LIBERIA

Fragile State:  YES
Current Conflict:  NO
Refugee Camps:  YES — refugee camp for Ivorians (Adrian Edwards "New Ivorian refugee camp opened in eastern Liberia" UNHCR, September 2, 2011; available at http://www.unhcr.org/4e60afb09.html)
EFA-FTI Partner:  YES
Special Status:  None
On-Track for EFA by 2015:  NO “Progress is being made towards meeting the EFA goals but the number of obstacles that have to be removed are such that progress has been slow and there is some doubt that any of the targets will be met by 2015, even though they will be met later.” (ESP 2010)

Analysis:
From reading Liberia’s Education Sector Plan, one gets the sense that Liberia has a deep and nuanced understanding of the challenges it faces in rebuilding its educational system. The focused political intention to rebuild collaboratively — both inter-ministerial and with donor partners — is evident from the country’s education sector documents.

Liberia faces unique contextual challenges: the consequences of a 14-year long civil conflict, an uneducated generation as a result, and an extremely young population — 44% of which are under age 15. For these reasons alone, donors have rightly highlighted the need for an emergency preparedness response for the education sector.

Unique among its peers, Liberia recognizes and has made plans to invest in developing the administrative and planning capacity of its county and district level personnel. Although other SSA countries are also affected by weak education planning and management capacity at the local levels, Liberia is one of the few to dedicate space in its ESP to how the administrative personnel should be trained so as to assure strong capacity from the ground up.

As noted by the Appraisal of the 2010–2020 Education Sector Plan (2010), the ESP “represents an excellent effort by the MOE to develop a sector-wide program through a highly consultative process.” The question then becomes — with such excellent plans as a foundation, what can be done to ensure steady and on-track progress in implementation? Although not related to education per se, the answer may hinge on Liberia’s national infrastructure and roads.

Providing reliable utility services will enable better communication among national, county, and district offices. Creating access to areas where schools are or are needed will enable delivery of services and supplies, and support building rehabilitation and construction. Such access will also enable quality control through improved monitoring and supervision, and improve safe access for teachers and students.

Spotlight Issues:
• National infrastructure and roads
• Emergency preparedness plan for the education sector
• Increased funding for the education sector
• More qualified teachers
• Instructional materials for teachers and students

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<th>POLICY AND PLANNING</th>
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<td><strong>Key Facts</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Priority Policies and Reforms</strong></td>
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Updated: June 19, 2012
2. To improve the quality of all early childhood development services and programs in the country
3. To support greater community and family involvement in provisions and programs for those aged 0 to 5 years
4. To establish mechanisms for greater collaboration and co-ordination between relevant ministries, agencies and communities, in order to maximize the impact and effectiveness of ECD programs

**Primary Education**
1. To make the provisions necessary for all children (especially girls, individuals with special needs, vulnerable children, children with ‘manageable’ emotional behavioral disorders and learning disabilities) to start at the right age and complete primary level education of a minimum stipulated quality
2. To put in place provisions and structures such that no individual is denied the possibility of primary education because of age and/or circumstances
3. To put into operation a strategy and framework for greater efficiency and cost effectiveness in primary schooling
4. To make those provisions and arrangements that result in the school environment being clean, sanitary, violence-free and sufficiently conducive for all students, especially girls, to feel safe and at ease
5. To reduce worm infestation as well as the possibility of staff and students at the primary level contracting and/or spreading HIV/AIDS

**Secondary Education**
1. To increase access and the transition rate from primary to junior high school and from junior high to senior high school
2. To increase the retention and completion rates of both levels of secondary education
3. To increase the number of girls accessing and completing secondary schooling
4. To improve the quality of secondary education and the conditions of teaching and learning
5. To make those provisions and arrangements that result in the school environment being clean, sanitary, violence-free and sufficiently conducive for all students, especially girls, to feel safe and at ease
6. To reduce worm infestation as well as the possibility of staff and students at the secondary level contracting and/or spreading HIV/AIDS

**TVET**
1. To bring together Ministries and agencies vested with responsibility for TVET in Liberia so that they are able to work collaboratively and cooperatively
2. To improve the quality and relevance of TVET nationally and build links between TVET and secondary education;
3. To increase access to TVET programs nationally through the development of cost-effective mechanisms/strategies

**Teacher Education**
1. To provide adequate training and professional development programs for teachers at the pre-primary to tertiary levels
2. To put in place arrangements and a framework that result in teachers becoming motivated and supported to carry out their responsibilities
3. To make provisions for the deployment of teachers to rural and under-served areas
4. To upgrade the status of the teaching profession in Liberia
5. To increase the number of females in the teaching profession
6. To improve efficiency in teacher management

**Higher Education**
1. To improve on the regulatory and governance mechanisms for higher education
2. To improve on the funding mechanisms for higher education
3. To improve on the quality of the teaching staff
4. To put in place mechanisms that result in programs on offer and research conducted in institutions of learning being relevant to the needs of the society
5. To reduce inequities in Higher Education

**Education Planning and Management**
1. To develop the institutional capacity for management at the central, regional and local levels
2. To increase planning and management capacity
3. To increase accountability and transparency throughout the education system  
4. To strengthen the decentralized system of governance  
5. To clarify the roles and responsibilities of different institutions and departments at national and local levels in monitoring and supervision  
6. To strengthen the capacities of District Education Offices and County Education Offices in monitoring and supervision, including classroom assessment of student learning  
7. To strengthen record keeping capacity at the school and community level  
8. To develop mechanism for monitoring Sector Plan progress and providing feedback  
9. To improve the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the analysis and use of EMIS data

### Contextual Challenges

- 1/3 of Liberian population lives in Monrovia (ESP 2010 — concentrated lack of capacity in educational system; concentrated lack of complementary resources in rural areas)  
- 44% of Liberian population is under age 15 — tremendous pressure on GoL resources (ESP 2010)  
- 14-year long civil war destroyed educational system -- infrastructure destroyed, basic supplies for service delivery stopped flowing, and most skilled professionals fled to neighboring countries or to the United States; population no longer able to produce industry personnel to assure future sustainability of system (ESP 2010)  
- HIV/AIDS prevalence approximately 300% higher in urban areas, leading to prevalence rate of 1.7% (UNAIDS 2007) (ESP 2010)  
- Child malnutrition “remains high” (ESP 2010)  
- Households continue to finance significant portion of primary education (59%) relative to government even after introduction of free education (ESP 2010)  
- National infrastructure and local construction capacity are weak — renders school construction particularly difficult as close supervision is required (ESP 2010)  
- Poor road conditions -- complicate supplies and services delivery/accessibility of schools (ESP 2010)

### EPM Challenges

- Per ESP 2010  
  - MOE has poor enforcement capability of educational policies and directives  
  - Poor accountability and performance management (of personnel) within MOE  
  - Poor accountability also of schools — many without PTAs; head masters follow MOE policies as please  
  - Sector severely underfunded for population size and anticipated growth and enrollment at all levels  
  - Learner to Textbook ratio is 3:1  
  - 60% teachers are untrained; student to trained teacher ratio is 59:1  
  - lack of operational support for county and district levels of education sector  
  - lack of assessment tools and reporting mechanisms  
  - lack of capacity within MOE to carry out national assessments as planned  
- Per Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS):  
  - Inadequate and undefined sources of finance for sustained quality and relevance  
  - Weak capacity for management and governance from central to the local level  
  - Outdated curriculum and inadequate textbooks, chairs, desks, and school supplies  
  - Insufficient school access that limits the ability of every child, including girls and persons with disabilities, to exercise his/her right to quality education  
  - Insufficient numbers of well trained, qualified, and motivated teachers  
  - Understaffed and over-crowded public university  
  - Poor quality programs being offered at some institutions of higher learning

### Successes

- Primary completion rate has increased from only 21 percent in 2002 to 62 percent in 2008 (ESP 2010)  
- Procurement and distribution of 1.2 million teachers guides and textbooks (ESP 2010)  
- Strengthened coordination between the MOE and its donor partners (ESP 2010)  
- Strengthened MOE planning and management systems, including inter-ministerial collaboration (ESP 2010)  
- Development of sector-wide approach to education (ESP 2010)

### Worth Noting

- Relatively low expenditure on education — as percentage of GDP (between 2.6% and 2.9% in 2007/8) GoL spends less than that of other post-conflict countries (ESP 2010)  
- GoL is below FTI targets on percentage of recurrent expenditure spent on education (between 11.4% and 13.6% in 2007/8) and percentage of funds allocated exclusively to primary education (29% if pre-primary
and teacher training not included) (ESP 2010)

- **Four types of schools:** Public (government owned and financed); Community (started and run by the community until later taken over by government); Mission (owned and financed by religious institution); Private (owned and financed by individual) (ESP 2010)

- **Due to years of conflict, there is an “uneducated generation”** — nearly a generation of persons, most of whom have had no access to formal schooling (ESP 2010)

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<th>KEY ISSUES</th>
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<td><strong>Early Childhood</strong></td>
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| • **Status:**
  - Liberia is unique in that pre-primary education includes children below age 3 (MOE 1999)
  - Provided primarily by private sector; some early childhood facilities are annexed to primary schools (MOE 1999)
  - Children enrolled in pre-primary are often of primary school age (6 to 12 years old); currently no difference in curriculum and teachers are untrained (ES 2010; Appraisal 2010)
  - **Strategy:** Soros Foundation and the World Bank are working with newly established Early Childhood Education Division within MOE to review studies conducted in 2008 to produce a policy document that will cover the early childhood development and education

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<th>Free Primary Education</th>
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| • YES (2002 Education Law) — However, “limited financial resources and limited supply of schools in many areas has limited the degree to which education can be deemed “free and compulsory” (ESP 2010)

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<th>Compulsory Education</th>
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| • YES (2002 Education Law) — insufficient capacity to enforce compulsory education

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<th>Lifelong Learning/TVET</th>
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| • **GoL recognizes critical importance of TVET** particularly given large number of unemployed, uneducated adults in post-conflict society; although GoL lacks resources to fully fund TVET, it is committed to rebuilding this subsector (ESP 2010)

- **National Council on TVET** — established in 1981; inter-ministerial; 18 members, 9 of whom are ministers and others of which are union and industry leaders; stopped functioning during conflict; this Council does not seem to have been able to provide coordinated leadership (ESP 2010)

- **Working Group on TVET** — established in 2007 to improve the sub-sector (ESP 2010)
  - Composed of representatives from the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS), Ministry of Education (MOE), Agricultural Industrial Training Bureau (AITB), public and private TVET providers, and non-governmental organizations. (ESP 2010)
  - Prepared draft National Policy Framework for TVET and a revised bill that calls for the creation of a National Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) (ESP 2010)
  - NCTVET would regulate, coordinate and promote the development of TVET (ESP 2010)

- **Specific Policy Objectives per ESP 2010:**
  - To bring together Ministries and agencies vested with responsibility for TVET to work collaboratively and co-operatively
  - To improve the quality and relevance of TVET nationally and build links between TVET and secondary education;
  - To increase access to TVET programs nationally through the development of cost-effective mechanisms/strategies

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<th>Literacy</th>
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| • **National Mass Literacy Program** — established in 1999 to encourage each literate Liberian to volunteer and includes the establishment of literacy classes (MOE 1999)

- **Status:**
  - **Females have significantly higher rate of illiteracy** than men (2007 literacy rate for ages 15+ → women at 41%; men at 69%) (ESP 2010)
  - **Adult education is under-resourced:** low capacity and the lack of logistical capacity to carry out mandate. (ESP 2010)
  - **Logistical challenges:** No functional vehicle for national work of visiting and assessing literacy programs (ESP 2010)
  - **Lack of Coordination:** Because few of the NGOs doing literacy work coordinate their activities with the MOE, MOE is unaware of the scope and content of their literacy programs; MOE is putting strategies and plans in place to improve coordination and information sharing (ESP 2010)

- **Three current providers of adult education:** the private sector, NGOs and line ministries (Education, Youth and Sports, and Gender) (ESP 2010)

- **Specific Policy Objectives:** (i) To increase enrolment in literacy programs and (ii) To improve the quality of
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<tr>
<th>Gender parity</th>
<th>“Girls still lag behind boys in enrolment, retention and completion at all levels.” Only 12% of trained teachers are female; gender parity index is .88 at primary level and .69 at secondary level (ESP 2010)</th>
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<td>Strategies in place (ESP 2010):</td>
<td>- A Girls’ Education Unit has been established at the MOE with UNICEF support.</td>
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<td>- A Girls’ Education Policy has been produced and simplified for implementation.</td>
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<td>- Girls enrolled at the primary school level who attend school regularly receive take home rations supplied to schools by WFP on behalf of the government.</td>
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<td>- Inter-ministerial groups are in dialogue over collaborative activities to promote education for girls.</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
<td>GoL is in the process of building a comprehensive database of information on the education sector (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>- Lack of effective flow of information and data between the school and local levels, and the central ministry</td>
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<td>- Significantly challenged by lack of capacity and lack of reliable data</td>
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<td>- Challenges result in frustrated policymaking and planning; ineffective monitoring of quality and progress, both systemically and at school level (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Alternative Strategies and Programs</td>
<td>History of conflict renders non-formal education, including literacy programs, critical to national development</td>
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<td>Non-formal education exists primarily at primary level (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Education for Conflict Mitigation</td>
<td>Peace education and education on human rights are included in revised curricula, which was developed between 2008–09 for primary education was with support from UNESCO</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>“If the health and nutritional problems of pre-school and school-age children are not addressed, Liberia will likely not achieve the Education for All (EFA) goal and Education MDGs.” (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Most threatening diseases for school age population: malnutrition, diarrhea, malaria and HIV/AIDS (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Strategy: School Health Unit re-established at MOE in 2001 — responsible for water, de-worming, hygiene, sanitation, reproductive health, skill-based education and HIV/AIDS/STI prevention education; works in partnership with the following (ESP 2010):</td>
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<td>- Family Health Division in the Ministry of Health (school-based nutrition/micronutrient supplementation)</td>
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<td>- Division of School Feeding of the Ministry of Education (feeding programs; supported by WFP)</td>
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<td>Special needs Education</td>
<td>Schools do not have the resources to serve this population; services are minimal to nonexistent; moreover, social attitude is that children with special needs are cursed or being punished; this population is significantly under-enrolled in educational system (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>- “Most schools currently in use have not been built with the needs of the physically handicapped in mind.” (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>- “Teachers of the hearing impaired are non-existent.” (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>- “Liberia has only two schools for the visually impaired and none for the mentally disadvantaged.” (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>- “A significant number of children are believed to be suffering from undiagnosed emotional behavioral disorders and various forms of learning disabilities and require help not presently available in schools.” (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) — induce enrollment of over-aged war affected youth; facilitate completion of 6-year curriculum in 3 years (MOE 1999)</td>
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<td>Assisted Enrollment Program (AEP) — to address limited access to education and demonstrate commitment to revitalization and reconstruction of education sector with special focus on war-affected youth (MOE 1999)</td>
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<td>Infrastructure Expansion — rebuilding and refurbishing educational institutions (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Instructional Materials Provision — procurement and distribution of primary school textbooks using pooled fund (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Teacher Development — working with UNHCR and USAID to rebuild Rural Teacher Training Institutes (ESP 2010)</td>
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<td>Management Capacity at Local Levels — GoL recognizes that county, district, and school levels of education sector lack administrative and planning capacity to implement education policies and programs (ESP 2010)</td>
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**GoL Commitment:** “In an effort to improve school-level management and strengthen collaboration between school, district, and county level management, the MOE will develop a strategy to establish effective school management committees at each school” (ESP 2010)

**Liberia Teacher Training Project (LTTP)** — a certification program to help develop capacity of school principals (ESP 2010)

### Sector Management

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<th>Implementing Agency</th>
<th>• Ministry of Education</th>
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<td>Sector Coordination Groups</td>
<td>• <strong>Education Steering Committee</strong> — headed by Deputy Minister of Planning and Development and includes participation of donor agencies, bilateral donors, local government authorities, NGOs, and the National Teachers’ Association of Liberia. (MOE 1999)</td>
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### Monitoring Frameworks

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<th>• Supervising authorities per ESP 2010:</th>
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<td><strong>County and District Education Offices</strong> — responsibility of school monitoring and supervision lies with the County Education Offices (CEO) and District Education Offices (DEO). There are 15 CEOs and 86 DEOs, and 400 supervising principals charged with assisting DEOs in school visits and classroom observations</td>
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<td><strong>PTAs</strong> — charged in part with monitoring and maintaining school assets</td>
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<td><strong>Student Assessments</strong> — Liberia working with USAID to implement Early Grade Reading Assessment</td>
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<td><strong>LPERP</strong> — sets targets for improving supervisory and monitoring services</td>
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<td><strong>PRS</strong> — outlines a plan to improve the capacity of ministries to report on selected indicators</td>
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<td><strong>Education Sector Review</strong> — biannual sector review conducted by MOE</td>
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#### Strategies to strengthen monitoring capacity per ESP 2010:

| • To clarify the roles and responsibilities of different institutions and departments at national and local levels in monitoring and supervision |
| • To strengthen the capacities of District Education Offices and County Education Offices in monitoring and supervision, including classroom assessment of student learning |
| • To strengthen record keeping capacity at the school/community level |
| • To decide on a set of outcome indicators for monitoring progress towards (ESP) objectives and outline mechanism for monitoring plan progress |
| • Improve the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the analysis and use of EMIS data |

### Financing

**GPE Information**

| • **Endorsement:** Endorsed by EFA in 2007, based on Liberia Primary Education Recovery Program (LPERP) (World Bank 2011) |
| • **Earlier support:** Since 2008, the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF), has been supporting upstream technical assistance for the development of the Education Sector Plan 2010–2020 (World Bank 2011) |
| • **Recent requests:** GoL recently requested EPDF support for developing a Medium Term Plan and the application of the Rapid Results Approach to the implementation of key activities under the CF grant; GoL was to have completed Medium Term Plan by August 2011 (World Bank 2011) |

**GPE Coordinating Agency**

| • **UNICEF** is coordinating agency (World Bank 2012) |
| • **Other donors:** UNESCO, the World Bank, EU/EC, the Open Society Institute/Foundation, WFP, UNHCR, USAID, Save the Children UK, Plan – Liberia, IRC, UNFPA, UNHCR, Ibis, FAWE, LET, LACE, FRC, Vision in Action, Right to Play, NRC, Peace Corps, Peace Wind JP, China Egypt, Russia, Morocco (ESP 2010) Child Fund, Plan International (World Bank 2012) |
| • ESP 2010 includes comprehensive list of each donor and funding focus — p.18 of ESP 2010 |

**GPE Commitments and Disbursements**

| • **2010:** $40 million, SIL (World Bank investment lending instrument) (World Bank 2011) |
| • **Future Commitments and Planned Disbursements from Donors** (World Bank 2011): |
| • “Education sector projects funded by key partners in education in Liberia will total $127.05 million from 2010–2012.” |
| • UNICEF: $8.4 million in financing |
| • USAID: $60.0 million |
| • World Food Program: $30.0 million |
| • European Union: $18.8 million |
| • UNESCO: $2.1 million |
| **World Bank Development Objectives** | “The Catalytic Fund’s development objective is to increase access to basic education, with a particular focus on poor areas, to improve conditions of teaching and learning, and to improve school management and accountability” (World Bank 2012) |
| **Other financing Information** | **Project vs. Budget Support**: ESP endorses project financing support although goal over time is sector support and targeted budget support (ESP 2010)  
**Recurrent education budget** (excluding debt service) will increase from 14% to 16% and will reach 18% in 2015 (ESP 2010)  
**Original funding request to EFA based on interim education sector plan** — LPERP — was denied, but certain donors still provided support; CF request granted on basis of ESP 2010 |

| **IMPORTANT LINKS** | **Ministry of Education Website** | http://www.moe.gov.lr/ (Not functional at time of drafting report) |
| **GPE Country Profile** | http://www.globalpartnership.org/partners/developing-countries/liberia/ |
| **World Bank Country Profile** | Click here |
| **UN Data Country Profile** | http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=LIBERIA |

| **KEY DOCUMENTS** | **Liberia Primary Education Recovery Program (LPERP)** | Developed as a three-year action program (2007-2009) -- prepared for submission to EFA FTI and based on the Priorities for Post-Conflict Education Sector Recovery in Post-conflict Liberia (FY 2007/08 to 2010/12); basis for admission to EFA partnership  
**Designed as a transition strategy** to bridge the gap between short-term emergency-type interventions and a comprehensive approach for the recovery of the primary education sub-sector.  
**Addresses eight components**: (1) Infrastructure Expansion and Improvement, (2) Instructional Materials and Curriculum Development, (3) Teacher Development, (4) Accelerated Learning Program, (5) Advisory, Supervision and Assessment Services, (6) Strengthening Education Sector Governance, (7) Organizational Capacity Building, and (8) Institutional and Implementation Arrangements for the Program. |
| **The Liberia 2008 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper** | Rated education second only to roads in terms of national priorities (ESP 2010)  
**Based on 4 pillars**: (1) Security; (2) Economic Revitalization; (3) Governance and the Rule of Law; and (4) Infrastructure and Basic Services → Education is addressed under fourth pillar as basic service (ESP 2010)  
**Lists seven strategic objectives** for education sector, which have been incorporated into ESP 2010:  
1. Strengthen the curriculum.  
2. Improve access to quality, safe, and hygienic schools.  
3. Recruit and train qualified teachers.  
4. Improve learning achievement and school completion rates.  
5. Strengthen the quality and accessibility of skills and vocational training.  
6. Improve the quality and standard of tertiary education while carrying out a limited and phased expansion and decentralization.  
7. Strengthen the overall governance, management, and financial basis of the system. |
| **Education Sector Plan of Liberia, 2010–2020** | Developed in hopes of accessing CF to help address annual education sector financing gap (ESP 2010)  
**Consists of three components** (World Bank 2010):  
1. Increasing access and equity in rural areas.  
2. Improving the quality of teaching and learning.  
3. Strengthening management capacities and developing a framework for institutional capacity building with a focus on monitoring and evaluation. |
| **Law/Legislation** | Per ESP 2010:  
1986 Constitution  
Education Act of 2002  
Act establishing the National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE) in 1989  
A Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) Decree No. 56 on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) — legitimacy is debatable |

**CONTACTS**
References