FRIENDS OF LIBERIA ANNUAL REPORT

A summary of the year's achievements

FY 2015



Table of Contents

Letter from the President and Board Chair	4
Strategic Plan	5
Achievements	7
Future Plans	25
Contact Information	28



Letter from the President and Board Chair

Dear Friends,

We are proud to share the Friends of Liberia Annual Report for 2015. The report summarizes the highlights from fiscal year 2015. We continued to meet our mission to positively affect Liberia by supporting education, social, economic and humanitarian programs and through advocacy efforts as well as instituting our strategic plan, which will ensure that Friends of Liberia remains a sustainable organization.

In the last year, we raised funds (see Finance report p. 20-21) to support organizations in Liberia addressing the terrible aftereffects of the devastating health crisis brought on by Ebola. As an organization, we welcomed new board members and officers and began a family literacy initiative in three communities with partners We-Care Foundation and HIPPY International. FOL committees worked on projects dealing with health, education and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, FOL's Small Grants Committee awarded six Liberian organizations funds to support their projects. A Post-Ebola Committee was established with funds raised for Ebola to assist with the problems that arose from the epidemic. The committee has awarded four grants. These two committees have been merged into one and will seek organizations that support specified criteria for awards up to \$3,000.

Most importantly, we wish to give you in this report the clearest picture of FOL's framework, where we are and where we are heading. Also enclosed is the 2015 financial statement. We hope this information will help you assess the effectiveness of our organization.

Friends of Liberia continues to rely heavily on volunteers to support its many ongoing programs. As you read the report, think of areas where you might want to become involved as a volunteer. In addition to project volunteers, we are interested in involving members who might wish to serve on the Board of Trustees, as an Officer or on a committee.

On behalf of the entire Friends of Liberia Board of Trustees and Officers, we would like to thank you for your support. Your support and commitment are the fuel that keeps us moving forward to accomplish our goals and contribute to Liberia's growth as a nation that provides opportunity for all.

Sincerely yours,

Stephanie Vickers, President

Robert Sharer, Board Chair

Strategic Plan

In March 2013, FOL adopted a five-year <u>strategic plan</u>. Three years into the plan, we are taking stock of where we are in implementing the many goals and tasks we set out to achieve, examining what remains to be done, and analyzing the implementation challenges we face, especially in the light of the 2014 health crisis.

FOL members who would like to work on updating the plan should contact FOL at **liberia@fol.org**.



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 educational, social, economic and humanitarian programs and through advocacy efforts.

Core Values				
Service Partnerships Integrity Stewardship Accountability & Transparency				
Strategic Issue 1: Programs	Strategic Issue 2: Funding	Strategic Issue 3: Governance & Operations	Strategic Issue 4: Membership Engagement	
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?	How can FOL diversify, increase and sustain its financial resources to support programming for greater 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?	

Ebola and Post Ebola Support



While the Ebola epidemic lingered into 2015, FOL through its website, and Facebook page, called on members and friends to give money specifically for post Ebola organization and needs. In light of the changing conditions, the FOL Ebola Task Force was merged into the Post-Ebola Task Force, chaired by FOL Board Member Dr. Blidi Stemn. The committee consists of Dr. Stemn, former FOL officers Pat and Jim McGeorge, Chris Piccione, Susan Sammons and Sarah Ness.

Program Recommendations for Post-Ebola Small Grants Program

1. Health Education

Schools: Health education is part of the national curriculum, but it is rarely implemented in classrooms. Local organizations involved in hygiene education for students or teacher training will be considered. Provision of supplies for the schools, such as buckets, soap, construction of wash facilities, could be included in the programs, as long as there is also an educational aspect.

Community Based: Programs implemented by local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that focus on educating communities about basic health and hygiene practices. Communities with school health education programs will be favored.

Health Centers: Projects focusing on education and support for medical staff (doctors, midwives, nurses, etc.). Programs educating maternity patients about hygiene and health are also appropriate.

2. Psycho-Social Support System Rehabilitation

Orphans (children and youth): Local NGOs working with orphans to provide nurturing environments with education, shelter, food, etc. Support should be long-term and enable orphans to become independent and productive members of society. Programs should go beyond immediate or short-term counseling.

Ebola Survivors: Programs supporting individuals who are stigmatized as a result of contracting the Ebola virus. Goals of programs should be to help people rebuild their lives, but nature of support or intervention will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for the applications.

Hard-Hit Communities: Communities may include geographic locations and sites that were devastated by the outbreak, as well as sectors, such as medical staff and health-care practitioners.

3. Entrepreneurship

Micro-financing: Programs supporting micro-financing projects for individuals affected by Ebola (survivors, orphans, families of victims, market/sellers impacted by limited access to goods, etc.). Programs may have a two-pronged approach with economic/micro-financing and psychosocial support benefits. Qualified implementers with quality projects, appropriate target populations, and a history of micro financing in Liberia will be considered for grants.

Much work remains to combat the terrible effects of the Ebola outbreak: caring for Ebola orphans, overcoming the stigma experienced by Ebola survivors, continuing Ebola awareness and prevention programs, rebuilding and strengthening the Liberian medical and public health infrastructure (including training more health workers), and restarting the educational system to name just a few. FOL's Post-Ebola Committee is the appropriate group to undertake these tasks along with the education and entrepreneur committees. The committee recommended to the Board of Trustees that the following organizations receive grants (see chart below).

Summary of Activities

Number of proposals received	17
Number of proposals funded	4
Number of proposals awaiting information about the group's reputation	2
Total Amount disbursed	\$15,034

It was the committee's goal to exhaust all the \$30,000 allotted for the Post-Ebola Projects by the end of 2015. The committee felt there is a need to re-advertise on the website, social media, and by word of mouth to extend the reach of the awards.

Organization	Project Name	Project Location	Program Summary	Date Received	Amount Requested (\$)	Status	Amount Funded (\$)
Winifred Harley College of Health Sciences, United Methodist University	Construction of hand pump well at the male dormitory	Ganta, Nimba County	Make water more accessible to male nursing students to enable them attend classes and practice on time	April 23, 2015	2,156.65	Funded	2,156.65
Consolidated Youth of Peace & Development (COYPED)	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene in Schools project (WINS)	Montserrado and Grand Bassa	Five-month program to establish WAS clubs in 20 schools and provide training	April 23, 2015	5,514	Funded	3,000
Center for Community Advancement and Family Empowerment (CECAFE) United Methodist University	Psychosocial support for Ebola Orphans in Liberia under the theme: "We Can Make It: No Matter What"	Montserrado and Margibi Counties	A two-year program to provide case management support and psychosocial counseling to 200 orphans (100 in the first year)	April 23, 2015	5,000	Funded	3,000
Education First, Inc.	Wellness, Nutrition, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WENSH) school curriculum	Maryland County	Twelve-month program for nutrition and hygiene at school, training of teachers and parents, campaigns for 260 students	May 27, 2015	6,878	Funded	6,878

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 \$2,000 to Liberian-registered not-for-profit organizations. The Small Grants policy and application procedures may be found at <u>http://www/fol.org</u>. In addition, one may find a summary of all grants that have been awarded over the years on that site.

In 2015, 11 Small Grant applications were received in the first round. The following grants were awarded:

- \$1,000 to Concern Youth for Development and Progressive Actions, Inc. to develop a sound waste management system in the Goba Chop community of Paynesville, sorting waste, recycling, educating youth and marketers on how to separate waste, composting and establishing an organic garden.
- \$1,100 to Accountability Lab to publicize its anonymous computer-based system to report grievances, corruption, etc.
- \$1,450 to Forerunners of Children's Universal Rights for Survival, Inc. to develop and disseminate radio messages to enable individuals, caregivers, elders, etc., to reunite and reintegrate Ebola survivors with their families and communities without stigmatizing them.

An additional six Small Grant applications were received in the second round. The following grants were awarded:

- \$1,640 to Youth Coalition for Education in Liberia to provide school materials to children who were affected by the Ebola crisis and to facilitate a semester-long workshop.
- \$2,000 to Waste Not Inc. to construct a roof on a larger facility to allow for the growth of its sewing and quilting program.
- \$2,000 to Ganta United Methodist Hospital Workers Assoc. to purchase zinc and cement to substantially complete a caretaker center to provide for short stays of relatives visiting hospital patients.

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In summary, six Small Grants totaling \$9,190 were awarded in 2015.

The Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the committee that administers the Small Grants Program, voted to merge the Post-Ebola Task Force and its grant activities into the Small Grants Committee so there would be a unified administrative process for FOL's grants to external organizations.

In addition, FOL will engage former Board members who reside in Liberia to assist in the solicitation and vetting of applications.

Finally, the Board set Jan. 1 and July 1 as the application deadlines for grant applications.

Family Literacy Initiative (FLI)

"If Liberia does not put an end to illiteracy, it will be illiteracy that will put an end to Liberia."

-Foreign Minister Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, Monrovia, June 2014



FOL launched the Family Literacy Initiative (FLI) in November 2015. FLI addresses a crisis that underlies all of Liberia's challenges — one of the lowest literacy rates in Africa. The closing of schools for most of 2014 during the Ebola crisis exacerbated the existing serious problem.

This new project for FOL takes a family approach to literacy. It recognizes that parents are a child's first teacher and partners FOL with the international evidence-based program Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-school Youngsters (<u>HIPPY</u>) to bring this program to three communities in Liberia.

FOL's other partner is the WE-CARE Foundation in Monrovia, a respected Liberian not-for-profit organization that runs a library, publishes supplemental reading materials and trains teachers, to serve as the implementing partner for the program.

Together with HIPPY-International and WE-CARE, FOL is committed to a program that will (1) increase parents' literacy levels along with their child's, and (2) will have a lasting and sustainable two-generation impact. If the two-year pilot is successful in preparing Liberian children for success in school, the program will be scaled up and expanded to other communities in Liberia.

http://fol.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Screen-Shot-2015-05-01-at-10.20.27-AM.png

The HIPPY Model

The HIPPY approach to early learning supports parents while providing solutions that strengthen families. It is based on the belief that every child can learn and every parent wants what is best for his or her child.

The HIPPY curriculum addresses five key learning areas: literacy, math, science, motor, and language. The HIPPY model contains four essential features designed to provide optimum support and services to families.

- 1. Developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to strengthen the child's cognitive and early literacy skills, social/emotional and physical development;
- 2. Easy-to-use educational activity packets and storybooks for parent and child to use at home;
- 3. Home visits and group meetings to teach parents how to teach their child, extending over a two- or three-year period;
- 4. Home visitors hired from within the community, trained and supervised by a professional coordinator.

Why the Family Approach?

FOL trained early childhood educators for 14 years after the civil war in Liberia. Trainers realized there were many challenges to getting children to read on schedule. Chief among them was low-literacy and poor reading habits in the home environment. Even teachers are not confident readers and schools are further challenged by the absence of reading material and the size of classes. FOL's Education Working Group (EWG) researched many approaches beginning before Liberian schools were closed due to the Ebola crisis. Early on, the EWG decided that a family-based approach would address two generations at once and very likely more than one child in a household. The EWG found in HIPPY-International a willing partner with a model that has proven effective in many country and cultures where low literacy prevails.



Implementation

The FLI pilot was formally launched in November 2015 with a training program for program coordinators and home visitors. In January 2016, weekly home visits began with 60 families in three communities in Montserrado and Margibi Counties. These photos tell the story of the first 9 weeks of the pilot.

ABOVE DR. MIRIAM WESTHEIMER, DIRECTOR OF HIPPY-INTERNATIONAL, AND FOL'S BARBARA KAMARA SHOWN WORKING WITH HOME VISITORS DURING THE NOVEMBER TRAINING.



ABOVE~ FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER OLUBANKE KING-AKERELE PAID A VISIT TO THE FLI TRAINING TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY, EDUCATION, AND THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITY.

Home visitors practice lessons





Parents learn by doing





Above: A Home Visitor is showing a Mother how to use shapes in a variety of activities.

Bottom: Home Visitors come together once a month for in-service training and to share experiences. 16

FOL will continue its commitment to education in Liberia by sustaining its 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. FOL believes 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 FLI does; and,
- Offering opportunities for members to participate in the project.



Our WE-CARE Foundation partners pictured above are David Sonjor, Yvonne Capehart, Gbima Bahktopah and Michael Weah.

If you would like to know more about FLI or join the team, send an email to <u>liberia@fol.org</u> and put in the subject line: Literacy Project Help. And follow FLI on FOL's website: <u>http://fol.org/programs/literacy-initiative/ where you will find</u> more information about the program including our Literacy Landscape Paper and <u>literacy map.</u>



LICESS

FOL has formed a partnership with the Liberian Council for Economic and Social Services, LICESS, a Liberian non-profit that provides social and economic support programs for Liberians.

Three FOL Board Members, Joseph Crayton, Jefferson King and Harmon Lisnow, who are also on the board of LICESS, will launch a crowd-funding campaign for an entrepreneurial training program for Liberians with a good business idea that need resources and training to run a business.

After a modulated training in business practices, the Liberian entrepreneurs will receive financing to start the business and coaching and technical support for one year. The goal is to kick-start small businesses that will employ Liberians and keep more of the business wealth in the country. LICESS has its own web site: <u>www.licess.fol.org.</u>

Fundraising-Development

The FOL Development Committee has had a busy couple of years. In 2014-15, it raised a record amount of more than \$130,000 for Ebola relief. Of that, \$100,000 was dispensed for community-based Ebola prevention and recovery projects. The final \$30,000 went to seeding "Post-Ebola" grants, which are the latest iteration of Small Grants.

The design and launch of the Family Literacy Initiative (FLI) in 2015 gave FOL a very specific fund-raising challenge. With an annual budget of \$90,000, which includes Liberian administration, staff salaries, rent, licensing and materials, FOL has applied to foundations for support. Two of the organization's stalwart supporters came through again in 2015. The Rolander Family Foundation gave FOL \$10,000 for the first year of FLI. The International Foundation promised \$25,000, to be delivered in July 2016.

FLI attracted some new donors. One member gave \$10,000, designated for FLI. Another, whose late wife served as a literacy volunteer in Peace Corps, gave \$2,500. An anonymous donor made a matching challenge of \$1,000 to members of Peace Group 28, which encouraged 3 members of the Development Committee to personally more than match it. Stephanie Vickers raised \$2,000 from her Portland, Ore., community.

In the December year-end appeal, members designated almost \$10,000 to FLI. Another \$9,000 went to the general fund. Members of a health group in Peace Corps gave \$2,500 to the Refugee Place International through FOL.

Raised in 2015		
Contributions	\$18,000	
RFF Grants	\$10,000	
Dec. Appeal		
Letter	\$20,000	
Total Income	\$48,000	

The Development Committee has identified foundations that support literacy. The Open Society has invited FOL to apply for funding. The Rolander Family Foundation has already promised FLI a \$5,000 grant in 2016.

Finance

Liberia and West Africa experienced the climax of the Ebola Virus epidemic in 2014, but recurrences occurred into 2015. Friends of Liberia saw a surge in donations for a total of \$130,000 during the period of 2014-early 2015. Our donors were able to designate funds for use in community-based Ebola recovery projects, which FOL has continued to fund in 2015 through our Post-Ebola Small Grants program.

In late 2015, FOL launched a family literacy project in coordination with two international partners, WE-CARE Foundation and HIPPY-International. The Family Literacy Initiative (FLI) has drawn new individual donors and the interest of several foundations. The 2015 year-end appeal to our members and new donors yielded over \$28,000 over the course of two months, and \$10,000 was designated for FLI. The project, with an annual budget of \$90,000 for the first year, has already raised \$83,000.

The program expenses of FOL during the 2015 calendar year reflect an increase to \$45,000. This is due to an increase in both the amount awarded per Small Grant as well as the increase in the number of grants awarded. These grants funded organizations in Liberia working on community team building in coordination with official law enforcement, the development of health and sanitation projects, and in particular, projects that aid the recovery of communities and the replenishment of health systems affected by the Ebola crisis. In addition, expenses also reflect the capital investments needed to launch FLI, including the bank account recently opened in Liberia for the project's efficient operation.

On the following page, the first numbers reflect FOL's financial position moving forward; FOL began 2015 with \$137,000 in available funds.

Year-End Funds \$106,335

2015 Expenses and Revenue Summary

	Family Literacy	
	Initiative (FLI)	83,000
Revenue	Refugee Clinic	2,400
	Ebola Recovery	13,750
	General Fund	35,800
	Small Grants	24,000
Expenses	Family Literacy Initiative	21,350
	Administrative/ Operations	3,750

2016 Programs Budget

Small Grants	15,000
Post-Ebola (now	15,000
merged)	
LICESS	300
Family Literacy	90,000
Initiative	

Strengthening FOL and Building Capacity to Serve

Organizational Working Group

The Organizational Working Group (OWG) was created in March 2014 to assess the underlying structure of FOL and to suggest an alternative structure that would allow the Board, Officers, Committee Chairs, and Program Heads to work more effectively together.

The new structure would:

- a) Streamline communication and decision-making, and
- b) Create a more efficient organization overall.

The Committee has been composed of a variety of FOL Board members and former board members including Don Drach, Rich Fahey, Simon James, Hilary Kouhana, Harmon Lisnow, Garrett Mason, and Nancy Wallace.

In 2015, the OWG continued to meet regularly and research the organizational and structural issues of FOL and similar organizations. In particular, the OWG contacted several organizations (including several NPCA-affiliated "Friends of" groups), investigated how they are structured, and delved into how the organizational structures have helped or hindered the function of the organizations themselves. The OWG conducted an internal assessment of the various roles and responsibilities within the current structure of FOL and how the various officers and FOL members interact. The OWG has put forward a proposal for an organizational structure for FOL that was shared with the Board for feedback. It will be considered at the April 2016 Board meeting.

Art and Livelihood Treasures from Liberia

A few years ago, Friends of Liberia was solicited by a member to find university and/or museum homes for her Liberia artifacts that she brought home after her Peace Corps service. It was hoped that other FOL members whose children and/or families did not want these Liberian art items might take advantage of this opportunity. The membership has been continuously updated in FOL newsletters and on the website. Volunteer Coordinator, Virginia Hesel, with the assistance of Verlon Stone, former FOL board member and Special Advisor to the Indiana University Liberian Collections, have attempted to provide this service to FOL members. It has not worked out as hoped and planned. Only one returned Peace Corps volunteer requested FOL assistance.

Verlon Stone has provided two collections:

1) Dr. Warren d'Azevedo, 1920-2014,

www.africanstudies.org/publications/asa-news/winter-2014/326-obituaryprofessor-warren-l-d-azevedo

2) Dr. Jeanette Carter, 1928-2011 reports <u>www.webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids/view?doc.view=entiretest&docl</u> <u>d=VAD2058.</u>

Bernadette Phifer, Culture and Arts Education Manager and Curator of the George Washington Carver Museum in Austin, Texas, gratefully accepted the d'Azevdo and Carter collections. The museum and cultural center has also agreed to accept any future donations of Liberian art items from FOL members. If interested, please contact, Virginia Hesel at <u>vchesel@comcast.net</u>, Board Member and Volunteer Coordinator, Friends of Liberia.

Membership

Friends of Liberia has 1,950 members, an increase of 10 percent in 2015 with new donors and new friends joining committees and the board. Members are the backbone of FOL, which also saw a 5 percent increase in the number of people receiving electronic newsletters and a 20 percent increase in FOL's social media audience. The website has continued to improve the organization's ability to communicate effectively with our membership and, as more content is added from ongoing projects, FOL will be reaching out to members to share successes from Liberia.

Website

The Communications Committee added new members and spent the majority of its time updating and revamping the new FOL website. New content has been added as historical content has been restored. Some highlights include a page for the Family Literacy Initiative, adding previous Annual Reports, and combining our Small Grants and Post-Ebola information so it is in a central location. The blog shares important information with the membership regarding FOL projects, updates on activities, and opportunities for members to engage with Liberia and Liberians.

In 2016, the Communications Committee plans to increase the number of blog posts and continue to add missing content, including a more extensive history of Friends of Liberia milestones.

Future Plans



FOL Health Project

FOL is developing an education-focused health project that is being designed to help improve the knowledge base and competency of the faculty at the Liberian schools of nursing and midwifery.

There are now nineteen (19) schools of nursing and/or nurse midwifery in Liberia. Since 2012, forty-five (45) directors and faculty members from these schools of nursing and nurse midwifery have graduated in the only Masters of Nursing Education (MSN Ed) in Liberia. The MSN Ed program is part of the Mother Patern College of Health Sciences in Monrovia. The courses in the 18-month program were primarily taught by visiting faculty from the United States.

The MSN Ed graduates have returned to teach and lead their schools of nursing and/or nurse midwifery to develop nurses and midwives for the Liberian health-care system.

Four of the graduates have formed a FOL Health Team in Liberia. The goal of the team is to identify specific areas where the faculty members from the nursing and midwifery schools need to improve their teaching competencies in order to better prepare nurses and midwives to work in Liberia.

FOL has formed a FOL Health Team in the United States. This group will advise and mentor the FOL Health Team in Liberia and together develop a FOL health project.

Process:

- Develop a needs assessment to survey faculty members in the schools of nursing and midwifery.
- Administer the survey along with individual interviews and focus groups.
- Tabulate and analyze the data from the survey, interviews and focus groups.
- Propose and develop a health project to improve the specific areas of teaching competencies for faculty members.
- Submit the proposed project to the Friends of Liberia Board of Trustees for acceptance as a program.

Outcomes:

- A project will be developed that will improve the knowledge base and competencies of the faculty members at the schools of nursing and midwifery, which will in turn improve the skills of new nurses and midwives and raise the level of health care in Liberia.
- There is a potential that the schools of nursing and nurse midwifery will become training centers continuing education for the nurses and midwives working at health clinics, health centers and hospitals in their areas of the country.

How Members Can Help:

- If you would like join the FOL Health Team in the U.S., send an email to: liberia@fol.org and put in the subject line: FOL Health Project Help.
- Make a donation to FOL.

Future Plans

Finance

For 2016, FOL's goals are 1) to increase the level of donations by sustaining and expanding the donor base, 2) to continue to support worthwhile projects that address Liberia's ongoing difficulties, 3) to continue to reduce administrative expenses by having members receive the newsletter by email and 4) to maintain financial records electronically rather than on paper.

FOL is excited to continue its programs and to begin new projects in 2016. Thank you to all donors and volunteers for making this work possible. Look for updates on FOL's successes in the email newsletter and on <u>www.fol.org</u>.

Contact Information

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Board of Trustees

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The Refuge Place-The Maternal Child and General Clinic under the leadership of Dr. Mosaka P. Fallah was one of the several organizations supported by FOL and its members.