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# FRIENDS OF LIBERIA

## 2016 Annual Report

*A summary of the year's achievements*



***Stephanie Vickers, President 2002-2016, Friends of Liberia***

**Receiving the 2016 Loret Miller Ruppe Award for  
Outstanding Community Service**

*from the National Peace Corps Association  
on behalf of Friends of Liberia  
for its work with NPCA and the Ebola Relief Fund*

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**Children celebrating completion of Year One of the pilot FOL-WE CARE-HIPPY**

### **Family Literacy Initiative**

## Letter and Executive Summary

*from the President and Board Chair*

Dear Friends,

We are very pleased to share the Friends of Liberia (FOL) Annual Report for 2016. With our membership located all over the globe, we miss having more opportunities for face to face interaction. This and our newsletters are no substitute, but we can communicate what FOL has accomplished, the impact of your donations, and FOL's direction in the short-term.

The cover photo shows FOL's President from 2002-2016, Stephanie Vickers, receiving the Loret Miller Ruppe Award for Community Service on behalf of FOL at the National Peace Corps Association Conference in Washington, D.C. in September 2016. This prestigious award recognized the galvanizing leadership of FOL in 2014-15 to help meet the Ebola crisis, along with Friends of Sierra Leone and Guinea, who also received awards. Advocacy and emergency response will always be priorities to FOL.



Friends of Liberia was also honored to be the 2016 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the D.C. Chapter of the B. W. Harris High School (Monrovia) Alumni Association. At least 3/4 of the audience, successful Liberians and Americans of Liberian descent, indicated they had been taught by or known a Peace Corps Volunteer, and remembered that as one of most positive influences in their lives.

FOL's goal is to continue making a lasting impact on Liberia through its partners, including local groups in Liberia; U.S.-based and international foundations; and especially FOL members, who include academics and educators, diplomats, missionaries, development workers, health practitioners, entrepreneurs, and Liberians in addition to former Peace Corps Volunteers, who founded FOL over thirty years ago. Many FOL members continue to help support their former "families" and communities, and even

travel independently to Liberia to work on projects they have begun. If you are one of these, we would love to hear about what you are doing. Let us know what you think about our including information or a link to your project on a future "Member News" page on the FOL website.

In 2016, FOL adopted a new organizational structure for more efficient operations, described on page 8. Bylaws were then revised with the extraordinary assistance of the FOL pro-bono lawyer, Jim Levine of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, P.C., to reflect the changes in accordance with the D.C. statute for non-profit organizations. They took effect in January 2017.

The 2015 FOL Annual Report (available through the FOL website) was very comprehensive in its description of FOL programs underway and provides background on continuing programs. In this report that material is not repeated, but we refer the reader to our website for project details. Here, you may read a summary of the successful first year of the Family Literacy Initiative (FLI) pilot program, conducted in partnership with the Liberian WE-CARE Foundation and HIPPIY International (pages 11-14). This pre-school preparation program receives the largest portion of our budget and

most attention from FOL members, who volunteer hundreds of hours helping steer the program through bimonthly calls to our Liberian partner, periodic on-site monitoring and evaluation, reviewing and preparing reports, reviewing expenditures, and writing grant proposals. Thanks to your financial support and the dedicated work of the Development Committee under Pat Reilly to secure grants, FLI has doubled the number of children served in its second year with funding assistance from the Open Society Foundation.

FOL's Small Grants Committee continues to evaluate and select proposals from Liberian organizations to support post-Ebola, humanitarian, health, and development projects. Six organizations received awards, and for the first time it was decided to consider follow-up grants to particularly effective groups to help them achieve self-sustainability. In 2017, we look forward to possibly partnering with some Peace Corps Volunteer-supported, locally developed, projects in Liberia, plus provide training to Liberian NGOs on proposal writing and program management.

The FOL Health Committee has worked closely with its counterpart Health Team in Liberia, who are MSN Ed graduates at the Mother Patern College of Health Sciences, toward identification of ways to help improve the knowledge base and competency of the faculty at the Liberian schools of nursing and midwifery. A needs assessment survey was developed and modified after piloting it with a group of instructors. It will be administered in early 2017 and a proposal developed based on analysis of results and focus groups. Please read more about this project on page 17.



**FLI 2016:** WE-CARE Home Visitor working with mother during weekly home visit to prepare lessons for child.

From our 2016 financial report, we want you to be proud of how your vitally important donations are spent. We have a totally volunteer administration and our projects are carried out through partnerships with organizations in Liberia. Administrative costs in 2016 were only 6.4% of the total expenditures, and that included a trip to Liberia for program development. Other trips, such as for the FLI evaluation, were funded by personal or outside sources.

Your input is crucial to wise decisions as we move forward. Friends of Liberia is currently seeking members to serve as Vice President, Communications Committee Chairperson, and Development Committee Chairperson. There are experienced people on the latter two committees to help a new chairperson, and we are happy to explain the responsibilities. Other committees, identified in the report, are always enthusiastic about welcoming new members. Thanks to the phone and Internet, you may participate actively from anywhere in the world.

Although Friends of Liberia is not participating as an organization in the October 2017 Liberian presidential elections, we are proud that several FOL members have volunteered to assist larger U.S. nongovernmental organizations in election monitoring. We will be



following developments in Liberia closely, and as a non-partisan group we will reach out to the eventual winners to see how we might support mutual goals.

As of January, 2017, I became President and (under our new structure) also Chairperson of the Friends of Liberia Board. The dedication of the former Chair, Robert Sharer, and President, Stephanie Vickers, as well as that of other Board members who rotated off or resigned after many years of service, cannot be overstated or more appreciated by each of us. Former Lutheran missionary Linda Samuelson created a beautiful collage as a tribute to Stephanie, which she received at our November 2016 Board meeting. There is no way that their shoes can be filled, but with your feedback, support, and participation I know that FOL will move forward and explore both new and continuing ways to have a positive impact in, and on behalf of, Liberia.



Our goal is not to compete with other worthy non-governmental organizations, but to be a partner, mentor, and catalyst. As Peace Corps Volunteer numbers in Liberia grow again, we hope all new and returned PCVs will find that FOL can be a family to them. FOL has also been enhanced and sustained by the hundreds of members who never were PCVs, including Liberians, and we want to represent all your interests, when possible. We also hope to be a liaison with other groups serving Liberia so that we can support each other and not duplicate efforts. Let us know what you are thinking -- I promise all feedback will be appreciated and considered.

On behalf of the entire Friends of Liberia Board of Trustees, thank you.

Sincerely yours,

*Sarah C. Morrison*

President and Board Chair

[liberia@fol.org](mailto:liberia@fol.org)

## **Strategic Plan**

In March 2013, FOL adopted a five-year [strategic plan](#). Please follow the link to review the full plan, which includes specific activities under each of the issues and measures of achievement. Because four years have passed, a review is underway of accomplishments and what tasks remain. In light of new developments in Liberia and FOL, decisions will be made about those remaining -- which should receive priority attention, and what changes are now needed. We appreciate Peg Sammons volunteering her expertise and experience to help on this.

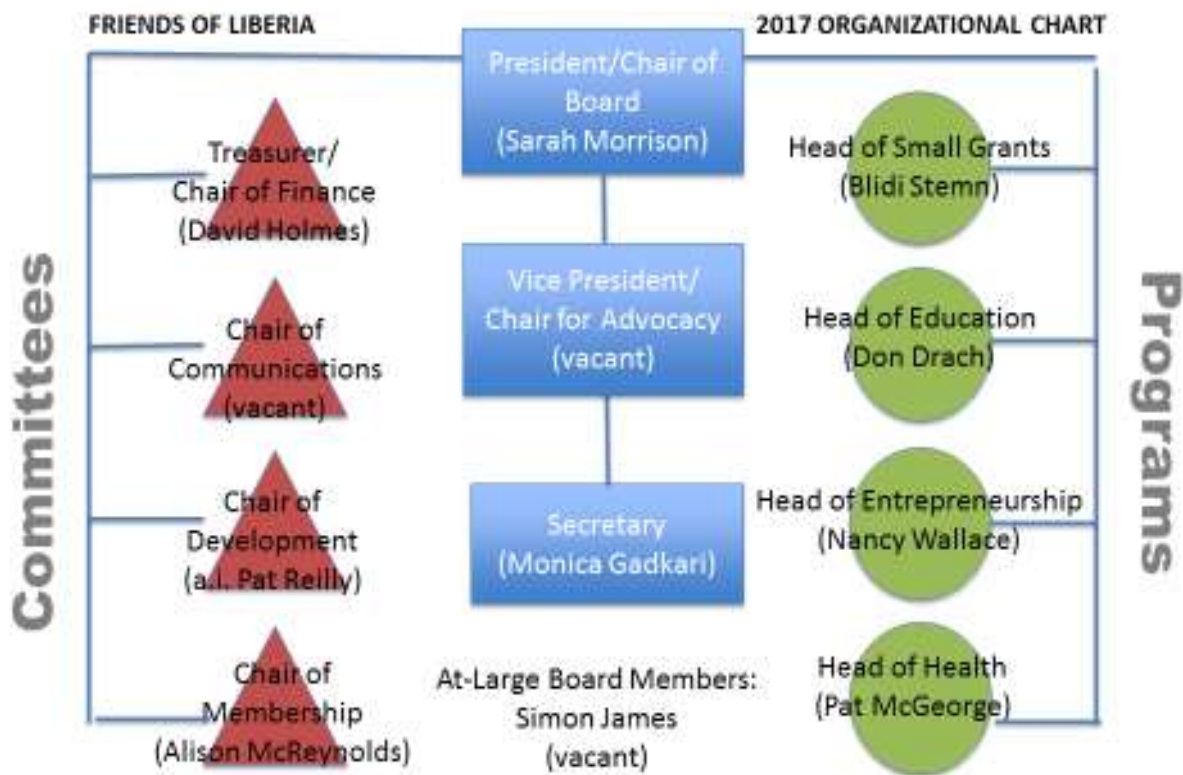
FOL members who would like to propose ideas or make comments on updating the plan may contact FOL at [liberia@fol.org](mailto:liberia@fol.org). The intro to the Plan follows, including the primary Issues FOL continues to address in the current period.

<b>Friends of Liberia Strategic Plan 2013 - 2018</b>			
<b>Vision</b>			
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.			
<b>Mission</b>			
FOL is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that seeks to positively affect Liberia and Liberians through educational, social, economic and humanitarian programs and through advocacy efforts.			
<b>Core Values</b>			
Service    Partnerships    Integrity    Stewardship    Accountability & Transparency			
<b>Strategic Issue 1: Programs</b>  What programs can FOL 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?	<b>Strategic Issue 2: Funding</b>  How can FOL diversify, increase and sustain its financial resources to support programming for greater impact on Liberia and more engagement of members?	<b>Strategic Issue 3: Governance &amp; Operations</b>  How can FOL organize itself for more efficient and effective management of its work in the U.S. and in Liberia?	<b>Strategic Issue 4: Membership Engagement</b>  How can FOL recruit new members and engage more members in its work by offering opportunities to carry out FOL's mission?

## Governance and Operations

An Organizational Working Group (OWG), led by Garrett Mason, was created in March 2014 to examine FOL's Strategic Issue 3, Governance & Operations. It determined that the operational structure could be more efficient and accountable, researched several options, and worked with present and former Board members to create the new structure. In 2016, the structure below was adopted and the bylaws were revised to reflect a flexibility in the structure as well as comply fully with the District of Columbia Code for Incorporation as a Nonprofit. The new governing board is comprised of officers, committee chairs, and program heads, as well as at-large members. This reduces duplicative meetings and facilitates decision-making.

The Board will meet at least quarterly, once a year in person and at other times, either in person or via electronic participation. A quorum must be present for official decisions to be taken. Between official board meetings, program and management committees confer, and communication among committee members is frequent. FOL members are welcome to attend Board meetings and share opinions at any time.



## Development Committee

The goal of the Development Committee is to raise the funds FOL needs to operate and support programs selected to advance FOL's strategic goals. FOL keeps administrative costs to a minimum and has no paid staff, which allows almost all funds raised to directly support projects, but also restrains the potential of FOL to make an impact in Liberia. To increase fund-raising, with correlated proposal development, project management, and the reporting required by grants, more attention is needed than current volunteers can consistently provide. Pat Reilly has been the extraordinary leader, workhorse, and catalyst of this committee, but has asked the nominating committee to find a new chairperson. Pat has promised to continue to actively work with the committee and a new chair.

Friends of Liberia has traditionally had two major funding sources: individual contributions and small foundation grants. In the end of year appeal in 2015, FOL reported to members that it was launching a new Family Literacy Initiative (FLI) pilot project in Monrovia and was depending primarily on FOL members to fund its first year, while FOL asked foundations, large and small, to consider its merits. The first year FLI budget was \$90,000. The Board allocated \$20,000 as start-up assistance and the rest was raised through specific donor appeals. The Rolander Family Foundation, a longtime supporter of FOL education projects, gave FLI \$10,000; The International Foundation, another longtime supporter of FOL education projects, granted \$25,000. The Vispo family donated \$10,000. And in response to the spring 2016 appeal letter, which noted that FLI Year One had a \$7,000 funding shortfall, Sally Humphrey, the author of [A Family in Liberia](#), personally filled that gap. We thank you all for your generous support.

Hundreds of individual donations totaled another \$18,000, some of which was allocated for the second year of FLI, when the budget would grow to \$125,000 in order to expand to new families. The FOL Board allocated \$10,000 from general funds for the second year, which, together with the successful first year results, gave the project the promise of sustainability needed to attract a larger funder. The Open Society of West Africa learned of our Family Literacy Initiative through FOL member and Education Working Group advisor Sia Barbara Kamara, who shared with them FLI's first-year results. Thanks to the volunteer evaluation work of Ron Mertz, FOL had the evidence that the first year had produced meaningful reading preparation progress with the target 3-5 year olds. Open Society, a foundation begun by philanthropist George Soros, invited FOL to submit a proposal to fund FLI Year Two, and subsequently awarded \$125,000 to FOL for FLI.

Potential funders for the third year of FLI include, primarily, Open Society of West Africa. It has generously also committed extra funds to revise FLI materials using a Liberian cultural context, a project that FOL partner HIPPIY International has estimated will cost \$45,000. Plans for Year Three of FLI are under discussion, and could see the project expand to new communities, posing logistical challenges for the staff that could increase the budget to \$200,000. Parents and caretakers in the program have also requested an adult literacy component, which would help meet a critical need. FOL will work to expand its funding partners so that the project may scale up for maximum impact and sustainability in Liberia.

FOL also raises funds for its Small Grants Program. Every year for more than a decade, FOL has invited Liberian community organizations to apply for grants to benefit their communities. Since the Ebola crisis, when FOL raised and distributed more than \$100,000 for community projects related to Ebola prevention and survival, the Small Grants Program has encouraged proposals that address the aftermath of the epidemic as well as capacity building and environmental, health, legal, and economic deficiencies. In 2016, it awarded almost \$17,000 to such community endeavors.



Friends of Liberia currently lists over 2000 members. FOL anticipates a donation at least annually from members who wish to be considered active and supportive, though this is not required for continued membership as it was years ago. Members seem to respond in greater numbers to specific crises instead of regular, ongoing support for programs. FOL is exploring various ways to encourage greater member involvement in its longer-term programs, as well as how to encourage members to remember FOL as a tax-deductible gift and in their wills. FOL continues to be a member-driven organization supporting an educated, healthy, and viable civil society in Liberia.

## **Finance Committee**

FOL has operated well within its budget and has only funded projects that were demonstrably able to be delivered with accountability and transparency. Receipts in 2016 from donations, grants, and bank interest totaled \$142,798. Total expenditures were \$100,150 at year's end. Indirect expenses in 2016 included costs for bank fees, Paypal, postage, travel for program monitoring and training, printing, the FOL website, and other small admin expenses. These totaled \$6429, or 6.4% of total expenditures. All the rest of expenditures were directly project related.

As noted above, \$42,648 was carried over to 2017 in unexpended 2016 receipts. Although this balance may appear large, it includes funds obligated to projects that were not spent for various reasons, year-end individual donations, and the year-end receipt of a sizeable grant for the Year Two Family Literacy Initiative. Non-obligated funds to go into the bank account toward program expansion and improvement, evaluation, and outreach. In the program sections that follow, some of the proposed plans are detailed. The continued support of individual donors is the sustainable backbone of FOL and what makes larger donors believe in our programs.

Additional budget details are available to members upon request.

## **Communications Committee**

FOL did not have a Communications chair during 2016 despite recruitment efforts. FOL's Membership chair, Alison McReynolds, necessarily also became our ad interim point person for social media oversight and electronic communications. We greatly appreciate her sacrifice of time to do this, but she and the Board would welcome and mentor a Communications chair who can oversee development of a communications strategy as well as coordinate and edit information going onto the website, Facebook, Twitter, and more traditional media. We are very grateful for the continuing technical assistance Fred Lange provides to update the FOL website and help us make it more inviting and useful. He is also bringing attention to improvements needed on other FOL social media sites and helping educate us on both the limitations and possibilities of various platforms.

## **Membership and Nominating Committees**

FOL welcomed many new members this year and is especially grateful for our new friends who have joined us to support the Family Literacy Initiative and our Small Grants Program. We count on our members to help FOL continue the important work we do in Liberia both through monetary support and generous donations of time on our committees, programs, and special projects. While we are continuing our leadership transition this year, FOL invites any member interested in a leadership role or committee participation to contact Don Drach, head of the nominating committee.

We are proud that FOL members with experience and expertise contribute thousands of hours of work collectively every year to develop, deliver, and evaluate quality programs in Liberia; inform members of FOL achievements and challenges through communications; manage and fund a well-respected and transparent organization; and advocate for appropriate democracy and development assistance to Liberia, including support for additional Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs).

Since Peace Corps returned to Liberia after the civil wars and Ebola crisis, FOL has offered mentoring to PCVs when they return to the U.S. and opportunities to continue their service on FOL committees and in leadership positions. We'd love to hear your ideas about how FOL can attract new generations of members, including new PCVs. Their insights and contributions are invaluable.

FOL is researching new ways to show appreciation to our supporters, analyze and appeal to the interests of our members, present opportunities such as short-term service projects in Liberia, and address the Peace Corps 3rd Goal -- sharing first-hand knowledge about Liberia with Americans. Maintaining a talent bank of speakers and reaching out to schools is one idea. Your ideas and experiences are welcomed.

Members represent many interests, and many individual members support families, schools and higher education, clinics and hospitals, and business development in Liberia on their own. We are proud of members' commitments to Liberia, and are exploring how we might promote these members' projects, e.g. by inclusion of member news on our website -- book publications, art exhibits, new jobs or retirement, cultural artifacts for donation, obituaries, and tributes.

## **Programs**

### **FAMILY LITERACY INITIATIVE (FLI)**

Launched in November 2015, FOL's Family Literacy Initiative (FLI) successfully completed its Year 1 pilot in October 2016. Propelled by positive evaluations and our effective partnerships with WE-CARE Foundation and HIPPY International (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Children), and fueled with major funding from the Open Society Foundations, FLI began Year 2 in November 2016.

#### **Year 1 Results**

Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of FLI. We appreciate our WE-CARE partners and FOL Education Working Group's evaluation specialist Dr. Ron Mertz and his team for their Year 1 evaluations which consisted of formal Bracken School Readiness Assessment pre/post-testing of participating children and a formative evaluation looking at program implementation.

The Bracken, administered in December 2015 and again in August 2016, revealed that the pilot's 28 boys and 25 girls "showed substantial gains" as a result of the program, and that "FLI had significant impact on children's growth." The formative evaluation report contains detailed information and analyses about the successes and challenges of introducing the program. It highlighted the importance of the international partnership and how critical hiring and training of highly qualified and committed staff are to the program's success.



FLI Coordinator administering the Bracken achievement test at the end of FLI's pilot Year One to a young FLI participant.

The evaluation included recommendations for future years, including adaptation of the written materials to reflect the Liberian culture, gathering more socio-economic data on the family to see correlations between certain characteristics and program success (as well as referrals for interventions if needed), and developing or locating literacy training for caretakers who have a harder time reading the materials to their children but are enthusiastic to improve their own skills.

A link to Dr. Mertz's Year 1 formative evaluation report may be found on the right red sidebar at <http://fol.org/programs/literacy-initiative/>.

Another positive result of FLI's Year 1 is that the Ministry of Education formally adopted FLI in its Early Childhood Development Program Plan as well as in its Five Year Sectoral Plan, although the current budget was not able to fund it.

**Year 2 Launched in November 2016**

Building on these successes, FLI in 2017 has doubled the number of families in the same three communities: West Point and Caldwell in Montserrado County, and Duazon in Margibi County. FLI now reaches 120 families and 123 children who are working with 12 home visitors under the supervision of coordinator Gbima Bahtokpa and assistant coordinator David Sonjor, and the overall management of Mike Weah and Yvonne Capehart of WE-CARE. Sia Barbara Ferguson Kamara is FOL's liaison with WE-CARE.

FOL has worked with Peace Corps/Liberia and WE-CARE to help secure a Peace Corps Response volunteer to work with WE-CARE in 2017. FOL is very pleased with this development, and we look forward to continued cooperation and collaboration with Peace Corps.

**Year 3 and Beyond**

As we look beyond the 2-year pilot, we and our partners are exploring scaling FLI to additional communities around the country, as well as the potential of adding an adult literacy component to directly improve literacy skills among participating parents.

We will continue our commitment to education in Liberia by sustaining our focus on family literacy, knowing that increasing the literacy of the entire family is critical to improved educational outcomes and the economic viability of Liberia. We believe that FLI will be successful because it is grounded in these basic capacity-building principles:

- Supporting a sustainable program in Liberia based on local ownership and participation;
- Engaging in partnerships and alliances;
- Coordinating with donors;
- Monitoring and evaluating what we do.



**The Education Working Group (EWG)** supported development of this project after analyzing research on educational weaknesses in Liberia and what was in place already to address these. The EWG consists of ten FOL members with experience and expertise in early childhood education, reading and literacy, administration, evaluation, and capacity building. Dr. Miriam Westheimer, Director of HIPPIY International, is an invaluable advisor to the FLI project.

Established in 2014, the EWG is committed to working in close cooperation with its two partners, WE-CARE and HIPPIY International, via conference calls, Skype, and when possible, in person. For example, as this report was being prepared, three EWG members met with WE-CARE and Open Society officials at a Harvard University program about scaling options for early childhood programs. In addition, the EWG met in March and October 2016 with Open Society Foundations officials to

present and discuss FLI. These led to submission of a proposal and a grant of \$125,000 for Year 2, as mentioned in the Development section.

Written reports from WE-CARE are sent to FOL and reviewed monthly, including statistics on visits, challenges faced, and expenditures. We believe this collaborative model with excellent, established partners in Liberia may be the most sustainable way for FOL to pilot programs in the future.

Organizationally, the EWG has established sub-committees responsible for evaluation, budget, adult literacy, and research. Each program partner is represented on each sub-committee. The sub-committees meet regularly. If you would like to know more about FLI or EWG, please send an email to [liberia@fol.org](mailto:liberia@fol.org) and put in the subject line: Literacy Project Help. Follow FLI on FOL's website: <http://fol.org/programs/literacy-initiative/>, where you will find more information about the program, including the EWG Literacy Landscape Paper and Liberia literacy map.

## **SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM**

Since 2007, FOL has administered a Small Grants Program. Through a semi-annual competitive process, FOL has awarded grants of up to \$3,000 to Liberian-registered not-for-profit organizations whose mission promotes goals that FOL shares. During and immediately after the Ebola crisis, funding was solicited specifically to help meet the urgent needs of the population affected and for prevention activities and education. Some of these have exceeded \$3000. The responsible use of the funds received contributed to the reason FOL received National Peace Corps Association's 2016 Loret Miller Ruppe Award for Community Service.

The effects of the crisis, as well as the years of civil strife, are ongoing and serious. Many children were left as orphans, families affected by Ebola have been stigmatized, there are ongoing health problems, Liberia lost additional health care providers as many died from Ebola themselves, illiteracy remains high, environmental concerns grow, and under-employment is catastrophic. The Small Grants Program continues to encourage efforts of Liberian civil society groups to meet these needs.

To qualify, an organization must submit a proposal that addresses community challenges and demonstrates good management practices, accountability, and transparency. Recently, the FOL Board voted to allow organizations which met their goals with a FOL grant to apply for a second year if that would help make them sustainable or complete a project, and also to fund feasibility studies that may lead to future FOL projects.

The Small Grants Committee is headed by Dr. Blidi Stemn and includes Jim and Pat McGeorge, Chris Piccione, and Peggy Sammons. They welcome your participation, so if interested please write them at [liberia@fol.org](mailto:liberia@fol.org) and put "Small Grants" in the subject line. The Small Grants policy and application procedures may be found at <http://FOL.org/small-grants/>. Other policy changes may occur in 2017, and if so will be posted on that site.

### **Overview of 2016 Funded Projects**

#### **1. Center for Community Advancement and Family Empowerment (CECAFE), Department of Social Work of the United Methodist University. Phase II (\$3,000)**

The purpose of the Phase II project is to provide psychosocial support to Ebola orphans, survivors and affected children under a conceptual framework model of Community Support for Ebola



Survivors (COSES). The COSES project is providing psycho-social support to the targeted population with emphasis on a comprehensive case management approach to ensure that the targeted population receives a long-term coordinated support that values individual capacity and the strength of their community to enable them to reach their full potential as they rebuild their lives.

The project administrators engage in a multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration intended to contribute to collective efforts to increase the capacity of service providers serving Ebola orphans, survivors and affected children and the advocacy voice of this vulnerable population. This approach empowers stakeholders, including the target population, to become effective advocates for raising the concerns of the vulnerable population and placing them on the national agenda of the Liberian government, to ensure that this population is a critical priority for national planning.

The Partnership Chart for Client Identification

<b>Organizations Providing List of Clients</b>	<b>Number of Clients Served</b>
1. West Africa Ebola Survivors & Affected Organizations(WAESAO)	55
2. Hope Worldwide -Liberia	43
3. Liberia Education Project, Inc.	10
4. J. W. Harris School	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>208 Clients</b>

The original project target was to identify and reach out to 50 clients in three months (June-August, 2015), but CECAFE through its partners reached their target within a month. CECAFE purposefully verified the Ebola status of these children through a partnership with MSF-France, and was awarded this Phase II grant to reach additional clients identified during the screening.

**2. Ganta United Methodist Workers at the Methodist Hospital. Phase II (\$2,000)**

The Ganta United Methodist Workers Association (GUMHWA) solicited funding to purchase materials for the plumbing and electrical wiring of the Caretaker Center that FOL had funded in 2015. The pictures below show the building FOL funded in 2015 and 2016, in the total sum of \$5,000.00.



### 3. Initiative for Female Development (INFED). (\$2000)

FOL provided \$2,000 for the organization to purchase 14 sewing machines for female graduates from the INFED sewing and seamstress program at Red Light and Thinker's Village, to enable them become self-employed. Each person commits to repay \$20 per month to raise the amount of \$1,960 (which is the total cost of the fourteen machines) within seven months, July 2, 2016 through February 2, 2017. These funds will recycle to purchase fourteen (14) new sewing machines and provide for the next phase of the program in March, 2017.



Left: Graduates of the INFED program thanking FOL for its support.  
Right: With sewing machines purchased through FOL grant.

At the end of 2016, two additional grants were awarded. They will report achievements in 2017.

### 4. My Heart's Appeal (\$2000)

A well will be rehabilitated at their special needs school in Monrovia.

### 5. Education First, Inc. (\$2997)

Four toilets will be constructed for children at a school in Harper.

### 6. Refuge Place International Maternal and Child Health Center (\$5000)

This special, designated grant was approved in 2015 under FOL's Ebola prevention, treatment, and survival program, but paid in 2016. Funding went toward completion of clinic begun by Founder/ Executive Director, Mosoka Fallah, Ph.D., MPH, MA. <http://www.refugeplaceinternational.org/>

### Recommendations

1. Since there are fewer and fewer quality grant proposals received from Liberia, the Small Grants Committee suggests that FOL identify a handful of impactful projects and permit

reconsideration for funding additional years or to completion, if accountable and transparent during each evaluation.

2. Each project funded by FOL either partly or in full, should have an inscription of some sort acknowledging that the project was either fully funded or partly funded by FOL. FOL is making significant contributions and it is important for FOL's name to be visible on funded projects. That may attract both more members and other creative, worthy proposals.
3. If FOL chooses to continue with the current model of funding small projects, then there is a need to invest in training local organizations how to write grant proposals, manage programs, and evaluate them. This will enable small organizations to compete for grants from other sources also, not just FOL. FOL should identify someone capable in Liberia to facilitate appropriate workshops, or one of the FOL members visiting the country could do it, perhaps in collaboration with Peace Corps.
4. FOL might fund additional projects if someone on the ground could visit grant applicants, determine their capability to perform what they want to do, and help them develop a good needs assessment and proposal. Ideally, the FOL representative would also act as a mentor and monitor to the grantee through project completion.

## **HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Friends of Liberia is helping assess the need for an education-focused health project designed to help improve the knowledge base and continued competency of the faculty at Liberian schools of nursing and midwifery, since nurses and midwives provide the bulk of health care in Liberia. The project addresses the need to continue to improve the comprehensiveness of instruction at the schools of nursing and midwifery and institute a program of continuing education.

FOL has formed a Health Team in the U.S. and in Liberia. The four members of the Health Team in Liberia are graduates of the first class of the Masters of Nursing Education Program at Mother Patern College of Health Sciences in Monrovia, Liberia: Edwin Beyan, Harriette Mondaye, G Clinton Zeantoe, and Humphrey Loweal. The Health Team in the U.S. is a counterpart and mentor to the FOL Health Team in Liberia. The members of the Health Team in the U.S. are Jim McGeorge, Pat McGeorge, Chris Piccione, Dr. Karen Hein, Roger Kropf, Sarah Morrison, Richard Nisbett, Beth Fischer, Bob Fischer, and Joe Franta.

The immediate goal of the team in Liberia is to identify specific knowledge areas that the faculty members of the nursing and midwifery schools believe need to be improved, widened, or where their teaching competencies need to be updated in order to better educate future nurses and midwives to work in Liberia. Specific areas of additional education possibilities will be identified from the needs assessment funded by the FOL Small Grants Program in 2016 (carried over to 2017).

From the analysis of the needs assessment and feasibility studies, we foresee the two Health Teams, together, proposing a project to FOL that supports enhancement of nurse and mid-wife instruction - e.g. workshops to help improve the teaching competencies of the faculties of the schools of nursing and midwifery in Liberia, and/or additional partnerships with specific U.S. academic institutions and medical facilities. This project may be part of a longer term strategy of continuing education that will also address needs of nurses and midwife practitioners already in clinics and hospitals throughout Liberia. This would, of course, be developed in collaboration with and under the authority of the appropriate governing institutions in Liberia.

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

FOL greatly appreciates the contributions of the former chair of the Entrepreneurship Committee, Harmon Lisnow, who after years of service handed off his responsibilities at the end of 2016. FOL continues to endorse LICESS (the Liberian Council for Economic Progress) as a model for business development and training. Board Member Nancy Wallace has offered to lead this committee.

The first step is to identify a core group of people who will identify resources, potential partners, and activities. This group will identify a few priority strategies to be implemented by the committee and bring them to the Board for support. The committee will identify new partners and broaden FOL efforts to support increased employment and business development. These activities will ideally coordinate with FOL's Small Grants Program to strengthen the skills of the recipients, resulting in long term success.

Please contact Nancy Wallace via email at [liberia@fol.org](mailto:liberia@fol.org) (with her name in the subject line) if this is your area of interest and you would like to serve on this committee. It should be an exciting area of growth!

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

All of the FOL Board, listed on the organization chart on page 8, may be contacted by email at [liberia@fol.org](mailto:liberia@fol.org). Please put the name of the person you would like to answer your question in the subject line, or the theme of your message. A postal mailing address and additional email address is located on the FOL website. If you do not receive a timely response, please forgive us and write again since emails sometimes go into spam and we volunteers may miss them.

**Phone:** 202-643-0428 (Voice Mail)

**Website:** [www.fol.org](http://www.fol.org)

**Facebook:** [FriendsOfLiberia](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfLiberia)

**Twitter:** [@FOLiberia](https://twitter.com/FOLiberia)

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