Friends of Liberia Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018

Vision

Our vision is that Friends of Liberia be an effective organization for helping Liberia in its quest to be a peaceful and just country in which every Liberian has opportunities for quality education and employment, and access to adequate health care.

Mission

FOL is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that seeks to positively affect Liberia and Liberians through education, social, economic and humanitarian programs and through advocacy efforts.

Strategic Issue 1: Programs	Strategic Issue 2: Funding	Strategic Issue 3: Governance and Operations	Strategic Issue 4: Membership Engagement
What programs can we develop with a large impact that draw on the expertise of FOL membership, capitalize on FOL's comparative advantage, and support Liberia's long-term development strategy?	How can FOL diversify, increase and sustain its financial resources to support programming for bigger impact on Liberia and more engagement of members?	How can FOL organize itself for more efficient and effective management of its work in the U.S. and in Liberia?	How can FOL recruit new members and engage more members in its work by offering opportunities to carry out FOL's mission?

Core Values

Service: We are committed to timely and reliable service based on mutual respect. We engage in programs and activities that respond to needs identified by Liberians and that help them shape solutions to their needs.

Partnerships: We value collaboration and seek partnerships with like-minded organizations and individuals. We build strong working relationships and coalitions to help ensure self-reliance and sustainability as ultimate goals of our work.

Accountability and Transparency: We follow the highest ethical standards, and demonstrate honesty and fairness in every action that we take. Measurable outcomes and sound financial management are important elements of our accountability. We expect the same from our partners and those we serve.

Integrity: We are responsible to our members, board, donors and the communities and country we serve for ensuring that our programs and activities meet the highest standards of professional and personal integrity.

Stewardship. We are able to accomplish our mission through the generosity of our members and others. We respect donors' intentions on the use of their gifts, and are responsible stewardship of the resources they entrust to us.

Strategic Issue 1

What programs can we develop with a large impact that draw on the expertise of FOL membership, capitalize on FOL's comparative advantage, and support Liberia's long-term development strategy?

FOL's comparative advantage is its collective program experiences and history in Liberia, and the resumes of its members. This expertise plus priorities for Liberia as defined by President Sirleaf and Liberia's development goals, lead to clear options for FOL. Implicit in these choices is the large impact that can be made in Liberia, based on a co-commitment to raise significant funds to implement these programs. In addition to our members' extensive knowledge and experiences regarding Liberia's needs and culture, FOL members brings a wealth of executive, administrative and management experiences and knowledge to play in each of the program categories listed below. By emphasizing these four program priorities, FOL can leverage its comparative advantage to lead and make a significant contribution to Liberia's growth and prosperity. As we design and implement programs, we will follow basic capacity building principles of regional and local representation and ownership; partnerships and alliances; donor coordination; and gender balance**.**

Goal 1: **Early Childhood Education/Teacher Training**. Improve the quality of early childhood education (ECE) in Liberia by providing in-service training to rural K-3 classroom teachers and their principals on how to teach the national curriculum in developmentally appropriate ways.

- Strengthen the ability of the LEAP teacher network, including principals, to sustain itself as an NGO committed to training other teachers.

- Provide instructional and management research for principals, continue to encourage principal cooperation with ECE, strengthen principal-faculty collaboration and professional development opportunities for faculty and principals, inculcate best principal practices, and provide a step-by-step process for teacher evaluation and school education (strategic) plan.

- Expand U.S.-led trainings to two more counties, possibly Lofa and Bomi Hills, in the next three years and bring those counties' trained teachers into the LEAP teacher training NGO

- Gain the recognition of the Ministry of Education that in-service training fills a critical lack of college educated ECE teachers and gain support and incentives for the LEAP network to train their colleagues.

- Promote the importance of early childhood education through a community awareness/education media campaign

Goal 2: **Health**. Develop a FOL health sector project that meets the critical need to improve the skills of health care workers (nurses & midwives) working in health clinics, health centers and hospitals in Liberia.

- Meet with the Ministry of Health, the Liberian Board of Nursing, and health NGOs to learn about their goals and what in-service training they are providing. Survey the deans and faculty of the nine schools of nursing and nurse midwifery in Liberia. Research international donors funding of relevant health care programs.

- Conduct a needs assessment of the in-service needs of current health care workers serving in health clinics, health centers and hospitals. Report results to FOL board. If warranted, form a working group of

representatives from the Ministry of Health, Board of Nursing, Schools of Nursing and Nurse Midwifery, NGO's and FOL to develop a model for an in-service education program.

- Coordinate with FOL's development committee and partners to seek funding for a pilot model in-service education program.

- Help Liberian partners to: conduct and evaluate a pilot model in-service education program; revise as needed; and, seek funding and determine the best way to expand the pilot model program throughout the country.

Goal 3: **Entrepreneurship.** Help develop an entrepreneurial middle class in Liberia through training and business development around the current growing prosperity in Liberia, and through growing satellite business opportunities built around the giant multinational corporations moving into Liberia. This will create small businesses and jobs, hopefully help raise the wage scale and create prosperity. This effort can be developed using the following model from the Liberian Council for Economic and Social Services (LICESS).

LICESS Model

Build business training modules along a continuum of learning needs to create a step-by-step understanding of successful business premises and practices in Liberia.

Identify, screen and select educated, motivated Liberians who desire to start their own businesses, but have no experience in business and have no equity capital to start a business.

Training and evaluating participants' capacities along the continuum.

If they successfully complete the training, provide an equity capital low-interest loan to launch a defined business and negotiate with bankers (a working relationship with bankers already established by LICESS) to provide long term capital.

Provide LICESS technical support for one year for every business launched.

- Research Potential Resources: Using the LICESS research possible funds to implement the program. Identify and follow up Liberian resources, U.S. funding sources and developing a web based "Crowd funding" capacity; publicly raising large amounts of money in small increments to fund the training modules, financing and technical support.

- Implement the program.

- Establish a continuous review and an evaluation process to maximize success rates.

- Correct problems and begin the next identification and training/evaluation and financing cycle.

Goal 4: **Small Grants Program.** Support the growth and self-sufficiency of entrepreneurs, cooperative associations, schools, social service agencies and other non-governmental organizations by providing modest grants on a semi-annual basis to the most qualified applicants within the budgetary limitations of FOL.

- Use FOL members in Liberia to help identify and screen potential grantees, and to conduct post-grant evaluations.

- Strengthen grantee reporting and accountability requirements.

- Provide training/technical assistance to projects in areas such as grant writing, and program monitoring and evaluation.

Strategic Issue 2

How can FOL diversify, increase and sustain its financial resources to support programming for bigger impact on Liberia and more engagement of members?

Support change and growth in the organization, especially in its financial resources: how they are diversified, increased, and sustained. FOL's priorities in this area are to encourage the development of projects and initiatives that address Liberia's needs; involve the Board and Development Committee members; attract giving and sustainable funding; and mount successful development projects and fundraising campaigns. The committee will support programs in the strategic plan and seek funding for such programs that will have a bigger impact on Liberia.

Goal: Develop and implement a fundraising strategy that has annual and long-tern goals that meet the budgetary needs of FOL's operations and programs.

- Analyze donor patterns and interests and stratify appeal messages to solicit larger donorship.

- Pursue grants and donations from foundations, organizations, and corporations by programmatic specialty.

- Encourage legacy contributions (wills and bequests).

- Require that a routine percentage of income, say 10 percent, is designated for general administration or operations.

- Find help with grant writing.

- Report on levels of giving in the Annual Report.

Strategic Issue 3

How can FOL organize itself for more efficient and effective management of its work in the U.S. and in Liberia?

Good governance and management are central to addressing this strategic issue, and our approach is grounded in FOL's core values: service, partnership, accountability, transparency, integrity, and stewardship. We define governance as a set of policies and practices that enable FOL to achieve its mission and to respond strategically to present and future needs. Good governance and management ensure that we manage our resources efficiently and effectively, and that we protect and reflect the interests of our stakeholders and those we serve. The following goals and strategies are drawn from the results of the environmental scan and SWOC analysis, the strategic planning discussions in Portland Sept 2012, and research into best practice for non-profits.

Goal 1: Strengthen the human capacity (our membership) of FOL.

- As funds are available, hire a paid executive director, even part-time, to provide daily management, stability and continuity of FOL programs. Funds could come in the form of a dedicated grant or as a percentage of program grants. (see Strategic issue #2)

- Use the membership survey results to develop, nurture and deploy member volunteers to support full range of FOL programs and activities.

Goal 2: Clearly define roles and responsibilities at every level of the organizational structure and strengthen FOL's institutional presence in Liberia.

- Clarify and update roles/responsibilities of and relationships for Trustees (e.g., set overall policy and strategic direction; budgeting; fundraising); Officers and Committee Chairs (program implementation and reporting).

- Develop Expectations of Trustees and use as a tool in the nomination process.

- Clarify committees in terms of their: structure (look at various types of committees, working groups, task forces); mandates/scope of work (e.g., considering broadening nominations committee to become a governance committee); and, membership (broaden membership beyond board members).

- Explore establishing an FOL affiliate as a legal entity for fund-raising and other programs in Liberia (e.g., FOL-US and FOL-Liberia). Research related benefits, costs, and requirements, responsibilities and interaction between the two, and recommend action.

- Board development: Develop a Board handbook (and guidance for committees and other key functions. Develop and conduct orientation for new Trustees, Officers, and Committee Chairs. Develop and implement a strategy (succession plan) for identifying and screening a diverse pool of candidates with needed skills and expertise to be nominated for all key positions as positions become vacant. Update by-laws and other governing documents accordingly**.**

Goal 3: Modernize and use sound financial management basic principles and practices: Issue quarterly financial reports to support decision making by the Executive Committee and Finance Committee. Use software such as QuickBooks to keep accounts. Conduct an annual audit *(pro bono* preferred). Publish an annual report that includes financial and program results.

Goal 4: Identify and use appropriate technology to enhance communication among key stakeholders (including donors)

- Allow and facilitate virtual participation in board, executive and committee meetings.

- Use email, website, Facebook, twitter and other forms of technology to communicate efficiently and effectively with members, partners and others.

- Manage and share FOL documents on an on-line platform.

Strategic Issue 4

How can FOL recruit new members and engage more members in its work by offering opportunities to carry out FOL's mission?

Goal 1: Develop strategies for identifying and recruiting new members

- Continue to expand the inclusiveness of FOL (international development organizations, missionaries, Liberians, Peace Corps, academics, etc.)

- Use social media (Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) and direct personal contacts ('each one reach one')

- Expand mentoring program as numbers increase including 'meet and greets' in the U.S.

Goal 2: Develop programs for members to participate in and encourage member involvement wherever they reside (see strategic issue #3)

- Analyze and use the results of the membership survey. Follow-up with survey respondents

- Offer development programs (e.g., ECE, health, entrepreneurship) for member participation

- Organize regional and local programs, including speakers from Liberia, and periodic service trips to Liberia, with networking events in Liberia

- Invite members to serve on (and chair) FOL committees, and encourage members to serve as mentors in the mentoring program (coordinate with strategic issue 3)

- Establish and maintain an on-line talent bank for FOL members interested in international consulting opportunities in Liberia.

Goal 3: Update and streamline membership administration/management

- Update membership data base using user-friendly software

- Establish various levels of donorship and membership(sustaining, supporting, etc.) and stratify messages to appeal to donor interests (coordinate with strategic issue 2)