai) were between 2.3% and 7.7% of the sample. The category "other language" contained 11.3% of responses. Overwhelmingly, the participants affirmed having close friends in other ethnic groups (over 95% of male and female respondents said "yes" to the question). In contrast, 75% of respondents with almost equal numbers of males

and females agreed with the statement, “There are still big tensions among different tribes in Liberia.” The fact that the sample was exclusively urban with many respondents having migrated from elsewhere might explain the apparently higher level of friendships among different ethnicities while individuals noted that ethnic tensions are still a major problem.

Conclusion. The respondents have low levels of organizational membership and participation outside of religious organizations and seem little motivated to expand their range of organizations. On the other hand, the responses suggest that participants frequently participate in church or mosque activities. While acknowledging the existence of ethnic tensions, the respondents largely affirmed having close friends in other ethnic groups.

2.3 Health, Fragility and Health Education

Poor health care affects youth fragility in several ways. Most importantly, it affects their ability to learn and to work. If youth are frequently ill, they are often absent from school or work. As a result, they risk repeating grades or dropping out of school altogether. For those who work, illness means loss of income for the self-employed (half of both male and female Survey respondents work in the informal sector) and for the 13% with formal sector employment. Unplanned pregnancy becomes an obstacle to education and work for women.

2.3.1 General Health Knowledge

The Survey attempted to develop a profile of general health knowledge among youth. Responses were classified by level of education.

- Knowledge of germs as vectors of infection and disease. Respondents at all educational levels had a high level of knowledge about germs as vectors of disease or infection (percentages of correct responses ranged from 74% to 100% for both males and females). The only differences of note were the awareness of stress and depression as causes of illness where respondents with at least 4-6 years of elementary education were better informed. The “other” causes were given spontaneously by the respondents. Almost no respondents cited witchcraft as a cause of illness.
- Knowledge of sources of malaria. Female respondents generally had a better knowledge of the sources of malaria than males. Only 41.7% of male youth with 1-3 years of elementary education was able to identify mosquitoes as a source of malaria. Fifty-eight percent of this male group stated that they did not know where malaria comes from. However, 86.7% of females in this education group correctly identified mosquitoes as a source of malaria and only 13.3% said that they did not know. Knowledge of malaria improved dramatically among those with more education. In that case, 100% of females correctly identified mosquitoes as causes of malaria while male scores reached 96.6%.
- Knowledge of how to protect oneself from malaria. Respondents were asked to cite two ways to protect themselves from malaria: 1) bed nets, 2) anti-malarial drugs, 3) elimination

of standing water, 4) overcoming witchcraft; 5) “can’t name any means” and 6) “other” means. Bed nets, anti-malarial drugs and elimination of standing water were the most frequently cited choices, with bed nets as the most popular choice. Almost no one chose to overcome witchcraft and few respondents gave “other” means of protection from malaria. Poorly educated males had the least knowledge of malaria prevention. As many as 20% of males with only 1-3 or 4-6 years of elementary education said that they could not name *any* means of preventing malaria. Female respondents with 1-3 years of education were much likelier to cite bed nets than their male counterparts (cited by 80% of females in this educational category compared with 67% of males). At higher levels of education, male and female responses were similar, although more males than females at almost all levels of education cited the elimination of standing water as a means of fighting malaria. The data suggest that greater efforts are needed to inform youth about how to prevent malaria, particularly males with low education.

2.3.2 Knowledge and Attitudes about HIV/AIDS

Calculating HIV prevalence in Liberia has been problematic. In 2003, UNAIDS put HIV infection among adults at 5.9%, while a 2002 Liberian government study estimated 8.2%³³. UNAIDS’s latest calculation is 1.7%. Nevertheless, HIV/AIDS is a serious health problem for Liberian youth because high-risk sexual behavior is common and condom use very low (only half of women and 71% of men age 15-49 know that the risk of getting HIV can be reduced by using condoms³⁴). Only about a quarter of women and a third of men aged 15 to 49 know where to get an HIV test. As for being tested, just 4% of women and 6% of men in this age group have ever been tested³⁵. Ignorance about how the virus is spread underscores the need for much more energetic education and information campaigns. When asked if sero-positive youth should be allowed to attend school with other youth, 73% agreed with the statement, suggesting that most youth did not perceive any danger in mixing sero-positive students with those who are not infected. This result showed a greater degree of understanding and tolerance than in the general youth population, where only about 40% of women aged 15-29 agreed that a female teacher living with HIV should be allowed to continue teaching. By way of contrast, 50% of men in this age group agreed.³⁶ It must be noted, however, that the LDHS covering the general population included less-educated, rural residents, which may explain the difference in responses.

2.3.3 Fertility and Early Child Bearing

For young women, early pregnancy and child care responsibility make education and employment difficult. It is still common to expel pregnant girls from school. Childbearing begins early in Liberia. The median age at first birth is 19.1, which is almost unchanged from

³³ Liberia: “HIV rates lower than feared.” IRIN News 27 August 2007.

³⁴ Liberia 2007 Demographic and Health Survey: Key Findings, p. 12.

³⁵ Liberia Demographic and Health Survey, p. xxv

³⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 166 and 167.

19.2 in 1986. Over one-quarter of girls aged 15-19 have already had a child³⁷. Although fertility has declined over the past 23 years, on average, Liberian women have 5.2 children (women in urban areas have 3.8 children on average, compared to 6.2 children per woman in rural areas)³⁸. Education and economic status are intimately linked with fertility. Women with no education have almost twice as many children as those who have secondary or higher education. Fertility is also inversely related to household wealth. The poorest women, in general, have more than twice as many children as women who live in the wealthiest households (6.5 versus 2.8 children per woman). The survey results showed that while 87% of respondents had never been married, 40% had at least one child (50% in the case of women). Child care poses a problem for those who are studying and/or working.

It appears that many women lack information about contraception and family planning. Visits to health facilities are important opportunities to educate women about their contraceptive options. Almost four in ten women who participated in the 2007 LDHS did not visit a health facility in the year before the survey. Another 25% went to a health facility but did not discuss family planning. Only 36% visited a health facility and discussed family planning³⁹.

2.3.4 Access to Health Care

A very large percentage of respondents stated that they had been ill at some time during the past year and had sought some form of medical care. Almost all respondents reporting illness said that they had gone to a hospital, clinic or pharmacy for care. Almost none said that they had gone to a traditional healer. These responses are probably influenced by the fact that the sample was urban and biased toward Monrovia.

2.3.5 Access to Clean Water and Food

In the area of access to potable water, most respondents (82.4%) said they have access to clean drinking water. Nevertheless, the perceptions of “clean” are subjective.

In the area of food consumption, Survey respondents were asked “How many times each day do you put a pot on the fire to cook?” In Liberian English this means, “How many times a day do you have a hot (or full) meal?” Responses were categorized by whether or not respondents reported having an occupation or not (and presumably the resources for adequate meals). Fifty-two percent of the respondents who claimed to have an occupation stated that they had a hot/full meal “less than once a day”; 43% said they had a hot/full meal twice a day and 5% said they had a hot/full meal three times a day. As for the respondents who did not have an occupation (many were students), 59% had less than one hot/full meal a day, 34% had two hot/full meals a day and just 7% had three hot/full meals a day. In conclusion, a larger proportion of respondents with no occupation had less than one hot/full meal a day or two such meals a day compared to respondents with an occupation.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Key Findings, p. 6.

2.3.6 Health Education

There is little evidence of organized health education in elementary, junior or senior high schools, particularly since most teachers are poorly educated and untrained. School health clubs appear to be an important venue for health education in formal education, with a focus on Family Life Education (FLE), Life Skills Education and HIV/AIDS and STI prevention. In some cases, trained peer educators provided by youth groups such as YASA (Youth Against the Spread of AIDS) conduct health education lessons. However, School Health Clubs exist in only seven of the 15 counties, so many students do not benefit from them.

2.4 Exclusion and Marginalization

2.4.1 Equality of Service Delivery and Opportunity

Early efforts to bring peace to Liberia featured special measures to disarm combatants by offering job skills training in exchange for their weapons. Many were also given tool kits and psycho-social counseling. Civilians who were not combatants have often felt that ex-combatants are a “pampered” group. Respondents were asked if they felt that there had been an equitable distribution of assistance to civilians and to ex-combatants. Forty-seven percent of male respondents felt that former combatants had received “more than their share” of assistance, compared with 54% of female respondents. Significantly fewer respondents of both sexes stated that the ex-combatants had received less assistance than other people (22% of males and 16% of females felt this way). Thirteen and 8% of males and females replied respectively that the former fighters had received “about the same” help as others and 18 and 22% stated that they did not know. In conclusion, respondents tend to view the distribution of assistance as inequitable.

Tensions related to group identity are evident. When asked if they felt that “some persons born in Liberia are not “real” Liberians, approximately half of male and female respondents agreed. Ethnicity was also probed in the survey. Three-quarters of both male and female respondents agreed that “There are still big tensions among different tribes in Liberia.” Just under 20% disagreed with this and about 6 % did not know.

Controversy over obtaining employment was also evident. Eighty-two percent of the sample affirmed that jobs are “very hard to get” in Liberia. Although 90% of both male and female respondents regarded education as “very important” in earning money, and 70% stated that education and skills were the most important factors in getting a job, 26% said that “connections” were the most important way to obtain employment.

The survey explored the issue of labor exploitation by asking respondents if they had ever, since the end of the war, been required by anyone to work without pay. This question was included because of its relation to resentment and alienation that could contribute to youth

fragility. A small but significant number of respondents affirmed that they had been obliged to work without pay (excluding household chores): 22% of males and 14% of females.

2.4.2 Gender

In this context, “gender” is taken to mean male-female relations and their implications for access to education, training and employment. The survey asked questions to elicit views about male and female equity, particularly regarding employment, education and violence.

The respondents were asked whether the statement “Men should have the first chance to get jobs.” was true or false. Fifty-seven per cent of male respondents said that it was true whereas only 33% of female respondents agreed suggesting that; overall, there is considerable sentiment against the idea, although men tend to agree more than women. About 5% of male and female respondents did not know if the statement were true or false.

When asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “Education is more important for men than women,” there was a stark difference in male and female responses. Seventy-two percent of male respondents agreed while only 29% of female respondents supported the statement. An average of 5% of respondents of both sexes said they did not know.

Curiously, when asked to react to the statement, “Women and men should have equal chances to get education and jobs,” close to 50% of both sexes agreed that the statement was true and about 6% of both sexes was uncertain. The results suggest that about half of the youth surveyed do not feel that women should have equal opportunity with men in the area of education and employment.

Overall, the findings tend to support the observations of various studies that indicate that education and professional employment are seen as less important for women than for men. A significant number of female respondents agreed with the traditional cultural gender norms of Liberian society in these areas.

Finally, the survey respondents were asked to express their opinions about the statement, “Women who get raped are often at fault for tempting men.” Sixty-five per cent of male respondents felt that the statement was true, as did 35% of their female counterparts. The respondents seemed quite certain of their response, because less than 1% said they did not know. The reactions of the respondents seem to reflect a persistent tolerance of rape in Liberian society and a view that men and women are not equal in rights. Despite positive strides towards a restored society, sexual violence against women and children remains a central challenge for Liberia. According police statistics, rape, often of girls between the ages of 10-14 is the highest reported crime⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ “Liberia / Sexual Violence” UNIFEED Story, 14 November 2008.

2.4.3 Disabled Youth

The Survey was administered to 42 disabled youth (23 male and 24 female), about 7% of the sample. In addition to the questions posed to all respondents, a special list of additional questions was used to highlight their points of view and special needs. The disabled respondents included polio victims, blind youth and some handicapped by the war.

Many of the disabled respondents have never been to school. Of the 27 who had some formal education, only 19 went beyond primary school. Very few have received any assistance related to their handicaps or were members of an association for handicapped people. Six respondents stated that they beg on the street. When asked what they would prefer to do as an alternative to begging, training and schooling were the most popular choices. Only six out of 47 disabled respondents reported facing discrimination because of their disability.

The disabled respondents appear to be cautiously optimistic about their situation. Seventy-five per cent of them feel that conditions have improved in Liberia in the past two years, 50% stated that their lives have gotten better in this period and 43% replied that the quality of their lives had “stayed the same”. The respondents were less sanguine when it came to reflecting on how much government cared about individuals like them. Eighty-one percent replied, “a little” or “not at all.” Development partners fared slightly better in the eyes of the disabled. When asked how much they thought donors and NGOs cared for people like them, 83% said that these partners cared “some” or “a little” for them.

2.5 Social Cohesion and Aspirations

2.5.1 Perception of Government, Police and Citizenship

The civil war seriously eroded many social institutions as well as the economy. Crime, including armed robbery and rape, are common. Distrust of the police, who are considered ineffective and corrupt, is common. In order to explore general youth attitudes towards the concept of equal rights for all citizens, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “Everyone born in Liberia is a “Liberian” and should have the same rights.” Overwhelmingly, the respondents, both female and male, agreed (90% of both sexes). This partly contradicts the reactions to the statement, “Some people born in Liberia are not “real” Liberians, discussed previously (half the respondents agreed, suggesting widespread resentment against “privileged” groups).

When asked to comment on the statement, “Overall, how well do you think Government is doing to make life better in Liberia”, no more than 7% of the sample said that the Government was doing an “excellent” job. The most frequent reaction to the statement was “Trying” to do a good job, cited by an average of 60% of respondents of both sexes. Twenty-seven percent rated Government efforts as “Good” and 7% as “poor”. When asked whether they felt the Government cared about people like them, male and female youth responded “some” (26%); “a little” (46%) and “not at all” (20%).

When asked what areas should be themes for more Governmental help, respondents were able to make several choices among health, education, employment, housing, agriculture, security and “other” areas. There were negligible differences between females and males. The most popular choice was education, cited by 56% as a priority. Forty percent chose employment and 37% mentioned a desire for more health services. Housing, agriculture and security were each mentioned as priorities by less than 20% of the sample.

The Survey asked youth several questions about settling disputes or responding to crime. Ninety-seven percent agreed that disputes should be settled through peaceful and cooperative means. When asked specifically how they would handle a dispute with a landlord, employer or the “Big Man” in the community, few respondents (18% male-female average) said that they would go to the police. Even fewer would take someone to court (12%). By far, most of the surveyed youth would ask their relatives or elders in the community to help resolve the dispute (63% of both women and men). Less than 5% of the respondents said they would fight back, do nothing or do “something else”. In the case of crime, if the respondents were robbed or attacked, 65% of males said they would go to the police. Seventy-three per cent of females would do so if attacked or robbed. This finding was in contrast to the general suspicion about police effectiveness.

There was a certain willingness to resort to vigilante justice, as 16% of males affirmed that they would organize friends and neighbors to attack a criminal. Thirteen percent of their female counterparts expressed this choice. Thirteen per cent of males stated they would handle a crime problem themselves but only 8% of females were willing to take this personal risk. Less than 6% of the sample said they would do nothing or some “other” thing.

In conclusion, respondents expressed an egalitarian ideal about Liberian citizenship despite resentment against “privileged” groups. The youth had a rather low opinion of overall Government effectiveness and the justice system. Informal and traditional means of settling disputes were preferred over police or court interventions, except in the case of violent crime, when respondents tended to opt for police intervention. Nevertheless, many youth preferred to fight criminals themselves or mobilize vigilante justice. Despite the obvious need for better housing and security in Monrovia, Buchanan and Kakata, the surveyed youth’s priorities for Government assistance were in the areas of education, employment and health.

2.5.2 Community Cohesion and Security

Urban migration was fueled by conflict but is now sustained by youth seeking education and jobs. Most respondents (81%) had been refugees, IDPs or both at some point and the majority was also made up of recent migrants. Twenty-one percent of the sample had been in the city where they were interviewed for one year or less; 40% had been at the location for two to five years and slightly less than 40% had lived in the location for more than five years. Thus a significant portion of the sample was still getting acclimated to living in Kakata, Buchanan and Monrovia, often after having suffered displacement and/or exile. One young woman, aged 15, was taking private lessons from her father so she could enroll in a sixth grade class in Monrovia.

Her problem was that she had been schooled in Guinea, where her family had been refugees. The young woman got her end-of-primary school certificate there but was refused enrolment in a public school in Liberia because she had been schooled in a different curriculum -- in French.

Crime and violence are important indicators of community cohesion. To gauge youth perceptions of personal safety, respondents were asked to comment on how safe they felt in various settings: a) their homes; b) outdoors at night; c) at school and d) in the workplace.

Safety at home. About 70% of all respondents said they felt “very safe” from violence and theft in their homes. Males felt slightly safer than females. Sixteen percent said they felt “somewhat safe” in their homes, with no significant difference between men and women. Eight percent of respondents declared that they felt only “a little safe” in their homes and 6% complained that they were “not at all safe” in their homes. In this last category, although there were just 38 respondents, young women were much more threatened than young men: 9% versus 4% feeling “unsafe” in their homes.

Safety outdoors at night. The respondents generally agreed that it was not safe to walk outdoors at night in Monrovia, Kakata and Buchanan. Only 11% of the sample felt “very safe” walking outdoors in the evening (9% of girls). Twelve percent of respondents of both sexes felt “somewhat safe” outside at night and 23% said that they felt “a little safe.” However, the majority of males and females felt “not at all safe” outdoors at night (54%).

Safety at school. For most of the 259 students included in the sample, safety at school was not much of an issue. Eighty-seven percent of students felt “very safe” in school (91% of females). Less than 10% of either sex said that they felt “a little safe” at school and less than 5% replied that they were “not at all safe” at school.

Safety on the job. Of the 211 working youth who responded to the question, “If you are working, how safe do you feel on the job?” most felt “very safe”. Young working women felt safer than males (65% compared with 53%). Twenty-one percent of both sexes said they felt “somewhat safe” on the job and 7% felt “a little safe.” However, there was a significant sex difference among those who felt “not at all safe” on the job: 17% of young men compared to 8% of young women.

The ALP survey arrived at similar conclusions. Over half (54%) of the respondents in the ALP survey stated that they were unwilling to travel after dark, with those in Montserrado, Sinoe and rural areas expressing the greatest reluctance. Surprisingly, slightly more men (56%) than women (53%) would refuse to travel at night.”⁴¹

It appears, in conclusion, that many urban youth find themselves in a threatening environment. Security outdoors at night was cited as a major danger by more than half the sample and

⁴¹ Karen Tietjen. (2006) “ALP Youth Survey: Potential Demand for and Factors Influencing Youth Participation in an Accelerated Learning Program in Liberia.” p. 61.

workplace threats were a concern to more young men than young women. Home and school, however, were reported to be safe by most respondents.

2.5.3 Youth Perceptions, Attitudes and Aspirations

The survey probed whether respondents were experiencing general improvements in their lives or not and asked about their expectations about the future for the respondents, their families and (eventual) children. In theory, positive responses should be negatively correlated with indicators of fragility, such as pessimism about the country, one's family and self as well as doubts about the future.

Assessment of the recent past. Overall, respondents felt that life had generally improved over the past two years, as 70% of both males and females answered "yes" to the question, "In the past two years, have things generally improved in Liberia? Nineteen percent answered "no", with little difference between males and females. Twelve percent of the sample replied, "I don't know."

Changes in personal and family circumstances. Respondents were asked to reply to two related questions asking whether their own and the lives of friends and families had improved, gotten worse or stayed the same over the previous two years. The respondents were generally positive about their own lives, as 64% stated that their lives had gotten better. Only 5% felt their lives had gotten worse but 30% said their lives had not changed over the period. Less than 2% said they did not know.

As for the respondents' perceptions of how their family and friends' lives had changed over the previous two years, responses were more muted: 40% said the lives of significant others had improved but 5% said they had deteriorated. Thirty percent said that the lives of their significant others had stayed the same and a large proportion, 25% said they did not know.

Short-term expectations. When asked how they thought their lives and those of their families and friends would turn out in five years, respondents seemed quite optimistic: 91% expected that life would get better. Virtually no respondents expected things to get worse or stay the same. Six percent said that they did not know what the future would hold.

Aspirations for self. Respondents were asked to say what they would choose from a list of activities if they could have a wish. The responses of young women and young men were very similar. The most popular choice was to go back to school or continue in school, chosen by 54%. Learning a trade was cited by 17% and finding a job (or a better job) was chosen by 14%. Only 7% said they would choose to leave Liberia and 8% opted for "other."

Aspirations for children. The survey sought to further clarify youths' aspirations by asking about their children, seen as a projection of self. One reason for asking this was to see if they had a clear idea of occupation and to explore perceptions of gender in occupations.

- *Aspirations for daughters.* There were extremely small differences between the choices of women for their daughters' careers and those of men. The most popular choice of both sexes for daughters was teacher or nurse, chosen by 33% of respondents. The next most popular choice was "professional in science, technology or medicine," selected by 17% and followed by "secretary", mentioned by 14%. The options "trade/commercial" and "other professional" were chosen by 10 and 9% of respondents respectively. "Government employee" and "other profession" were chosen by less than 5%. The fact that many respondents did not know what they wanted their daughters to become was revealed by the 12% who said that their daughters would choose their own careers. Gender stereotyping was evident in many of the aspirations, although about 20% of respondents mentioned "professional" types of occupations for their daughters.
- *Aspirations for sons.* As with daughters, young men and women had similar choices of occupation for their sons. "Commerce or business owner" was the most popular occupation, chosen by 22%. The next most popular choice was "professional in science, technology or medicine" favored by 19%. Following that, was "construction, mining or manufacturing worker," chosen by 14% and "other professional", cited by 11%. "Government employee" was mentioned by an average of 10%, although male respondents (12%) were more favorable than females to this category. Unspecified "other" professions were mentioned by 9%. Traditional rural occupations (farmer or fishermen) were rejected: only 2% wished their sons to take up these occupations. Respondents were somewhat more open-minded about letting their sons choose an occupation than they were with their daughters: 14% said they did not know what they wanted for their sons or that only the sons could make the choice in the future.

There was remarkably little difference between the attitudes of males and females, suggesting a certain level of cultural cohesion among Liberian youth in cities. In general, perceptions of self and personal aspirations were positive. The majority of respondents expected the future to be better for them and their significant others. On the other hand, a large proportion of respondents reported that their lives and those of their significant others had stayed the same over the past two years. Respondents expressed a variety of aspirations for their children. While there was some gender stereotyping in the area of aspirations for daughters, professional and technical careers were the choice of a sizeable number of male and female respondents for daughters. As for sons, there was a wider spread of responses among career choices and a somewhat "traditional" bias for "commercial/business owner" rather than careers in technology, science and medicine. These aspirations suggest that there is a strong and growing demand for education and training in Liberia and not meeting those demands could encourage greater frustration among youth.

3. Opportunities and Assets: The Context for Mitigating Fragility

3.1 The Enabling Policy Environment

3.1.1 *The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and Youth*

The PRS outlines the GOL's vision and key strategies for moving from relief to sustainable development in the period from April 2008 to June 2011. The four PRS pillars (Security, Economic Revitalization, Improved Governance, and Improved Infrastructure and Services) are each designed to reduce fragility. They offer a strong foundation for a USAID strategy focused on youth, education and job creation for poverty reduction. The basis of the PRS is a job-producing private-sector led growth strategy that will help build a Liberian entrepreneurial class and generate incomes for an emergent middle class. Progress is being made on improving infrastructure, securing new investments and rebuilding the state security apparatus. However, this vision of a dynamic private sector cannot be realized unless there is a major and sustained effort to expand education, upgrade skills and link them to likely job growth areas, including commercial and small-holder agriculture, mining, logging and the service industry. The PRS cautions that "young men and women have been denied education ... have few skills⁴² and are often overburdened ...," adding that "unmet expectations with this group could trigger significant social unrest, not only in Liberia, but across the region."⁴³ In response, the PRS noted⁴⁴ that the GOL was planning to develop a National Youth Policy Action Plan (NYPAP) within the context of the 2005 National Youth Policy⁴⁵ (NYP). The NYPAP was completed in February 2009.

3.1.2 *The National Youth Policy Action Plan (NYPAP)*

A NYPAP Consultative Workshop was held in January 2008 followed by intensive consultations with about 100 stakeholders and a period of revision. In February 2009, the NYPAP was released by the MOYS and serves as the GOL's principal policy document for youth empowerment and employment programming for 2009-2012. It is designed to encourage development partners in "the youth development process" to work within its parameters to support the "holistic development of young people." To accomplish this, the NYPAP strategy encourages a) the disaggregation of youth by age, gender and vulnerability; b) concrete linkages between education and employment; c) clear linkages between sexual reproductive health issues and gender empowerment; d) a cross-cutting focus on education, training, and psycho-social counseling and e) a framework for coordination. These strategies are fully consistent

⁴² Despite the clear recognition of the critical skills shortage in Liberia, the PRS only mentions skills and vocational training in passing, indicating as a goal "the refurbishment of two vocational institutions and an increase in the number of skills center graduates of 50 (*sic*) per year starting in 2010." (PRS, p. 113) By way of comparison, there are about 145,000 primary school pupils in Nimba County and 175 vocational training places in the single vocational skills center operating in the county at Yekepa. (Interview with County Superintendent, February 26, 2009).

⁴³ PRS, p. 171.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Youth and Sports (2005) "A National Youth Policy for Liberia: A Framework for Setting Priorities and Executive Actions: Placing the Youth on the National Agenda of Liberia".

with USAID's findings and approaches to fragility and education as summarized in the YFA Introduction.

The NYPAP has three specific objectives, to: 1) develop and implement an effective coordination and communication strategy for youth development; 2) develop the capacity of youth as stakeholders and not primarily as recipients of services; and 3) implement program activities according to nine NYP prioritized strategic areas. These are summarized below:

- Education and Training. The focus is on increasing job-linked vocational training by standardizing national vocational curricula; integrating vocational skills training into the national academic curriculum using the Magnet School approach (this is also referred to elsewhere in Liberia as “multilateral schools” since they provide both vocational and academic tracks for high school students) and both the renovation of pre-war vocational and technical training centers and development of new ones in needed locations. This focus area also recognizes the need to train trainers in vocational areas, procure equipment and provide complementary life skills education to address attitudinal and motivational issues.
- Youth Employment. This focus area stresses internships, youth entrepreneurship skills to promote social enterprises, better coordination with private sector employers, developing business mentoring programs to coach youth in sound business practices, development of agricultural and other cooperatives to enhance rural incomes and the provision of micro-credit.
- Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). The NYPAP targets training of trainers to increase the technical capacity of service providers, including peer educators to provide gender sensitive youth-friendly services, supports increased access and utilization of youth-friendly SRH information and services and advocates development of a comprehensive standardized youth-friendly SRH curriculum with inclusion of a “psycho-social life skills approach.”
- Youth and Conflict. This area focuses on building youth values and non-violent coping mechanisms and supports developing dialogues on healing, reconciliation and peace building with life skills as the key to peace building.
- The Environment. This includes a waste management and monitoring program with clean-up activities and creation of sanitation sites through community partnerships.
- Sports and Recreation. This sometimes overlooked focus area stresses the need to equip community youth centers with sporting and recreational equipment and support national and county sports competitions to provide healthy outlets for youthful energies.
- Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment. The NYPAP advocates awareness campaigns on gender equity issues, actions to increase attendance of females, especially in secondary education and vocational programs; and improved protection mechanisms for women and girls to stop harassment and abuse. The NYPAP specifically urges action to combat FGM and sexual exploitation, revision of laws relating to inheritance and enforcing age 18 as the

legal age for marriage with “stricter penalties for perpetrators of underage marriages.” Finally, training for police, judges and community leaders to enforce the laws in these areas is urged.

- Youth Leadership. The NYPAP requests stakeholders to develop a national curriculum on leadership and development; provide learning and networking opportunities through training, fellowships and conferences, and to increase youth representation at the city, county and national levels of government.
- Juvenile Drug Abuse and Crime. The NYPAP recognizes that Liberia is experiencing a growing problem of substance abuse. It advocates launching a National Drug Awareness Campaign, training to provide more support for juvenile justice reform initiatives and creation of more juvenile courts and detention centers to deal with prison over crowding and the negative effects of mixing youth with older prisoners.

The NYPAP has a proposed budget of US\$2.6 million over three years. There are numerous small activities in the many tables describing actions to be taken within each focus area. The NYPAP has targeted many of the areas confirmed as priorities by the YFA Survey but it is grossly under-budgeted⁴⁶. The NYPAP conveys an important message about Government’s specific objectives and priorities with respect to the kind of process they seek for sustainable youth development. The NYPAP effectively builds on the PRS and NYP and offers a framework for action that provides a basis for engagement by development partners. As noted below, the JPYEE has fully engaged the MOYS and other stakeholders in JPYEE’s design and the JPYEE reflects the vision and goals of the NYPAP and seeks to advance the NYPAP concept.

Proposed NYPAP activities help mitigate fragility in the domains defined by USAID as shown in the following table.

USAID Fragility Domains ▼	Box 7 NYPAP Mitigation Strategies
Economic	Vocational training; internships, youth entrepreneurship skills to promote social enterprises; waste management jobs
Governance	Improved MOYS management of NYPAP process – policy implementation committee and a trust fund mechanism for fund raising and accountability
Security	Train police to deal with youth offenders
Social	Provide gender sensitive youth-friendly services, support increased access and use of youth-friendly SRH information
Disengagement	Equip community youth centers with sporting and recreational equipment
Corruption	Youth leadership training; effective Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)
Capacity	Train trainers in multiple fields; train youth; provide equipment

⁴⁶ To fund NYPAP activities, the MOYS recommended establishing a “Liberia National Youth Development Trust Fund” to raise US\$7 million from development partners, the private sectors and elsewhere for 2009-2011. The proposed fund has a 23-person steering committee. This amount is much larger than the current NYPAP budget and appears to be a fund raising goal rather than a reflection of a detailed budget for this amount.

USAID Fragility Domains ▼	Box 7 NYPAP Mitigation Strategies
Violence	Combat drug abuse and crime; build youth values and non-violent coping mechanisms and support developing dialogues on healing, reconciliation and peace building
Exclusion	Awareness campaigns on gender equity issues

3.1.3 National Health Policy and Plan

The goals and objectives of the health and social welfare sector are defined by the National Health Policy. Its implementation is guided by the 2007-2011 National Health Plan.

The National Health Policy. The national health system consists of primary, secondary and tertiary levels of care linked by a referral service. The Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) is the cornerstone of the reorganized, decentralized health system. The community and the county are to serve as loci for decision-making about resource management and service delivery. The Ministry will work collaboratively with public, private and NGO health sector partners to ensure full coverage of health services to the public.

Box 8: Key National Health Policy Goals	
Gradually assume the costs of the system, which will require outside funding for some time.	A strong communications strategy to convey the rationale of key policies and foster trust.
Achieve a “gender-balanced” health workforce with the skill mix needed by the health services at different levels of care.	A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system, based on policy goals and indicators.
Restructure the procurement system, ensuring a reliable supply of effective drugs and commodities.	A level of health spending to meet the Abuja target of 15% of the national budget.

The National Health Plan has four components:

The Basic Package of Health Services defines an integrated minimum package of standardized prevention and treatment services adapted for each level of the health system: community, health clinic, health centre, county hospital, and tertiary hospital.

Human Resources for Health will ensure that the right numbers of health workers are in the right place, at the right time, and with the right skills to deliver the Basic Package of Health Services. This component will also work to ensure gender equity.

Infrastructure Development will expand access to basic health services, especially for clinics and health centers. County health development plans will be prepared by County Health Teams in collaboration with communities and local partners.

Support Systems are the planning and management functions required to deliver the BPHS. The planned systems include *inter alia*, policy formulation and implementation; planning and budgeting; human resource management; and health management information systems.

This policy and planning framework provides the context for action for USAID and other Development Partners (DPs). Interventions should explicitly support policy objectives. The M&E component of each intervention should be designed to measure impact, quantify progress toward GOL health objectives and indicate how health initiatives have affected youth fragility benchmarks.

3.1.4 National Education Policy

The GOL does not have a current education policy. A National Education Policy and Sector Plan for 2008-2012 remains a work-in-progress. The anticipated completion date is June 2009. The MOE made a decision after the war to move gradually in developing the policy to see what would “work” in this post-conflict country before committing the GOL to an approach. This decision was taken, in part, because many policies “on the books” were not being implemented.

Historically, Liberia has promulgated a variety of laws and policies to promote education. The Education Law of 1973 recognized the right of every Liberian child to education and made education compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16. That law compelled parents to send their children to school or be fined. It also prohibited the collection of school fees in government schools at the primary and secondary levels and set aside public land in each county to support public schools. The right to “free and compulsory” education was reaffirmed in the 1986 Constitution and again by the Education Law (2002) which reflected the MOE’s commitment to the goal of universal basic education – nine years of education or completion of junior secondary school. However, education has not been free as a number of fees and other costs are still imposed on students, making it difficult for many children to enroll in school. Moreover, there are not enough classrooms and teachers for all school-age students to enroll in school.

In 2000, two important policy documents were prepared, the Policy Framework for the Liberian Education Sector and the Liberian Education Sector Master Plan 2000-2010. These documents addressed basic education in the context of Education for All (EFA), free and universal primary education, technical and vocational education, secondary education and teachers’ licensing. The government has also highlighted the need for special programs for girls’ education. In this regard, Liberia also developed an EFA Action Plan as a strategic component of the Liberian Basic Education element of the Master Plan noted above. For the most part these policies have not been implemented.

The MOE has also begun a gradual process of decentralization and devolution of responsibility to the 15 counties and districts. To be successful, considerable training will need to be provided to strengthen county, district and school-based management (of human, financial and physical resources), improve transparency and accountability at all levels, including in the

Ministry itself, and increase community participation with the support of PTAs, school management committees, and local NGOs involved in the local communities.

A Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) to support education in Liberia is under consideration by DPs. This could improve coordination among DPs as well as between DPs and the MOE. It could also facilitate the MOE's reporting and collaboration with DPs on various education initiatives and bring a more integrated approach to policy making. This would be welcome since attempts to address youth education in light of the drivers of fragility are hampered by this weak policy environment.

3.1.5 Investment and Growth Policy

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is the key to economic growth and development in Liberia and essential for the creation of sorely needed employment opportunities for the nation's youth. FDI is a major part of the context in which any initiatives to reduce youth fragility must be considered. The GOL is sensitive to this reality and is working to enable a more investment-friendly business climate.

Liberia's Investment Incentive Code offers benefits to new and expanding enterprises such as exemptions from a range of duties, taxes and fees for a period up to five years. These incentives apply to investments in selected sectors including mining and manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction, communication, transportation, tourism and, under certain circumstances, to utilities. The Central Bank may also provide support in securing loans and guaranteeing credit for such businesses. Liberia has no statutory foreign exchange controls. In 1976, the GOL created the Liberia Industrial Free Zone Authority (LIFZA) to promote industrial and corporate growth, but no FTZs are active now though one is being planned for Buchanan.

Foreign citizens and corporate entities are welcomed as investors. The Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry has established a set of rules and regulations for such investors. They can operate independently or through local agents, corporations or partnerships. The Minister of Foreign Affairs can also authorize the operations of foreign corporations. Additionally "non-resident" companies, i.e., those with external ownership, are not subject to taxation. This policy has led many international corporations and maritime entities to register under Liberian law as non-resident (offshore) corporations. Since they are not permitted to do business *in* Liberia they are not subject to tax. A tension exists, however, within the GOL, between remaining open and promoting more foreign investment (a nationality-neutral policy) through generous incentive schemes and encouraging domestic businesses with similar incentive policies. In this regard, the government passed a "Liberianization Policy" in 1975 that set aside certain business activities exclusively for Liberians and mandated that Liberians be employed at all levels of foreign companies. Currently 26 sectors are reserved for Liberians. However, the policy has not been consistently enforced and is often ignored by foreign companies.

Liberia has also set some clear conditions to ensure that investments "work" for Liberia, not just for the investor. In order to receive incentives, enterprises must make certain that their

planned investments fit within the priorities of the National Planning Council. They must guarantee the employment of Liberians at all levels and provide training as necessary to ensure their equitable participation. Investors must provide opportunities for Liberians to participate in the ownership of new enterprises and provide a local value added amounting to not less than 25% of the value of gross output and utilize Liberian origin raw materials and other supplies. These conditions are very important in terms of job creation for Liberians.

As a result of Liberia's liberal investment policies, foreign investors, particularly in the areas of mining, construction, tourism and agriculture are showing growing interest. UN sanctions on timber exports were lifted in 2006 and on diamonds in early 2007, opening the way for renewed investment activity in those sectors.⁴⁷ The National Investment Commission (NIC) processed "in excess of US\$132 million in investment applications in 2008 with a direct job creation potential of over 2,000 jobs (excluding other multi-million dollar projects [concession agreements] in the mining, forestry and agriculture and fisheries sectors."⁴⁸ This was a substantial increase over the US\$97 million in 2007. Investment projects in 2008 include food processing operations (cocoa, coffee, vegetable oil, liquor and gin), construction projects, several hotels, port rehabilitation, a flour mill and grain storage, and manufacturing (plastic and building materials). Informants also cited potential future projects in oil drilling, expansion of rubber plantations and factories, power companies, and rice projects.

Specific examples of these and other projects reveal the importance of direct investment for job creation. Mittal Steel, the world's largest steel company, has increased its investment in Liberia to US\$1.5 billion and will create thousands of new jobs (See also sub-section 4.4.2 below). The NIC also reported that the government has recently signed an agreement with China that will involve another mining investment of more than US\$2.6 billion. It is anticipated that this investment alone will create 3,000 direct jobs and more than 10,000 indirect jobs for Liberians. Bids for another large scale mining project in the southwest part of the country were being reviewed in March 2009. This project is expected to create another 3,000 direct jobs. Finally, negotiations are underway for two large scale agriculture projects (oil palm) that combined could possibly create an estimated 10,000 jobs.

While investment trends have been moving in the right direction, the country may experience short- and medium-term problems if the global economic crisis persists. For the longer term, the GOL needs to attack the rampant corruption which could undermine good investments over time. It also needs to make it easier for businesses to "do business" by simplifying the registration process and setting up "one-stop-shops" to facilitate transactions such as customs clearance and tax payments. Liberia was ranked 170 out of 178 countries on the IFC's "Doing Business" index. The USAID-supported Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) has been instrumental in instituting "accountability, responsibility, and transparency" in government and has had "a positive effect in many areas that influence foreign investment decisions such as mining and forestry policies and transparency in the procurement process."⁴⁹ The government is working on legislative reforms to strengthen the Investment

⁴⁷ Liberian Investment Code.

⁴⁸ National Investment Commission. "Annual Report 2008" (December 31, 2008)

⁴⁹ <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/ifd/2008/100904.htm>

and Revenue Codes. Liberia also joined the Multilateral Investment Guaranty Agency (MIGA) in 2007.

The level and extent of FDI is a powerful argument for placing priority on planned, market-driven high quality vocational and technical skills training linked to a public-private training council able to advise on how many skills of what types are likely to be needed when and where in the coming years. This will ensure that Liberians get the jobs and that foreign investors are pleased with Liberian workers' aptitudes. This is also a critical input into the promotion of FDI since firms with positive experiences share that with those considering investing in the future. At the same time, the formal education system must also be strengthened to provide the basic skills needed to make learning possible at the higher vocational and technical levels.

3.2 The United Nations Joint Program for Youth Employment and Empowerment (JPYEE)

The JPYEE directly targets critical problems of youth linked to fragility issues. It views youth as a national asset and proposes to fund five inter-related components that, taken together, will promote “the employability of young women and men both as a means to sustained growth and ... as a vehicle for sustained peace and security...”⁵⁰ The JPYEE was developed after extensive consultations with key GOL ministries, youth, and development partners. The JPYEE will be guided by a Steering Committee co-chaired by the Minister of Youth and Sports and the UN Resident Coordinator (RC). UNICEF will be the administrative agent and the International Labour Office (ILO) will fund a JPYEE program manager for the first year of implementation. The Program Manager will report to the MOYS and the RC. The JPYEE design includes a strong M&E component able to measure progress toward program goals and impact. The proposed budget as of March 13, 2009 is US\$27.6 million for the three-year program period, with funds available of US\$8.7 million leaving a funding gap of US\$18.9 million (68.5%)⁵¹.

Box 9: JPYEE Components

1. Institutional capacity building for the MOYS and for youth-led organizations.
2. Practical education (skills) for employment.
3. Facilitating the transition of young people to employment (Skills-to-Work).
4. Empowerment and social cohesion of youth.
5. Promoting work for youth in the informal sector, agriculture and through special employment waste management and construction initiatives.

In order to promote a more holistic approach to youth “employment and empowerment,”⁵² the UN has developed two options. Option one is to have new funds go through UNICEF in a

⁵⁰ JPYEE. The UN Joint Programme for Employment and Empowerment of Young Woman and Men in Liberia, (UN: November 19, 2008), p.3.

⁵¹ UNICEF, confirming email, March 17, 2009.

⁵² These terms are used in the program title. Employment refers to all types of income generation leading to sustainable livelihoods and empowerment means equipping youth with the skills they need to become employable, including psycho-social, leadership and other life skills.

pass-through arrangement whereby UNICEF would be responsible for disbursement to implementing partners (e.g., NGOs, INGOs, specialized UN agencies, government ministries) based on a common workplan that reflects strategic government priorities. The second option for development partners wishing to support the JPYEE is to provide parallel funding where the cooperating development partner would manage its own funds but align its activities with the NYPAP framework and harmonize its strategic approach with the JPYEE. The second approach might also involve having the participating development partner join the Steering Committee. Depending on circumstances, a development partner could also consider putting some funds through the UNICEF pass-through mechanism to fund or scale up activities already identified or under implementation and at the same time launch a parallel youth fragility mitigation initiative that advances the shared goals of the PRS, NYPAP and JPYEE.

The aim of Government and the UN system is to make the JPYEE a “holistic, comprehensive, multi-sectoral, integrated and inclusive”⁵³ program able to mitigate fragility by driving down poverty through a combination of education via skills development, social cohesion initiatives and job creation. The five JPYEE components are summarized briefly below and then compared to the EFT domains and education areas of concern to USAID.

- Institutional capacity building for the MOYS and for youth-led organizations. This component will build the institutional capacity of the MOYS to ensure that youth employment and empowerment are the clear priority and that the NYPAP is implemented, especially via the creation of a proposed Trust Fund for youth-led projects.
- Skills training for employment. This largest component will include:
 - *Up-grading the Informal Apprenticeship System (IAS) in Liberia* by carrying out a rapid assessment of the scope of the current IAS and identifying ways to improve performance, including by building the capacity of training providers. This will be supported by the planned early 2009 labor market assessment (thus improving targeting for IAS up-grading) and will provide incentives to attract females into traditional male-dominated apprenticeships.
 - *Expanding community-based training.* This involves skills training, entrepreneurial skills development, credit, marketing and post-training support. It builds on experience with community-based income generation.
 - *Training in cleaning, maintenance and waste management.* Trainees will learn practical skills and then intern at hotels, hospitals, offices, etc. Some will be trained as trainers and the program will be housed at Monrovia Vocational and Technical Center (MVTC).
 - *Reform of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).* Standardized approaches will be introduced gradually for the planning and delivery of training and to set up a certification system. New curricula will be developed and teacher training introduced to support a new TVET policy that will put in place a national qualification framework.

⁵³ JPYEE *op. cit.*, p. 6.

- *Reform TVET curricula.* There are no national curricula for trades. A 2006 TVET analysis outlined the need for comprehensive reform of the curriculum, policy and structure of TVET.

- *Develop a TVET teacher training program.* This initiative will help current teachers to access in-service training programs, a critical first step to improving the quality of vocational education. A recent study suggested using the Booker Washington Institute (BWI) in partnership with a nearby teacher training institute to launch this.

- Facilitating the skills-to-work transition. This component includes funds for labor market studies to improve skills training targeting, school-to-work surveys and systems to share job information with youth in and out of schools.
- Empowerment and social cohesion of youth. Peace education, human rights, reconciliation and civic engagement activities plus leadership skills development through course modules designed with the MOYS are included. Gender-sensitive life skills, reproductive health education and psycho-social support through counseling and peer group networks are also part of this component. The JPYEE will also fund a scaling-up of the National Youth Volunteer Service (NYVS) program. In 2009 the NYVS will deploy 150 volunteers in six counties for one year. Volunteers will provide direct support to education, health services and agriculture and work to build social cohesion via youth sports and other activities. The NYVS is one of the most cost-effective programs in Liberia and helps both the receiving communities and recent university graduates looking for a way to gain experience and build a career.
- Promoting decent work for youth in the informal sector, in agriculture and through special employment schemes in waste management and construction. This last component facilitates access of youth to business development services, including direct support to enterprises to facilitate productivity, profitability and job creation. It will promote Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through outsourcing, sub-contracting and mentoring. The agriculture/agro-industry sub-component is designed to support the farmer training “Centre Songhai” Initiative by working with the MOA, MOYS and the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) to rehabilitate basic infrastructure at the Center, train 200 agro-enterprise farmers and try to “re-engage youth” in agricultural and agro-processing activities through training, credit and transport incentives.

The following table demonstrates the linkages between the EFT’s “fragility domains,” the relevant JPYEE components and the range of education issues highlighted in the YFA SOW and summarized in the YFA Introduction.

Box 10: JPYEE Components and Relevant Activities and Fragility Domains		
USAID Fragility Domains	<i>JPYEE activities help address most fragility issues and contain elements of “Get Ready,” “Get Set” and “Go.”</i>	“Actions USAID education programs must take to reduce the likelihood of a return to conflict” (from YFA SOW)
Economic	Upgrade informal apprenticeship systems Expand community-based training; Training in cleaning, maintenance and waste management	Livelihood skills development
Governance	Build the institutional capacity of MOYS Facilitating the Skills-to-Work Transition	Improve governance capacity at key ministries
Security	Not addressed	School safety
Social	Promotes “social cohesion of youth” via peace education, human rights, reconciliation and civic engagement activities plus leadership skills. Psycho-social support through counseling and peer group networks	Psycho-social support Transitional education services
Disengagement	Not addressed	Not mentioned
Corruption	Not addressed	Reducing corruption in payrolls, exams, by teachers
Capacity	Reform TVET curricula & train trainers to build institutional capacity to deliver bankable skills to at-risk youth. Scale-up the National Youth Volunteer Service to build civil society, youth-led groups, education and health capacities.	NGO capacity building Civil society capacity building
Violence	Promote youth leadership, reconciliation, and life skills to reduce violence as with “social” above.	Promote youth leadership, reconciliation, life skills to reduce violence
Exclusion	Promote gender equity; disabled are explicitly included; no geographic bias	Promote gender equity; equitable geographic access

Employment and empowerment; jobs and education; incomes and skills – however it is phrased - the message is clear. The PRS, NYPAP, the JPYEE and results from the YFA Survey and focus groups are wholly consistent. Liberian youth want and badly need to gain knowledge they can use, to be engaged in a process that enables them to convert that knowledge to income and that does not abandon them along the way because of policy changes, budget shortfalls, poor project designs or unrealistic assumptions about the nature and duration of essential support. The JPYEE does not address all the challenges of Liberia’s youth, but its proposed activities can reduce fragility in the domains indicated. The program’s design reflects input from a broad range of Liberian society and is consistent with Liberia’s policy for youth. Therefore, as explained further in the YFA sections below, the YFA mission strongly recommends that USAID invest funds into selected JPYEE components and also develop a project for parallel funding that will complement and energize the JPYEE through the framework described in Section 5.

3.3 Other Relevant Development Partners

The UN system, bilateral DPs, international NGOs, foundations, religious organizations, local and international advocacy groups and others provide a bewildering array of inadequately coordinated assistance. Some are mentioned in Charts 3-5 in Section 5. With respect to the framework for action to mitigate the impact of fragility on youth emerging from this YFA, a few other development initiatives need to be mentioned here briefly.

- The European Union as of mid-March 2009 began providing long-term technical assistance to build the capacity of the MOE plus provide funds for short-term consulting missions in planning, curriculum design, management and several technical areas.
- The World Bank is providing technical advisors to help the MOE develop an Education Policy.
- The Soros Foundation and the Netherlands have provided substantial resources to the “education pooled fund” for primary education (some pupils are over age 15).
- UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIFEM and other UN agencies have pre-existing activities outside the JPYEE that benefit youth in their areas of competence.
- Some international NGOs have their own resources and operate numerous youth-targeted projects (e.g., Population Services International (PSI), International Rescue Committee (IRC), PLAN International, Mercy Corps).

3.4 Challenges Posed by Aid Approaches and Processes in Liberia

Coordination and Coherence. In early 2009, the MOYS identified 65 key partners currently working with youth in Liberia sponsoring several hundred activities. New projects are launched while others close down. There are pilot projects that are never scaled up, missions that produce studies that never lead to activities and DPs that make commitments that are never disbursed. It will be important for the JPYEE to help build MOYS capacity to gain adequate information about all significant youth-targeted initiatives so that better planning can identify and meet service delivery gaps and build synergies.

The MOPEA requested local NGOs to register so they could produce a profile of ongoing activities. Some NGOs refused to register, some who did register turned out to be fake NGOs and the information that was provided sometimes proved to be incomplete, inaccurate or self-serving. DPs often work bilaterally with their preferred NGOs and the GOL is not always aware of activities, despite existing coordination bodies. Many DPs are reluctant to share financial information with the government or each other, further complicating coordination efforts and making duplication more likely.

The lack of effective coordination and the coherent application of sector strategies where they exist has impaired the impact of development aid and frustrated both the government and its partners. UNICEF plans to recruit a full-time expatriate staff member to try to coordinate aid activities exclusively in the education sector. Once it is known precisely who is doing what, for how long, with what resources, in what locations and with what impact, programming of

education sector development funds can be better targeted and the MOE will begin to be able to determine how its own resources can best be applied.

In this regard, USAID could play a useful role by identifying performing and potentially performing local partners (NGOs, youth groups, units within ministries with potential for capacity building) and then invest in them in the medium to long term while supporting coordination efforts of government and other development partners through the NYPAP and JPYEE.

Donor-driven Development Agendas. Most DPs are answerable to their legislatures. Some legislatures insist on placing various policy requirements, mandates and earmarks on development assistance budgets. Some try to use aid for political or even military reasons in addition to their presumed humanitarian or developmental purposes. The militarization of development aid, top down policy imperatives, the explicit link between development aid and origin of product purchase restrictions, TA nationality limits, short funding cycles and other constraining factors means development aid in Liberia is burdened by multiple external purposes and goals that, taken together, can - and do - undermine the ostensible DP commitment to “stakeholder participation,” alignment with national government priorities and the rational use of development funds for objective development-related purposes.

4. Strategic Options to Mitigate Fragility: Increasing Youth Access to Education Leading to Sustainable Livelihoods

4.1 Reducing Fragility by Improving Access to Formal and Non-Formal Education

4.1.1 *Building Capacity in the MOYS and MOE to Address Youth Needs*

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) is advised by a National Youth Policy Implementation Committee (NYPIC) which provides the Ministry with input from a full range of stakeholders. This improves the capacity of the MOYS to understand policy issues, policy choices and their potential impact. The Ministry has a Deputy Minister for Youth supported by two Assistant Ministers, one for Vocational and Technical Training and the other for Youth Services. Capacity in the Ministry is modest since the Ministry has 242 staff, but only 25 professional staff. Annex E shows current and planned staff at MOYS headquarters. In addition, there are 15 County Youth Coordinators (CYC), three sports development officers and a youth development officer. The Ministry recently received a capacity boost with the arrival of 15 volunteers from the NYVS. One has been assigned to each CYC. The MOYS suggested the skill areas in Box 11 as their training priorities for 2009-10 for CYCs and youth leaders.

The MOYS would like to increase its capacity through in-service staff training programs and the recruitment of additional technical staff able to help them to:

- Strengthen their capacity to improve youth employment policy planning in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor.

- Prepare, implement and regularly update Action Plans for youth employment at county and eventually district levels.
- Develop and maintain a database of vocational, technical and skills training schools, centers and projects that would include contact information, courses offered, number of students, curriculum in use, certificates issued, sources of financial support, profile of teachers' qualifications, etc. This is vital for youth employment planning and to be able to know what adjustments may be needed to make training more market-based and reduce duplication.
- Develop some in-house training capacity in areas like local economic development planning linked to youth skills and program design and budgeting.
- Improve the Ministry's capacity to assist youth organizations, in turn, to build their capacity to deliver services to their members through local project initiatives.

Box 11
Training Needs of County Youth Coordinators and County Youth Leaders, MOYS

Priority training needs include organizational management development; planning, programming, goal-setting and agenda preparation; effective use of boards; resource mobilization strategies; conflict management; administration and record keeping; leadership training, gender awareness and equity issues and HIV/AIDS and youth.

The MOYS also wishes to build the capacity of i) the two vocational training centers under its supervision (The Business and Domestic Occupations Training Center (BDOTC) and the Monrovia Vocational Training Center (MVTCC)); ii) its Youth on-the-job Training (YOJT) program and its Community Vocational Training Centers (CVTC) initiative. USAID could help build the Ministry's capacity in these and other areas by providing resources to the MOYS in accordance with the NYPAP and the JPYEE, which includes a MOYS capacity-building component.

The Ministry of Education⁵⁴ (MOE) has three Deputy Ministers, seven Assistant Ministers and numerous bureaus and divisions (See Annex F). The MOE estimates that it has around 10,000 staff (60% male), including teachers. Box 12 shows current estimated professional staff levels and qualifications. In August 2008, the MOE estimated its staffing needs as 31,500 people, including 7,380 professionals, 4,300 semi-professionals and 8,200 vocational and technical staff.⁵⁵ These figures give an idea of the scope of the capacity building challenge since large numbers of staff are unqualified or under-qualified.

Box 12: Ministry of Education				
Estimated Number of Current Employees by Levels				
Management/Admin	Qualification Level			
	Below BA	BA	MA	PhD
	850	720	330	1
Professional	BA	MA	PhD	

⁵⁴ The information in this sub-section of the YFA is drawn principally from the USAID FORECAST report. "HICD Assessment for Education and Economic Growth," December 12, 2008, pp 14-17.

⁵⁵ See the Capacity Assessment Questionnaire completed by the MOE for the MOPEA long-term capacity needs assessment. The figures in Box 10 are from the same source.

	462	738	0
Semi-Professional	BA	MA	PhD
	570	360	0
Vocational/Technical	Diploma	AA	BA
	250	357	443
Total (prof. staff)	5,081 (about 34% are female)		

The MOE does not have a formal planning system for human resource development and there has been no systematic internal assessment of future staffing or training requirements. The Ministry does not yet have the capacity to perform this function. Capacity gaps include adult literacy, dealing with corruption in schools, guidance and counseling, information systems and data entry, science teaching, inserting vocational and agricultural skills into the formal curriculum and accreditation. Capacity constraints are summarized in Text Box 13. Coordination among DPs is promoted in the basic education sector via the Education Sector Development Committee and through efforts to build a sector “pooled fund.”

As the MOE decentralizes and devolves educational responsibilities to 15 counties, 136 districts and surrounding communities, the need for training increases. County and district education officers need to be trained in program and financial management, to learn how to increase community participation in, and advocacy for, quality education and to help communities hold their local schools accountable for delivering educational services. Increased accountability and transparency in all aspects of education is needed, particularly in the management of county development funds for education. Improved local MOE capacity, in turn, should have a positive impact on reducing corruption and fragility in the sector. USAID can play a role in developing a program to support the decentralization process through training and support of community-based initiatives in education.

Box 13: Summary of Some Key Capacity Building Needs of the MOE

- The Research and Planning Department. The Deputy Minister indicated that the section needs to be upgraded while training in supervision and compliance is needed for planning exercises. Management of county and local level staff and school mapping are also weak.
- The Administration Department. The new Deputy Minister for Administration indicated that the MOE does not yet have a complete staff personnel list, detailed job descriptions, new staff orientation programs or adequate management capacity to carry out its tasks.
- The Department for Instruction deals with basic education, teacher training, curriculum revision, textbooks and school materials issues. Within this Department, the Bureau for Professional and Technical Education deals with in-school vocational training through its eight divisions and also has minimal capacity.
- M&E Capacity. Capacity is viewed by the MOE as very weak. There are only three M&E staff in the ministry. The MOE indicated that it needs to learn how to carry out M&E exercises and apply what is learned to improve performance. Data collection and analysis capability was estimated by the MOE as “effectively zero.”
- Gender Equity. Limited capacity to address gender issues was also cited as a problem by some staff. There is interest in addressing biases and perceptions within the MOE itself in this area. *(extracted from USAID FORECAST Capacity Needs Assessment Report, Nov. 2008)*

Even if USAID applies resources to build MOE capacity within a youth fragility framework, the Ministry will still suffer from considerable performance weaknesses, including⁵⁶:

- A decrepit high rise ministerial building located in congested central Monrovia without elevators and often without electricity or running water
- An absence of internal communications systems – no internet connectivity, no internal phone system, no MOE newsletter and not everyone has a cell phone or funds to buy top up cards for work-related calls.
- A lack of transport – too few vehicles, motor bikes, etc.
- Internal corruption with some staff seeking payment for producing information, attending meetings, etc.
- Motivational problems caused by low salaries and the poor work environment
- Continued risk of brain drain and “daytime moonlighting” among the very modest number of capable staff not being topped up by SES or other external sources
- A continuing problem with ghost workers.
- A lack of security within the ministry – people can walk in from the street with no controls to visit, sell goods or worse.

It is within this difficult institutional environment that Liberia must provide educational opportunities in the formal educational sector and for in-school vocational training. USAID could either decide to engage the MOE with a major institutional capacity building program or leave this issue to other DPs (such as the EU) and focus instead on immediate delivery of basic

⁵⁶ FORECAST Assessment, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

and functional education to youth. Although the ALP and the Liberia Teacher Training Project (LTTP) have had some capacity building effects, they have been focused more on impact on over age youth through accelerated learning for out-of-school youth and by developing teacher capacity rather than management. This seems to make good sense given the level of fragility and the urgent education needs of youth.

4.1.2 Reducing Fragility by Improving Youth Access to Basic Formal Education

The Condition of the Formal Education Sector

As noted above, though the civil war ended nearly six years ago, the formal education system is still in shambles. Its current state and the steps to be taken for its reconstruction must be understood in that context. The war “impacted negatively on all aspects of the education system... [destroying or depleting] institutional structures, facilities, programs and personnel in the sector. [It also] resulted in a mass of illiterate, semi-literate and unskilled youths and adults, as well as a large number of ex-combatants, girl-mothers and disabled youth who, by virtue of their special circumstances, would not fit into the programs of a formal school system. The war also eroded the income sources of most citizens and, therefore, their ability to send their children to school.”⁵⁷

The majority of Liberians have little education with females less educated than males. The education of all youth during the civil war was disrupted. In Liberia today, 56% of all females and 39% of all males have never attended any school and 25% of females and 26% of males have some primary education. Within the youth demographic, the median years of school completed by females aged 15-24 is 3.5-4 years; for 25-34 year olds 0.5 to 1.4 years. For males in those age brackets the median years of school are 3.9 to 6.7 years and 6.3 respectively. Only 5% of females and 13% of males have completed secondary education or higher.⁵⁸ Certain areas of the country (e.g. the North West region) have particularly low levels of educational attainment. Consequently, many youth, now encumbered with responsibilities as young adults, lack the basic educational and technical skills necessary to participate fully in the economic life of Liberia. They have aged-out of the formal education system and are effectively in education limbo.

UNESCO estimated in 2006 that more than 350,000 children were out of school and that more than 50% of boys and 65% of girls were unlikely ever to enroll. Only 63% of children complete a full course of primary education.⁵⁹ Data on the primary-to-secondary transition rate are not available though enrollment figures indicate that only 11% of the secondary school age population is in school. More than half of illiterates aged 15 and over are female.

Teacher training remains a major problem. The Ministry estimates that 16,000-17,000 teachers need to be trained to meet the needs of free, primary education. Currently, 60% of the

⁵⁷ UNESCO, IBE- World Data on Education, 6th Edition.

⁵⁸ Liberia DHS Survey, 2007, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁹ <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco>

teachers at the primary level have no formal training. Of the 40% with some formal training, most received “quick impact” training of “questionable quality”. Less than 1,000 teachers per year are in formal training programs, a number totally out of proportion to the country’s needs. As a result, while more students are in the classroom, the quality of education being imparted is generally low. As one government official noted: “Usually each generation is better educated, better prepared than the one before. That is not the case in Liberia. Youth are not as well educated as the previous generation and unprepared for work.”

In sum, while enrollments have increased substantially, especially at the primary level, since the end of the conflict, only small percentages of those enrolled are within the target age range for their grade. Most are overage. Teachers and teacher training institutions, classrooms, textbooks, current and relevant curricula, vocational and technical training programs, and comprehensive, consistent education policies and procedures are in short supply or non-existent. Education has been largely geared towards traditional academic pursuits with minimal emphasis on technical, business or vocational skills.

School fees at the secondary level present a barrier for most students. Those who have the opportunity to complete a secondary or even a tertiary education have great difficulty finding gainful employment where unemployment is estimated to exceed 80%. The end result is that a large majority of youth in Liberia in the 20-year age range from 15 to 35 remain uneducated and untrained either wholly or ineffectively. This youth demographic, educated and trained, could be an extraordinary asset to Liberia as it emerges from a post-conflict status. However, unless and until the education system, both formal and non-formal, makes a timely response commensurate with the needs, youth may become a liability that the country cannot afford.

Improving Access to Formal Education and Reducing Education Fragility

Tertiary Education. Formal education for youth aged 15-35 presents policy makers with several quandaries. There are an estimated 30,000 youth now in tertiary institutions and most of them face unemployment upon graduation because of the massive tilt toward social sciences (sociology, geography, history and English are popular majors) in a country with severe technical and professional skills shortages (e.g., in health, agriculture and engineering). The quality of tertiary education is reported to be deficient with many young graduates finding it difficult to write coherently in English. Expanding general university education will only compound this problem. The first priority, therefore, is to improve the quality of tertiary education and to shift admissions into professional and technical areas while limiting the number of social science students. Teacher training colleges also need more support and incentives need to be developed to attract youth into teaching since many now avoid teaching due to low salaries. Specifically, the GOL and DPs could consider:

- Developing remedial education classes for entering first year tertiary-level students to upgrade English and math skills and using UNVs or other international volunteers as instructors⁶⁰

⁶⁰ There are several private and non-profit international volunteer organizations that can be contacted via the internet that recruit people for as little as two weeks up to several months who want to travel to places like Liberia to assist with development. English language instruction is an easier area for successful recruitment than

- Expanding the NYVS to absorb more recent graduates using current means of placement in ministries and with development projects but expanding the concept to build in a longer post-graduate skills upgrading initiative such as a 10-week intensive English writing immersion program before they take up their assignments.
- Offering a one-time cash bonus to all tertiary students who graduate in the top half of their class with a BS in agriculture, medicine, dentistry, civil engineering and perhaps other critical technical fields
- Offering prizes to students at teacher training colleges who graduate in the top 10% of their class such as a motor bike (and helmet!)
- Developing long-break internships for tertiary students for all years in school so by the time of graduation they will have had two to four experiences.

Secondary Education. At the secondary school level, similar problems of quality are pervasive. As noted above, only 11% of the secondary school age cohort is in secondary schools but a too rapid expansion of secondary school graduates will simply increase the number of the relatively “educated” unemployed. Here also short-term initiatives to improve the quality of secondary teaching will help reduce the problem of under-qualified tertiary school entrants and graduates while making them more employable. The conventional wisdom, as endorsed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been an overwhelming focus on basic primary education to try to achieve universal literacy by 2015. While this is a laudable goal, some attention must also be paid to the secondary level if Liberia is to develop a new generation of well-educated leaders for senior positions in government and the private sector.

Teacher Training. The quality of education at all levels is ultimately determined by the quality of the teaching corps. To reduce fragility among youth, the education they receive must not only be relevant but also delivered by teachers who are well-trained in both pedagogy and subject knowledge. This is currently not the case for many of Liberia’s teachers. While the LTTP program has enjoyed considerable success in revamping the teacher training curriculum and training trainers, implementing a primary teacher training system, and taking initial steps to create a professional teaching system, the work is not complete. Liberia still has a severe shortage of teachers overall and many teachers in the classroom need additional in-service training. The final evaluation of the LTTP revealed various areas which a future teacher training program needs to address. The three-year duration of LTTP was insufficient to train adequate numbers of teachers for both the primary and secondary school levels. USAID should continue to support a teacher training initiative that will address these needs since this directly reduces youth fragility by better equipping in-school youth with the skills they need for the transition to adulthood and the workforce.

Out-of-School Youth. The problem of “over-aged youth” addressed by the ALPP continues also to be a challenge. The ALPP program was developed to address the basic education needs of the tens of thousands of youth who dropped out of, or never started primary school and are now over-age for primary school. The program was also intended to reduce fragility by getting

some others. Volunteers could be housed in dormitories or other adapted structures and would be expected to pay their own transport to Liberia and cover their own food and local transport costs. To do this requires capacity in a relevant ministry to manage the process.

out-of-school youth back in school, either during the day or in the evening after work, and provide them with the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to become at least minimally employed. Despite ALPP's success over the past three years it has not "solved" the problem of illiteracy among out-of-school youth. It is scheduled to end in September 2009. If this happens, the program will leave the last two cohorts of students currently enrolled in the first two years of the program in limbo in terms of completing their three-year primary/basic education. USAID should give serious consideration to extending the current ALPP program for at least two years so that those students currently enrolled can complete the program.

One of the weaknesses of the current ALPP program is that the curriculum has not included vocational or technical elements. Moreover, it has not been linked to other vocational/technical or internship programs that would enable ALPP students to transition more easily into jobs after completing the three-year program. In addition to scaling-up ALPP to cover more counties, a re-designed ALPP should be linked in some way to existing economic development programs either in other DP-funded projects or to internships in the private sector. It could also link to mentoring or apprenticeship initiatives supported by the private sector. This type of activity could be integrated into the broader NYPAP framework via the COYELI.

Community Volunteers. The formal education sector can also be supported at the community level through local volunteerism. Grinding poverty and limited education and training opportunities at home have lured many youth away from their rural communities to urban areas where they remain unemployed and vulnerable to unproductive and counterproductive activities. Creating opportunities for youth to support primary schools in their communities through a community-based youth volunteer program could not only reduce fragility among older youth by engaging them in useful activities in their home community, it could also have beneficial effects on the quality of primary education.

A community support program for primary schools could be initiated by having community members select a few local youths for the program. The youths would receive a small stipend for a specified period as a volunteer. During this period they would support primary schools by assisting teachers in the classroom, monitoring children's attendance, developing school gardens, building playgrounds, and leading extra-curricular activities such as clubs and sport teams. Program beneficiaries would not only be the primary schools, their teachers and students but the volunteers themselves who would gain life and leadership skills as well as valuable work experience.

Vocational and Technical Education. The integration of vocational and technical education, including agriculture, into the formal MOE curriculum is a work in progress. Some DPs seem to believe that skill training is better handled in an out-of-school environment while others want to see the MOE move more rapidly toward the "Magnet School" (MOYA term) or "Multilateral School" (MOE term) concept. The MOA has given the MOE advice on curricula and advocates school gardens. The MOL has expressed its support for more job-oriented

learning in the schools. Until the MOE is able to build its internal capacity to address this entire area, progress will continue to be slow⁶¹.

Given the current economic profile of Liberia and the types of livelihoods available to most youth, however, the vocational and technical track seems to offer more promise than any large expansion of formal education. The next section considers TVET from both a formal and non-formal education sector perspective since the need is for an integrated approach to practical education with close coordination among all types of education/training that is expected to lead to sustainable livelihoods.

4.1.3 Reducing Fragility by Improving Youth Access to Practical Education for Sustainable Livelihoods.

Youth Access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Any strategy to reduce fragility and poverty must be centered on promoting sustainable livelihoods. Skills acquisition is critical to this end. A review by the YFA team of several YFAs from other conflict-affected countries found that almost all of them identified vocational and technical education linked to job promotion as an important objective.⁶² In Liberia, post-conflict job training has had mixed results but this has led to lessons learned and improved the prospects for more successful project designs. In post-war Liberia, two major types of projects have been mounted as follows.

Projects directly targeting ex-combatants. These have been characterized by their short duration, their linkage to disarmament more than the labor market and by a lack of follow up once ex-combatants completed the training. They helped Liberia in the immediate post-conflict period by “buying time” but proved to have several drawbacks. First, the raised expectations of many ex-combatants led to anger and resentment when expected jobs and incomes did not materialize. Second, such targeting sometimes increased fragility in communities where war victims felt they were being neglected while the perpetrators of the war were rewarded. USAID and UNMIL both used this approach in Liberia and are aware of the drawbacks.

Projects stressing community reintegration. This follow-on broader approach benefited ex-combatants and non-combatants, including refugees and IDPs. USAID has used this approach in Liberia for the past few years. Project examples include the ALP, the recently completed Community-based Peace Building and Development Project (CBPB - Mercy Corps) and the Liberia Integrated Assistance Project (LIAP – Catholic Relief Services). The Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) is an example of a similar project funded by another DP

⁶¹ In late March 2009, the World Bank sent its Senior Education Economist to Monrovia to review options for possible World Bank engagement in support of TVET in response to a request from Liberia’s President to the head of the World Bank to become involved in this critical sub-sector.

⁶² See, for example, Ignatowski, Clare; Rodrigues, Christina; and Balestino, Ramon: USAID Youth Assessment in Angola, March 31, 2006. This assessment focused on expanding youth centers, building youth employment and entrepreneurship programs, fostering youth participation in democratization efforts, developing a youth service corps, etc.

(World Bank). Accelerated learning, psycho-social counseling, community-based leadership training, project-based vocational training and community grants were often part of the mix of services.

Liberia is rapidly becoming a developing, if still fragile country, rather than a “failed state.” In view of this, USAID and other development partners are now making the transition from relief to development and looking for more sustainable initiatives able both to continue to reduce fragility and to contribute to longer-term development with institution building elements. As noted previously, the NYPAP (with JPYEE support) offers a framework for more institutionally sustainable skills development by addressing issues like rehabilitation of war-damaged vocational centers, curriculum reform, training of trainers, etc.

At present, TVET in Liberia is in a parlous state. While 1.9% of Liberians have a university education, only 0.8% has completed a teacher training college or a vocational school.⁶³ Liberia has no institution or system to train TVET teachers and 84.2% of instructors in a 2007 survey were listed as untrained. According to the MOE, there are only 545 vocational education teachers in Liberia of whom about 15% are trained. Of these, about 200 are employed by the MOE and about the same percentage are trained. About 2,000 people may be employed in the informal apprenticeship system⁶⁴, offering a place to start for upgrading and looking for potential candidates to be trained as trainers. However, apprenticeships are only part of the solution, quality is uneven and they cannot provide many of the more advanced vocational skills needed by a developing economy.

The TVET education sub-sector was badly damaged during the war with destruction of buildings and looting of equipment. Major training providers, like the Liberia Opportunities and Industrialization Centers (LOIC) which had 10 training sites before the war, are not operating. There are no standard curricula for the various trades and certificates are *ad hoc* and given at the discretion of each vocational training center. As noted elsewhere in this YFA, however, the demand for TVET is high and constant. About 84% of Liberian adults (above 18) are engaged in informal non-agricultural and agricultural pursuits offering a large pool of potential trainees.

Vocational training in the formal school system is offered at the junior secondary level. The MOE has an Assistant Minister for Vocational and Technical Training who supervises eight divisions as follows: 1) Science and Technology; 2) Agricultural Education; 3) Home Economics – including handicrafts; 4) Adult Literacy; 5) Liberian Languages; 6) Music Education; 7) Physical Education and 8) Vocational Education (building and mechanical trades). Most of these divisions have very weak capacity and schools lack workshops, equipment and skilled teachers in most areas. For agricultural education, the MOE has recently introduced an agricultural curriculum in conventional high schools for grades 10 through 12 and a second one in two so-called “multilateral high schools” (Tubman High School in Monrovia and Zwedru Multilateral School in Grand Gedeh). The MOE plans to expand the program to Voinjama Multilateral School in Lofa

⁶³ Most statistics in this list and sub-section are drawn from the 2007 CWIQ which has a module on labor, the 2007 LDHS, the 2008 ILO document titled, “Towards Decent Work in Liberia: A Labour Market and Employment Assessment (LMEA),” and the December 2006 UNESCO document titled, “The Situational Analysis of the Technical, Vocational, Educational and Training (TVET) System in Liberia.”

⁶⁴ CWIQ, 2007.

and Greenville in Sinoe. The programs offer classroom instruction and practical fieldwork in food, cash crop and livestock production but suffer from a small budget.

Out-of-school youth have vocational and business studies training opportunities through the vocational training programs managed by the MOYS. The principal MOYS vocational centers are shown in the following table. The MOYS also has a rattan furniture skills training program with Chinese instructors located at the Ministry’s headquarters. Rattan is a less expensive and a more environmentally friendly alternative to wood furniture for offices.⁶⁵ The MOYS YOJT Program was used in the past by the Liberia Community Infrastructure Project (LCIP) to conduct training but has no external funding at present. The YOJT Program places youth in private sector internships and elsewhere to facilitate the skills-to-work transition. The MOYS believes this is among their most successful initiatives and would like help to scale up its activities⁶⁶. The Ministry also wishes to expand its Community-based Vocational Skills Program that is administered with the help of the CYCs. This program is very similar to the USAID Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI) Rural Artisans Project in its design and has been equally successful, albeit on a small scale due to funding constraints.

Given the serious weaknesses in TVET in Liberia, it is ironic that the 2007 CWIQ identified micro and small-scale manufacturing as an area that “possesses enormous potential for employment generation, e.g., handicrafts, agro-processing, furniture, sandals.” Yet it is estimated that only 0.4% of the labor force is engaged in this area. Support for small firms through training, market identification, credit and equipment would “be a major breakthrough.”⁶⁷ This skills education sub-sector, through NYPAP, clearly offers a major opportunity for USAID support and innovation. See Section 5 below for ideas in this regard.

Box 14:⁶⁸ List of Government Vocational/Technical Schools in Liberia⁶⁹.		
Institution	Location	Conditions and Prospects
Supervised by: Ministry of Youth and Sports (complete)		
Monrovia Vocational Training Center (MVTC)	Monrovia	Open; 435 students plus ex-combatant training programs. Masonry, plumbing, carpentry, etc.
Business and Domestic Occupations Training Center (BDOTC)	Monrovia	Open; 340 students; 140 are interning in their skill areas; African Union (AU) aiding 200 trainees & funding new classroom block. Computer skills, baking, pastry, hotel management and sewing.
Youth Agricultural Training Center (YATC) (<i>partners with MOA</i>)	Bensonville	Re-opened in 2007; 22 students in agric. studies; need to rehabilitate campus, re-equip with tools, inputs.
Liberia Opportunity Industrialization Centers	10 locations; NGO	<u>Not functioning</u> . 8 destroyed; 2 upcountry being rehabilitated with German church funds.

⁶⁵ USAID FORECAST Report, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

⁶⁶ Interview with Assistant Minister for Youth Services, March 12, 2006.

⁶⁷ LMEA, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁶⁸ The MOE was unable to provide a current list of government schools offering vocational education. A list developed in 2006 with UNESCO assistance was used to prepare the above table. The UNESCO list is outdated and there are many inconsistencies regarding the number of pupils and the gender ratio. The 2006 list suggests that about 21,000 people were engaged in vocational training in 2006 in all schools (government, private and mission). Of these, about 12,000 were shown as doing computer studies (57%), about 1,000 in tailoring, 650 in driving and 350 in typing. About 1,100 were in agriculture, 800 in masonry and smaller numbers in other fields.

⁶⁹ Information drawn from interviews with staff at the MOYS and MOE in March 2009 and visits by the YFA team to some institutions.

Box 14:⁶⁸ List of Government Vocational/Technical Schools in Liberia⁶⁹.		
Supervised by Ministry of Education (incomplete and as of 2006)		
Booker Washington Institute (BWI)	Kakata	Open; large campus; needs upgrading. 1,335 students in 2008/09; about 250 graduates annually. During 2007/08, BWI placed 265 interns in work places and will place another 318 in on-the-job training programs.
Zwedru Voc. Tech. Center.	Zwedru	Open; agriculture, auto mechanics, business, other.
German-Liberian VTC		Open
Suakoko District Voc Tech Center	Suakoko	Open
Accelerated Voc Tech Program	Various	Open in 2006
Liberian-Swedish Vocational Training Center	Nimba Cty. (Yekepa)	Operating. Capacity 175 students. IRC supporting 100 of these, of which 80 female.

Increasing Young Women's Access to Practical Education for Sustainable Livelihoods

The Liberia Primary Education Reform Program (LPERP) has helped put Liberia on track to meet the 2015 MDG of gender parity in primary and secondary education. However, this achievement is not leading to successful school-to-work or skills-to-work transitions in most cases. Out-of-school female youth without incomes who are not engaged in full-time unpaid domestic chores are worrisome since strong economic participation by women is a powerful tool to combat poverty, a key driver of fragility in Liberia. Some fragility-reducing effects of income earning and additional education on young women include:

- Women who earn incomes, on average, produce a greater impact on household income than earnings from males since women tend to use a higher proportion of their income for child welfare and general household needs;⁷⁰
- Women who earn incomes or with some secondary education, on average marry later, have fewer children and are better prepared to defend themselves from poverty-induced exploitation.⁷¹
- Higher maternal education leads to lower infant and child mortality
- Young women with income and education are more likely to play active roles in community organizations
- Young women trained in non-traditional occupations tend to become more self-confident and serve as role models for other female youth

In 2007 the World Bank examined 291 projects in 84 countries designed to promote youth employment. Only 15% of these actively promoted the inclusion of women but these represented 29% of projects deemed to be cost-effective in terms of their impact.⁷² This study concluded that: a) young women need basic education to facilitate their transition to work – programs like ALP are critical in this regard; b) need more information than males since they often have smaller or less consequential networks that can help identify income earning

⁷⁰ See Morrison, A., et. al. "Gender Equality, Poverty and Economic Growth," (World Bank: Policy Research Paper No. 4349, 2007).

⁷¹ In six sub-Saharan African countries the median age at marriage for women with 10 or more years of education and women with no education differs from 4 to 6 years on average while in 13 Sub-Saharan countries women with 7-10 years of education had from 0.2 to 0.7 fewer children. *Ibid.*

⁷² Betcherman, G., et. al., "Global Inventory of Interventions to Support Young Workers," (World Bank: 2007)

opportunities – radio is an important communication tool in this regard in Liberia, c) child care facilities or subsidies can be important incentives for young women to participate in training programs – in Liberia day-care facilities at markets could allow market women to time to learn new skills; d) female entrepreneurs have trouble controlling their own assets so business training for girls also needs to promote autonomous savings systems; e) especially in countries like Liberia where women face special disadvantages, comprehensive programs that support young women from basic education through to sustainable livelihoods is more effective than stand alone vocational training programs where graduates then need to make the skills-to-work transition on their own.

The implications of the above findings for USAID are that a) a COYELI process-based approach will benefit women disproportionately since they face greater obstacles in the transition to sustainable livelihoods, b) that a USAID initiative for fragile youth should take explicit and proactive account of the needs of young women and incorporate activities to address those needs into any program design, and c) vocational and life skills training are very important for female youth but they should be added to and not replace a focus on basic formal education.

Any USAID initiative to reduce female fragility through youth training must take account of the new Liberia Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG) Project. This US\$4.65 million project runs from 2009-2012 and will be implemented through the Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGD) under a grant from the World Bank for youth aged 16-24 in Greater Monrovia and Kakata town in Margibi County. According to the Project Paper⁷³, the project will test two approaches to promoting productive employment and strengthen the institutional capacity of government partners and implementing agencies. The project paper states:

“The project has four components. Component 1 will prepare girls and young women for wage employment via job skills training. Component 2 will raise incomes and productivity of young women entrepreneurs through business development services training and links to (but not provision of) microfinance. Both components 1 and 2 will provide incentives to ensure that training providers train girls and young women in areas for which labor demand or entrepreneurial opportunities exist. Component 3 will increase the capacity of the MOGD to execute the project and to improve the ability of the MOGD and other stakeholders to formulate and execute policy and programming on adolescent girls. Component four will fund project impact evaluations.”

These components were designed on the basis of a sample survey and focus groups of adolescent girls and young women in Greater Monrovia. The results of that survey mirror the findings in the YFA Survey (Section 2) and are consistent with the 2006 ALP Survey findings and those in the 2007 LDHS. The survey “identified the following supply-side factors keeping young women (aged 16-24) from entering wage employment: a) lack of productive skills; b) lack of contacts to help in job search; c) poor life skills (e.g., lack of punctuality and poor interpersonal skills); and d) sexual harassment from employers that dissuades young women from

⁷³ “Project to Promote the Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women, Project Paper”, November 17, 2008, p. 3.

seeking paid work. Limited labor demand, of course, also plays an important part. Reported barriers impeding young women's entry into self-employment include: i) lack of start-up capital; ii) lack of contacts; and iii) lack of business skills."⁷⁴

Increasing Young Men's Access to Practical Education for Sustainable Livelihoods

As noted previously, disaggregating youth into sub-sets allows for better targeting of at-risk youth as discussed immediately above for female youth. Among male youth, ex-combatants (who were mostly male) are one obvious group that has been targeted and can exacerbate fragility. The focus on women and (below) the disabled is a response to the general tendency of programs to benefit young males most. Helping youth make the transition to adulthood is not a "zero sum game" where gains for young women or the disabled must come at the expense of young men. The needs of the large number of vulnerable young men who were not combatants must also be adequately addressed. There are many who did not fight in the war, are not engaged in criminal activity, are not disabled and do not use drugs. They are the strivers who go to school every day even if they have no books, look for work every day often as petty traders to help support their families and survive homelessness, hunger, random street violence and tropical diseases to gain a better future. In the effort to divide youth into sub-sets to address particular needs, the GOL and DPs must not overlook this vital cohort.

Increasing Access to Practical Education for Disabled People

The disabled population receives support from the Christian Association of the Blind and the Group of 77 (chaired by the wife of the Vice President). The Group of 77 currently has 8 branches around the country and supports about 2,500 disabled people, including many youth. A National Commission on Disabilities exists but has a very small budget. The MOHSW is responsible for addressing the needs of the disabled but the NGO, the Union of the Organizations of the Disabled, indicated that the share of resources to address the disabled is meager, resulting in a large proportion of disabled left begging in the streets.

4.2 Reducing Fragility by Improving Youth Access to Health

Liberia's civil war severely damaged health infrastructure. Hospitals and clinics were destroyed and looted. Today, the X-ray machine at JFK Hospital in Monrovia is among the few still functioning in the country. Very few county hospitals have fully functional laboratories, and most county hospitals and health centers are without running water, electricity, or functioning basic sanitary systems. Lack of transportation and other communication systems prevent ill youth from calling for help or getting to the health centers where they can receive care. The war also caused an exodus of medical personnel and a shortage of supplies and equipment. This

⁷⁴ Maria Elena Ruiz Abril. 2008. "Girls Vulnerability Assessment for the Liberia Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project."

situation severely restricts the delivery of preventive and curative health services and led to a drastic cut in government health expenditures to less than US\$1 per capita, well below the WHO-advocated minimum of 5%.

The government relies heavily on foreign assistance for the provision of health services. By 2006, 80% of the 390 functional health facilities were being fully supported by NGOs. Most supplies, drugs, and incentives for health care providers are provided by relief organizations and through foreign assistance. As humanitarian funding is reduced and relief agencies begin to phase-out their assistance, there is a fear that access to basic health care services and to the supply chain will decrease significantly⁷⁵.

The MOHSW sector policy and strategy for 2007–2011 focuses on expanding access to basic health care; attracting additional investments in infrastructure, human resource development and management systems improvement; ensuring resources to fund recurrent expenditures and reducing systemic inefficiencies to improve operations management.

The National Youth Policy also emphasizes the importance of health care for youth and states that health centers should be staffed with qualified personnel and decentralized with at least one health post in each district. The Policy recommends that youth be encouraged to pursue medical studies, calls for the education sector to provide HIV/AIDS awareness programs through peer education and advocates integration of health and sex education into the academic curriculum. In addition, the policy states that adolescent health and sex education should be incorporated into all media information programs. The following sections highlight how health initiatives in formal and non-formal education have responded or could respond to each of these priorities.

4.2.1 Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS)

The BPHS is the cornerstone of the National Health Plan. It standardizes prevention and treatment services throughout the health system to ensure that all individuals receive the same package of care. The key BPHS elements are antenatal care, labor and delivery care, post-partum care, care of the newborn, child health, family planning, adolescent health, HIV/AIDS, control of malaria and tuberculosis and essential emergency treatment. This package is intended to improve access to health care in a more coherent manner. It is difficult to separate youth access from that of the general population since most types of care are needed by everyone. For example, it would be absurd to develop an initiative to assist pregnant girls and women aged 15-35 but to ignore their newborns due to their age bracket.

Implications for USAID

There are lots of gaps that need to be addressed if the BPHS is to be realized. The first issue is the shortage of drugs and medical equipment. The second issue is the lack of adequate medical infrastructure and the urgent need for investment in this area. The emphasis should be both on

⁷⁵ World Bank. For a Health System Reconstruction Project 2007, p 2.

hospitals throughout the country and on rural health posts where young people first go to try to access health care. Given the critical state of health care in the country, USAID and other partners will need to continue to provide emergency support before a transition to a long-term health sector development approach can become a reality. With respect to the 15-35 year cohort, actions to assure access to the BPHS is probably the single most important initiative USAID could undertake at this time.

Poor nutrition is a major driver of youth fragility and contributes to the high incidence of morbidity. In rural areas especially, school gardens, fish ponds and raising small livestock could provide inputs to school feeding programs, improving nutrition. Surplus produce could be sold, bringing income to schools. Rural skills training followed by inputs to ensure sustainability could be part of a vocational training for livelihoods strategy

4.2.2 Health Human Resources and Youth Fragility

The MOHSW has identified its needs for expertise in a variety of areas. In the managerial areas, the Ministry requires specialists in law, public administration, financial management, health economics, health management, information management and health information systems, construction, logistics, human resource development, pharmacy and laboratory, health systems research, negotiations and communication. In the area of basic health care delivery, the priority is for certified midwives, physician's assistants and registered nurses. USAID can respond to these needs by providing scholarships for tertiary studies (such as through the USAID FORECAST project). Also, USAID could fund expert instructors to provide training at Liberia's medical school and treatment facilities. Currently, several development partners provide health sector support to address health sector skill shortages but find that it is difficult to convince graduates to work where they are needed most. For example, Médecins du Monde, a French NGO, is supporting a program of scholarships at Phebe Hospital's school for nurses and in exchange for students' commitment to work two years in Bong County. However, some students do not respect their engagement and return to their region of origin or go to Monrovia to work or go abroad.

The University of Liberia teaching hospital, the John F. Kennedy Medical Center in Monrovia, is the main venue for expatriate technical support and training. In some cases, like the program provided by Project Hope, short-term medical technicians and clinicians are provided to do counterpart training. One program with longer-term medical education is the Health Education Alliance for Liberia (HEAL),⁷⁶ a consortium dedicated to improving pediatric health in Liberia. HEAL has been instrumental in the development of the country's first and only pediatrics special care unit, and the initiation of a newborn task force. While this assistance is important for the country's main teaching hospital, youth fragility is much more affected by the daily struggle for basic health care at local health posts where drug availability, low skill levels of staff and informal user "fees" continue to drive fragility.

⁷⁶ See http://www.massgeneral.org/globalhealthandhumanrights/initiatives/Health_Education_Alliance_for_Liberia.aspx

4.2.3 Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness and Behavior Change

The HIV prevalence rate, according to the LDHS Survey indicates the rate at 1.5%; while a national HIV Survey conducted in 2006 estimates the national prevalence at 5.7%. There is general consensus that HIV/AIDS is a problem of mounting severity that disproportionately affects youth. Available statistics indicates that Monrovia and the Southeast Region of the country have higher HIV prevalence.

The United States is the largest bilateral health DP, particularly in the area of HIV/AIDS with a total of \$3.5 million approved in FY 2008. USAID is providing \$450,000 to the BPHS and its delivery of HIV/AIDS education at the health facility and community levels. In addition, the grant will support prevention and treatment of STIs, tuberculosis and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. The US Department of Defense is establishing an HIV/AIDS awareness program for the 2,000 soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The \$350,000 grant will pay for training, counseling and administration of the new program. This will include the services of an NGO in running the program.⁷⁷ The Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is the largest health DP in Liberia. Since 2004, nearly US\$47 million have been disbursed in the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Nearly half of the funding has supported prevention and treatment of malaria⁷⁸

In 2000 the GOL established the National AIDS Commission. The National HIV/AIDS and STI Control Program in the MOHSW is responsible for the inter-sectoral coordination and scaling up of responses nationwide. A National Strategic Framework was developed in 2000 and updated in 2004. However, there is no national monitoring and evaluation framework and decentralization is still minimal. Current national capacity is very weak across all sectors.

HIV/AIDS affects both teachers and students. The MOE is responding to this in four ways. First, an HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy was adopted to protect teachers living with HIV/AIDS from discrimination and to promote school health and nutrition. These have not been funded. Second, the national curriculum was revised to include Family Life Education (FLE) and core curriculum teachers' guides were revised to include FLE. The guides were tested in 30 schools and then finalized. Third, AIDS orphans and vulnerable children will benefit from food rations provided by the World Food Programme (WFP). Fourth, population and FLE materials have been submitted to the Teachers College at the University of Liberia for trial teaching. Coordination meetings have been proposed for all tertiary institutions with teacher training programs. There is awareness of HIV-related risks such as "sex for grades," stigma and discrimination.

Implications for USAID

The traditional Abstinence, Be Faithful, Use Condoms (ABC) method of HIV/AIDS awareness has not made a significant impact in behavior change among young people. Supplemental approaches are needed. It would be useful to explore what has worked in other countries.

⁷⁷ PEPFAR Operational Plan June 2008.

⁷⁸ Grant Performance Report – print version.

Support for developing an HIV/AIDS workplace strategy could help reach youth in the workforce. The American Federation of Teachers is a possible technical partner, able to draw upon its HIV/AIDS experience in supporting teachers' unions in South Africa and Kenya.

4.2.4 Integration of Health and Sex Education into the Academic Curriculum

The MOE School Health Division is responsible for planning, implementing, managing and monitoring all health education in the education sector. Specifically, it carries out the following activities:

- Coordinates and supervises all health activities in schools;
- Trains teachers to disseminate correct health information;
- Holds workshops and seminars for teachers, principals and peer counselors;
- Develops instructional materials;
- Establishes Health Clubs in schools;
- Collaborates with the MOHSW and other agencies to implement the National School Health Program.

This remains mostly a plan and has not been widely implemented. However, based on needs, a few schools have started to teach health and sex education. The School Health Division has supported several health education initiatives, including:

- Population and Family Life Education (FLE), with UNFPA;
- HIV/AIDS awareness through the HIV/AIDS control unit of the School Health Division
- Health-related activities through extra-curricular activities, e.g., School Health Clubs and a student de-worming program, with UNICEF.

School Health Clubs help empower students to play active and responsible roles in their own health and that of their families, friends and communities. Club objectives include:

- To train peer educators of each club to disseminate correct information;
- To upgrade student knowledge and skills in First Aid Services
- To initiate income-generating projects using locally-available materials, especially for arts and crafts;
- To identify focal points for the sale of items produced by the club;
- To encourage other schools to establish Health Clubs.
- To address issues like STIs, HIV/AIDS, FLE and substance abuse/peer education.

FLE is the primary MOE vehicle to help youth acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes related to social, physical, emotional and moral development. Sex education is part of FLE and is designed to make boys and girls aware of their sexuality, to learn to respect others as sexual beings and to make responsible decisions about their own behavior. The GOL has requested funds from UNFPA to integrate "Population and FLE" into the curricula of elementary, junior and senior

schools as well as the pre-service teacher training colleges. While these are promising initiatives, data are not available on their impact on student attitudes, behavior or learning.

Implications for USAID

For the formal sector, USAID could invest in health education teacher training to empower the MOE to deliver health and sexual education to schools based on the curriculum. USAID could also invest in School Health Clubs which will help empower students to play active and responsible roles in their own health and that of their families, friends and communities. The School Health Division caters to 275 schools in seven counties and wishes to extend its programs to all counties. This presents an opportunity for USAID to help extend health education initiatives to schools in all counties and help strengthen the curriculum. The MOE Gender Department, which is responsible for HIV/AIDS awareness and health and sexual education, needs to be strengthened through training and logistics support.

For the non-formal sector, USAID could integrate health activities into a broader skills training initiative linked to livelihoods development by boosting health-sector human resource training linked to the MOHSW Health Human Resources Development Plan. The NYPAP (MOYS) calls for promoting improved sexual and reproductive health of youth and access to youth-friendly health services. Health initiatives could be integrated into the several MOYS training activities described elsewhere in this Assessment. Work with the MOYS to strengthen the capacity of youth centers and youth organizations so they can provide health counseling through peer educators would also be beneficial.

USAID could also examine the feasibility of funding health care for students and teachers either through direct subsidy of preventive and curative care at health centers or by supporting a school health insurance program that would reimburse health centers for services provided to schools. A “health voucher” system could be considered to allow students to go to health centers for care without having to pay in cash⁷⁹.

4.2.5 Adolescent reproductive health in non-formal education and training

The NYPAP calls for promoting improved sexual and reproductive health of youth and access to youth-friendly health services. As noted above, strengthening the capacity of youth centers and organizations to provide outreach work and health counseling through peer educators is a key area of potential focus. Similarly, broadcast media can be used to reach youth with health

⁷⁹ A total of 200,000 primary and secondary school students in Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province in east China were each given vouchers worth 40 Yuan for free dental checks on March 14, 2009. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/15/content_11016026.htm. Also, the Government of Kenya, supported by its German development partners is currently piloting a new model to help the poor to access good quality health care in the field of reproductive health care dubbed as ‘Output Based Aid’ (OBA) or also called ‘Vouchers for Health’. <http://www.output-based-aid.net/>

messages. For example, the radio program, “Let’s Talk about Sex”, is supported by PSI and broadcast twice a week on UNMIL radio.

The Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) is an umbrella coordinating organization for youth development activities. It is currently working with Population Services International (PSI) to train peer educators to provide counseling to youth on pregnancy, STI, HIV/AIDS and substance abuse issues. Among its outreach activities for female youth is the creation of Gender Clubs, established in the seven counties where female students suffered the highest rates of teenage pregnancy, sexual exploitation, abuse and violence.

The oldest youth organization in Liberia is the YMCA, whose Liberia chapter was founded in 1881. Its current strategic areas of work are leadership development, adolescent reproductive health, peace building and education, youth entrepreneurship development and youth worker training. The YMCA rehabilitates former child combatants, runs primary schools and provides youth employment and psycho-social counseling services to aid youths traumatized by war.⁸⁰ Similar activities are carried out by YASA (Youth Against the Spread of AIDS). YASA is credited with launching the school health clubs in Monrovia and Montserrado Counties. USAID should assess the capacities, achievements and needs of the main youth organizations in the country before deciding what program areas each group would best be able to support.

4.3 Reducing Fragility through Education: Democracy and Governance

The NYPAP recommends action in two areas related to D&G: i) building youth values and non-violent coping mechanisms for peace building and 2) launching a National Drug Awareness Campaign supported by training able to generate juvenile justice reforms and support for juvenile courts and detention centers. This conforms to USAID’s FY 2008 focus on increasing access to justice and building the capacity of magistrates while “deepening civic education in cooperation with other USAID programs⁸¹.” Modules for inserting D&G topics could be built into many of the fragility-sensitive education initiatives proposed in Section 5 at both the “Get Ready” and “Get Set” stages of the youth transition process.

Post-war civic education has been conducted many times in the period leading up to the last presidential election and subsequently. Youth associations, women’s groups and NGOs have been implementers for many short-term workshops and campaigns to build a better-informed public. The elections planned for 2011 offer a focal point for continued civic education. As the NYPAP notes, youth with non-violent coping mechanisms and a sense of how their country is supposed to operate within a legal and political framework are less likely to fall victim to the many factors that make Liberia a fragile state.

Youth incarceration is both a governance and security issue for Liberia. Prison conditions are harsh, food is scarce and violence is common. Youth are usually not separated from the general prison population. As in many countries, time in prison can turn a youthful offender

⁸⁰ http://www.ymca.net/international/international_civic_engagement.html

⁸¹ USAID/Liberia Sector Information Sheet (2008).

into a hardened criminal or a political extremist or both. There have been numerous and some spectacular jail breaks in the past year which has angered the public and made it more difficult to use resources for those in trouble with the law when so many law-abiding citizens are in dire need. Nevertheless, incarcerated youth and youth on drugs (often many of the same individuals), though small in total number, cause a disproportionately large number of social problems. The MOYS would like to do more to address this cohort and has made serious attempts at outreach to highly alienated and drug addicted youth but lacks enough funds to have a major impact.

4.4 Reducing Fragility by Using Education for Economic Growth

Of course, neither the government nor development partners can create the critical mass of sustainable jobs needed in Liberia via education projects. Jobs are created primarily by the private sector through an expanding economy, by increasing foreign investment, new product development, export promotion, etc. However, education is a powerful driver of growth since it can deliver skilled workers, higher levels of efficiency and stimulate innovation. To optimize the role of education in spurring growth, increasing incomes and thus contributing to reduced fragility, an education strategy linked to growth is needed that will:

- Tailor education and skills training to the labor market.
- Create a Public-Private Partners Training Council for this purpose to plan training and link training to employment.
- Liaise more effectively with the private sector to ensure optimal coordination of the use of corporate social responsibility funds.
- Improve the mix of formal and non-formal education by increasing the ratio of funds and activities devoted to skills-to-work training. (For example, in Nimba County there are about 250,000 youth aged 15-35 and 175 places available for vocational training in the sole vocational government center at Yekapa. Even with informal apprenticeships and training via NGOs, there is a serious shortage of opportunity to learn an occupation).
- Scale up and expand (to new geographic areas and new vocations) successful skills-to-work initiatives such as the USAID-funded Rural Apprenticeship and Artisans Project (RAP) which created sustainable income-generating projects (e.g., bakeries, motorcycle repair shops, carpentry shops).
- Provide skill-to-work bridges in targeted sectors through enterprise management training, technical support, entrepreneur coaching and mentoring, subsidized internships, youth organization income-producing projects; and rural learn-to-earn centers (e.g., vegetable production in farmer field schools).
- Expand current USAID micro and small-enterprise financing with a greater focus on job-producing productive sectors (as opposed to micro-credit for petty traders)
- Provide incentives, education and training and follow up extension support for the agriculture sector, including fisheries and livestock
- Work more closely with the private sector to ensure optimal substitution of labor for capital. For example, the Chamber of Commerce or other business group could set up a Working Group on this topic to develop industry-specific recommendations and norms.

The next sub-sections of the YFA briefly examine how USAID might help to reduce youth fragility through education-related initiatives in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining and then comments briefly on the informal sector. The YFA is not intended to and cannot cover all sectors and sub-sectors of the economy or consider these sub-sectors in depth. The goal is to make the case that any education initiative promoting livelihoods that emerges from this Assessment should include full participation by rural youth, consider the comments below and build upon what has already been accomplished by USAID and others in rural development.

4.4.1 Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: Mitigating Fragility

Agriculture

The recent MOA World Bank-funded Comprehensive Assessment of the Agriculture Sector (CAAS) (4 vols., 2007), USAID-funded Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment (September 2008), USAID Forestry Needs Assessment and the USAID Technical Assessment of the MOA (September 2008) are among the scores of recent documents that consider in depth the challenges facing agriculture, forestry, livestock, fisheries and the environment. Numerous USAID project assessments and progress reports also provide feedback to USAID on what is having the greatest impact.

USAID is already working with communities to increase food production (rice and cassava), restore small holder farming, generate incomes and develop cash crops like cocoa, oil palm and rubber. USAID supports the MOA's Food and Agriculture Strategy with technical assistance. Since 2005 it has supported farmer field schools, farmer-to-farmer training and seed distribution. The LIAP is providing training in food production and nutrition and is rehabilitating markets. Therefore, this sub-section of the Assessment focuses on only a few critical issues related directly to productive rural work with respect what the YFA team has observed with respect to youth and fragility mitigation.

Agriculture and Youth Attitudes

What is agriculture? Agriculture is what you do when you cannot do anything else. Agriculture is hard, back-breaking manual labor in the hot sun. Agriculture is you and a hoe and a swamp full of rice and a million bugs. Agriculture is what my father did in the village; it kept him poor and he died young. They want us to do agriculture so they can live in big houses and eat the food we grow; plenty of food. Why should I work hard for months to grow rice if I can beg rice from the World Food Program? Agriculture is what I do not want to do! With these types of sentiments widespread in post-war Liberia, it is no wonder that two surveys on youth attitudes have shown only around 3% of youth expressing any interest in agriculture. The majority of farmers is estimated to be over 55 years of age. Urban poverty is acute but rural

poverty statistics are even worse⁸². Clearly, Liberia and its DPs need to re-examine strategies for rural development in light of this.

Agriculture and Youth Incentives

Training is not the answer. Training is a means to an end. The end is increased production, improved productivity and rising rural incomes through enhanced performance. Offering youth training in agriculture will not address most of the attitudes described above. Post-training incentives packages are not useful for those unwilling to enter agricultural training in the first place. Exhortation alone will be ineffective since attitudes are engrained and the realities of village life do nothing to persuade youth otherwise. What then is to be done? First, youth want to be shown, not told. They want sustained guidance. And they want at least the prospect of a different model of rural life. This is not impossible and there are pilot programs that can be monitored, adjusted and scaled up given sufficient resources.

Agriculture and Pilot Programs

Neither the MOA CASS nor the draft AfDB/IFAD agriculture sector project document⁸³ says anything about youth attitudes or the current average age of farmers or the need for upfront incentives to get youth interested in the sector. These documents assume that there are farmers and that they need the standard types of inputs: seeds, tools, fertilizer, extension, storage, pest control, credit, market support, etc. In fact, land tenure issues, a continuing rural youth exodus toward Monrovia and a legacy of failed agricultural projects make it imperative to try something different while still moving ahead with the many sensible and valid recommendations in the CAAS.

USAID farmer training initiatives are complemented by an FAO pilot project that is currently testing the use of “lead farmers” who will be trained in a range of improved agriculture techniques and shown how to train others. They are expected to become “model farmers.” They are then to become Trainers of Trainers. The MOA with the MOYS has developed a pilot youth agriculture training initiative at the Youth Agricultural Training Center (YATC) at Bensonville. They currently have 22 trainees but much of the YATC is still in ruins due to the war. The MOA is also experimenting with a Centre Songhai training initiative, based on a model developed in Benin, at the YATC and at a second site in Tumutu where 200 ex-combatants received training in raising small ruminants but received no entrepreneurship training.

Urban gardening also offers prospects for youth incomes since before the war 70% of people in Monrovia cultivated vegetable gardens while after the war the figure plunged to just 15% according to the FAO. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) is considering funding an urban gardens project using the Ghana Urban Farmer Field School Model.

⁸² Due to very high poverty rates, 81% of the population is either highly or moderately vulnerable to food insecurity with the highest poverty levels among those engaged in crop farming, fishing and artisanal mining.

⁸³ Keita, D. AfDB “Agriculture Sector Rehabilitation Project,” (draft project preparation report), January 2009.

The MOA also would like to see development of “Junior Farmer Field Schools,” “Future Farmers of Liberia Clubs” and “putting agriculture back in secondary school curricula.” The MOA is working with the MOE at two pilot schools to try to reintroduce the subject.

Model farms can help as can more trained farmers able to impart lessons learned. However, many youth simply reject village life. What may be needed is an expanded notion from “model farm” to “model village” or “model community.” The NYVS could provide volunteers to promote this concept. Many recent university graduates lack hard skills but they have developed general skills that allow them to learn and apply new approaches. To develop “model communities” where more youth would be willing to settle requires a broader approach integrating agriculture (the main source of village income) with rural vocational skills (farm and non-farm), community leadership and management skills, physical improvements (through self-help with some external support through the provision of materials) and quality of life improvements (e.g., a sports field, a film club with a film library and a generator, a village arts and music program). The “Get Ready” Component of a Comprehensive Youth Livelihoods Initiative could fund the training of volunteers to begin to work at the village level as catalysts empowering villagers to transform their living and working environment. To avoid cultural problems and jealousies, village associations might compete for funds by developing their own vision for Village 2015. Villages could receive community improvement grants not for a single activity as has usually been the case but for a sustained process of village transformation.

Box 15
Major Development Partners
focusing on agriculture:

- European Union - \$15 million planned for agriculture
- AfDB and IFAD - \$30 million sector rehabilitation for 2010
- World Bank – project in pipeline
- USAID – production and marketing project in pipeline
- UNDP – agriculture is theme for next Human Development Report

Agricultural Skills Development (Education and Extension)

It is difficult enough to persuade youth to enter the farming sector. Without technical support, many understandably avoid the sector altogether. Once youth have agreed to enter the sector and received some training, the issue then becomes how best to deliver on-going support to new young farmers to help them to succeed. The CAAS recommends that the GOL should “develop, maintain and support a decentralized community-based extension service for small-scale farmers, staffed with appropriate subject matter specialists. The aim should be to assist rural communities to develop greater self-reliance and to take responsibility for their own basic needs by providing them with appropriate skills to acquire and manage post-harvest and other rural economic infrastructure facilities.” There are three methods to consider for extension service delivery, as follows:

- *The Government Model.* The MOA has a County Agriculture Coordinator (CAC) in each county and 59 extension agents to service 86 agricultural districts with 93,000 farmers⁸⁴.

⁸⁴ The MOA defines a farmer as anyone with at least one hectare of land although small-holders can also receive some assistance.

The MOA recently recruited 22 more but has 185 vacancies. Most are not well trained⁸⁵ and all are male. The MOA would welcome support for a “quick impact training” program for “extension assistants” able to deliver basic farmer supports.

- *The Private Sector Model* where input suppliers are used to deliver packages of technical information and stand ready with advice.
- *The NGO Model* where NGOs are given the task of developing an extension system that might later be absorbed into a stronger MOA.

The YFA is not recommending a particular solution or combination of solutions to the extension issue since that is a matter for agriculture specialists. However, the lack of an effective system to support young farmers and the often ineffective presence of elements of all three models in Liberia – plus a parallel system of extension run by the Ministry of Internal Affairs for “communal farms” - can lead to confusion and frustration. In effect, agriculture’s role in mitigating fragility by providing skills and incomes to youth will be undermined without such support at the farm level.

Agriculture and Fragility

It is clear from this YFA that the single greatest driver of fragility is extensive extreme poverty in a volatile post-war environment where expectations are high and patience is wanting. USAID is well-aware of the shallowness of the apparent calm in Liberia, induced in part by the presence of UNMIL troops. It is imperative, therefore, that the GOL, USAID and other DPs use the tools at their disposal to deal as effectively as possible with this reality. In this regard, the following quotation from the 2008 World Bank World Development Report is striking. It states:

“... an aggregate increase in GDP from agricultural labor productivity is on average 2.9 times more effective in raising the incomes of the poorest quintiles in developing countries ... than an equivalent increase in GDP coming from non-agricultural labor productivity...based on observations from 80 countries during 1980-2001. It is estimated that one percentage point aggregate growth in agriculture reduces the incidence of US\$1 a day poverty on average 2.3 times more than an equivalent amount of growth originating in non-agricultural production.” (emphasis added).

The conclusion about where to focus resources to reduce poverty and fragility is inescapable and is a key reason why the agricultural sector is emphasized as a potential engine for medium-term stability in Liberia.

Forestry

Farming systems in Liberia involve rotational land uses for annual agricultural crops, perennial crops (such as cocoa, rubber and oil palm) and forests in varying stages of regeneration. For this

⁸⁵ The College of Agriculture at the University of Liberia is using a 1960s curriculum and has difficulty finding people to teach specialized subject areas. Cuttington University has similar difficulties.

reason, forestry and agriculture are intrinsically linked and efforts to address one must also address the other. Unlike agricultural production, which requires extensive labor and time, utilization of many forest resources is often less time consuming and many of these resources are “open source” and available to youth through hunting, collecting and selective indirect management of forest species.

USAID/Liberia has made a commitment to support governmental reforms in the forestry sector, particularly by working with the GOL to enable community-based management of forest resources. To this end, USAID is implementing a pilot community forestry program in two counties that is helping communities to form community-level governance structures to manage forest resources by helping them to identify potential forest-based products for marketing and value chain development, and by working with producer groups to enhance their business skills.

Forestry and Youth Incentives. Youth have participated actively in the initial discussions in the four active pilot areas. Forest resources, though also managed and controlled by community leaders, are often more accessible for youth than prime agricultural land so forests represent a target of opportunity for youth. However, for all members of these communities, capacity is lacking for undertaking any program to build business skills. The program is working to create a “Community Forestry as Business” training module in these communities. The program will use this module to help develop a few forest-based products and will provide small grants to user groups to successfully manage and market them. Given the current active level of youth participation in the program, youth should benefit greatly from involvement in these enterprises. If forestry can be developed alongside farming and cash cropping, income levels for most rural Liberians, including youth, can be increased.

Forestry as an Entry Point for Youth Involvement with Other Development Programs. USAID perceives the pilot community forestry program as an entry point for other development programs in its target communities and will be testing and demonstrating approaches to broaden the development impact of the forest activities to other sectors. A follow-on program is being designed now that will build on this experience and allow USAID to expand the program. In this way, the forestry activities and rural people that are involved in the program will also benefit from USAID programs in health, civil society strengthening, basic business skills (some literacy and numeracy) and the like. Youth involvement will be key in building future community leaders in these communities.

Fisheries

The fisheries sub-sector contributes about 3% of GDP. Artisanal fishing employs an estimated 33,120 people of whom 60% are female and 61% Liberians. The industrial fishing sector employs about 4,200 people and 75% of them are Liberians. In the 1980s there were about 3,600 fish farmers in 159 communities but most of these were destroyed or not maintained due to the war. Recently, some people have begun rehabilitation, providing incomes for about 700 women and youths. Only 8% of fishing vessels are motorized, 97% of cold storage is in

Monrovia and almost no fish is exported although there is significant illegal and unregulated fishing by over-the-horizon non-Liberian vessels.⁸⁶

In brief, support for artisanal fishing is likely to have the greatest impact on incomes, especially for young women. Any comprehensive skills-to-work strategy including rural youth should contain a fisheries education and training component. Health education, HIV prevention, nutrition and literacy can be taught alongside improved fishing techniques in fishing communities.

4.4.2 Mining and Mitigating Fragility

Prior to the war, the mining sector contributed about 10% of GDP but by 2006 due to conflict and international sanctions, this declined to about 2%. By 2008, mining had climbed to 25%⁸⁷ of GDP and Liberia had secured two major investments from Arcelor Mittal (\$1.5 billion) for Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties and China Union (US\$2.6 billion) for the development of iron ore deposits. Other mining concessions for gold and diamonds have been issued or are in the pipeline, BHP Billeton is conducting explorations and the GOL is selling offshore gas and oil exploration blocks. Arcelor expects to create 3,500 jobs directly and generate incomes for another 20-25,000 people in ancillary areas through the growth of towns in the vicinity of mine sites, along the line of rail and at the Port of Buchanan⁸⁸. The China Union investment was announced in early 2009 and its implications are still being assessed but given the scale of the investment, this should produce a similar spurt of job creation and stimulus to the local economy.

The West Africa Mineral Sector Social Assessment (WAMSSA) is currently being undertaken by the World Bank⁸⁹ to examine potential synergies in contiguous or proximate mining concession areas within the Mano River Union (MRU). The goal is to identify ways to increase the impact of mining sector investments on sustainable development through dual use infrastructure development, better planning for social services and environmental priorities and in other ways. For Liberia, WAMSSA has pointed out the large investments in Guinea just across the border from Nimba (Rio Tinto and Arcelor), the potential for a rehabilitated Robertsport to serve as an outlet for southern Sierra Leonean minerals exports and the need for cooperation around the issue of artisanal mining.

The large-scale mining sector is a key driver of Liberia's economic growth. This has several implications for youth fragility as follows:

- Post-war attitudinal problems if unaddressed, unregulated artisanal mining and unplanned settlement in and around major mining sites will exacerbate fragility.
- Vocational training initiatives need to anticipate the skill needs of the mining sector so Liberians will be ready to take up jobs in this sector in the coming years and decades

⁸⁶ CAAS, *op. cit.*, p.50.

⁸⁷ WAMSSA, "Economic Snapshot," Situation Analysis, December 2008.

⁸⁸ Interview with Arcelor Mittal CEO, February 10, 2009.

⁸⁹ WAMSSA Phase I results are expected in mid-2009. The study is being undertaken by Associates for Global Change and Golder Associates Inc.

- Some training in town and village planning could create jobs in this area and reduce conflicts in new towns by having technically proficient Liberians able to deal with land use issues, competition for rights water, etc.
- Increased basic education opportunities at mine sites will build a foundation for technical skills development and people living adjacent to mines will see more easily the connection between literacy and income earning potential.
- Mining communities should not become enclaves. A Comprehensive Youth Livelihoods Initiative should specifically examine how youth education leading to livelihoods can be promoted in mining areas so that complementary skills are provided that will lead to the development of more broad-based communities from both an economic and social perspective.
- Mining is capital intensive but the ratio of capital to labor can be shifted in favor of labor with proper planning, will and imagination. This offers a clear opportunity to reduce fragility and promote livelihoods for more youth.

Youth Fragility, Ethnicity and Artisanal Mining

The artisanal mining sub-set of the 15-35 year old youth cohort is of special interest to the YFA because of the high number of ex-combatants among this group, the recent strong link between diamonds and conflict, the kinds of tensions that often surface in the race for diamond wealth, the scale of this phenomenon and the particular ethnic divisions linked to the diamond trade.

- Potential Scale of Artisanal Mining. A 2006 joint UNDP – International Alert Background Paper⁹⁰ stated that the US Geological Survey in 2004 estimated Liberia’s diamond production capacity at between 100,000 and 430,000 carats per year. One foreign mining expert estimated the potential capacity of alluvial diamond production at around US\$30 million per year.
- Number of Artisanal Miners. The same report noted that estimates vary widely but there could be as many as 50,000 artisanal miners in the country. The International Alert team that prepared the report witnessed “several thousand people” engaged in artisanal mining. The Sustainable Development Institute, a Liberian NGO, found between 3,500 to 5,000 artisanal miners settled just in two camps in the Sapo National Park in Sinoe County in 2005. Many of these miners were from the Lofa river basin.
- Ethnicity, Artisanal Mining and Ex-Combatants. At the beginning of the war, most miners in Nimba County were Mandingos. The Mandingos supported the Doe government while the dominant Mano and Gio supported the insurgent NPFL force of Charles Taylor. The Mandingos fled to Guinea and have not returned to Nimba where artisanal mining is now done mostly by Mano and Gio people. However, Mandingos continue to finance artisanal miners in Lofa County, most of whom are ex-combatants from a Mandingo-based militia.

⁹⁰ As quoted in “Current State of Diamond Mining in the Mano River Basin and Use of Diamonds as a Tool for Peace Building and Development,” (Monrovia: UNDP. June 2006), p. 27.

Most of the miners in Sinoe County are also ex-combatants but the majority appears to be ex-Taylor fighters⁹¹.

- Conditions of Miners. Almost all miners are youths since the work is difficult. Many miners live rough in temporary camps and voraciously pan for diamonds or gold in the riverain areas of the country. Health and education facilities are almost non-existent. Those with families often live in makeshift dwellings. Tensions and fights are common but the hope of instant wealth keeps desperate people working and living in such areas despite the risks and conditions of daily life.

In 2008 a UNDP report⁹² offered a strategy for dealing with youth engaged in artisanal mining. The report's key fragility-related findings are quoted in the bullets below so that inclusion of artisanal miners in a fragility reducing Comprehensive Youth Livelihoods Initiative can be considered. The report also makes numerous other recommendations about land tenure, legal reforms, royalties and environmental issues that are beyond the scope of this Assessment.

- Key Findings: Artisanal diamond mining has potential to contribute to gainful employment and to increased foreign earnings but viability is threatened by free-for-all illicit mining. There are technical and financial constraints, an inadequate policy and legal framework on land and environmental management and lack of capacity to enforce regulatory guidelines. There are unmitigated environmental impacts and inequitable sharing of benefits. All these inhibit meaningful contribution of mining to poverty reduction
- Artisanal Miners' Concerns: include inadequate tools and credit; unfair trading practices; diamond theft and corruption; minimal entrepreneurial skills among miners; no objective technical advice; short license durations; transport to diamond authentication offices is difficult and there is a constant threat of dispossession from non-Liberians and large mining companies.
- Proposed Strategy: The proposed UNDP-supported Diamonds for Development (D4D) program is to facilitate compliance with mining regulations and deputize local buyers. It will try to respond to miners need for improved access to credit, technology, information, prices and markets. D4D seeks to raise funds from DPs to integrate initiatives for miners and their communities into existing poverty reduction programs. Cooperation with agencies in the implementation of community development plans in areas where they operate empowers communities to address their needs. Development of sustainable mining will mean institutionalizing social accountability and stakeholder participation in the GOL's operating procedures.

The conclusions from the UNDP report are reinforced in the 2008 Diagnostic Trade Study⁹³ which made the following recommendations regarding artisanal miners in Liberia:

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29

⁹² UNDP. "Poverty and Social Impact Assessment on Artisanal Diamond Mining," 2008.

⁹³ Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (Washington DC: IMF, *et. al.*, 2008), p.77.

- Implement programs to formalize illegal miners
- Promote formation of mining cooperatives, including assistance to acquire tools and equipment for increased efficiency
- Develop special programs/toolkits for extension services and facilitate short-term cash management and investment training courses
- Develop labor policy governing working relationships between miners and diggers
- Develop framework for cooperation with large mines
- Decentralize valuation facilities to foster transparent trade at every level
- Develop local mechanisms to manage influx of aliens in the sector
- Provide for health-care and other welfare services

Artisanal miners are, for the most part, at-risk youth. They are at risk not because they have no incomes, like many youth seeking to move from skills-to-work, but because of who they are and what they are doing. Attention to artisanal miners offers a way to focus on specific subsets of ex-combatants without using that label, who are present in rural areas and who are involved in the central economic activity that played such a strong role in previous conflicts.

4.4.3 The Informal Sector: Mitigating Fragility

The informal sector is Liberia's second largest income generator after agriculture. In Monrovia, the sector is saturated with tens of thousands of "micro-enterprises" consisting of little more than a youth with a wheel barrow full of cheap merchandise for sale, or scores of market women trying to sell little piles of local produce or street kids with head loads of mostly Chinese imports jostling for space to sell their wares through car windows during traffic jams. Youth engaged in petty trading of this sort are easily identified as fragile since they are fully involved in the daily struggle to avoid hunger, homelessness and worse. A Comprehensive Youth Livelihoods Initiative would benefit many such youth but not necessarily by targeting them as a group. Those involved in the informal sector can be disaggregated more precisely than those youth "involved in informal trade." Targeting would be more effective through categories like a) *membership*, e.g., in youth groups, churches, mosques, social clubs, trade associations like the Wheel Barrow Union, etc.; b) *characteristics*, e.g., disabled, female, homeless; and 3) *needs*, e.g., basic education, skills training, psycho-social counseling, credit. At the same time, the dynamic informal sector needs to be analyzed in terms of how certain specific risks can be mitigated for those youth involved in petty trade and found in large groups (like markets, special market days upcountry). These are opportunities for communications messages about health, hygiene, nutrition, peace, etc.

5. Comprehensive Youth Education for Sustainable Livelihoods (COYELI) Framework

5.1 Introduction

As noted previously, multiple factors contribute to the fragile environment in which youth live and need to learn and multiple actors seek to mitigate fragility by providing educational and other opportunities for youth. The most frequent observation made by youth informants and reinforced by local NGO representatives regarding this risk and aid nexus is that youth want to enter into a process that will enable them to make the transition to adulthood and economic self-sufficiency.

The overwhelming request in YFA youth focus groups was for vocational and business skills training followed by help with the education and skills-to-work transition. This is also entirely consistent with the findings of other surveys (see Box 16).

Box 16: ALP Survey Results

The USAID Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) youth survey in 2006 found that 85% of those surveyed wanted to get more education and skills. The greatest percentage (39%) requested vocational skills training while 27% felt literacy and numeracy were most important “at this time”. Most respondents in rural and urban settings saw literacy as a path to vocational training and improved income. Respondents pointed out that “elementary education will carry me up to trade school.” (p. 27) “Less than 3% of respondents in rural areas opted for farming or fishing as an occupation,” despite the fact that 41% of those surveyed were engaged in farming at the time.” (p. 33).

The perceived reality that emerged from the focus group meetings is that many at-risk youth were initially provided with hope, followed by participation in a learning activity that culminated with their return to their prior economic condition, albeit with a bit more education or some knowledge of a skill. When this happens, frustration actually raises youth fragility and, as put succinctly by the JPYEE, youth “having been denied education and still facing an interrupted transition from childhood to adulthood will not easily accept unmet expectations...” resulting from “well-meaning (but) isolated, uncoordinated and fragmented (initiatives) in terms of services provided.”⁹⁴ As the MOE and MOYS have noted, access to vocational skills training is extremely limited and youth expectations that this path will lead to better livelihoods is very widespread. Informal Apprenticeship Systems help meet demand in this area but, as noted in the JPYEE document, IAS suffers from its *ad hoc* nature, lack of standardization, uneven quality and absence of market-linked skill needs planning.

There is no one way to reduce fragility. The drivers of fragility are not static, the intensity of fragility is not even across all counties or sub-sets of youth and our understanding of the drivers of fragility and how they act on each other is incomplete. However, getting the school-to-work continuum right, building skills-to-work bridges leading directly to income and reducing overall poverty rates and intensity, are probably the surest ways to reduce the vulnerability of youth to multiple sources of fragility in Liberia. As mentioned in other Sections, doing this effectively will involve disaggregating the youth cohort into meaningful sub-sets in order to link fragility

⁹⁴ JPYEE, p. 8

variables to the particular needs of such sub-sets using the results of the YFA survey and other recent surveys to help substantiate the positive linkages between education and fragility mitigation actions. Text Box 2 provides an initial list of these sub-sets.

The SOW for this YFA states: “Youth employment, along with access to education, is the most pressing issue facing youth”⁹⁵ in Liberia. The framework presented below, takes cognizance of this and acts as a template to facilitate a design and programming process that will permit USAID to empower key Liberian stakeholders in the effort to reduce fragility in Liberia through a Comprehensive Youth Livelihoods Initiative. Areas for possible intervention are presented below.

Chart 1 shows the organizational relationship among NYPAP, JPYEE, COYELI and some other DP interventions. It shows DPs supporting government efforts to have a broad impact on fragility. Chart 2 presents a framework (**Get Ready, Get Set and Go!**) that illustrates possible points of intervention in light of the policy context outlined above, the activities of the GOL and other development partners, and the gaps and opportunities identified by the YFA survey. Chart 2 is amplified by Charts 3-5. Prior to launching a Comprehensive Youth Livelihoods Initiative, a few preliminary actions would also be required as described below.

Box 17: Trading Weapons for Makeup Brushes - But Still No Jobs (*IRIN News—abridged/edited*)

MONROVIA, 2 February 2009. Tony Clarke traded two grenades for a set of combs, makeup brushes, nail varnish and a short course in cosmetology. “They help me beautify myself,” said the 32-year old. As a cosmetologist, you have to groom yourself before you can groom others.”

Clarke, who fought in the country's civil war, is set to graduate from his training in March. But given high unemployment and poorly developed private industry, he might end up like many other trained ex-combatants - unable to find a job. He is one of 101,000 former fighters to take part in the UN-led reintegration process (DDRR) where ex-combatants hand in their weapons for cash and in some cases vocational training. But many trainees still have no jobs. Liberia's unemployment rate stands at 70 percent, according to Ministry of Labour statistics.

Clarke is looking forward to setting up his own beauty salon, but to afford to do so and support his family he would have to leave Monrovia for somewhere where the cost of living is lower. In April 2009 - when the UN programme is set to shut down - he will lose his US\$30 monthly allowance.

More jobs would have been created had training schemes emphasized agriculture, the national DDRR Commission's Sengbe said. Just 4% of Liberia's lowlands are irrigated, leaving the country highly dependent on imported food. The UN offered agricultural training but - despite the fact that two-thirds of Liberians live rurally - only 4% of trainees chose to focus on agriculture. Though a return to the land brings job opportunities, many ex-combatants are not interested. Matthew Karr, 31, comes from Nimba County where his mother cultivates rice, but he does not plan to return. “I came to Monrovia to hustle on my own. If I had a

⁹⁵ USAID RFQ Statement of Work, Part 1, page 2.

5.2 COYELI Preliminary Interventions

Interventions are not “projects” and they need not result in the creation of new project offices or additional overhead costs. Implementation arrangements and a final selection of activities should be worked out during the program design stage. This comment applies to all COYELI intervention possibilities described below

National Youth Action Plan Strengthening. USAID could work with the MOYS to strengthen the NYPAP framework and content so it can address youth fragility issues more comprehensively and scale up more rapidly. This would require the provision of a short-term consultant to review the NYPAP in depth. The consultant would need to define how selected proposed activities, and possible add-ons, can be prioritized and most effectively targeted at fragility reduction in a way that USAID could support financially. The consultant should also review the robustness of the proposed M&E approach and transparency safeguards.

The same consultant could then also examine the JPYEE and confirm specific areas that USAID could support, propose budget amounts and duration and link this to an enhanced NYPAP and the broader USAID youth fragility mitigation effort flowing from the COYELI perspective.

Vocational and Technical Policy Planning As noted above, there is a high demand for bankable skills training. Vocational and technical skills are badly needed and local capacity to provide them is minimal. However, it is critical that the current *ad hoc* array of skills training be assessed and that a clear, coherent TVET policy be articulated. The TVET policy is supposed to be developed with the support of the MOPEA through the National Council for Vocational and Technical Education and Training, chaired by the Minister of Planning, with the support of its administrative arm, the Agricultural and Industrial Training Bureau (AITB). USAID/OTI assisted the AITB in 2006 and anticipated the preparation of such a policy and completion of a system of certification and standardization. However, the latter has a current preparation goal of June 2009 and TVET policy is still in need of attention. Since concern about TVET is shared among the MOPEA, MOYS, MOE, numerous NGOs, informal apprenticeship systems and the private sector, short-term technical assistance is recommended to help the GOL build a policy and an implementation framework to create synergies among the plethora of existing efforts, link such training to market realities, reduce duplication and improve efficiency in the use of training resources.⁹⁶

5.3 Get Ready

Some youth are not ready. They may need to gain literacy or life skills, or need psycho-social counseling or need to understand basic concepts common in the world of work or some

⁹⁶ In 2006 the Ghana Industrial Skills Development Centre (GISDC) was created. It set up an Industrial Training Advisory Board, uses industry personnel as external examiners and has people from various businesses teaching part-time to link skills to private sector needs by building communications. Liberia needs all of this. A mission from the MOE and AITB visited GISDC in 2006 but it does not appear that there has been follow up.

combination thereof. Such youth may come from deeply impoverished families or be from areas of the country where knowledge of hygiene, nutrition and the causes of disease may be rudimentary. Because of the war and the “fast money ethic” bred by violence and impunity, some youth also need help to change their attitudes and become less confrontational.

Opportunities: Possible Areas for Intervention

Youth Centers. The MOYS has set up a few youth centers but lacks funds to expand the program rapidly. The centers visited by the YFA team in the towns of Saniquellie and Buchanan demonstrated their utility. USAID could fund the construction and/or rehabilitation of some of these structures and equip them while the MOYS provides staff with NYVS backstopping. The youth visited by the YFA team were energized and articulate, they were proud of their facility and had photos and posters proudly displaying their activities. Sports funding in youth centers is also vital for reconciliation, teaching youth how to cooperate in teams and for building community cohesion and should also be supported by USAID. Such centers are a venue for health and psycho-social counseling, for library and internet services and for keeping sports and entertainment equipment.

Psycho-Social Counseling. Perhaps the most passionate plea for support in this area was made by the Minister of Gender and Development. She eloquently described the failure of seemingly well-designed projects targeting vulnerable girls and women because of unseen traumas that distorted value systems, twisted behavior and led to failures that only reinforced negative self-images and activities of targeted youth. Counseling is a critical aspect of getting affected youth “ready” to function in schools and in the world of work.⁹⁷

Life Skills Training. This type of training (see footnote one for a definition) is closely linked to psycho-social counseling and can help emotionally disturbed youth to alter their behavior while also helping other youth to restructure their lives and learn a range of basic social and coping skills. Life skills help youth restructure their social environment by developing positive habits which reinforces more mental-health types of psycho-social counseling. Life skills training modules can be integrated into vocational, entrepreneurial and other types of skills training.

Clubs and Youth Development Organizations. In addition to the School Health Clubs, already part of the MOHSW Health Education Strategy, Four H Clubs can promote health among rural Liberian youth. Seven Four H Clubs with 900 members are active in Liberia. The clubs support the following activities: formal and non-formal community-focused experiential learning; skills development; leadership training and volunteerism; partnerships for programming and funding; strengthening families and communities; and counseling and trauma healing. The Boy and Girl Scouts are both active in Liberia but suffer from minimal resources. These are other youth-oriented organizations that could be supported by USAID as part of a package of support to youth groups.

⁹⁷ On 31 March 2009 it was announced that ARC International received a grant from the UN Peacebuilding Fund to provide psycho-social counseling and counselor training in cooperation with the MOHSW in the three counties of Margibi, Bong and Montserrado. This could be expanded nationwide if more funds were made available.

Youth-friendly Curative Services. Initiatives to make existing curative services more youth-friendly may better accommodate adolescents' needs than setting up special youth-focused services. Also, taking essential preventive health services, including male and female condoms, combined oral contraceptives and emergency contraceptive pills, outside of the clinics may both meet adolescents' needs and improve utilization. Partner youth organizations in Liberia, such as FLY and YMCA could provide appropriate venues and organize activities for sensitization, peer education and distribution of these products. PSI/Liberia will manage a community outreach through peer educators to reach in- and out-of-school youth with specific reproductive health messages and social marketing of condoms.

Develop and Implement Health Care Packages for Pregnant Adolescents and Mothers and Promote School Attendance. All pregnancies of girls under 18 should be treated as “high risk” pregnancies. As soon as pregnant adolescents are identified, a care plan would be established that would include pre-natal care, skilled attendance at birth and post-natal care, including training and mentoring of young mothers in infant and child care. While some agencies are doing some of this in Liberia, USAID could scale up to reach more of these at-risk youth.

Decrease Barriers to Contraceptive Services and Counseling. Only 9.5% of adolescent girls report using contraception and 38.9% (aged 15-19) report having unmet needs for contraception. While several family planning providers are active in Liberia, a large share of the at-risk youth population appears to be unreached due to funding constraints and some social resistance to current contraceptive messages. USAID could work with groups like the Family Planning Association of Liberia and PSI to enable MOYS youth centers and youth organizations like FLY and YMCA to provide basic reproductive and sexual health information and become involved in social marketing. Family planning service delivery points might be developed in large markets (like Rally Market and Red Light), at upcountry banks (many are opening branches) and in rural areas (e.g., by working with Trained Traditional Midwives (TTMs).

Legal Protection for Women who are Victims of Violence is usually not enforced. The underlying attitude seems to be that the victims are somehow to blame, and the perpetrator should go unpunished. Awareness-raising, advocacy, follow-up on cases and other efforts are needed to end impunity for perpetrators. Training of police and justice officials is also necessary. The Carter Center has a civil rights and justice program in Liberia that includes addressing these types of issues. USAID could consider helping to expand this program nationwide⁹⁸ while including counseling to address the fact that the YFA survey indicated that 35% of women respondents thought that rape victims are at fault because they “tempt” men to assault them (compared to 65% of male respondents).

5.4 Get Set

Some youth are “Ready” but need to “Get Set;” that is, to build on their basic knowledge, to obtain a bankable skill or a stronger educational foundation as preparation for further studies.

⁹⁸ In Ghana, Mauritania and Sierra Leone, women choosing to leave violent relationships are given training and counseling to help them regain their self-esteem and become more self-reliant. In some cases, they are provided with seed money and technical assistance to start small businesses.

Opportunities: Possible Areas for Intervention

Support Practical Education for Sustainable Livelihoods. The NYPAP seeks funds to rebuild the country's vocational training capacity. USAID could focus on vocational training as the obvious follow up from ALP for over-aged out-of-school youth and from other formal sector education initiatives. This would include rehabilitation of some vocational schools, provision of equipment, curriculum reform and introduction of new trades to widen the skills range of vocational school graduates and doing an early market study to link skills training to market needs.

Support a Teacher Vocational Training Program for TVET to increase the number of teachers and upgrade the quality of vocational teaching and master apprentices. The Booker Washington Institute is well-established, has ample land and could host such a program. It is also close to the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute which could also be included in such a program. Short in-service training should also be organized for VTET teachers.

Consulting Support for MOE and MOYS for VTET Standards and Certification (coordinated with the JPYEE). Several GOL officials have expressed frustration with the "lack of progress in developing standard teaching and qualification modules" for VTET that could be adopted and used throughout the country. There is no reason for Liberia to have to draft training modules or to develop new standards when such documents have been developed in other countries and training in many vocations is standard (i.e., plumbing in Liberia is not much different from plumbing in Ghana or Nepal!) A consultant could review and assemble the best modules available from elsewhere and help Liberia to adapt the materials rapidly.

Training for Adolescent Girls in Liberia (excluding Greater Monrovia and Kakata Urban). The World Bank is funding a 2009-2012 girls' economic empowerment project limited to Greater Monrovia and the Kakata urban area. The other 50% of adolescent girl's have nearly the same needs and problems as those in the two largest urban areas. Although the kinds of skills training in rural areas should be modified away from wage labor and towards agricultural and agro-processing skills, the second component of the World Bank-funded project, to raise incomes and productivity of young women entrepreneurs through business development services, is also needed throughout Liberia. USAID could work with the MOGD to expand the component's two strategies to the rest of Liberia and help the MOGD to work with the MOA and private sector agricultural service providers to develop a rural skills strategy.

Psycho-social Counselor Training. There is a broad consensus that a great deal of psycho-social counseling is needed to reduce fragility because many of the constraints to socio-economic recovery are behavioral and attitudinal. The key constraint aside from funds is the lack of qualified trainers. This training of trainers initiative could be provided under the aegis of the MOGD which could link psychological training with life skills and guidance and career counselor training so that the trainers could continue to find work even after the effects of post-war trauma have been mitigated. As the economy grows and the Ministry of Labor's (MOL) National Employment Bureau becomes operational, there should be a rising demand for employment and career counselors and even for private employment agencies.

Special Education and Vocational Training for Disabled Youth. According to a recent survey,⁹⁹ four percent of households have at least one disabled member. The most common cause of disability is polio (32%), followed by injury (18%), blindness (15%), deaf-/muteness (12%), and amputation (5%). There are at least 25,000 disabled people, yet none of the project documents reviewed by the YFA explicitly included disabled people. One Nimba County NGO described the disabled as overlooked by the GOL and development partners. USAID could help the disabled “Get Ready” for economic self-sufficiency by supporting initiatives tailored to their special needs and by requiring explicit inclusion of the disabled as a project component of future USAID-supported training activities.

Youth Entrepreneurship Training. Getting ready to start or upgrade a business may require a range of technical and business management skills but these should be delivered as part of a “Get Ready and Go” approach where practical skills transfer is accompanied by post-business start up mentoring for up to three years. The focus should be on productive enterprises since petty trading is already saturated. Micro- and small business incubators, bookkeeping and basic accounting, market analysis, advertizing, a customer service orientation, quality of products and services, etc. all need to be elements of a Skills-to-Business initiative.

Distance Learning for Community Health Workers. Community Health Workers are well-established members of a community with a commitment to the people and place. Leaving the community for training can be difficult and costly. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control has used radio effectively to reach remote areas. The African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), based in Kenya, has pioneered the use of Distance Education for continuing education to health workers in East Africa. AMREF runs ten print-based correspondence courses. USAID could explore how the CDC experience (delivered via interactive radio) and/or the AMREF correspondence courses could be adapted to Liberia.

5.5 Go

Some youth are “Ready” and “Set” but need help getting to “Go;” that is, entering the workforce in some capacity. Workforce development cannot reduce fragility by itself. Job placement and income generation must be pro-actively nurtured. The skills-to-work transition is a challenge everywhere, but there are strategies available for optimizing it. In light of Liberia’s current economic, human resource and security situation, it would be prudent for the GOL, with USAID’s enthusiastic support, to build as broad a bridge as possible from employability to employment. There is no greater motivation for those seeking to “get ready” for life’s challenges than to know that opportunity awaits them, that they really can “Go” forward in life through their own efforts. Hope realized will do more to reduce fragility than all the workshops and counseling and fragility assessments anyone can conjure up.

Opportunities: Possible Areas for Intervention

⁹⁹ See: Greater Monrovia Food Security and Nutrition Survey (FSNS), Monrovia, July 2007.

Education to Work for Tertiary Graduates and Capacity Building. A promising area for USAID involvement is the NYVS. In 2009, NYVS is expected to have 150 volunteers serving for one year each. USAID could double the size of the NYVS and sponsor, for example, 150 volunteers for 12 months each for about US\$270,000 in stipends (\$150 per month per person). The NYVS with UNV support can cover much of the administrative cost (e.g., recruitment, training and supervision). The key advantage of this initiative would be to give other USAID COYELI youth activities a cadre of trainable recent university graduates whose skills could be harnessed, for example, as rural teacher's assistants, health management aides, agricultural extension agent assistants, vocational training management support assistants and some could be trained as trainers. A three-month intensive training program followed by 9 months would build capacity of the trainees and ensure their transition to a work environment. Over 5 years, 750 university graduates would cost US\$1.35 million, rounded to US\$1.5 million to accommodate rising costs and perhaps some administrative costs.

Promote Private Sector Links to Move from Skills to Jobs. Institutions seeking to provide demand-driven workforce development need to be linked to the private sector. These links are vital since they allow businesses to express their skill needs and address human resource management issues. Private sector linkages can be created through job placement services, mentorship and apprenticeship programs and special councils or committees where businesses and the heads of training institutions can meet regularly. In any project design for a workforce vocational education initiative, these types of activities should be included in the budget as a way to facilitate the skills-to-work process.

Scale up the MOYS Community-based Vocational Training Centers and Link Trainees to a Post-Training Placement System

The MOYS supports six CVTCs in Montserrado, Sinoe and River Cess Counties. In March 2009, 524 youth were being trained in 9 to 12-month courses in tailoring, pastry, cosmetology, tie and dye, building trades and agriculture. The MOYS indicates that this training is not sustainable and that they have "no exit strategy" whereby the CVTCs can continue to function without external support. In 2009-2011 the MOYS wishes to fund 10 more CVTCs, adding four counties. The MOYS needs help to design a Skills-to-Work strategy that involves placement of every trainee before new trainees are accepted.

Scale up the MOYS Youth On-the-Job Training Program.

In 2008 the YOJT placed 132 unskilled youth at technical workshops as apprentices. They receive on-the-job training in electricity, electronics, upholstery, carpentry, rattan furniture making, cosmetology, refrigeration and tailoring. Training varies from two to three years after which the MOYS administers a practical skills test before providing a certificate of proficiency. Each trainee receives a one-time allocation of basic tools and 39 of them receive a US\$20 per month stipend. These original 39 trainees fall under a prior year budget but stipends have now been eliminated for budgetary reasons. No fee is paid to the trainers who are induced to offer the training in response to the MOYS appeals to "patriotism." The MOYS would like to expand the program to at least 200 more youths in Nimba, Bong and Maryland counties where

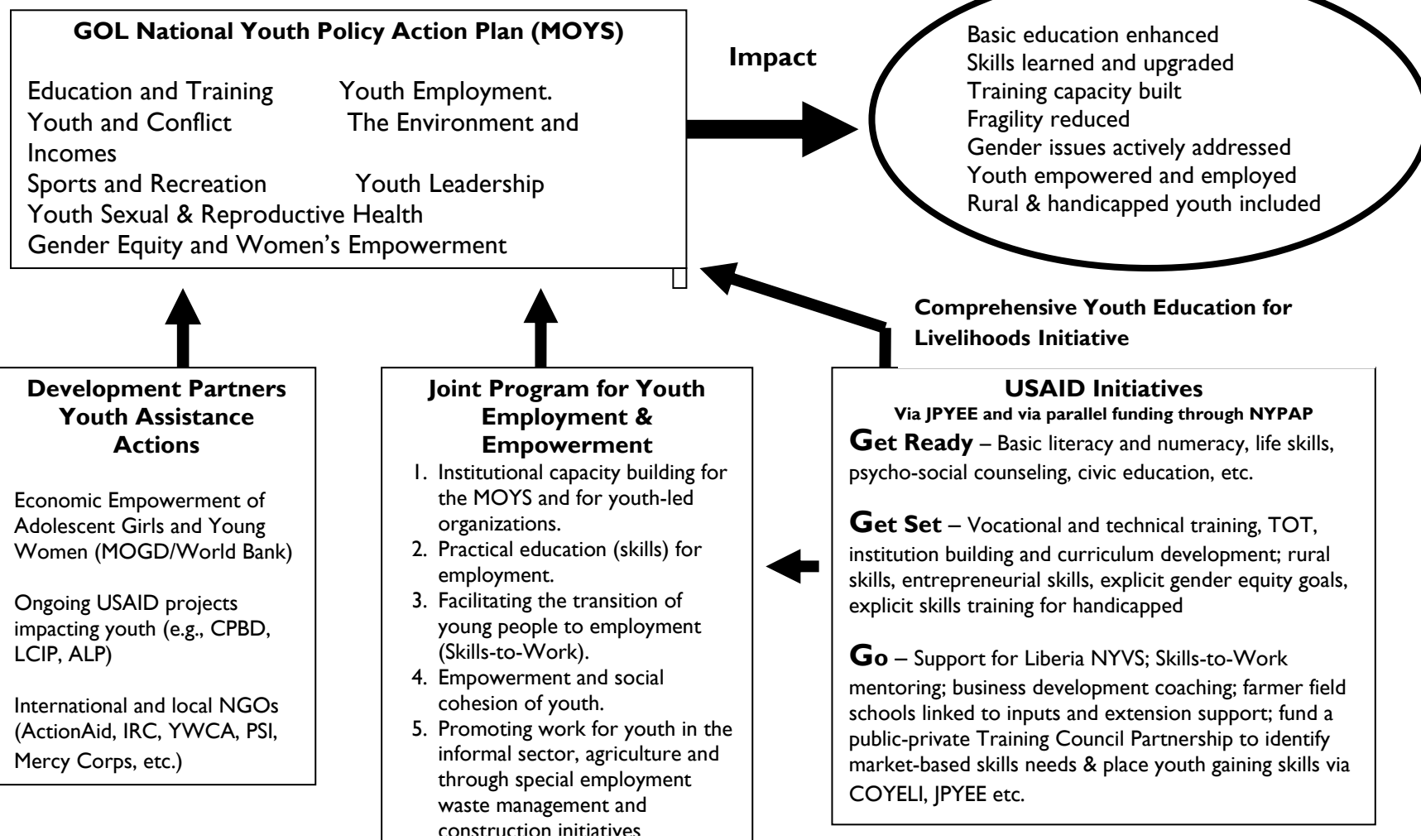
there are private companies that could help support the program but the Ministry lacks funds to purchase start up tool kits. This type of program has enabled its beneficiaries to enter the workforce but the program needs to be strengthened, including the addition of a monitoring component to confirm that YOJT trainees do receive income after completion of their apprenticeships.

Support a Broadening of Vocational Skills Areas to increase the number of trained youth obtaining jobs and incomes. A serious, market-based TOT program under “Get Ready” can be linked to an aggressive effort to broaden the range of vocations available in the country. South-South cooperation (e.g., via USAID Liberia and USAID Morocco working together for mutual youth benefits) could be linked to work with US-based groups¹⁰⁰ to identify and build new product markets and enhance product quality. This could lead to jobs and incomes through import substitution, the gradual beginnings of an export market and the eventual use of AGOA opportunities. This leads youth directly into the workforce since there would be a combination of new product, new skills, loan funds and business coaching.

Use Women-owned NGOs to Work with Female Youth. Research has shown that NGOs led by women are often more effective in dealing with gender equity issues, particularly when joined with other training providers. Most USAID community reintegration projects have been committed to building the capacity of local institutions, especially through youth-centered development and inclusion. This observation may be pertinent for any project design that seeks to facilitate the transition of female youth from skills-to-work. Women-owned and managed organizations help build “old girl networks” that can help young women enter into new careers and advance more rapidly. A women’s employment center could be considered to formalize such networking and placement efforts.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Aid to Artisans is a well-known NGO and CHF International has a well-respected International Crafts Development Center and manages a US\$20 million loan program (Liberia Enterprise Development Finance Company), funded by OPIC, for small business start ups of US\$20-\$100,000. Loans from this source could help launch new products developed via South-South cooperation.

Chart 1



COYELI is a Sustained Process for Education – not a collection of activities – Leading to Improved Knowledge, Skills, Livelihoods and Reduced Fragility

Chart 2

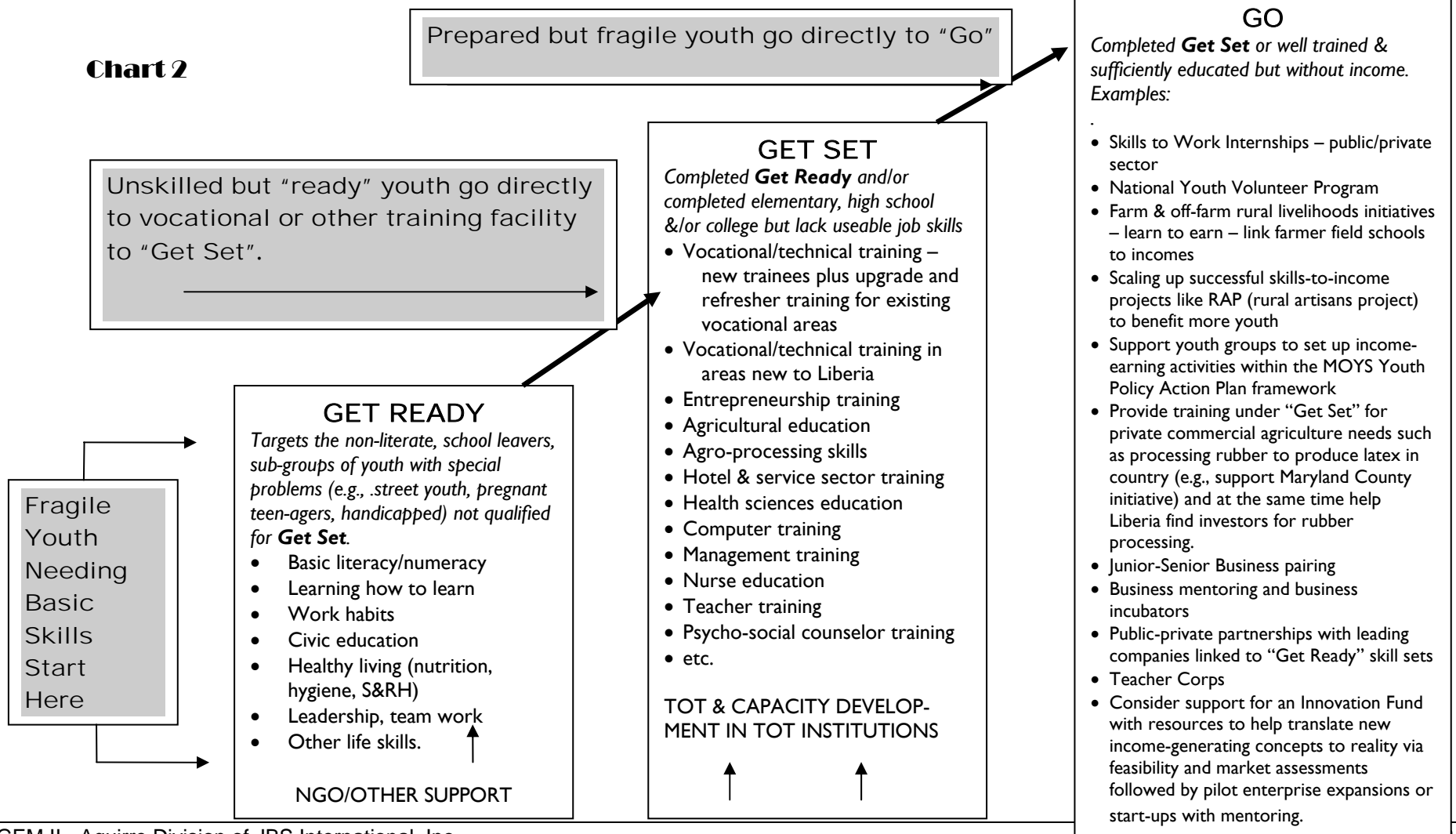


Chart 3 COYELI Component I: Get Ready!		
<p style="text-align: center;">GET READY</p> <p>In order to prepare for the transition adulthood youth need to Get Ready by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining basic literacy and numeracy • Learning how to learn • Improving work habits • Learning civic responsibility • Improving nutrition and hygiene habits • Mastering leadership skills and team work habits • Learning about sexual and reproductive health • Coming to terms with war-induced traumas through psycho-social counseling • Learning tolerance • Preventing drug & alcohol abuse • Gaining sports skills • Other life skills 	<p style="text-align: center;">Examples of Recent and Current Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID RWAC (Revitalization of War Affected Communities and Reintegration of Women and Children Associated with the Fighting Forces), now completed, helped reintegrate women associated with fighting forces. It provided psycho-social assistance & strengthened social support networks. • USAID Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LICP II) supported youth training to 10,000 at-risk and war-affected youth and helped 3,750 people gain jobs by the end of FY 08. This project falls into both Get Ready and Get Set Categories • USAID Youth Education for Life Skills (YES) program supported youth training to at-risk and war-affected youth. YES provided life skills training to 15,000 youth. • USAID Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) provides basic skills for those who left primary school during the war as a foundation for later skills and/or workforce entry • Counseling and support for drug-addicted and incarcerated youth (MOYS) Seeking funding. • Children's Assistance Program (CAP) psycho-social counseling (local NGO with Merlin) • FAWEL/Liberia has founded girls' clubs and sensitized teachers and local officials on girls' education issues. • WHO 6-year project (2006-11) for HIV prevention in schools 	<p style="text-align: center;">Gaps and Opportunities (Examples)</p> <p>Gap: MOYS is trying to address needs of incarcerated juveniles, war-traumatized drug addicts and street youths involved in petty crime.</p> <p>Opportunity: Assist MOYS to service this small but highly fragile youth cohort to reduce juvenile recidivism and reduce crime levels.</p> <p>Gap: There is a broad consensus in GOL and among Development Partners that much more psycho-social counseling is needed to prepare youth psychologically to be able to gain from training and workforce entry support.</p> <p>Opportunity: Include TOT for psycho-social counseling in an assistance package</p> <p>Gap: Many at-risk working youth lack basic health knowledge and existing programs are unable to cover all youth.</p> <p>Opportunity: Workplace peer education on health issues could be developed, e.g., through the Wheelbarrow Union and other associations of youth in at-risk categories.</p> <p>Gap: The MOE needs to integrate agriculture and vocational education into all schools. The capacity is minimal.</p> <p>Opportunity: Review with Minister and EU TA advisors at MOE how MOE and MOYS can ensure coordination, synergy and rapid action in these areas so more primary school pupils begin to learn basic and bankable skills.</p>

Chart 4 COYELI Component 2: Get Set!		
<p style="text-align: center;">GET SET</p> <p><i>Beneficiaries completed Get Ready and/or completed elementary, high school &/or college but lack useable job skills.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational/technical training – new trainees plus upgrade and refresher training for existing vocational areas • Vocational/technical training in areas new to Liberia • Informal apprenticeships • Entrepreneurship training • Agricultural education • Agro-processing skills • Hotel & service sector training • Health sciences education • Computer training • Management training • Nurse education • Teacher training • Psycho-social counselor training • Informal sector business development • Training of Trainers, etc. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Examples of Current Activities</p> <p>(Most of these projects are supported by development partners. Some projects have broader objectives but have relevant education and training components.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls Project (MOGD/World Bank) • Liberia Employment Action Program (ILO) • Youth on-the-job Training Program (MOYS) • Youth Agricultural Training Center (MOYS) • Liberia Community Infrastructure Project (USAID) • Liberia Integrated Assistance Project (USAID) • Youth Education Centers (DANIDA/Ibis) • Quality Education and Participation Program (Oxfam) • NIKE Foundation project for Improved Economic Opportunities for Women and Adolescent Girls • Group of 77 Disabled Assistance Activities • Girls' Mentorship Program for Female Youth Education and Skills Development (PSI) • Training for out-of-school Female Youth (ActionAid) • Vocational Training for 100 youth per year (80 female; 20 male) International Rescue Committee • Mercy Corps Food for Progress (USDA) – training and TA for market-driven agricultural practices. • Cocoa Farms Rehabilitation and Training Project – training for improved cocoa practices and how to produce seedlings (Realizing Rights Inc.) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Gaps and Opportunities (Examples)</p> <p>Gap: There are almost no funds to rebuild the country's vocational training capacity</p> <p>Opportunity: Support practical education for sustainable livelihoods</p> <p>Gap: There is no vocational teacher training center operating in Liberia</p> <p>Opportunity: Increase the number of teachers and upgrade the quality of vocational teaching</p> <p>Gap: Little progress in standardizing vocational curricula or certifications</p> <p>Opportunity: Provide TA to bring "good practices" from elsewhere</p> <p>Gap: The new MOGD adolescent girls' training and entrepreneurship project is well-designed but limited to two cities</p> <p>Opportunity: Help MOGD to deliver such training and livelihoods support nationwide.</p> <p>Gap: Training programs for disabled youth are very limited and grossly underfunded</p> <p>Opportunity: Target disabled youth as a sub-set of fragile youth; seek to provide handicap-sensitive training while also mainstreaming disabled people into broader educational activities.</p> <p><i>These opportunities and others should be reviewed in-depth as part of a project design responding to the COYELI framework.</i></p>

Chart 5 COYELI Component 3: Go!		
<p style="text-align: center;">GO!</p> <p><i>Completed Get Set or well trained & sufficiently educated but without income.</i> <i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills-to-Work Internships • National Youth Volunteer Service • Farm & off-farm Rural Livelihoods Initiatives: Learn-to-Earn; link farmer field schools to incomes • Scale up successful Skills-to-Work projects like RAP (Rural Artisans Project) to benefit more youth • Support youth groups to set up income-earning activities within the MOYS NYPAP framework • Provide training under “Get Set” for private commercial agriculture via public/private partnerships & link directly to jobs, e.g., local rubber processing for latex • Junior-Senior new business mentoring and coaching for business expansions • Teacher Corps • Labor-intensive public works 	<p style="text-align: center;">Examples of Current Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Youth Volunteer Service supported by UN and UN Volunteers allows recent graduates to gain experience and facilitates their school-to-work transition since most retain their jobs at the end of NYVS service. • MOYS On-the-Job Training Program places unskilled youth in apprenticeships with the understanding that they will be retained after training is completed. • CHF International trains women in vocational areas, provides entrepreneurship training and then tries to link them to business start up loans or helps them become integrated into existing businesses where new entrants are able to enlarge business production or product range. • FAO program for ex-combatants had them fabricate farm implements that were then sold to the MOA and farmers. Incomes were sustained when trainees were absorbed into local businesses that decided to continue farm implement production after the FAO program training ended. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Gaps and Opportunities (Examples)</p> <p>Gap: A dearth of imagination limits the range of vocational skills offered risking market saturation and unemployed graduates. Opportunity: Support an Innovation Fund with resources to help translate new income-generating concepts into reality via feasibility and market assessments followed by pilot enterprises so graduates can transition to workforce in more skill areas. Gap: MOYS Community Vocational Centers are under-funded and need help to ensure graduates transition to the workforce. Opportunity: Scale up MOYS effort and develop a model skills-to-work transition initiative demonstrating how recent graduates can be supported after entry into the workforce. Gap: Weak to non-existent linkages between private businesses and vocational training centers cause both scarcity and glut of workers in trades. Opportunity: Work with Chamber of Commerce and/or other business associations to set up a Public-Private Partnership Training Council and promote annual labor market analyses.</p>

Annex A
Draft Statement of Work
Liberia Comprehensive
Youth Education for Livelihoods Initiative

I. Background

USAID/Liberia seeks technical assistance through a contractor to prepare a Comprehensive Youth Education for Livelihoods Initiative (COYELI) that will reduce the vulnerability of Liberian youth to the fragile economic, social, governance, security and civic domains that confront them in their daily lives. USAID wishes to empower youth (defined as those aged 15-35) by promoting a process that will assist youth at various stages of their transformation to adulthood. Some youth need basic education and life skills to prepare for further education and training. Some youth have achieved literacy and exhibit positive social behavior but lack bankable skills that can lead to sustainable livelihoods. Finally, some youth already have a level of formal education or technical skills that should allow them to enter the workforce but they have been unable to make either the school-to-work or the skills-to-work transition. In effect, some youth need to “Get Ready,” some are ready but need to “Get Set” through more education or training and some are “Ready” but need help to “Go” into the workforce. This Get Ready, Get Set and Go concept seeks to underscore the need for a coherent and integrated process rather than stand-alone activities and the need to link this proposed USAID/Liberia youth initiative into the Government of Liberia’s (GOL) holistic framework for youth development.

The GOL developed a National Youth Policy in 2005 and a National Youth Policy Action Plan (NYPAP) in 2008 to address the multiple problems confronting young people. The United Nations responded to the GOL’s desire for a coherent approach to youth development by preparing a UN Joint Program on Youth Employment and Empowerment (JPYEE). The COYELI, while comprising definable components linked to specific priorities as described below and building upon the achievements of recent USAID projects in Liberia, should be fully compatible with the NYPAP and the JPYEE through various mechanisms. These mechanisms may include, for example: a) funding or co-funding for some NYPAP and/or JPYEE-identified activities; b) providing short-term technical assistance to the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) to help them better define and operationalize certain NYPAP elements; c) providing capacity building and other support to the MOE; and d) providing parallel funding where the contractor and/or possibly local or international sub-contractors would initiate and backstop specific components or sub-components as described below. The selection of the mechanism would depend upon comparative advantage, local capacity and relative cost.

The attached charts¹⁰¹ show the relationship between the NYPAP, JPYEE and COYELI and the “Get Ready, Get Set, Go” process that defines the COYELI approach. The prospective contractor should also see the Youth Fragility Assessment (April 1, 2009) document that was prepared as a background assessment for the preparation of the COYELI.

¹⁰¹ See pages 81-82 to the YFA.

2. COYELI Components

Component One: Institutional Capacity Building for Education to Reduce Fragility

The MOYS is the primary GOL focal point for project implementation. The contractor should have the capacity to provide short-term technical assistance to help the MOYS to move the NYPAP towards implementation and to provide occasional technical assistance to specific elements of the COYELI in any of the technical areas contained in any of the project's components. The COYELI should also be able to make technical assistance available to the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGD) whenever this becomes necessary for the achievement of COYELI goals and objectives. Specifically, the contractor will also be expected i) to engage the MOE in order to help them build their capacity to achieve their goal of better integrating vocational skills, including agricultural skills, into the formal education curriculum and b) support the MOGD in their efforts to promote gender equity in formal and non-formal education and the link to livelihoods. Finally, institutional capacity will be built within the GOL National Youth Volunteer Service (see below) and the COYELI will use NYVS members to help achieve COYELI objectives.

Component Two: Youth Basic Education and Preparation for Life

Liberia already has numerous development partners and NGOs engaged in basic education for out-of-school youth, life skills and civic education and some in psycho-social counseling. However, the content, quality and duration vary widely. There is little effort to measure the impact of these initiatives. In particular, the number of youth in need of post-war psycho-social counseling and in need of making a social adjustment to a post-war and achievement-oriented society is much greater than current capacity. Part of the problem is inadequate funds but there is also a lack of psycho-social counselors and a near absence of process whereby such counseling then leads to additional assistance in the form of formal or non-formal education or help with the transition into the workforce. In the area of psycho-social counseling, the contractor should also work closely with the MOGD. In the area of basic education for out-of-school youth, which is the responsibility of the MOYS, the MOE also needs to be consulted and involved since this will link to in-school basic education initiatives and the connection with in-school vocational education options.

Within this basic education preparation component, access to health education and basic health services is a vital element. The contractor will, in particular, propose strategies for addressing health issues as part of life skills education and in selected priority areas that include HIV/AIDS awareness and behavior change; sexual and reproductive health; nutrition and hygiene; malaria control; minimizing informal barriers to curative health care access (i.e., solicitation of informal users fees that dissuade the poor from seeking care); and ways to improve health care access for vulnerable youth.

Component Three: Vocational and Technical Skills Education for Livelihoods

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-sector is extremely weak and uncoordinated. The types of training offered are very limited. There is a critical shortage of trainers in almost all areas with 84% of the current TVET trainers defined as "untrained" in a recent UNESCO assessment. There is virtually no standardization of

curricula and no uniform functioning certification process. Vocational education in schools is the responsibility of the MOE. Out-of-school youth are the responsibility of the MOYS. There is no current list of which schools offer what TVET or how many trainees are now enrolled or for what duration or with what impact. It is known that many pre-war vocational centers are in ruins and, according to one study, only 0.8% of the population has ever attended a vocational or teacher training college compared to 1.9% for universities. There are inadequate linkages between what is taught and the job market. Many youth complete a TVET activity or an apprenticeship and end up half-trained, unemployed and sometimes unemployable. This state of affairs increases youth frustrations and can be dangerous in a fragile post-war state like Liberia. At the same time, however, the demand for vocational skills training has been higher than for any other item requested by youth in multiple surveys.

To build the capacity of this sub-sector and create new opportunities for learning and incomes, the contractor will be expected to undertake the following:

- Database. Assist the MOYS and MOE to compile a current and accurate list of what schools under MOE and what institutions under the MOYS are providing what types of training and then add to this list TVET entities run by NGOs, religious missions or others.
- Market-based Policy and Planning. Engage the relevant Liberian government institutions responsible for TVET. These may include the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NC-TVET), chaired by the Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs (MOPEA), the Agriculture and Industry Trade Bureau (AITB) which is theoretically responsible for certification and coordination of vocational training matters; the Ministry of Labor, the MOYS and the MOE. After assessing the roles and capacities of these entities, determine how best to develop a TVET market-driven training policy and plan of action in cooperation with the ILO and other stakeholders. USAID may separately fund a labor market survey to assist in policy development in this area.
- Training of Trainers. Work directly with the MOYS to identify a venue and propose a TVET Training of Trainers (TOT) program that will start with training for the highest priority skill areas for out-of-school youth as identified by the NC-TVET analysis proposed above. This is one of several Component elements that target the issue of quality in training.
- Curriculum. Assist the relevant ministries and other entities to obtain TVET curricula from abroad that can be modified for Liberia's needs in order to enable Liberia gradually to adopt standard curricula for various vocational areas. This should be linked to GOL efforts to create a standard system for certification.
- Rehabilitation. After the launch of the COYELI, review the status of funding for the rehabilitation of major TVET institutions and draw up a plan for USAID funding of those with no other funding commitments. This may include major reconstruction of ruined facilities, upgrading of functioning but dilapidated facilities or cost-sharing with other development partners and the GOL where gaps are identified in priority areas.
- Equipment. The COYELI has funds for equipment to enhance TVET institutional capacity. An equipment procurement plan should be developed in light of policy priorities and gaps.

- Institutional Linkages Initiative (ILI). The ILI will work to establish or re-establish professional linkages between Liberian and American TVET institutions where there may be prospects, for example, to attract vocational educators to teach in Liberia on sabbatical, to identify and ship used but serviceable equipment, to obtain short-term technical advice, to link Liberian institutions with their counterparts via the internet for discussions around curriculum, pedagogy, etc.
- South-South Vocational Synergies Initiative (SSVSI). The SSVSI aims to develop professional and mutually supportive contacts between Liberian TVET institutions and similar ones in other developing countries whereby the range of vocational skills training offered in Liberia could be expanded. For example, the Ghana Industrial Skills Development Centre has gone far in professionalizing the curriculum and re-orienting training towards market needs with active private sector involvement. Also, Morocco has direct flights to and growing contacts with Liberia. Nearly 60 Liberians are in Morocco on government scholarships and Morocco has one of the most developed vocational and artisanal sectors in the world. USAID/Liberia working with USAID/Morocco and the contractor should be able to develop synergies and opportunities for Liberians to improve the quality of vocational skills and products produced by vocational graduates.
- TVET to Include Health Sector. The health human resource needs of Liberia are enormous. Training in nursing, for birth attendants, for health management personnel, laboratory and clinical staff, etc. is a major need and should be considered both as a source of sustainable incomes for those entering these skill areas and as a way to bring down Liberia's negative health indicators.
- Skill-to-Work Bridges. Provide skill-to-work bridges in targeted sectors and skill areas through enterprise management training, technical support, marketing, entrepreneur coaching and mentoring, subsidized internships, youth organization income-producing projects that use TVET graduates; and rural learn-to-earn centers.
- Build Linkages with Small and Micro-Finance Providers. Review what USAID has done in micro-finance in Liberia and the plans of The Microfinance Bank (Access Bank Ltd.) that started up in January 2009 with start up lending capital of US\$6 million and the Liberia Enterprise Development Finance Company (LEDFC) with US\$20 million in lending capital from OPIC¹⁰². Use credit opportunities to foster the skills-to-work transition of TVET graduates and those completing apprenticeships.

Component Four: Rural Skills Development for Sustainable Livelihoods

Liberia has enormous potential in tree crop production (rubber, cocoa, oil palm), other commercial agriculture and in subsistence food crops, forestry and fisheries. In 2008, 61.4% of Liberia's GDP was derived from agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Since the war, however, there has been rapid urban migration, the average age of farmers is now over 55 and only 3% of youth express any interest in farming. In one telling example of this problem from Nimba County recently, an international NGO offered 100 vocational scholarships in four areas. They were immediately over-subscribed in three but could not fill the quota for agricultural skills training. The disinterestedness of youth in farming seems only matched by the renewed interest in the same sector by development partners. USAID, the EU, the

¹⁰² The LEDFC lends funds in amounts from US\$20,000 to US\$100,000 but may soon make eligible borrowers from US\$10,000-\$20,000 as well. Interest rates vary from 12-14%.

World Bank and the African Development Bank with IFAD all have major agricultural development projects in the pipeline for Liberia. In view of this, the COYELI has two objectives: 1) to develop and implement strategies to renew the interest of youth in farming and 2) to provide a process whereby agricultural and other rural skills are provided to youth and they are then mentored and supported until they make the transition from trainee to productive farmer with a sustainable livelihood. In this regard, the contractor will need propose strategies in these two areas.

Incentives for Youth in Farming. The contractor should suggest strategies and incentives to attract youth into farming and fisheries. What has worked in other parts of the world where youth have fled agriculture? What ancillary activities can be developed to make rural life more appealing, more healthful and more secure and stable? How can incentives be linked to training and then to post-training support? What local organizations have useful ideas in this regard that might be scaled up? Would a youth-targeted strategy be optimal or is it more effective to target households and seek to retain youthful household members in their communities?

Rural Skills Development and Skills-to-Farmer Transition Strategies. Liberia has farmer field schools, agriculture training centers, pilot model farmer initiatives, NGO-managed rural skills training activities, seed multiplication projects, tree crop assistance and other initiatives related to the rural sector. Some are substantial in size, but most are small-scale and many are struggling to scale up and to secure the transition from training to sustainable livelihoods. In view of the contractors experience in these areas, the experiences of other countries and current activities in the sector supported by development partners in Liberia, what would the contractor propose as a strategy to address the need to train more youth in agricultural skills, to do the training to a higher standard and to ensure that most trainees end up as effective farmers? Although fisheries comprise just 3% of GDP, there is scope for reducing youth fragility by training for fisheries development, including aquaculture. This area should also be addressed in the proposal.

Once the design of the forthcoming USAID agriculture support project is known, the contractor will need to adapt COYELI's strategies and activities to the forthcoming larger and presumably more comprehensive undertaking.

3. COYELI Implementation Strategy

Support from the National Youth Volunteer Service (NYVS)

The COYELI should be implemented with the assistance of the NYVS. At the same time, support to the NYVS will be an element of Component I of this Initiative. The NYVS was created by the GOL with technical assistance from the UNDP and United Nations Volunteers (UNV). It has recently increased its numbers to 150 youth, some of whom are already working with the MOYS. The NYVS provides an opportunity for USAID to support this worthwhile national youth volunteer program while also using NYVS members to achieve some of the COYELI objectives. The contractor should be familiar with the NYVS and explain how NYVS can best be used in connection with specific COYELI objectives.

Support from Local NGOs

Numerous local NGOs have been aware of the wholly inadequate provision of TVET in the country. In the post-war period, many have tried to fill this gap. Others have tried to assist rural youth with farmer field schools, farm inputs and technical advice. Although many local NGOs have very limited capacity and modest financial resources, some they have gained considerable grassroots experience in addressing some of the issues that will face the COYELI. Therefore, the contractor should identify a few key local NGOs involved in rural skills and TVET that may be able to help guide and facilitate the COYELI and help carry out some COYELI elements.

Linkages with Local TVET Institutions and Rural Skills Training Initiatives

Institutions like the Booker Washington Institute (BWI), the Monrovia Vocational and Technical Center (MVTC) and the Youth Agricultural Training Center (YATC) will be among the local counterpart institutions that the contractor must work with to implement the COYELI. The contractor's proposal should show familiarity with these and similar institutions in terms of their capacities, constraints and potential in order to explain how the COYELI will empower them institutionally to achieve key objectives outlined in this Statement of Work.

Linkages with International TVET and Rural Skills Providers

In the past, Tuskegee Institute, several United States land-grant colleges and others had institutional relationships with their Liberian counterparts. The contractor should demonstrate an awareness of the nature of these prior relationships and propose specific new institutional relationships with relevant United States educational institutions or consortia and indicate if there is agreement in principal from such institutions to work with the COYELI to advance the Initiative's objectives.

4. COYELI Geographic Locations and Targeting

All areas of Liberia are included in the COYELI since the COYELI responds to the GOL's National Youth Policy. Some initiatives will benefit youths from all parts of the country. However, since the COYELI is also expected to mitigate fragility by targeting at-risk youth, some areas of the country and some sub-sets of youth are considered as priorities. These will need to be defined further in consultation with the GOL with respect to individual COYELI elements. However, some broad priorities can be summarized here:

- Priority sub-sets of youth. Priority should be given in the COYELI to teenage mothers, disabled youth, street children, youth heads of households, rural youth wishing to pursue agriculture or fisheries and educated unemployed youth (B.A. and above) able to work through the NYVS or otherwise be empowered to use their skills on behalf of COYELI objectives.
- Geographic considerations. Ex-combatants are not specifically targeted since they have already received substantial special assistance during the past five years. Some ex-combatants no longer want to be designated as such, targeted assistance to ex-combatants causes resentments in the wider youth population and such targeting can reinforce a self-identity of ex-combatants as a class in

society, many of whom then assume they deserve special dispensations or have special power over society as a result of past negative behavior. However, County Superintendents, other government officials and NGOs often know the identity and locations of many ex-combatants so they can be included discretely in activities and processes that are community or sector-wide.

The majority of ex-combatants have remained in Monrovia and Monrovia is now home to about one-third of the country's entire population so it must be a focus of the COYELI. Lofa County had the highest concentration of Internally Displaced People and returnees, is home to substantial numbers of ex-combatants, and was one of the most seriously affected areas in terms of war damage. Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, and Maryland Counties have historically been largely excluded from development initiatives yet there is great potential for rural development. Further, these border areas lie next to Côte d'Ivoire where UNMIL reports there are still up to 2,000 armed Liberian ex-combatants. It is important that local people have good reasons not to join them.

5. Contractor to Build on Prior USAID Initiatives

The contractor (bidder) in its proposal should demonstrate an understanding of the Liberian economic, social and educational context and the activities that USAID has already or is currently undertaking that complement or provide guidance for the COYELI. Briefly, the contractor should be aware of the outcome of: the Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP) that offered apprenticeships and work; the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) for out-of-school youth; the Liberia Teacher Training Project (LTTP); USAID/OTI five-month Youth Education for Life Skills (YES) initiative implemented by Mercy Corps; the 2004 USAID/OTI peer facilitated life skills course called the Community Youth Empowerment Program (CYPEP) which trained hundreds of youth peer facilitators and master trainers in life skills. Also, USAID has supported Save the Children-UK to reintegrate Children Associated with Fighting Forces (CAFF), the work of the International Rescue Committee to provide community vocational skills training and several other NGOs.

In the field of rural development, the contractor should be aware, for example, of USAID's Sustainable Tree Crop Production Project, the cassava improvement project (with FAO) and the Liberia Integrated Assistance Program (Food for Peace). USAID has also been involved in the health sector dealing with primary health care, institutional capacity building for the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), malaria control and HIV/AIDS awareness and control efforts.

The contractor should also be aware of major activities of other development partners and their relationship to the NYPAP and to the proposed activities of the COYELI.

6. Proposal Development Tasks

The contract bidder will need to:

- I. display an understanding of the complex economic, socio-cultural and other drivers of fragility in Liberia that can be mitigated through COYELI and explain how they may affect the contractor's overall strategy;

2. prepare a proposal describing how each component of the COYELI is to be further developed and implemented;
3. explain what institutional strengths the bidder brings to the COYELI and how these are demonstrated through prior experiences and successes;
4. explain how the bidder proposes to manage and administer the COYELI;
5. propose a team of long-term and short-term personnel and explain why the proposed team represents an optimal mix of relevant skills and experience;
6. provide job descriptions explaining which proposed staff will do what to implement the COYELI and provide Scopes of Work for any proposed short-term consultants;
7. identify one or more local training institutions, consulting firms and/or NGOs with which the bidder proposes to work in partnership;
8. explain the nature of that partnership in terms of the institutional capacities and expected tasks of the local partner(s);
9. prepare a draft implementation plan and timeline outlining the specific roles of the prime contractor(s) and any other entities to be associated with the implementation of the COYELI;
10. prepare a Monitoring and Evaluation plan and a proposed reporting schedule;
11. propose a gender strategy that will take account of the post-war gender issues relating to equity in training and in other elements of the COYELI.;
12. propose a detailed budget; and
13. indicate how the bidder and/or local bidding partners will contribute materially to the COYELI either in-cash or in-kind or both and/or by using USAID COYELI resources to leverage funds from other sources to increase the impact of the COYELI in Liberia.

Annex B: YFA Survey Methodology

The YFA was undertaken in the first three months of 2009. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The following methods were used and each is described below.

- A literature review of documents pertinent to youth, education, health and economic and social development programs in Liberia¹⁰³.
- Key informant interviews with representatives from the GOL, NGOs, development partners and private sector organizations (see Annex H: List of People Met).
- One group meeting with local and national NGOs involved in youth programs and two Youth Focus Group discussions, held in Monrovia and Buchanan with representatives of youth organizations from those two cities and Kakata.
- A quantitative survey of 600+ youth in Monrovia, Kakata and Buchanan¹⁰⁴.

Review of Documents

The YFA began with a review of documents about fragility in Liberia, youth, gender, poverty, governance, security, health and agriculture and the efforts of the GOL and DPs to address issues in this regard. The documents collected include studies available on the Internet, unpublished documents and studies obtained from the GOL, DPs and NGOs.

Key Informant Interviews

During January-March, 2009, interviews were carried out with Liberian government officials, including ministers, deputy ministers and technical advisers; USAID officials and representatives of the European Union, UN agencies; NGOs and private enterprises. In some cases, follow-up interviews were scheduled. The interviews had two basic components: a) a presentation of the YFA objectives and methods and b) questions about the informants' views on youth and fragility issues and how the informants' organizations were responding to these issues in the areas of education, training, social services, health and employment. When possible, team members collected relevant documents after each interview.

NGO Workshop and Focus Group Discussions

One NGO workshop and two Focus Group Discussions were organized to gain a more in-depth understanding from youth leaders and individual youth about a broad range of issues, including education and training, employment, health, security, governance and corruption, attitudes and aspirations. The NGO workshop included 15 youth leaders representing a diverse group of organizations. Two half-day focus group discussions were held at the mid-point of the Assessment; one in Monrovia with 18 representatives of youth organizations. The other was conducted in Buchanan with 43 representatives of youth organizations from both Buchanan and Kakata. The discussion topics and responses are presented in Annex E.

The Youth Survey

The sample population

The youth survey was designed and implemented under serious time constraints and with the parameters pre-defined by the YFA Scope of Work. The SOW specified that a survey should be conducted of 600 youths in Monrovia, Buchanan and Kakata. Of the 600 youths to be interviewed,

¹⁰³ See the Bibliography for a complete list of documents studied.

¹⁰⁴ The YFA SOW specified that the survey should be conducted in Monrovia, Buchanan and Kakata only.

400 were interviewed in Monrovia, (population about one million) and 100 in each of two other cities, Kakata and Buchanan, each with an estimated population of 34,000. The SOW did not include a survey of rural youth. Seven percent of the sample were disabled youth since it was estimated that this number would be roughly proportional to the overall handicapped population. The 42 disabled individuals of both sexes were distributed proportionally among the three cities where the survey was conducted.

Within the requirements of the SOW, the Assessment team drew upon several techniques to determine the survey sample. Because Monrovia is a large city, four districts within the city were randomly selected as the interview sites. These districts included the central business and commercial district and three residential-commercial districts with socially mixed populations.

In all three survey areas, quota and opportunistic sampling methodologies were used to identify the survey respondents. The enumerators were instructed to identify roughly equal numbers of male and female youth in the three age sub-categories: 15–19, 20–25 and 26–35. Within these sub-categories, they were instructed to use an opportunistic approach in identifying respondents from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The sub-categories, from which respondents were to be identified include:

- Street youth, mainly out-of-school youth, including those who had never gone to school who are doing casual labor or hawking (about 50% of the sample);
- Youth working in small formal or non-formal enterprises (about 20%);
- Junior and senior high school students, (about 25%);
- University students or recent graduates (about 5%);

The questionnaire

The YFA team designed a questionnaire with 122 questions (see Annex C). It adapted elements of the USAID Education and Fragility Assessment Tool and initially drew from the Mercy Corps Youth Transformation Framework in developing the survey instrument. An additional 12 questions were added for disabled respondents. Although the questionnaire was written in Standard English, the enumerators asked the questions in Liberian English during the interviews. The YFA team sought advice from its local counterparts and the enumerators in phrasing certain questions so that they would be better understood by the respondents¹⁰⁵. The questions covered the following themes and interview lasted on average 25-30 minutes.

- General demographic information (10 questions): city of the interview, sex and age range of the respondent, marital status, number of children (if any), disability status and experience as an internally-displaced person or refugee.
- Occupation, lodging, education and training, health knowledge and practices, civic engagement and social capital, relations with members of different ethnic groups and contact with news media. (60 questions).
- Perceptions of trends (social, political and economic); performance of government including corruption; perceptions of the work of DPs and NGOs; perceptions of personal safety and employment opportunities; views on human rights, ethnic tensions and issues of equality between men and women and, aspirations for the future. (43 questions).
- Ownership or access to material goods and personal possessions as proxies for assessing relative economic status. (9 questions).

¹⁰⁵ For example, the question, “How many meals do you have a day?” was re-phrased in the questionnaire as “How many times each day do you put a pot on the fire to cook?”

- Disability issues, including questions about the respondent's specific disability, their access to assistance, education, training and jobs as well as their experience with discrimination. (12 questions)

Survey logistics were managed by Subah-Bellah Associates (SBA), a Liberian consulting firm with extensive experience in managing survey research. Three enumerators were hired (two men and one woman) as well as two data-entry clerks.

A two-day, intensive workshop was held to familiarize the enumerators and data entry clerks with the questionnaire and the interviewing techniques and procedures. The enumerators conducted practice interviews in the workshop and then tested the survey on the street by interviewing youth to get additional practice and identify any issues with the structure and/or wording of survey questions. Survey questions were then refined and re-phrased.

The survey process

The Survey was carried out over a three week period in February 2009. Each enumerator conducted 13-15 interviews each day in their assigned area. Numbered questionnaires were distributed to the enumerators on a daily basis and collected at the end of each day in Monrovia and the end of each week in Kakata and Buchanan. A control sheet tracked the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Survey supervisors monitored the enumerators adherence to the quotas (sex, age range and socio-economic sub-category) established for the survey.

Quality Control

At the end of each day, SBA and some YFA team members met with the two Monrovia enumerators to review each questionnaire completed that day. YFA team members were regularly in contact with the enumerator in Kakata and then in Buchanan for the purpose of answering questions and ensuring that all enumerators were interpreting the survey questions correctly and consistently. Each questionnaire from outside Monrovia was reviewed at the end of each week in consultation with the relevant enumerator. After the review of individual questionnaires and the correction of errors and omissions, the questionnaires were passed on to the data entry clerks who recorded the data in an Excel data base. SBA and the YFA team also did regular spot-checking of questionnaire data after they had been entered into the data base. The data for all questionnaires were then sent to JBS/Aguirre for further verification and analysis. Corrections were made when missing data or coding errors were discovered during this process.

Data Management

JBS/Aguirre produced tables using data from the 600+ questionnaires using SPSS software. The tables presented the data in cross-tabulations for each variable in the questionnaire by sex, age group, location and sometimes by disability. After reviewing the tables sent back to Monrovia, the YFA team member in charge of the survey drew up a new list of simplified tables to be prepared by JBS/Aguirre. These were then used selectively in preparing the Assessment.

Other sources of survey data

Because of time constraints, the YFA survey questionnaire was relatively brief to allow enumerators to finish 600 interviews in the time available. Other surveys covering wider geographic areas, including rural areas, and with larger sample sizes, were used to provide valuable additional data. These included: 2007 Demographic and Health Survey, 2008 Food Security and Nutrition Assessments, the USAID ALP Youth Survey (2006) and the Girl's Vulnerability Assessment (World Bank 2008).

Annex C: Survey Results

			Sex		Total
			male	female	
Age range	15-18	# respondents	102	114	216
		% within Age range	47.2%	52.8%	100.0%
		% within Sex	33.3%	37.6%	35.5%
		% of Total	16.7%	18.7%	35.5%
	19-25	# respondents	119	98	217
		% within Age range	54.8%	45.2%	100.0%
		% within Sex	38.9%	32.3%	35.6%
		% of Total	19.5%	16.1%	35.6%
	26-35	# respondents	85	91	176
		% within Age range	48.3%	51.7%	100.0%
		% within Sex	27.8%	30.0%	28.9%
		% of Total	14.0%	14.9%	28.9%
Total	# respondents	306	303	609	
	% within Age range	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%	
	% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%	

			Marital status			Total
			never married	married	divorced, separated or widowed	
Sex	male	# respondents	269	31	3	303
		% within Sex	88.8%	10.2%	.1%	100.0%
	female	# respondents	257	38	5	300
		% within Sex	85.7%	12.7%	1.7%	100.0%
Total	# respondents	526	69	8	603	
	% within Sex	87.2%	11.4%	1.4%	100.0%	

Table A3: Level of Education Achieved, by Sex of Respondent				
# yrs schooling		male	female	Total
1-3 years of elementary	# respondents	12	15	27
	% M/F	4.5%	6.0%	5.2%
4-6 years of elementary	# respondents	35	35	70
	% M/F	13.0%	13.9%	13.4%
7-9 yrs. of junior high	# respondents	72	93	165
	% M/F	26.8%	36.9%	31.7%
10-12 yrs. of senior high	# respondents	90	65	155
	% M/F	33.5%	25.8%	29.8%
12+ college	# respondents	59	44	103
	% M/F	21.9%	17.5%	19.8%
NA	# respondents	1	0	1
	% M/F	.4%	.0%	.2%
Total	# respondents	269	252	521
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A4: Agreement/Disagreement that Women Who Get Raped Are Often at Fault for Tempting Men				
		male	female	Total
true	# respondents	185	100	285
	% respondents agreeing that women who get raped are often at fault for tempting men	64.9%	35.1%	100.0%
	% M/F	60.5%	33.0%	46.8%
false	# respondents	119	200	319
	% respondents agreeing that women who get raped are often at fault for tempting men	37.3%	62.7%	100.0%
	% M/F	38.9%	66.0%	52.4%
don't know	# respondents	2	3	5
	% respondents uncertain whether women who get raped are often at fault for tempting men	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	% M/F	.7%	1.0%	.8%
Total	# respondents	306	303	609
	% respondents expressing views about the statement, "Women who get raped are often at fault for tempting men."	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A5: Educational Aspirations, by Sex				
(Level of education sought by of out-of-school respondents wishing to return to studies and currently-enrolled students wanting to continue their studies)				
		male	female	Total
primary school	# respondents	9	19	28
	% respondents wishing to return to or complete primary school	32.1%	67.9%	100.0%
	% M/F	3.6%	7.0%	5.3%
junior/senior high school	# respondents	71	84	155
	% respondents wishing to return to or complete junior or high school	45.8%	54.2%	100.0%
	% M/F	28.2%	30.9%	29.6%
college/university	# respondents	74	64	138
	% respondents wishing to return to or complete college or university	53.6%	46.4%	100.0%
	% M/F	29.4%	23.5%	26.3%
technical school	# respondents	23	19	42
	% respondents wishing to return to or complete technical school	54.8%	45.2%	100.0%
	% M/F	9.1%	7.0%	8.0%
other	# respondents	13	16	29
	% respondents wishing to return to or complete some "other" type of education	44.8%	55.2%	100.0%
	% M/F	5.2%	5.9%	5.5%
I don't want to return to school	# respondents	7	12	19
	% out-of-school respondents NOT wishing to return to any kind of school	36.8%	63.2%	100.0%
	% M/F	2.8%	4.4%	3.6%
NA	# respondents	55	58	113
	% respondents with no level of educational attainment or expressed aspirations.	48.7%	51.3%	100.0%
	% M/F	21.8%	21.3%	21.6%
Total	# respondents	252	272	524
	% respondents responding to a question about their educational aspirations.	48.1%	51.9%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A6: Links between Completed Vocational Training and Paid Employment				
		male	Female	Total
yes	# respondents saying "yes"	26	22	48
	% respondents who completed training and found paid work	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%
	% M/F	29.9%	28.6%	29.3%
no	# respondents saying "no"	49	40	89
	% respondents who completed training and did not find paid work.	55.1%	44.9%	100.0%
	% M/F	56.3%	51.9%	54.3%
NA	# respondents without vocational trg.	12	15	27
	% respondents for whom the question was not relevant	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
	% M/F	13.8%	19.5%	16.5%
Total	# respondents	87	77	164
	% respondents stating if they had taken vocational training leading to paid work	53.0%	47.0%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A7: Agreement/Disagreement that Men Should have the First Chance to Get Jobs				
		male	female	Total
true	# respondents	173	98	271
	% respondents agreeing that men should have the first chance to get jobs	63.8%	36.2%	100.0%
	% M/F	56.9%	32.5%	44.7%
false	# respondents	115	193	308
	% respondents disagreeing that men should have the first chance to get jobs	37.3%	62.7%	100.0%
	% M/F	37.8%	63.9%	50.8%
don't know	# respondents	16	11	27
	% respondents uncertain whether men should have the first chance to get jobs	59.3%	40.7%	100.0%
	% M/F	5.3%	3.6%	4.5%
Total	# respondents	304	302	606
	% respondents commenting on whether men should have the first chance to get jobs	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A8: Assessment of Government Efforts to Make Life Better in Liberia				
		male	female	Total
excellent	# respondents	18	21	39
	% respondents who think Government is doing an excellent job to make life better in Liberia	46.2%	53.8%	100.0%
	% M/F	5.9%	6.9%	6.4%
good	# respondents	91	75	166
	% respondents who think Government is doing a good job to make life better in Liberia	54.8%	45.2%	100.0%
	% M/F	29.7%	24.8%	27.3%
“Govt. is trying”	# respondents	172	183	355
	% respondents who think Government is attempting to make life better in Liberia	48.5%	51.5%	100.0%
	% M/F	56.2%	60.4%	58.3%
poor	# respondents	21	19	40
	% respondents who think Government is doing a poor job to make life better in Liberia	52.5%	47.5%	100.0%
	% M/F	6.9%	6.3%	6.6%
Don’t know	# respondents	4	5	9
	% respondents who don’t know how well the Government is doing to make life better in Liberia	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%
	% M/F	1.3%	1.7%	1.5%
Total	# respondents	306	303	609
	% respondents answering question, “Overall, how well do you think Government is doing to make life better in Liberia?”	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

		male	female	Total
decreasing	# respondents	49	38	87
	% stating that corruption in Liberia is decreasing	56.3%	43.7%	100.0%
	% M/F	16.0%	12.6%	14.3%
increasing	# respondents	196	184	380
	% stating that corruption in Liberia is increasing	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%
	% M/F	64.1%	61.1%	62.6%
staying the same	# respondents	24	28	52
	stating that corruption in Liberia is "staying the same"	46.2%	53.8%	100.0%
	% M/F	7.8%	9.3%	8.6%
don't know	# respondents	37	51	88
	% stating that they don't know whether corruption in Liberia is increasing or decreasing	42.0%	58.0%	100.0%
	% M/F	12.1%	16.9%	14.5%
Total	# respondents	306	301	607
	% respondents answering the question about changes in corruption in Liberia	50.4%	49.6%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

		male	female	Total
return to/continue in school	# of respondents	163	163	326
	% respondents who would return to/continue in school	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% M/F	53.4%	54.2%	53.8%
learn a trade	# of respondents	51	54	105
	% respondents who would learn a trade	48.6%	51.4%	100.0%
	% M/F	16.7%	17.9%	17.3%
find a job or get better job	# of respondents	42	42	84
	% respondents who would find a job or get better job	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% M/F	13.8%	14.0%	13.9%
leave Liberia	# of respondents	24	17	41
	% respondents who would leave Liberia	58.5%	41.5%	100.0%
	% M/F	7.9%	5.6%	6.8%
other	# of respondents	25	25	50
	% respondents who would do "other" thing	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% M/F	8.2%	8.3%	8.3%
Total	# of respondents	305	301	606
	% M and F respondents answering the question about having a wish.	50.3%	49.7%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A11: Responses to Robbery and Assault				
		male	female	Total
go to the police	# respondents	198	222	420
	% respondents who would go to the police if robbed or attacked	47.1%	52.9%	100.0%
	% M/F	64.7%	73.3%	69.0%
handle problem myself	# respondents	40	24	64
	% respondents who would handle the problem themselves if robbed or attacked	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
	% M/F	13.1%	7.9%	10.5%
organize friends & neighbors to attack criminal	# respondents	50	39	89
	% respondents who would resort to vigilante justice if robbed or attacked	56.2%	43.8%	100.0%
	% M/F	16.3%	12.9%	14.6%
do nothing	# respondents	9	10	19
	% respondents who would not react if robbed or attacked	47.4%	52.6%	100.0%
	% M/F	2.9%	3.3%	3.1%
other	# respondents	9	8	17
	% respondents who would take some "other" measures if robbed or attacked	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%
	% M/F	2.9%	2.6%	2.8%
Total	# respondents	306	303	609
	% respondents stating what they would do if robbed or attacked	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A12: Ways of Handling Serious Disputes				
		male	female	Total
go to the police	# of respondents	53	55	108
	% respondents who would go to the police if they had a dispute with their landlord, employer or the "big man" in the community.	49.1%	50.9%	100.0%
	% M/F	17.3%	18.2%	17.7%
use the judicial court system	# of respondents	38	36	74
	% respondents who would use the judicial court system if they had a dispute with their landlord, employer or the "big man" in the community.	51.4%	48.6%	100.0%
	% M/F	12.4%	11.9%	12.2%
ask relatives, elders in community to help	# of respondents	187	197	384
	% respondents who would ask relatives, elders in community to help if they had a dispute with their landlord, employer or the "big man" in the community.	48.7%	51.3%	100.0%
	% M/F	61.1%	65.0%	63.1%
fight back	# of respondents	16	10	26
	% respondents who would fight back if they had a dispute with their landlord, employer or the "big man" in the community.	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%
	% M/F	5.2%	3.3%	4.3%
do nothing	# of respondents	5	1	6
	% respondents who would do nothing if they had a dispute with their landlord, employer or the "big man" in the community.	83.3%	16.7%	100.0%
	% M/F	1.6%	.3%	1.0%
other	# of respondents	7	4	11
	% respondents who would do something else if they had a dispute with their landlord, employer or the "big man" in the community.	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%
	% M/F	2.3%	1.3%	1.8%
Total	# of respondents	306	303	609
	% M and F respondents answering the question, "If you had a dispute with your landlord or employer or the "big man" in the community, would you...?"	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table A13: Perceptions of Job Availability in Liberia				
		male	female	Total
easily available	# of respondents	5	3	8
	% respondents stating that jobs in Liberia are generally easily available	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
	% M/F	1.6%	1.0%	1.3%
somewhat available	# of respondents	16	14	30
	% respondents stating that jobs in Liberia are somewhat available	53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
	% M/F	5.2%	4.6%	4.9%
very hard to get	# of respondents	250	247	497
	% respondents stating that jobs in Liberia are generally very hard to get	50.3%	49.7%	100.0%
	% M/F	82.0%	81.5%	81.7%
not available	# of respondents	18	17	35
	% respondents stating that jobs in Liberia are generally not available	51.4%	48.6%	100.0%
	% M/F	5.9%	5.6%	5.8%
don't know	# of respondents	16	22	38
	% respondent saying that they do not know how available jobs are in Liberia.	42.1%	57.9%	100.0%
	% M/F	5.2%	7.3%	6.3%
Total	# of respondents	305	303	608
	% M and F respondents answering the question about job availability in Liberia.	50.2%	49.8%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

		male	female	Total
education & skills	# of respondents	215	207	422
	% respondents stating that education and skills are the most important factors in getting a job.	50.9%	49.1%	100.0%
	% M/F	70.5%	69.2%	69.9%
connections	# of respondents	76	79	155
	% respondents stating that “connections” are the most important factor in getting a job.	49.0%	51.0%	100.0%
	% M/F	24.9%	26.4%	25.7%
don't know	# of respondents	14	13	27
	% respondents saying that they did not know what was the most important factor in getting a job?	51.9%	48.1%	100.0%
	% M/F	4.6%	4.3%	4.5%
Total	# of respondents	305	299	604
	% within C23. Which is most important in getting a job?	50.5%	49.5%	100.0%
	Total % M/F responses	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

		Do you have an occupation?		Total
		yes	no*	
less than once	# of respondents	153	182	335
	% taking less than one hot meal a day	45.7%	54.3%	100.0%
	% M/F	51.5%	59.1%	55.4%
two times	# of respondents	129	106	235
	% taking two hot meals a day.	54.9%	45.1%	100.0%
	% M/F	43.4%	34.4%	38.8%
three times	# of respondents	15	20	35
	% taking three hot meals a day	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	% M/F	5.1%	6.5%	5.8%
Total	# of respondents	297	308	605
	% respondents stating how many hot meals they take each day.	49.1%	50.9%	100.0%
	Total % M/F respondents	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Annex D: Key Comments from Youth Focus Groups and the NGO Group Meeting

A. Youth Focus Groups Discussions in Buchanan and Monrovia

Consolidated Comments Made by Participants by Topic

Education

- Education has been down played in our county of Grand Bassa in many respects. There is no public library in the county. The limited high school facilities in the county are also of great concern. Schools are not supported in terms of school materials and qualified instructors.
- The education system in the country is in a deplorable condition to the extent that learning has become a joke. Presently, some high school graduates cannot write a single page letter.
- IT and computer services are limited and are not readily available to young people. Those that are available are too costly for most youth to afford.
- Education is often too expensive for youth since many have no money for education.
- Education for Street Youth is very difficult since they live on porches, sleep on tables in the markets; eat others' homes; and skip meals to survive so they have no energy for schooling

Employment

- Job opportunities are not available to young people. To get a job now a days you require contacts or you bribe your way. In most cases, employers or intermediaries request from job seekers about US\$200.00 to get a job which can equal three month's salary.
- Young people do not have the requisite qualifications and training for the job market. Most of the so called vocational training provided to young people is not adequate enough to provide sustainable job opportunities.
- Most training opportunities around here are of short duration which does not prepare the trainees for the job nor prepare the trainees to manage their own business.
- The capacities of youths are not built in way that allows them to manage their own business. For example, the DRR program which resulted in the sale of tool kits given to beneficiaries.
- Self initiative in agriculture has some problems: lack of basic agricultural inputs-fertilizer, bird nets etc. and preservation facilities are a constraint faced by youth who want to engage in agricultural production.
- Unemployment is a serious problem. War destroyed family structures and education

Health, Sexual and reproductive health

- Free medication is a theory not a reality.
- Hospitals lack essential drugs because many health practitioners take drugs from the hospital to their various drug stores to sell.
- Health workers delay patients if they are not bribed
- Health practitioners are not qualified
- Youth (especially the poorest) do not have adequate access to sexual and reproductive health care. STIs and HIV/AIDS risk are serious problems. "Youth-friendly" health care (especially sexual and reproductive health) is important but unavailable for the most part. Therefore, many youth stay away from clinics and hospitals unless they are very ill.
- Health problems like malaria affect ability to learn and work. Malaria is linked to ignorance. People don't know how it is linked to the environment, mosquitoes.

- Teen pregnancy is a problem, especially in rural areas. Why are 13-year olds pregnant?
- Health and women's issues are linked. Youth know about STIs and HIV and modes of prevention, but are reluctant to change their behaviors.
- High-risk behavior, such as sex without condoms, is widespread, despite high levels of knowledge among youth about HIV/AIDS. Fatalism is widespread. Youth ask, "Why use condoms? I won't get AIDS unless it is my fate."
- Youth organizations must maintain constant work on information and sensitization about health issues.

Security

- Armed robbery is on the increase in Buchanan and Monrovia. At certain times of the night, there are some places in the cities where no one dares to pass.
- Police are not doing anything to address the situation.
- Food security is another type of security issue – many youth are often hungry

Gender Issues

- From we the girls, teachers demand money from us for tests and pamphlets
- Rape is a very big problem for many of us, we fear it. The law against rape is not very well enforced. The perception that women "invite" rape is widespread among both men and women.
- Teenage pregnancy is a big problem.
- Parents prefer their male children to go to school rather than their female children
- The dependency syndrome is imposed on women. Peer pressure is a factor in this process.
- Women who are not educated don't speak out.
- Girl prostitution is tolerated. It brings income to poor parents. Girls have no choice but to sleep with men to get rice or money, especially in rural areas.
- Despite the official policy of monogamy, polygamy is tolerated; "unlimited wives are "OK" in traditional society. In urban society men often have girl friends "on the side". "Decent" women are not allowed to have multiple partners. Educated young women dislike polygamy.
- Fashion, peer pressure and the desire for visible wealth (such as gold jewelry) drives girls to have sex with "sugar daddies", as the girls do not have the income to buy such luxuries for themselves.
- Socialization is an underlying cause of inequality between men and women. Girls are taught to be dependent on men but boys go do homework and prepare for the future.
- Men who have multiple sexual partners bring home diseases.
- There is silence, denial of "promiscuity" Now, women are equally promiscuous as many men.

Handicapped youths

- They are the most vulnerable. Some people or groups raise money on behalf of the disabled but these funds are often not used on their behalf.
- They are discriminated against in taxis, housing, jobs
- Many disabled street children have been disowned by poor parents or are orphans.
- Who has worked with handicapped youth? Very few focus on this!
- The handicapped are the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. Polio, blindness, amputations, deafness are serious
- Lack good programs. JFK Hospital helps handicapped via an accessible facility (the only one in Monrovia).

Suggestions from youth participants

Education and training

- School curriculum should be redesigned to include basic agriculture, carpentry, masonry etc. to enable youth to have some basic skills after high school.
- More education, including entrepreneurship, leadership and life skills is needed.
- A variety of ministries must be involved in order to ensure sustainability.
- Civic education must be re-introduced in schools.
- Training is needed in many areas such as agro-processing, tourism, driving, tailoring, soap making, hair dressing and tie-dyeing.
- Internships should be part of education and training to give youth practical job experience.
- Adapt education and training to needs and opportunities of the environment
- Upgrade BWI to provide sustainable skills
- Provide professional and long term vocational training opportunities
- Provide multi-purpose youth centers equipped with state of the art technology
- Fragile youth need practical job training more than academic teaching.
- Provide adequate training for teachers

Health

- Access to “youth-friendly” health care must be decentralized.
- On-going sensitization and information dissemination are needed to maintain awareness of diseases like HIV/AIDS among youth.
- There should be a special focus on information and program development in rural areas. Information dissemination must be decentralized.
- A minimum of free health care is needed for youth. At present it is virtually impossible to receive even minimum care if one has not the means to pay for it. Therefore, the very poor (such as street children) do not have health care.

Gender

- Greater awareness is needed of women’s rights and gender-based violence.
- Education is important in this process, as knowledge equals power.
- Curriculum adaptation is needed to support this process.
- Build girls’ self esteem. Teach positive values. Overcome temptations of materialism. Empower women. They need to know that they don’t have to be sex objects.
- Women need to be more assertive with men.

Employment

- Provide agro-processing and preservation facilities.
- Correction centers should have some skills training facilities
- Business skills development (entrepreneurship)

Food Security

- The US Food for Work program can provide significant relief in youth food security, particularly if some 4,500 youths were recruited to clean up Monrovia and other cities, receiving food as (at least partial) compensation.

Handicapped

- Internships are a way of giving work experience to the handicapped
- There needs to be a greater awareness of the needs of the handicapped. They must be incorporated into a national vision of change.

B. Youth Fragility Assessment Workshop

Consolidated Comments from NGO representatives (5 February 2009)

Training Issues (This was the major topic of interest to participants)

- Career Counseling is needed because many youth select vocational areas as a result of peer pressure and without knowledge of their options.
- Duration of training is often too short. “Projects, for example, train 500 people and then dump them back on the street. How do they then get incomes with no help?”
- Once the activity is completed and the DP withdraws, local NGOs have no resources to follow up with the trainees and they become discouraged.
- Search for Common Ground indicated they find that too many youth want to be trained as the leaders and all at the same time.
- Search for Common Ground added: “Programs are short-term and there is no sustainability. After six-months training they are back in the street. Large numbers are half-trained.”
- Need to reinforce artisanal cooperatives set up by trade to boost their skills
- Children’s Assistance Program (CAP) stated that: “training for cooperatives sound good but we have worked with UNICEF for the past few years but there is lots of “confusion” – theft of materials etc. Now you can find some who are working – making bread, repairing tires etc. So some do manage to move ahead but cooperatives are a challenge.
- People open new training centers without regard to what is needed and there is no quality control. Need to start by asking people what they need & not deciding for them.
- Many trainers are not trainers. Need to Train Trainers before starting training activities
- Need basic office skills training even for university graduates – many have never seen any office machines.
- ActionAid pointed out that whoever has the training resources makes the decisions. There is need to determine what works rather than just have the project come from the DP.
- Others added that: Donors come and say “we want to train masons (for example) and so we go out and find people to do this even when they have little interest. We need to determine their attitudes. No auto mechanics in suits!”
- ODAFARA. This NGO deals with farmers. They did training and provided tool kits but this did not work well – most were sold. So next time we used a system developed in Germany – an apprenticeship program – after training we group them and provide tools, equipment and materials, including management training for entrepreneurship. This works better but there are still motivational problems
- One NGO suggested that “Apprenticeships are key to the transition to work” but that external examiners are needed to assure standards.

Social Issues Linked to Fragility

- Many NGOs are frustrated and one said: “Initially we get enthusiasm and cooperation but after some time, there is an issue of credibility and complaints about missing funds. This leads to deterioration of the organization – again, follow up is the key.”
- Youth still have a problem of trust – demands for total transparency are common due to widespread corruption.
- Funds need to be better managed for community radio and be routed via the Community Radio Association. They are working to ensure they are better organized and spread knowledge of government policies, e.g., PRS.
- Christian Children’s Fund asked FLY to identify youth groups with which they could work. “They identified 12 of them but they are poorly structured and have poor leadership. Thus we help them reorganize, register to become legal, develop by-laws, etc. Then we form them into youth cooperatives. They then prioritize what they want

to do and we help them with skill and leadership training. Also use mentorship approach.”

- ActionAid pointed out that idea of leadership and participating in decision making has been thrust upon youth, partly by people from abroad. In the past the elders made decisions – so they are unprepared. Thus they need social reorientation and the culture has to change.
- There is urban migration promoted by town-based skills training. Once they get skills upcountry many are then motivated to move to Monrovia to look for work – thus a rural to urban skill drain.
- Mercy Corps is focused on empowering youth. In every sector youth want employment – this is the key to reducing poverty but most are unqualified for the job market. Thus we try to plan and collaborate with those advocating employment. We focus on direct partnerships with youth groups, especially in agriculture

Health Issues

- The Light Association stated that there needs to be more stress on HIV/AIDS prevention in rural areas. For those who are sick, some people go home, do not take their drugs and die – so they need support and monitoring.
- Adults are needed for mentoring and youth centers are very important as a venue for youth services. They added that even 10-15 year olds need HIV information.
- ActionAid: Women’s rights are not always considered and women not treated equally. Search for Common Ground added that “when women are involved with have more success in building leadership.”
- Sometimes NGOs measure outputs and not impact. Look at ownership; look at learning and at change when measuring results – this is partly qualitative but it can be measured

Gaps Identified by Participants Include

- Basic skills lacking even among those who completed primary school
- Inadequate amounts of psycho-social training
- Choice of livelihood options seems narrow – what do people do in other countries to earn money that we could do here?
- Social entrepreneurship is a gap. People want to “do business” but have no idea what that means.
- Very few viable public private partnerships, especially mentoring systems for tertiary graduates.
- There is a “job gap,” - even trained people cannot find a job
- There is a gap in advocacy – youth issues are cross-cutting and decision makers need to be made aware of youth issues and pressured
- Entrepreneurship skills are a big gap
- There is a gap in Training of Trainers – this is badly needed in most areas
- Need more synergy between formal and informal education

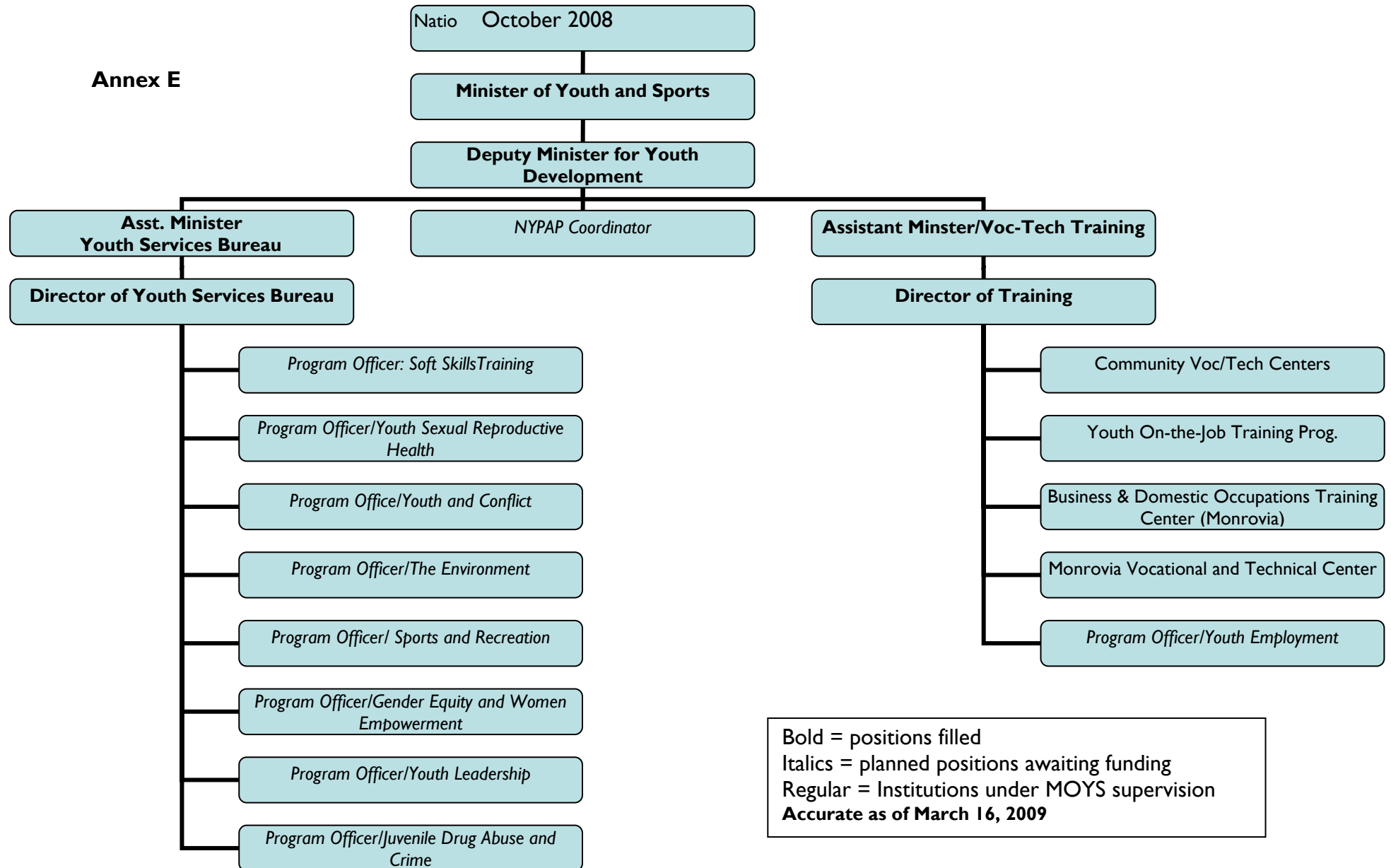
Coordination

- Coordination needs to be improved according to most participants. NARDA works to coordinate among local NGOs. LINNK is another NGO coordination group. These are now under the Civil Society Organization. Some NGOs can join the CSO directly or join LINNK or join NARDA.
- Often one group is not aware of what others are doing in same location. Radio can improve coordination
- UNMIL has a civil affairs office and many NGOs report their activities to them. This information is shared with relevant line ministries to provide feedback. Within ministries there are coordination groups like the gender-based violence task force.

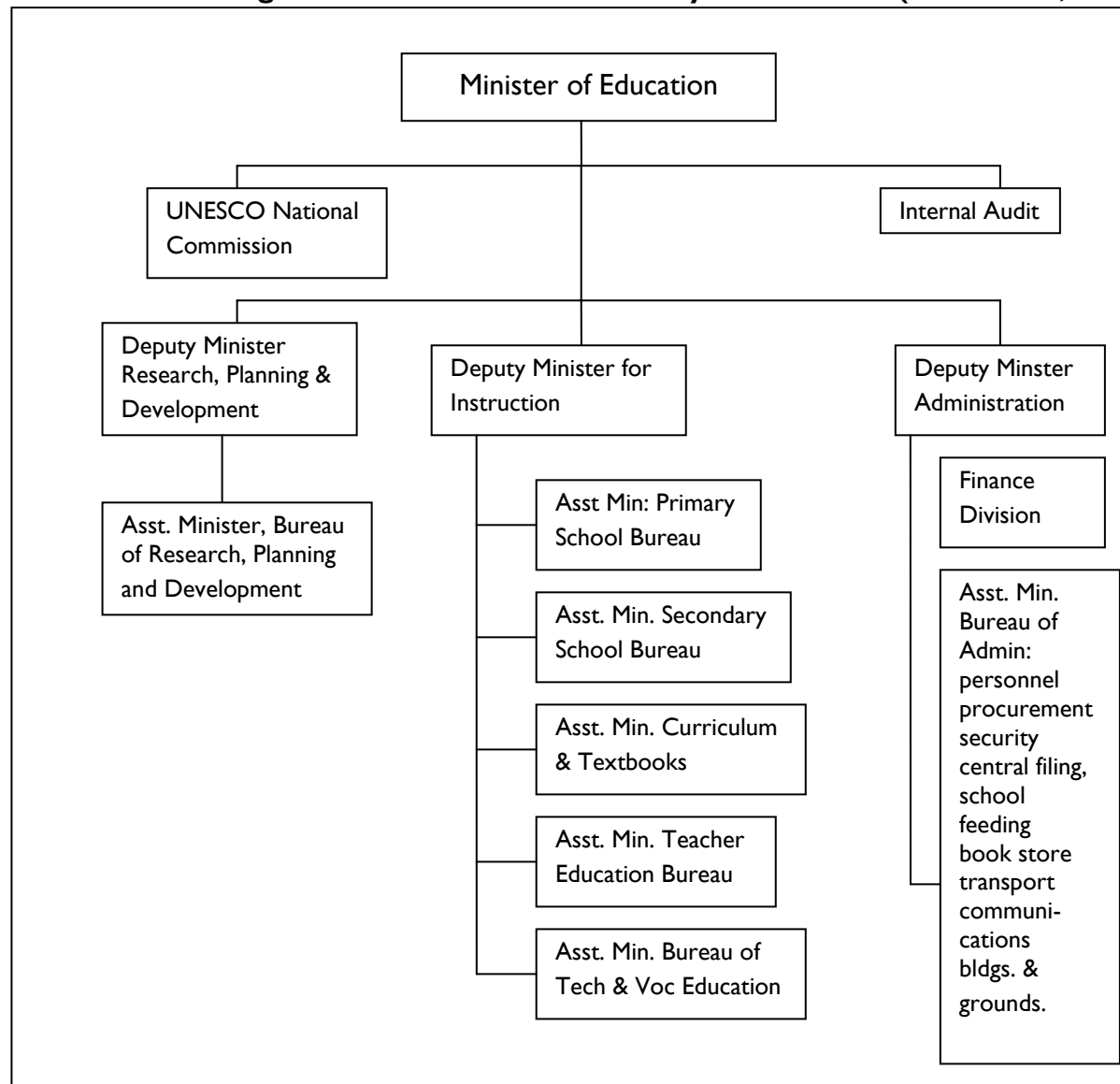
Some NGOs form alliances by sector. Many of these structures are weak and some coordination bodies only meet sporadically.

- The Women's Empowerment Network on HIV/AIDS has good potential to improve coordination in this area.

Annex E



Annex F: Organization Chart of the Ministry of Education (November, 2008)



Annex G

USAID Programs and Accomplishments

USAID has supported a broad range of development initiatives in nearly all of Liberia's 15 counties to promote economic and social development, peace and stability. This Annex summarizes information presented by USAID and is included for those reading this YFA who may not be familiar with USAID's portfolio of projects in Liberia. The accomplishments outlined below form a basis for further USAID efforts to address fragility and support the education sector in Liberia.

Major investments in education, including assistance from the President's Africa Education Initiative (AEI), are increasing school enrollments and improving the quality of education through sector planning and restructuring, teacher training and the provision of needed equipment, material and infrastructure rehabilitation. Nearly all of USAID's education program activities have been focused on improving basic education.¹⁰⁶ USAID support for workforce development in the productive sectors aims to fill gaps in human resource capacity. USAID also provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to enhance the institution's monitoring and evaluation capabilities.

The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) was developed for, and initiated in, Liberia beginning in 1998. It was designed to meet the needs of over-age, out-of-school youth, i.e., those who started primary school but were unable to finish their education or those who never enrolled in primary school because of the war. The program condensed the usual six years of primary education into three years. It was implemented in 10 countries.

In 2006 the ALP was expanded and enhanced to include a life skills component (especially for youth) conflict resolution and civic education. The new program was called Accelerated Learning Program for Positive Living and United Service (ALPP). The program also added a significant community mobilization component to create and engage local parent/teacher associations and a service learning component to encourage program graduates to become involved in community development projects. In 2007-2008, 16,288 students were enrolled in the ALPP regular program and 2,649 graduated with a Primary School Certificate (PSC) that year. That same year, 5,519 students were enrolled in the ALPP Youth Program with 768 earning their PSC. The ALPP has also established six Learning Resource Centers (LRCs) in six counties to provide teachers access to computer instruction, learning materials and updated skills training. A small grants component has assisted PTA, communities and youth to access funding to expand and enhance schools and informal learning sites.¹⁰⁷

An evaluation of the program in 2008 found high support for ALP and ALP-PLUS among educators and the local communities where it operated. There is demand for its continuance and expansion to more communities. The evaluation also found that the program was having a positive impact on the teaching styles and performance of teachers in the program. ALPP, however, is not integrated with or linked to any vocational training

¹⁰⁶ A very small amount of funds are allocated for higher education.

¹⁰⁷ USAID (DevTech Systems Inc). (Nov 2008) Accelerated Learning Program for Positive Living and United Service: Mid Term Evaluation Review.

programs. Thus students, even if they successfully complete the program of basic education, are not necessarily prepared to find employment.

The AEI supports several programs that have been important to improving access and quality in education for young girls and to improving literacy for adults. The Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program (AGSP) is one. Nearly 4,000 girls who lived too far from schools or who could not afford to pay fees have received scholarships. In 2008, boys also became eligible for scholarship support. AEI has also sought to increase adult literacy via a program run by a faith-based, grassroots organization, Alfalit International. This program targets needy adults in underserved areas and urban communities across five counties where illiteracy is most prevalent.

The Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP) has been very successful in improving the institutional and staff capacity of the University of Liberia and rural teacher training colleges. It has developed standards for teacher accreditation and introduced competency-based criteria to evaluate the skills of current and future teachers. Teachers are trained in child-focused methodologies and student monitoring techniques to improve the quality of instruction. To date, LTTP has trained nearly 1,500 teachers, including women in this traditionally male dominated profession.

USAID programs to strengthen and grow the economy have also had components that contributed to improving the education system. For example, the Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP) undertook the reconstruction and renovation of many public buildings, including school, teacher training institutes, and the University of Liberia that made it possible to restart operations and capacity building activities in those education institutions.

USAID has also provided training in business development and marketing skills, including micro-credit and small enterprise initiatives. In 2008, the Rural Apprenticeship and Artisans Program (RAAP), for example, was engaged in training more than 900 apprentices in over 90 businesses in three counties. A private sector internship program in Monrovia has placed 230 youth who have completed schooling or vocational training in large and medium-scale enterprises. The program has also provided training for women and disabled youth in rural areas in business skills and technical training in cash crop farming, food processing and preservation techniques.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ USAID/Liberia Briefer on Economic Growth for Sustainable Community Development., 2008/

In the agriculture sector, USAID is supporting a five-year innovative program (begun in September 2008) to address children's vulnerability and improve child welfare by improving their families' economic circumstances. The Liberia: Agriculture for Children's Empowerment (LACE) program is targeting at-risk youth in three counties. It is designed to foster competitiveness in horticulture and agriculture value chains and extend the involvement of the agricultural input industry into selected rural communities. The program also seeks to interface with formal school activities (two schools per county) by creating incentives to learn through the development of a more relevant curriculum and linking schooling to future, sustainable livelihood activities in agriculture. Though still in the pilot phase, the programs plan to incorporate internships with the agriculture input industry. It will also enable communities to invest more effectively in their children's current well-being and future success.

USAID has also invested in health programs, some of which have an education component. It has supported the strengthening of both public and private (NGO) health care providers who deliver a basic package of services related to maternal and child health, malaria, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS to underserved areas of the country. Currently 73 VCT centers provide a drop-in service for youth. USAID-supported programs implemented by PSI and the YMCA also provide youth-friendly services related to HIV/AIDS, STDs, family planning, etc. A peer group education program is under consideration that would be directed to older youth or out-of-school youth.

USAID has undertaken several crucial initiatives in the area of democracy and governance (D & G). These include initiatives related to the rule of law and human rights (with a special focus on gender-based violence), to strengthening the electoral and legislative systems, and supporting the development of an empowered civil society and media to increase participation in the political process and enhance understanding and awareness of engagement with elected and appointed officials. Except to the extent that youth are enjoined in these initiatives via their participation in NGO programs, there has not been a particular focus on youth in this area.

A new D & G program for 2009 ("Liberia Civil Society and Media Capacity, Advocacy and Leadership Program"), however, includes a youth leadership initiative to cultivate young leaders in Liberia intent on pursuing public service as a career. To that end, the program intends to providing comprehensive leadership training and mentoring for 100 young people (20 per year for five years between the ages of 20 and 25 who are underserved and from impoverished families) so that they can become active agents of change in their communities.

Annex H

USAID RFQ 669-00-08-00113-00 - A.6 STATEMENT OF WORK

PART I: Overview

I. Introduction

USAID/Liberia seeks technical assistance through a contractor to conduct an Education, Youth and Fragility Assessment which will determine the level of influence that Education has over youth insofar as it equips them to become productive members of society and contribute positively to the overall development of Liberia. The contractor shall conduct a practical evaluation on the current engagement of youth, their level of education, their vision and preferences for the future, and the attitudinal requirements necessary for upward growth. Furthermore, the contractor must also do an environmental review to describe the prevailing opportunities and resources available for youth development. Fragility here refers to the tendency of youth to break away from their pursuits in preference to a downward or negative oriented engagement which increases the likelihood for social unrest. The contractor shall examine education with respect to its ability to maintain the critical balance necessary for youth to be in total control of their own destiny and contribute to national development.

In Liberia, education encompasses formal and non-formal education services, basic education and higher education. Youth development includes both in-school and out-of-school youth with emphasis on knowledge and life skills, work force and livelihoods development, and civic engagement and protection. These components enable the cultivation of essential skills for transitioning to productive adulthood, including the psycho-social healing linked to post-conflict recovery.

Activities outlined in this statement of work intend to respond to the following questions:

- How does education, including youth development, contribute to fragility?
- How does fragility affect education and youth development?
- How can education and youth development, mitigate fragility and promote stability?

These key questions frame a new paradigm that casts education and youth development in the forefront of addressing the risks or the reality of conflict in countries affected by potential or real unrest.

2. Background on Liberia education and youth

Liberia's youth have been devastated by the country's 14-year civil war. Youth have not only missed out on education opportunities and healthy socialization, but also have experienced years of trauma and social dislocation. During the war, children and young people constituted the largest group of recruited fighters, creating an entire generation that has never known peace and security (Munive, Wisner and Lakovits, ILO/UNDP 2006). For many years, the education system essentially ceased to function, and large percentages of youth were unable to access or forced to abandon schooling. Unemployment is estimated at 85% (FTI submission, March 2007). Ex-combatants and war-affected youth alike do not have adequate access to job and employment opportunities, increasing the risk of a return to violence. As of today, 9,000 ex-combatants who have been demobilized and disarmed, have yet to receive reintegration and rehabilitation services. Because of exposure to violence, deprivation, and insecurity, ongoing psycho-social trauma is widespread among both youth and adults. These challenges, coupled with the breakdown of traditional values and norms, make the youth situation a highly volatile security challenge (PRS 2007). On the other hand, youth also constitute Liberia's greatest resource for the future: if youth are engaged constructively, they will be the engine to rebuild the country.

Liberia's public education system essentially was destroyed by the war. Outcomes from the 2006 school census reveal considerable infrastructure needs: 31% of public schools were destroyed during the conflict, and the average learner-to-classroom ratio is 300:1. Liberian public schools are extremely disadvantaged in terms of materials, equipment and supplies. The student-to-textbook ratio hovers at 27:1, and the only textbook often is in the hands of the teacher. Only one-third of public schools have pit latrines or flush toilets, and only one-fourth offer a functioning water point. Many educators, school administrators and teachers left the country during the conflict and have been replaced by untrained and unqualified teachers without formal training or experience. An estimated 62% of Liberian teachers lack a primary school teaching certificate and 40% of teachers do not have a high school degree. The war exacerbated the deficiencies of an education system that already was inefficient and of low quality.

School censuses were conducted both in 2006 and 2007. From one year to the next, enrollments increased substantially. Total enrollment, across all school types, rose from 894,316 to 1,394,035 – an increase of 56% (59% among boys and 52% among girls). Most strikingly, enrollments nearly doubled in public primary schools (an increase of 91%), while they declined (by 18%) in Mission schools. While part of this increase may be an artifact of improved data collection in the second census, a good part of the increase is real.

Overall there is a dearth of data on key education and other social indicators, and available data often are of questionable quality. With that caveat, and with the understanding that there is substantial error in enrollment ratios, we discuss enrollment rates below.¹⁰⁹ The gross enrollment ratio (GER) in 1980 was estimated at 48, which declined to the mid-20s in the 1990s, and then rose to the 70s (girls) and 80s (boys) around the year 2000. While these data are preliminary and not yet cleared for public release, the reliable data from the 2007 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS) suggest that in 2006, the gross attendance ratio (GAR) was 83 (86 among male and 79 among female youth).¹¹⁰ Undoubtedly, youth participation in schooling has increased substantially since the end of the conflict.

Perhaps most notable is the difference between the primary school GAR and net attendance ratio (NAR). According to the 2007 LDHS preliminary findings, in 2006, only 40% of children of primary school age (6-11) attended primary school. With a GAR of 83, this means that over half of the students in primary school are outside the target age range – and nearly all of those outside the age range are overage. These findings are consistent with those of the 2006 school census, which found, for instance, that 85% of the students in Grade 1 were overage (age 8 or older), rather than being of the target age for the grade (6 or 7).

At the secondary level, attendance ratios are much lower than at the primary level: the GAR is 46, and the NAR (attendance among youth age 12-17) is 20% (LDHS). As at the primary level, over half of the students are outside the target age range.

Data on primary school dropout and repetition rates are scarce, but the LDHS provides 2006 dropout and repetition rates for the primary grades. Repetition is highest in grades 1 and 6 (10%), and considerably lower in grades 2-5 (ranging from 2-4%). Dropout rates are low throughout primary, ranging from 4-6%.

3. Liberia's Recovery and Development Challenges

¹⁰⁹ One difficulty with these enrollment data is that they depend on an accurate estimate of the numbers of children of school age, and because the last census was in 1984, and because of the devastation and dislocation of the war, it is extremely difficult to estimate these numbers with any accuracy.

¹¹⁰ The GAR is based on household survey data on whether youth attended school at any point during the given school year. As such, attendance rates are comparable to enrollment rates, but not equivalent, since enrollment rates are based on enrollment records at schools.

Liberia is in a period of transition from relief to development; however it is clear that in the continuum that takes a country from conflict recovery, Liberia is closer to the relief stage than the development stage. While it is crucial to establish the foundations for stability, many interventions still need to operate in a relief mode. In education, the challenges include an unstable teaching corps composed of teachers who are being recruited with low qualifications, refugee teachers who received training in refugee camps in neighboring countries, etc. Communities in Liberia are slowly rebuilding themselves but all have not returned to their original locations since villages in several counties were evacuated and often burned down. Refugees are still in the process of returning to their communities but find no land to return to or face rejection or resentment related to the reintegration of those who committed atrocities; individuals are in search of livelihood opportunities and will keep moving until they find income generation activities. These circumstances shape the strategy and vision that USAID (and other DPs) need to adopt in support of the stabilization process. As USAID has done in the past, the Agency needs to continue investing in programs to mitigate fragility and conflict and promote stability.

Within the Ministry of Education, while considerable effort is being made to rebuild the education system, there are substantial challenges. In 2006/07 and 2007/08, education constitutes 11% of government spending (World Bank 2008: 9, draft), which is up considerably from previous years, but falls far short of the 20% or more that many countries allocate to education. The proportion of funding to primary education appears to be rising from 14.5 % to 29.5%, though this level is still far below what many sub-Saharan African countries devote to primary education (Ibid: 23). Households in Liberia spend considerable amounts on the education of their children (76% of costs at the primary level in 2007). Parents who send their children to private school cover the full cost of education. Those with children in government and government-assisted schools also report spending on fees, even though tuition fees were officially abolished in all primary schools in 2006 (Ibid:24).

In addition, while education policies are currently being developed, there are still few approved policies. The Soros Foundation, through the Open Society Institute, is funding a long-term technical assistant in charge of developing an education sector plan; and World Bank technical assistants assisted the MOE with its submission for the Fast Track Initiative. Other DPs and NGOs have produced reports and studies related to their programmatic needs. Reliable and sector-wide information is not available and what exists is questionable in terms of validity and reliability. Many gaps urgently need to be filled if education is to contribute to the stabilization effort. Many have identified the main deficiencies of the Fast Track Initiative plan, which include the paucity of data needed for decision making; the lack of transparency in the financial system; the limited absorptive capacity; the trade-offs between various strategies; the availability of resources; the drivers of conflict as they impact education; the inadequate consideration of equity and issues of exclusion that are the causes of conflict. The education policies and approaches being developed are based on a series of development assumptions that are not yet relevant to Liberia.

As USAID's programming moves from relief to development, the situation necessitates maintaining some relief measures and ensuring that interventions mitigate the root causes of fragility and conflict. To support Liberia on its road to recovery and rebuilding, education programs must address and mitigate the likelihood of return to conflict by:

- Providing psycho-social support to both program beneficiaries and service deliverers (such as teachers);
- Providing safety and security in schools and other learning spaces, e.g. by managing violence, showing zero tolerance for guns, preventing kidnapping and gender-based violence, developing conflict resolution skills, etc.;
- Providing livelihoods skills development to improve learners' economic self-sufficiency;
- Providing transitional education services to fill gaps in essential areas while building government capacity;

- Building capacity of a limited number of NGOs to supplement education service delivery and to build civil society participation in education;
- Reducing corruption in education systems, such as payroll, exams, and certification;
- Working to ensure inclusiveness and equity (e.g. geography, ethnicity) in all aspects of education, including teacher hiring and promotions; and in the provision of education services; and
- Engaging youth actively in the reconciliation and reconstruction process, enabling them to play leadership roles and work constructively with adults.

Youth have already begun to demonstrate their commitment to peace and reconstruction by their demand for education and training. Schools and NGO education and training programs are flooded with young people wanting to start or return to education after the conflict years. Youth are also beginning to participate in civic life. According to the Federation of Liberia Youth, a 2004 UNMIL inventory counted 177 registered and unregistered youth associations around the country. After more than a decade of dormancy, FLY is constituted today of 95 registered youth associations. Under the guidance of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, a National Youth Policy and Framework was finalized in 2005, and prepared as a legislative act in Parliament. A multi-sectoral Action Plan is currently under development through a national consultative process.

Youth employment, along with access to education, is the most pressing issue facing youth. With 80% of the economy in the informal sector, many young people, some who are heads of household, are involved in subsistence-level (survivalist) economic activity. Although young people have been involved in labor-intensive (cash-for-work) projects, training is either non-existent or ad hoc. Vocational training that is part of DDDR efforts has not been evaluated¹¹¹, though there is a widespread sense that these programs are not intensive enough to enable the majority to successfully transition to employment. Early child-rearing and high fertility rates put further economic stress on households. Other health issues such as malaria and food insecurity further erode youth productivity and academic achievement.

The fact that the Liberian economy and labor market are very weak has serious implications for formal education. These challenges include:

- A strong likelihood that the school dropout rate will be high as youth, especially girls, are forced to work to support themselves and their families;
- Extremely challenging conditions for the school-to-work transition (e.g. no jobs). This suggests that both in-school and out-of-school programs must create new curriculum and approaches to helping youth become economically self-sufficient, such as training in micro-enterprise development and entrepreneurship, technical skills training responsive to market demand, supported work, and practical learning opportunities;
- There is a need to help youth manage their child-bearing so that they can continue their education. Strategies include youth-friendly reproductive health services and flexible education scheduling that accommodates young mothers;
- Psychosocial trauma seriously impedes youth's ability to make wise education and employment decisions. Efforts to educate and train youth will not "stick" if youth do not have the psychological well-being to use what they have learned;
- As Liberia attempts to rebuild its formal sector economy, the poor quality of the workforce is already apparent. Educational programs must develop youth's basic employability skills, including IT skills and "soft" workplace skills (e.g. dependability).

¹¹¹ Some discrete assessments have been conducted on individual projects, but apparently nothing that systematically looks at DDDR interventions across donors and implementing partners. The UNICEF project "Strengthening Coordination of Reintegration Programmes for Children Associated with the Fighting Forces in Liberia" (funded by USAID) is currently assessing the results of the Business Development Services (BDS) programs run under the framework of DDDR.

In short, Liberian youth are facing challenges in multiple domains of life: psycho-social health, literacy/numeracy, employability, and inclusion and participation in community life. It is crucial that the basic education system address all these dimensions as it endeavors to deliver essential services. These holistic approaches will require cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination in programming in economic growth, health, democracy and governance, and education.

PART II: Scope of Work

I. Goals and Objectives

The goals of the assessment are to:

- 1) Assess how education and youth development affect fragility and how fragility affects education and youth development, in the country or targeted areas,
- 2) Inform the development of USAID/Liberia mission's strategy for education and youth programs.

Goal I:

Assess how education, including youth development, affects fragility and how fragility affects education, including youth development, in the country or in targeted areas:

- Determine the extent to which education and youth in Liberia are: a) affected by the war and the drivers of conflict; b) contribute to fragility/conflict; c) can mitigate against fragility and promote stability.
- Identify the degree to which the youth cohort nation-wide is accessing education and training opportunities. This includes identifying where out-of-school youth are, what they are doing, and what their needs are through a national – level survey which targets three urban areas, i.e., Monrovia, Kakata and Buchanan. The target population includes at-risk youth such as recent dropouts, and students enrolled but not attending regularly.
- Assess the risks (pregnancy, student-older partner (e.g., teacher) relations, unsafe and illegal abortion, and HIV/AIDS) faced by youth that keep them from completing school and jeopardize their health and even survival. These risks increase with age – and affect many more as teens come into the late years of adolescents, a time when most women have already had a baby.

Activities:

1. Evaluate the contribution of education to youth development in Liberia;
2. Analyze the role of poor education quality as a contributing factor to fragility/conflict among youth in Liberia;
3. Examine typical educational context/environment that mitigates against fragility and promote stability in Liberia;
4. Identify the existing education and training facilities/opportunities, including programs available for the development of youth in Liberia; and
5. Determine the percent of the youth cohort enrolled and/or have access to existing educational and training facilities nation-wide.

Note: For useful data collection on this first goal, it is advised that the 'USAID Education and Fragility Assessment tool' be adopted/adapted and applied together with the 'Mercy Corps Youth Transformation Framework'.

The youth component of the assessment will produce a profile of significant subgroups within the youth cohorts that includes rural, urban, age, geographic distribution, socio-economic status, gender,

identity groups, etc. This profile will be the baseline used to identify the challenges youth face and their assets, as well as opportunities for transitioning to productive adulthood and citizenship.

Both tools are innovative and are breaking new ground; their contents need to be used to conduct the assessment, if necessary in combination with other data collection instruments or strategies. As the tools are being used and their strengths and weaknesses identified, the contractor is to reflect upon the data collection and analysis process allowed by the tools.

Goal 2: Strategic programming

Propose potential strategies, approaches, and activities for mitigating fragility through USAID education and youth development programs in the country or in targeted areas. Identify potential USAID education and youth development strategies, approaches and interventions that can mitigate the source of fragility and promote stability in the country or in targeted areas.

- Identify ways to deliver education services to in-school and out-of-school youth and promote stability.
- Make recommendations on involving key actors in identifying windows of vulnerability and opportunity for addressing fragility and promoting stability in the country.

Activities:

1. Identify both traditional and modern/alternative methods of education service delivery in Liberian schools;
2. Identify methodologies best suited for education service delivery to out-of-school youth in Liberia;
3. Identify leading institutions, agencies and individuals and include civil society, and community-based organizations, who have the capacity to influence youth actions and behaviors;
4. Solicit information from this 'key actors' group with specific reference to matters relating to youth vulnerability and opportunity for addressing fragility;
5. Make recommendations on how the key actors could participate or contribute to youth programs that promote stability and prevent conflict; and
6. Produce a draft Scope of Work for a large-scale, multi-sectoral youth education project that would integrate Basic Education, Economic Growth (Life Skills, Business, and Voc/Tech), Democracy and Governance (advocacy, civil society strengthening) and Health programs to mitigate fragility and promote stability.

2. Task Actions

- a) Review the literature related to education and fragility in Liberia in general and conflict-affected districts in particular;
- b) Review documents related to the education program in Liberia;
- c) Collect information and review education and youth interventions that have taken place in Liberia;
- d) Interview education and youth stakeholders in the capital as well as in the regions: education officials, NGOs, civil society representatives, religious and community leaders, and DPs. Organize and manage logistical support: procure a car and a driver;
- e) Using Max Qualitative Data Analysis, SPSS or a similar statistical survey tool application of the data collection protocol;
- f) Collect and enter data in the statistical survey tool application; analyze data;
- g) Draft executive summary and main findings for presentation to the USAID/Liberia Mission, the Education Donor Partners, and the Ministry of Education, as required in Section A.10 Deliverable Schedule;
- h) Collect all findings from the entire team, participate in the collective drafting of the report in the format of the statistical survey software application
- i) Produce the final report as required in Section A.10 Deliverable Schedule;

- j) Produce a draft Scope of Work for a large-scale, multi-sectoral youth education project that would integrate Basic Education, Economic Growth (Life Skills, Business, and Voc/Tech), Democracy and Governance (advocacy, civil society strengthening) and Health programs to mitigate fragility and promote stability as required in Section A10 in the Delivery Schedule.

Annex I: List of People Met

Name	Position	Institution/Organization
USAID		
Aaron, Brian	Contracting Officer	USAID
Brown, Gib	Basic Education Adviser	USAID
DeMarco, Renée	Senior Advisor	USAID, Bureau for Africa
Fahnbulleh, Louise	Democracy & Governance	USAID
Gray, Frances	Cognizant Technical Officer	USAID
Homer, McDonald	Economic Growth Officer	USAID
McDermott, Christopher	Health Team Leader	USAID
Parwon, Sophie	Health Officer	USAID
Sancho-Morris, Margaret	Education Team Leader	USAID
Stam, John	Democracy & Governance Office	USAID
Tanu James	Health Officer	USAID
White, Miriam	Education Officer (COTR)	USAID
White, Pamela	Director	USAID
Whyner, Daniel	Land and Community Forestry Advisor	USDA, USAID
Government Ministries and Agencies		
Baker, Vaanii O.	Senior Policy Coordinator	National Investment Commission
Collie, Joseph Jr.	District Education Officer	Saniquellie, Nimba County
Cooper-Bruce, Aisha	Consultant	Ministry of Youth and Sports
Dahn, Dr. Bernice	Deputy Minister/Chief Medical Officer	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
Dupigny, Albert C.	World Bank Advisor	Ministry of Education
Gaye, E.	Training Director	Ministry of Agriculture
Gayeflor, V. Hon.	Minister of Gender & Development	Ministry of Gender and Development
Hare Jr., Sam E.	Deputy Minister for Youth Development	Ministry of Youth and Sports
Howe, Michael	Donor Coordination	Ministry of Education
Jackson, Ranney B.	County Superintendent	Bong County
Jappah, Eugene	Director of Planning and Management	Ministry of Education
Jimmy, Jimmie-Falla	Director of Guidance Counseling, Planning Dept.	Ministry of Labor
Johnson, Fred	Director for Industrial Dev.	Ministry of Commerce
Johnson, Sneh	Assistant Minister, Vocational Education and Training	Ministry of Youth and Sports
Kamei, Robert	County Superintendent	Nimba County
Kehzie, David N.	District Education Officer	Ganta, Bong County
Korto, Dr. Joseph D.Z.	Minister	Ministry of Education
Liberty, Edward T.	Director	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Systems
Lincoln, Johnny	Director for Price Analysis and Marketing	Ministry of Commerce
Mitchell, Richelieu Arthur	Assistant Minister	Ministry of Agriculture
Pewu, Dr. M. G.Y.	Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Assistant Minister,	Ministry of Health

Name	Position	Institution/Organization
	Curative Services	
Roberts, Moses P.	Assistant Minister for Industry	Ministry of Commerce
Roberts, Prof. James E.	Deputy Minister for Planning, Research & Development	Ministry of Education
Robertson, Boye A.	Director, OJTP	Ministry of Youth & Sports
Saah, George	Employment Coordinator National Employment Bureau	Ministry of Labour
Toe, Christopher	Minister of Agriculture	Ministry of Agriculture
Turay, Mohamed	Director of Standards	Ministry of Commerce
Twayen, Nya	Assistant Minister for Youth Services	Ministry of Youth and Sports
Wonde, Jackson	Deputy Minister for Planning and Manpower Development	Ministry of Labor
Wreh, Francis	Deputy Director for Statistics	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Systems
Zangai, Dr. Levi Zee	World Bank Consultant	Ministry of Education
Development Partners and Project/Contractor Personnel		
Bah, Chernor	Country Representative	UNFPA
Casanova, Joan Mr.	Education and Health Officer	European Union
Chorlton, Rozanne	Country Representative	UNICEF
Dowey, Terry	Country Director	Mercy Corps
Field, Michael	Chief of Party, ACE	ACDI/VOCA
Flomo, Josiah K.	Staff member	UNHCR
Greenberg, Marcia E.	Gender Adviser	LCIP (DAI) USAID
Hall, Peter	Technical Advisor	ILO
Hammond, Winfred N.O.	Representative	FAO
Kakoma, Itonde	Assistant Project Coordinator Conflict Resolution Program	The Carter Center
Karjanlahti, Kristina	Research Analyst	World Bank
Kaydor, Thomas	UN Coordination Analyst	UNCT
Lokonga, Taban		WFP
Magumba, Fred		NRC
Miller, Marie D. Esq.	Program Manager, Investment Climate Team for Africa	IFC
Ndayimiriye, Nestor		WHO
Ngongi, Susan	Deputy Representative	UNICEF
Outland, Monroe		UNDP
Poling, Peggy	Chief of Party	ALP Plus (USAID)
Seidi, Stevenson		UNESCO
Wheeler, Mahawa Ms.	Deputy Chief of Party, ACE	ACDI/VOCA
Williamson, John	Senior Technical Advisor Displaced Children & Orphans Fund	USAID Contractor
Wisung, Jenni	Program Officer	ILO
Non-Governmental Organizations		
Addy, Axel M.	Country Representative	Population Services International
Aston, Amah	National Youth President	YMCA
Barseh, Andrew Sr.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	Christian Children's Fund
Cooper, Barsee	Representative of NGO at	Mercy Corps Liberia

Name	Position	Institution/Organization
	NGO Group Meeting	
Doe, Elvis F.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	Sustainable Livelihood Promoters Program (Cape Mount County)
Dogba, Tikorta	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	Search for Common Ground
Dolobaipu, Charles M.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	CODHA (NGO) – Community and Human Development Agency
Gbessagee, Morris	Program Manager	PLAN International
Jacobs, Charles	Youth Group Member	Saniquellie, Nimba County
Jallah, Kpanneh Ms.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	Light Association Inc.
Kaiuway, Richard P	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	Light Association Inc.
Kamara, Edwin T.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	Children’s Assistance Program
Kansaye, Amadou	Director of Finance and Administration, LEDFC	CHF International
Kargbo, Alfred	Program Manager	Federation of Liberian Youth
Kear, Mabel M.K.	Program Director	CHF International
Mehn, Abednego Z.	National Youth Program Volunteer	Nimba County
Mitchell, Amos	President	Liberian Youth for Peace and Development
Muingbeh, Harry	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	ODAFARA, Organization for the Development of Associations for Farmers and Related Associations
Orji, Yvonne	Gender Specialist	Population Services International
Scott, Richard	Director & UN Youth Spokesman for Meeting MDGs	Global Youth Connections
Scott, Theodore Sie	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	PLAN Liberia
Smith, Ciana Ms.	Program Officer	Global Youth Connections
Sowah, Sondi (Mr.)	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	Human Development Program
Williams, Korto Ms.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	ActionAid Liberia
Yanquoi, Henry D.Z.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	Family Planning Association of Liberia
Yellowway, Alvin W.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	YMCA of Liberia
Zulu, Monyou Ms.	Representative of NGO at NGO Group Meeting	NARDA (New African Research & Development Agency)
Private Sector and Others		
Addy, Wendell	National Tripartite Committee Representative for Labor	Liberian Business Coalition against HIV/AIDS
Adepoju, Morenike Ms.	Managing Director	EcoBank
Du Plessis, Matt	Systems Analyst, Telecommunications investor	Fundamo
Du Plessis, Matt	Systems Analyst	Fundamo

Name	Position	Institution/Organization
Hariz, Wael S.	Acting General Manager	Royal Hotel
Harris, Alfred	Volunteer/Social Dialogue Director	Liberia Chamber of Commerce
Hermes, Claudia	Training Manager	GTZ
Jeffrey, Thomas S. III	Country Manager	GBS-Liberia
Johnson, Philip	Commerce and Industry Director	Liberia Chamber of Commerce
Mathews, Joseph	Chief Executive Officer	Arcelor Mittal Corporation
Rainer, Alexy	Project Manager	GTZ
Roberts, J. Feay	Industrial Relations Manager	Firestone Rubber Corporation
Sana, Marsalla	Acting Secretary General	Liberia Chamber of Commerce
Swaray, Lansanah Alex	Staff member	Liberia National Student Union
Taylor, Freddie R. Jr.	President	Liberia Chamber of Commerce

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 USAID <small>FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE</small>		Liberia Youth Fragility Assessment Questionnaire			
ANNEX K					
INTERVIEW #	TIME INTERVIEW STARTED				
I would like to begin by asking you a few basic questions. Then I would like to ask about health, education and security. And then learn your views about our country and the future. Let's start.					
A	BASIC QUESTIONS	Circle the correct answer			
A1	Location of interview	1 Monrovia	2 Kakata	3 Buchanan	
A2	Sex	1 Male	2 Female		
A3	Age range	1 15-18	2 19-25	3 26-35	
A4	Marital status	1 Never married	2 Married	3 Divorced or separated	4 Widowed
A5	Do you have any children?	1 Yes	5 No		
A6	If yes, how many?	1 one to three	2 four to six	3 seven or more	9 NA - None
A7	Are you physically handicapped?	1 Yes	5 No	(if yes, go to Annex 1. Then return here)	
A8	During the war, were you ever a refugee?	1 Yes	5 No		
A9	During the war, were you ever an IDP?	1 Yes	5 No		
A10	Time spent in current location (city of interview)	1 One year or less	2 Two to five years	3 More than five years	
Now I would like to talk to you about your needs in areas like work, education and health.					
B	YOUTH NEEDS PROFILE				
Occupation					
B1	Do you have an occupation?	1 Yes	5 No	(If no, skip to B7)	
If yes, what do you do for a living?					
B2	Petty trading (informal commercial sector)	1 Food	2 Non food	3 Other	9 NA - No petty trading
B3	Vocation/trade (informal sector)	1 Masonry/carpentry	2 Auto Repair	3 Plumbing/electricity	4 Domestic service
		5 Sewing/tie-dying	6 Hair dressing	7 Farming/fishing	8 Other
					9 NA
B4	Formal sector job	1 Government	2 NGO	3 Private Company	9 NA
B5	How would you describe your formal sector job?	1 Professional	2 Technical	3 Management	4 Administrative
					9 NA
B6	Please tell me what sector your job is in? (Read list to informant)	1 transportation	2 construction	3 commerce & communications	4 manufacturing
		5 hotel/restaurant	6 office work	7 security	8 Other
					9 NA
B7	If no, how do you support yourself?	1 begging	2 casual labor	3 family	4 Other
					9 NA
B8	If no, have you looked for a job?	1 Yes	5 No		9 NA
B9	Since the war's end, have you ever been required anyone to work without pay?	1 Yes	5 No		
Lodging					
B10	Do you	1 Rent own room	2 Live with family	3 Live with friends	4 Own your home
		5 Live on street			
B11	If you rent a place, what do you pay per month?	1 US\$1 to US\$10	2 US\$10 to \$20	3 More than US\$20	9 NA
B12	Do you receive financial help from anyone?	1 Relatives abroad	2 Family in Liberia	3 Charity group	4 Other
					9 No help provided
B13	If yes, how often do you get this help?	1 Monthly	2 Sometimes	3 Rarely	9 NA
Education: Formal Schooling					
B14	Have you ever attended school?	1 Yes	5 No	If no, go to Q. B18: mark NA for B15-B17	
B15	If yes, including this year, how many years of school have you completed?	1) 1 to 3 elementary	2) 4 to 6 elementary	3) 7-9 junior high	4) 10-12 senior high
		5) 12+ college			9 NA
B16	If yes, do you currently attend school?	1 Yes	5 No		9 NA

B17	If you dropped out of school, what was the MAIN reason for dropping out?	1 war/conflict	2 too expensive	3 no school nearby	4 family responsibilities	9 NA
		5 Other				
B18	If you have never attended school, what is the MAIN reason?	1 war/conflict	2 too expensive	3 no school nearby	4 family responsibilities	9 NA
		5 Other				
B19	If you wish to remain in or return to school, what level or degree would you want to complete?	1 primary school	2 junior/senior high school	3 college/university	4 technical school	
		5 other	6 I don't want to return to school			
B20	If education is 12+ years, indicate area of study.	1 science, medicine or technology	2 social science, law or literature	3 creative arts	4 business	
		5 Other				9 NA
B21	Did you receive a college/university degree?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
B22	If yes, where did you do your college education?	1 In Liberia	2 Abroad			9 NA
	Vocational (skill) training					
B23	Have you ever attended a skill training program?	1 Yes	5 No	If no, circle "NA" for B24-B29 and go to B30		
B24	If yes, in what skill area was your training?	1 Masonry/carpentry	2 Auto Repair	3 Plumbing or electricity	4 Service/hospitality	
		5 Hairdressing	6 Tie Dye/soap making	7 Tailoring	8 Other	9 NA
B25	If yes, how long was your skill training program?	1 Up to 1 month	2 Up to 3 months	3 Up to 6 months	4 Up to one year	
		5 Other				9 NA
B26	If yes, did you complete the training?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
B27	At what institution?	1 MVTC	2 BWI	3 UN post-war program	4 NGO program	
		5 Other				9 NA
B28	Did the training lead to paid work?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
B29	If not completed, why not? (cite the most important reason)	1 war/conflict	2 too expensive	3 Not interested	4 family issues	
		5 Other				9 NA
	Apprenticeships					
B30	Have you ever been apprenticed to anyone?	1 Yes	5 No	If no, mark NA for B31 to B 33 and skip to B34.		
B31	If yes, in what skill area? (circle all that apply)	1 Masonry/carpentry	2 Auto Repair	3 Plumbing or electricity	4 Service/hospitality	
		5 Hairdressing	6 Tie Dye/soap making	7 Tailoring	8 Other	9 NA
B32	If yes, how long were you an apprentice?	1 up to 1 month	2 up to 3 months	3 up to 6 months	4 up to one year	
		5 other				9 NA
B33	If yes, did the apprenticeship lead to paid work?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
	Other Education/Training					
	If the person has completed 6 or more years of schooling, skip to B 38 and circle NA for B34 to B37					
B34	Have you attended adult literacy classes?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
B35	Can you read one page in English?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
B36	Can you write one page in English?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
B37	Can you do simple written calculations?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
	Health and Nutrition (Access and use of health services, basic knowledge)					
B38	Have you been sick in the past year?	1 Yes	5 No			
B39	If yes, did you seek medical services?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
B40	If yes, where did you seek medical services?	1 Clinic	2 Hospital	3 Traditional Healer	4 Pharmacy	
		5 Other				9 NA
B41	If no, why didn't you seek medical services?	1 Cost	2 No trust	3 No facility nearby	4 illness not serious	
		5 Other				9 NA

B42	Do you have access to safe drinking water?	1 Yes	5 No			
B43	What is the source of your drinking water?	1 Well 5 piped water	2 Stand Pipe 6 Other	3 Bottled or bagged water	4 Surface water	9 NA
B44	How many times each day do you put pot on the fire to cook?	1 Less than Once	2 Two times	3 Three times		
B45	Do you eat rice every day?	1 Yes	5 No			
B46	Does your soup include meat/fish?	1 Yes	5 No			
Now I want to ask questions about health knowledge. (Circle answers closest to response.)						
B47	In most cases, what makes people sick?	1 Germs	2 Witchcraft/juju	3 other		
B48	Where do you think malaria comes from ?	1 mosquitoes	2 open air	3 witchcraft/juju	4 Other	5 Don't know 9 NA
B49	Can you name two ways to protect yourself from malaria?	1 bed nets 6 No; can't name any	2 medicine: anti-malarial drugs	3 elimination of standing water	4 overcome witchcraft	5 other
B50	Does smoking cigarettes damage your health?	1 Yes	5 No	3 Don't know		
Next, I would like to discuss your involvement in different organizations and with friends						
Civic Engagement and Social Capital		Circle all that apply for B51 only				
B51	Of which of the following organizations are you a member? (read the options to the respondent) If none, circle NA for B52-B54 and skip to B55	1 Church	2 Mosque	3 Political party	4 Sports team	
B52	If yes to the above, have you ever held a leadership position in any organization?	5 Intl. club (ex. Rotary)	6 Women's org.	7 Youth/student groups	8 Other organizations	9 NA
B53	If yes to membership question, have you ever received any training in leadership, management or bookkeeping for any organization?	1 Yes	5 No			9 NA
B54	If yes, how often do you participate in the activities of any of these organizations?	1 Often	2 Sometimes	3 Rarely		9 NA - Not a member
B55	If no, are you interested in joining some group or organization like those named?	1 Yes	5 No	6 Don't know		9 NA - Already an org. member
B56	Did you vote in the last Presidential election?	1 Yes	5 No			
B57	If not, why not?	1 Not important	2 Not interested	3 Didn't know about	4 Not registered	5 Other 9 NA - I voted
B58	Do you have good friends among other ethnic groups (tribes)?	1 Yes	5 No			
B59	Do you ever read a newspaper, listen to radio or watch TV?	1 Yes	5 No			
B60	After English, what is your best language? (circle only ONE language)	1 Basse 5 Lorma	2 Gio 6 Mandingo	3 Kpelle 7 Mano	4 Kru 8 Vai	9 Other
Now lets change the subject and talk about your views about Liberian society						
PERCEPTIONS OF TRENDS, CONDITIONS, SECURITY, SOCIETY			Read choices out loud			
Direction of Change in Liberia						
C1	In the past two years, have things generally improved in Liberia?	1 Yes	5 No	3 Don't know		
C2	In the past two years, has your life gotten...	1 Better ?	2 Worse ?	3 Stayed the same ?	4 Don't know	
C3	In the past two years, have the lives of your friends and family gotten....	1 Better ?	2 Worse ?	3 Stayed the same ?	4 Don't know	
C4	In the next five years, do you expect your life and that of your friends/family to get...	1 Better ?	2 Worse ?	3 Stay the same ?	4 Don't know	

C5	Since the war ended, what is your belief about the assistance provided to ex-combatants compared to help provided to those in Liberia who did not fight? Ex-combatants have...	1 Received more	2 Received less	3 About the same	4 Don't know	
	Perception of Government					
C6	Overall, how well do you think Government is doing to make life better in Liberia?	1 Excellent	2 Good	3 Trying	4 Poor	5 Don't know
C7	How much do you think the Government cares about individual people like you?	1 A lot	2 Some	3 A little	4 Not at all	5 Don't know
C8	Have you received any help from government?	1 Yes	5 No			
C9	If yes, how valuable was this assistance?	1 Very valuable	2 Moderately valuable	3 Not helpful		9 NA
C10	Do you think the Government should provide additional help to its citizens?	1 Yes	5 No	6 Don't know		
C11	If yes, in what areas should government provide more help to its citizens? (Choose top two) Read the list to the respondent.	1 Health	2 Education	3 Housing	4 Employment	
		5 Security	6 Agriculture	7 Other		9 NA
C12	Do you think corruption in Liberia is ...	1 Decreasing?	2 Increasing?	3 Staying the same?	4 Don't know	
C13	Have you ever been a victim of corruption?	1 Often	2 Sometimes	3 Rarely	4 Never	
	Perception of Donors and NGOs					
C14	Overall, how well do you think donors like UNMIL, UNDP, UNICEF, USAID and others are doing to make life better in Liberia?	1 Excellent	2 Good	3 Fair	4 Poor	
C15	How much do you think donors/NGOs care about people like you?	1 A lot	2 Some	3 A little	4 Not at all	
	5 Don't know					
	Perception of Personal Safety and Security					
C16	How safe do you feel from violence & theft when in your home?	1 Very safe	2 Somewhat safe	3 A little safe	4 Not at all safe	
C17	How safe do you feel walking outside at night?	1 Very safe	2 Somewhat safe	3 A little safe	4 Not at all safe	
C18	If you are in school, how safe do you feel there?	1 Very safe	2 Somewhat safe	3 A little safe	4 Not at all safe	9 NA
C19	If you are working, how safe do you feel on the job?	1 Very safe	2 Somewhat safe	3 A little safe	4 Not at all safe	9 NA
C20	If you are robbed or attacked, would you....	1 Go to the police	2 Handle problem myself	3 Organize friends & neighbors to attack the criminal	4 Do nothing	
		5 Other				
C21	If you have a dispute with your landlord or employer or the "big man" in the community, would you ...	1 Go to the police	2 Use the judicial court system	3 Ask relatives or elders in the community to help	4 Fight back	
		5 Do nothing	6 Other			
	Perception of Education					
C22	How important is education or training to earning money?	1 Very important	2 Somewhat important	3 A little important	4 Not important	5 Don't know
C23	Which is most important in getting a job?	1 Education & skills	2 Connections ("who know you" system)	3 Don't know		
C24	How well does school in Liberia prepare youth for jobs?	1 Very well	2 Somewhat	3 Very little	4 Not at all	9 NA Never in school
C25	In your experience, how serious were/are your teachers in trying to help you learn?	1 Very serious & hard working	2 They tried but were not very good	3 Didn't try very hard mostly tried to get money from us	4 Other	9 NA Didn't attend school
	Perception of Job Opportunities					
C26	Jobs in Liberia are generally...	1 Easily available	2 Somewhat available	3 Very hard to get	4 Not available	5 Don't know
C27	The best way to find a job in Liberia is...	1 Through friends	2 Through a job agency/program	3 Through the government	4 Applying to a business directly	5 Other/don't know
	Now I'll make several statements. Please tell me if each is TRUE or FALSE or if you DON'T KNOW					

	Views of Others/Tolerance	Which statements best reflect your own views?				
C28	Men should have the first chance to get jobs.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C29	Education is more important for men than woman.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C30	Women who get raped are often at fault for tempting men.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C31	Youth who are HIV positive should be allowed to attend school with other youth.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C32	Women and men should have equal chances to get education and jobs.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C33	Everyone born in Liberia is a "Liberian" and should have the same rights.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C34	Some people born in Liberia are not "real" Liberians.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C35	At present, there are lots of tensions in my community between ex-combatants and others.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C36	Witchcraft and juju are big problems because they can hurt people with their powers.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C37	There are still big tensions among different tribes in Liberia.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't Know		
C38	The best way to resolve disputes is through peaceful and cooperative means.	1 True	5 False	6 Don't know		
Well, we are almost done. Just a few more questions about your hopes for the future.						
Aspirations and Awareness about future opportunities						
C39	If it were possible to do just one thing right now, which one would you like to do?	1 Return to/continue in school 6 Other	2 Learn a trade	3 Find a job or get better job	4 Return to farm or village	5 Leave Liberia
What would you like your children to become? (If no children, ask what he or she would like sons and daughters to become if he or she ever has children.) Do not read answers. Circle the one statement closest to the respondent's choice						
C40	Your daughters	1 trade/commercial 6 government employee	2 teacher/nurse 7 other	3 secretary/office 8 Don't know/they'll choose	4 professional in science/tech or medicine	5 Other prof.
C41	Your sons	1 farmer/fisherman 6 government employee	2 commerce or business owner 7 other	3 construction, manufacturing mining worker 8 Don't know/they'll choose	4 professional in science/tech or medicine	5 Other prof.
Now read the following statements and possible answers to the respondent.						
C42	Ten years from now do you expect your life and that of your family and friends to be...	1 much better	2 somewhat better	3 about the same	4 worse	5 Don't know
C43	Ten years from now, do you expect Liberia's economy (money business) and government to be....	1 much better	2 somewhat better	3 about the same	4 worse	5 Don't know
D OTHER						
Finally, can you tell me if you own, or have access to any of the following:						
D1	Radio, tape, DVD or CD player	1 Yes	5 No			
D2	Bicycle	1 Yes	5 No			
D3	Motorbike	1 Yes	5 No			
D4	Fridge	1 Yes	5 No			
D5	Cell phone	1 Yes	5 No			
D6	More than one good pair of shoes	1 Yes	5 No			
D7	Automobile	1 Yes	5 No			
D8	TV	1 Yes	5 No			
D9	Computer	1 Yes	5 No			
D10	Do you have any other comments you would like to make? Please write below.					
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME		TIME INTERVIEW ENDED _____				
Enumerator's Name (print)		_____				
Enumerators' Signature		_____ Date _____				
Supervisor Name (print & signature)		_____ Date _____				