

INTRODUCTION

The Christian Association for Regional Development (CARD) is a national non-governmental organisation duly incorporated with the Liberian Government. The mission of the organisation is to reduce poverty through sustained engagement with rural and semi-urban communities. This mission supports a vision where communities can participate in the decision making processes on matters that affect them.

CARD has the following core values:

1. **Service:** We are driven by our mission to be flexible and less bureaucratic in order to be accessible to the population we serve.
2. **Integrity:** We promote high ethical standards in the discharge of our duties, always striving to create and maintain an environment of trust, loyalty, and civility.
3. **Independence:** We maintain a non-partisan, balanced view and approach to our work and the achievement of our mission.
4. **Transparency & Accountability:** We acknowledge that all of our resources are sought for the benefit of the broader society. Therefore, in all our dealings, we are open and accountable to the constituencies with whom we work and to donors and partners who contribute needed resources. By this, we regularly communicate with the public and partners through reports and statements regarding our programs, finances, and other dealings as well as encourage the public to seek information on the management of the organization.
5. **Participation:** In the conceptual development and implementation of programmes, diverse stakeholders are involved to ensure ownership and sustainability.
6. **Justice and Compassion:** We strive to reach out to needy communities irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, class.

Goal:

The overarching goal of CARD is:

Improved and sustained livelihood of target communities in consolidating the peace. In pursuit of this goal, the program has the following objectives:

CARD's programme in Liberia has identified the following strategic themes for implementation: :

- Food Security and Livelihood
- WATSAN
- Education

- Increased participation of target communities in their development processes;
- Increased livelihood opportunities for target communities;
- Increased access to information on health and hygiene promotion;
- Improved food security among target communities.

This document outlines CARD's strategic plan to guide its operations for the next year in Liberia informed as a result of consultations and conversations held with staff members, key individuals within the development and NGO sector as well as target communities.

I. CONTEXT AND OPPORTUNITIES

Since the formation of the new government, the security situation has improved considerably yet the peace remains fragile. The country has made some gains in making the transition from relief to recovery and development. The environment is now safe to access communities and do long term development planning with them. Efforts have been made to reactivate social and economic infrastructures and services.

The lack of gainful employment and wealth creation remain a major problem. These are contributing factors undermining the ability for families to get out of the poverty range. In the midst of this, there is a tendency for some communities to rely on outside help. Others have responded to the challenge by engaging in meaningful development activities that will lead to income generation. It is within this context that ZOA is implementing its programme.

Reconciliation still remains a major challenge with the politicization and delay in developing the framework for the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The country is struggling to make the transition from relief to recovery and development. As with all post-war countries, consolidating the peace is critical for sustaining the governance and development process. By the same token, consolidating the peace will require change at the institutional, community and individual levels.

As part of its governance and development agenda, the government has introduced a number of reforms to try to address the root causes of the country's 15-year conflict. The reform policies create an opportunity for CARD to leverage in the implementation of its programme in Liberia. The reforms policies include: SFCG has identified the following opportunities for change that can be leveraged for programme development:

- The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)
- The Liberian Anti-corruption Commission
- The Land Commission
- The establishment of the Governance Commission to support the decentralisation of power and authority and increase local ownership of development at the county level.
- Restructuring of the army and police in anticipation of the departure of United Nations peacekeeping forces.

II. STRATEGIC AND PRIORITY AREAS

In the consolidation of peace and improving the quality of life of target communities, the following priority areas have been identified:

- Food security and Livelihood
- Education
- WATSAN

Thematic Issue 1: Food Security and Livelihood

Prioritise helping more families produce more food and increase their income whilst managing their natural resources. Working with farmers to increase their crop yields through activities such as planting new seed varieties, and home gardening. Food security will be created by growing vegetables, root, tuber or paddy rice. Aqua culture and animal husbandry along with basic farming education would be available to enable the people to succeed.

A school gardening program will enable students to develop the basic interest in the agriculture sector at the primary and secondary levels. Produce from the school gardens

will be used to supplement and provide variety in nutrients in children diets ie vegetables and herbs.

Thematic Issue 2: Education

CARD is dedicated to securing basic and vocational education for all including training of teachers and building their capacities to encourage them to work in both rural and urban areas. Learning attacks poverty at its roots. We work alongside communities, governments and partner organizations at many levels to address all aspects of basic education. Our approach is to improve the quality of education; linking education programs to interventions in health, nutrition and livelihoods to better address reasons why children are out of school; involving communities in assessing and overcoming their unique barriers to learning; and conducting broad campaigns that promote the right to education for all people.

Thematic Issue 3: WATSAN

CARD helps communities build and maintain clean water systems and latrines. The goal of these projects is to reduce the health risks of water-related diseases and to increase the earning potential of households by saving time otherwise spent gathering water. Projects also include educating people about good hygiene habits to reduce the risk of illness. Installing water pumps will provide for clean drinking water.

STRATEGY:

In the implementation of its programme, CARD has adopted an integrative approach against the background that the three sectors identified are inter-connected. Continued access to education is tied to improved health and the ability for families to sustain themselves through the provision of food for the children. In other words, access to education and sustained livelihood are social determinants to health. Improved health contributes to productivity and this contributes to better livelihood.

The sectors will be strengthened by mainstreaming cross-cutting themes such as peace-building, gender, and HIV/AIDS. The approach to the peace-building theme is unique in that it is not standing by itself but rather will be mainstreamed through practical activities that communities are involved in such as livelihood security and Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs). The livelihood activities and the formation of PTAs will be done through groups and community members. The philosophy underpinning the implementation of this programme is “self reliance” and an operational approach of working closely with Community Based Organizations (CBOs), community leadership structures and community members.

This programme will seek to make the leap from activities to showing results. To make this transition, a general programme monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed setting creating the platform to carry out a baseline data. The baseline data will be the basis for monitoring and capturing results.

This programme will ensure community ownership and participation. To make this happen, communities will be mobilized using participatory methodology. In the mobilization of communities, local knowledge and skills will be leveraged in the implementation of the programme as a way of engendering sustainability.

