



**IDA-LIBERIA PROJECT UPDATE: SUPPORT RURAL GIRLS
EDUCATION IN LIBERIA Project - #(#33068)**

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INITIATIVE FOR DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVES-IDA-LIBERIA

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INTRODUCTION:

This update is a highlight of recent activities implemented under the above-mentioned Project covering the month under review (**November 2018-January 2019**). Activities were held in Bomi, Cape Mount, Bassa, Margibi and Montserrado counties in Liberia. The report reflects the agreement between GlobalGiving and the Initiative for Democratic Alternatives (IDA)-Liberia for the implementation of the project.

2.0 PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH:

- 2.1 Signing of MOU and Child Safeguarding Standards policy with schools in five counties;
- 2.2. Commenced the payment of tuition and fees for 231 sponsored students;
- 2.3 Organized meetings with County and District Education authorities;
- 2.4 Organizing meetings with parents of sponsored students.

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW:

Program launch: Eleven programs were organized by the project team in different locations. The programs brought together over 100 participants and representatives from 11 schools in 5 counties in Liberia. The programs were aimed at providing update to schools and other partners about the project and signing of partnership agreements, including a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and the child safeguarding policy agreement.

Participants at the program came from across all sections of the community including; County and District Education authorities, parents, community and student leaders. Making a brief statement at the program on behalf of the organization. IDA—Liberia Consultant Alvin Freeman, stressed the significance of signing an MOU which will serve as a framework for implementing the project in 2019. 11 schools' administrators signed the MOU and Child Safeguarding Standards policy agreement and received other relevant project documents.

The project team provided update on the scholarship program for 2019. The total number of beneficiaries for 2019 scholarship program is two hundred and thirty-one (231) primary school students. Between the ages of (8-16) (1st -6 Grades). (128 Female and 85 Male),(6 Private schools and 5 Public) Students are from 11 schools in 5 counties in Liberia. During the project IDA-Liberia team also provided symbolic checks to schools representing the total amount of Liberian dollars that each school will be received for 2019 scholarship year.

Symbolic checks were presented to:

- Jenneh Public School & Kingdom Builders Community School, Bomi County,
- Madina Public School & Konjah Public School, Sinjah, Grand Cape Mount County,
- Fred-Mart Community School and Lowerhardlanderville Community School in Buchannan, Grand Bassa County,
- Minor Community School and St. Eafa Community School in Kakata, Margibi County.

School administrations, parents and community members lauded IDA-Liberia efforts for the initiative to support rural education in Liberia.

Scholarship disbursement: IDA-Liberia officially commenced the payment of tuition fees to schools to as a commitment to supporting rural education in Liberia.

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Eight schools received their first payments, while three schools are in the process of setting up their bank accounts for the fund to be transferred. As part of the criteria for IDA-Liberia partnership agreement with the schools, schools are to have established bank accounts which would enable them to receive funds; for accountability and transparency purposes.

Staff and stakeholder training: On January 9-11, 2019, IDA-Liberia team conducted training for staff and other partners on child safeguarding standards. The training was aimed at enhancing the skills of staff and partners to better understand the project components and the significance of child safeguarding standards practices with the institutions and making sure other partners adhered to the policy.

Town hall meetings with community stakeholders: During the month under review, the project team also facilitated seven (7) town hall interactive sessions with County and District Education authorities, policy makers and local and community leaders in the project areas. The meetings were intended to provide policy makers and educational stakeholders with an overview of the project. They also sought to tease out what contributions local communities would make towards the project. At the end of the meetings, County and Districts Education authorities pledged their full support and commitment to the project and promised to work with IDA-Liberia project team to monitor schools and students. The meetings brought together over 30 participants and stakeholders from the project communities. As a way of contributing towards the project, County and District Education authorities agreed to work along with IDA-Liberia monitoring team in the schools to help monitor students' performance in schools and encourage parents not to keep the children away from school for any reasons. They stressed the need for students to always be in schools as attendance was a hallmark to the success of the project.

IDA-Liberia team also met with parents and guidance of the beneficiaries. The aim was to provide parents with a brief overview of their responsibilities as parents during the implementation of the project. During the meetings, the team introduced another component of the project that was critical to the success of the project. The inclusion of an extra curricula activity that would require sponsored students to participate in two hours of community service every calendar school year. Parents and other stakeholders were excited about the inclusion of an extra activity that would train students the culture of volunteerism and giving back to community, since in fact, they were benefiting from such gesture. At the end of the meetings parents also made a recommendation to IDA-Liberia about the sustainability of the project.

Making a brief remark at the event, Madam Marcy Kamara a parent and member of the community expressed thanks to IDA-Liberia for the gesture and recommended to the team to facilitate the establishment of a community revolving loan scheme for venerable parents. Especially rural (women) whose children are benefiting from the program. She noted that with a small economic empowerment initiative for single mothers and widows, it would provide support for families to become self-supportive, self-reliant and be capable of providing their children's needs (uniform, books, and shoes) in helping to alleviate some of the burden from IDA-Liberia. This will also help in terms of sustainability. She noted that most of the women are single mothers who are unemployed now and would be glad to enroll in such a program that will help keep their children in school.

4.0 Constraints:

Having experienced the implementation of project activities, there were few challenges that the project team encounter during to the period under review. Increased in the cost of transportation for our volunteers, due to the bad roads condition in rural Liberia, Our team had to travel on motorcycles to get to communities and schools.

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5.0 Recommendations / conclusion:

Thanks, and appreciation to our supporters, donors, GlobalGiving, local communities and schools for the level of commitment shown towards the successful implementation of the project. As the team continued to support our beneficiaries, IDA-Liberia continue to receive calls and appeal from other communities to extend the project to schools and counties. Rural women and survival of the Ebola epidemic whose children are benefiting from our scholarship program are appealing to IDA-Liberia to start up a small revolving loan scheme to support them,



so that they can be able to take on the responsibility of supporting their children.

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