



## COUNTRY PROFILE



*Children, especially girls, whose lives have been interrupted by conflict, now have a chance to catch up on their education, as a result of USAID-sponsored rehabilitation of schools, teacher training, and increased access to quality education.*

### OVERVIEW

Peaceful elections in 2005 and the inauguration of the first female head of state in Africa in 2006 ushered in a period of hope and high expectations for Liberia's recovery and development after decades of poor governance and destabilization. The consequences of 14 years of brutal conflict constitute huge challenges to the recovery, reform, and rebuilding process. The Government of Liberia, with the support of international partners—of which the United States is the largest bilateral donor—is slowly restoring public confidence in political, social, economic, and judicial institutions while addressing the regional disparity and bad governance that contributed to the conflict.



### PROGRAMS

#### PEACE AND SECURITY

Working across nearly all 15 counties of Liberia to aid the transition from relief to development, USAID has helped communities create economic opportunities to reintegrate internally displaced people, ex-combatants, and the members of the general population affected by the war. Other U.S. government assistance supports the development and training of new military and civilian police forces.

#### GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

USAID provided support for the 2005 presidential and legislative elections, and in an effort to build a more representative and competitive multi-party system, continues to support political party development, electoral systems, and preparations for local and municipal by-elections. With USAID assistance, civil society organizations are increasing public advocacy activities related to elections, corruption, conflict mitigation, and human rights. Through the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program, USAID helps create the necessary policy conditions for the economy to grow.

#### INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

Devastated health facilities and a diminished health care workforce challenge the Government of Liberia's ability to provide basic health services. Women and newborns are at particular risk due to high fertility rates, malaria, HIV/AIDS, poor sanitation and hygiene, and lack of safe birthing services. USAID is supporting public and nongovernmental organizations to deliver a basic package of essential health services to underserved areas of the country. Other USAID support contributes to

#### LIBERIA SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1847  
Population: 3.49 million (2008)  
GDP per person: \$185 (yr)

*Source: U.S. State Department*

#### USAID IN LIBERIA

[www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan\\_africa/countries/liberia](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/liberia)



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**LIBERIA**

## COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

national health planning, training of health professionals, and refurbishing facilities. Due to the high incidence of malaria, Liberia is a focus country for the President's Malaria Initiative.

### **INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EDUCATION**

Decades of poor governance and civil war devastated Liberia's formal public education system and created a tremendous need for informal, accelerated learning opportunities for ex-combatant and noncombatant youth and young adults. Major investments in education—including assistance from the President's Africa Education Initiative and International Education Initiative—are increasing school enrolment and improving the quality of education through sector planning and restructuring, teacher training, the provision of needed equipment, and infrastructure rehabilitation. In 2008, USAID began working with universities to help them become more effective learning institutions. USAID also supports adult vocational training, as many professionals have not benefited from advanced training and skills development in more than 15 years.

### **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Agriculture, including forestry, is critical to the economic development of Liberia and is the source of livelihood for 70 percent of the population. USAID focuses on conserving protected areas, rehabilitating smallholder rubber, cocoa, and oil palm farms, providing livestock, and conducting training in business and marketing. In addition, USAID's Office of Food for Peace runs a non-emergency food aid program for vulnerable groups and school children at risk of dropping out of school.

In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, USAID is supporting improved policies on natural resource management and an increase in the transparent and legitimate use, ownership, and commercialization of timber, mineral, and fishery resources, while protecting Liberia's unique biodiversity.

USAID also supports an Emergency Power Program to extend electricity to sections of the capital city and longer-term power generation throughout the country.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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