

# Friends of Liberia Membership Survey Report

## October 2024

Prepared by:  
The Friends of Liberia Board of Directors

### Introduction

On June 26, 2024, Friends of Liberia (FOL) issued a Membership Survey (the “Survey”) via email. The Survey was located on a Google Forms platform and contained a total of 33 questions. FOL issued email reminders for members to take the Survey in July and closed access to the survey on August 1.

FOL created and conducted this Survey to allow the FOL Board of Directors to better comprehend the opinions and suggestions of FOL membership regarding FOL mission, current priorities, and the future direction of the organization. The results of this Survey will help drive the direction of FOLs work and the scope of the projects we fund in Liberia. As with any survey, the results must be considered in the context of survey parameters and survey response rate. Out of the approximately 1,000 valid email recipients for this Survey, FOL received 112 responses to the Survey, indicating an 11% survey response rate.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions regarding this report, please write Craig Cooper, FOL’s Communications Chair, at [ccooper@fol.org](mailto:ccooper@fol.org).

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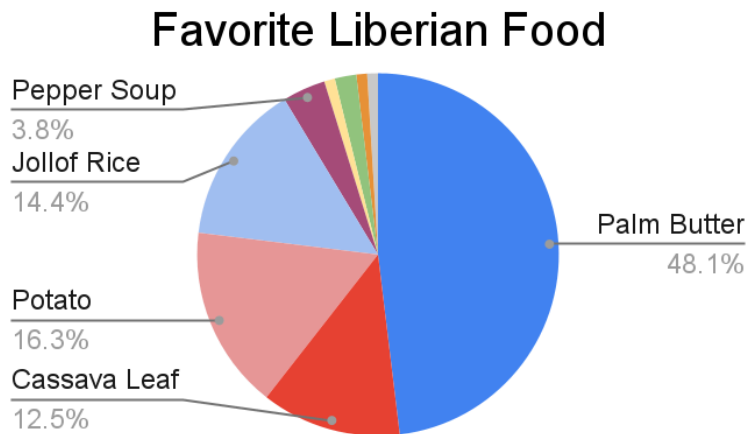
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# SURVEY RESULTS

## FOL Membership Demographic Information

**Survey Question:** What is your favorite Liberian food?

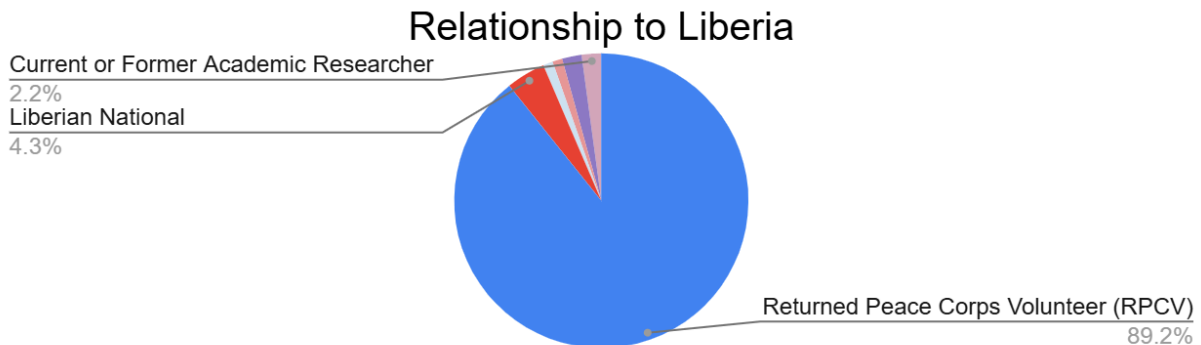
**Responses:**



**Findings:** Palm Butter Soup was by far the most favored with forty-eight (48%) of respondents. Potato Greens, Jollof Rice, and Cassava Leaf were runners up to Palm Butter. The “other” responses (not listed in the Survey) included Peanut Soup, Pumpkin, and Collard Greens.

**Survey Question:** What is your relationship to Liberia?

**Responses:**



**Survey Question:** RPCVs ONLY: Please enter the START year of your Peace Corps service in Liberia. & Please enter the END year of your Peace Corps service in Liberia.

**Responses:**

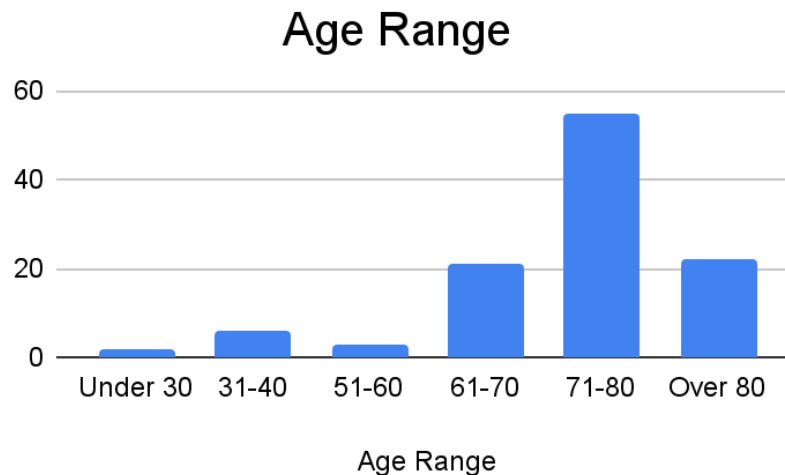
<b><u>First Year</u> of Peace Corps Service in Liberia</b>	<b>Percentage of RPCVs Responses</b>
1962-1966	16.8
1967-1971	37.2
1972-1979	21.2
1980-1988	11.7
1989-2011	0
2012-2019	13.1

**Findings:**

- Among FOL members who are RPCVs, there was a clear peak of volunteers between 1967 and 1971. During this 5 year period, 37.2% of FOL members who are RPCVs began their Peace Corps service.
- It is also notable that RPCVs from the first groups of volunteers (1962-1966) in Liberia represent 16.8% of our membership who are RPCVs.
- No RPCV members indicated their first year of Peace Corps service was between 1989 to 2011.
- FOL is represented by RPCVs throughout Peace Corps work in Liberia since 1962.

**Survey Question:** What is your age range?

**Responses:**

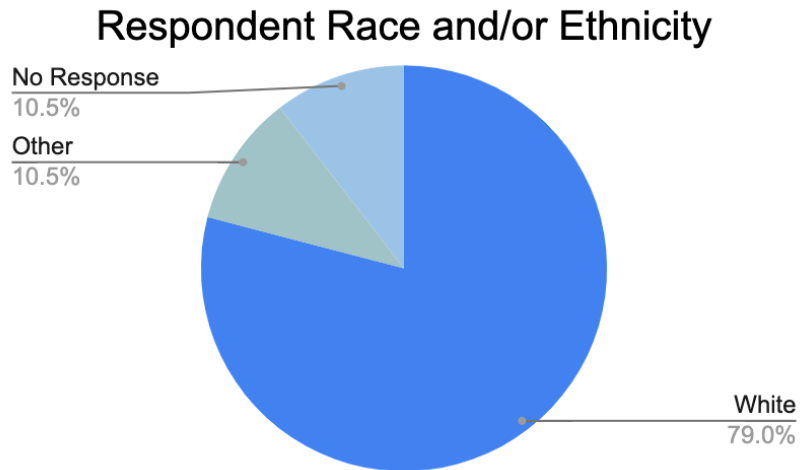


**Findings:**

- Overall, 84% of respondents stated they are 61 years old or older with about 20% indicating they are over 80 years old.
- Only 7% indicated that they are 40 years old or younger.
- This indicates that the majority of FOL current membership consist of a range of older RPCVs who served in Liberia from the 1960's through the 1980's.
- The limited supply of PCVs in Liberia starting in 1990 to present, due to the Liberian civil wars and other evacuations, has created a limited supply of RPCVs over the past 30 years. This fact will have a profound impact on our membership profile in the future.

**Survey Question:** If comfortable, please describe your race and/or ethnicity

**Responses:**



**Findings:**

- Seventy-Nine (79%) of respondents indicated they were white through various responses such as “white”, “caucasian”, etc.
- Just over ten percent (10.5%) of respondents indicated a race or ethnicity other than white including “African American”, “Black”, “Asian”, etc.

**Survey Question:** Where do you currently live? Please provide country and state, province or county. [Example: Liberia, Nimba County or U.S., California]

**Responses:**

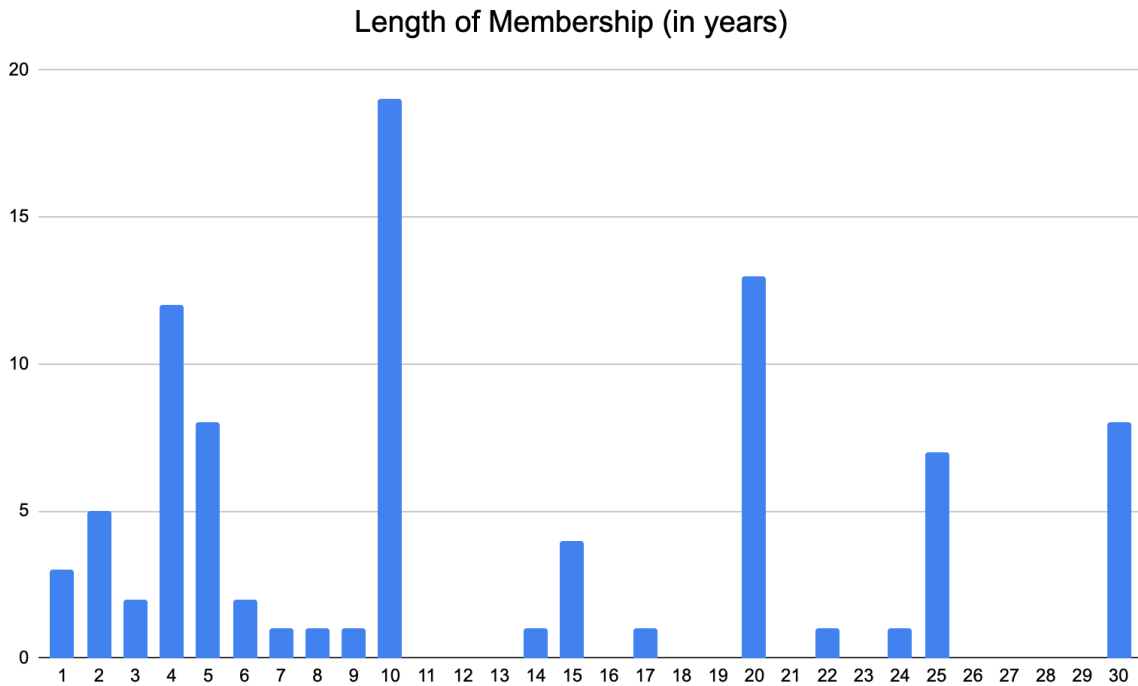
- The top 5 locations of respondents:
  - California, USA: 12%
  - New York, USA: 9%
  - Liberia: 7%
  - Washington, D.C. USA: 6%
  - Washington, USA: 5%

**Findings:**

- More than 90% of FOL's membership is largely based in the United States.
- FOL members living in Liberia (7%) represent an important and growing share of FOL overall membership.

**Survey Question:** How long have you been a member of Friends of Liberia? Please enter the number of years (e.g. 4).

**Responses:**



**Findings:**

Number of Years as FOL Member	Percent of Membership
5 years or less	33
6 to 10	27
11 to 15	6
15 to 20	15
21 to 25	10
26 to 30	9

- It appears that approximately of 60% FOL members have joined FOL within the last 10 years.
- The details in survey response data for this question indicated spikes in people joining FOL occurred in 2014, 2004, and 2020. FOL needs to investigate what led to membership spikes during these years.

**Survey Question:** Why did you join Friends of Liberia?

**Responses:**

The top five responses were categorized into 5 areas:

- Stay connected to Liberia and Liberians: 32% of responses.
- Get involved in development projects in Liberia: 31% of responses
- Information/Communication: 16% of responses
- Stay connected to RPCVs: 13% of responses
- Other: 12% of responses

**Findings:**

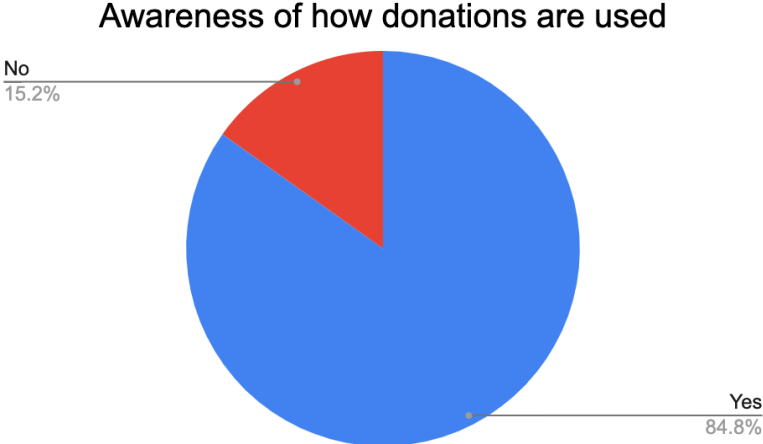
- It appears that the vast majority of FOL members joined FOL because they value and want to continue their connection with Liberia and to support development projects in Liberia.
- Of the responses labeled “Other”, some of the responses included: suggestion from an RPCV friend, obtain news about the Liberian Civil War, support FOL’s mission, enjoyed experience in Liberia, etc.



**Membership Satisfaction**

**Survey Question:** Are you aware of how your donations to Friends of Liberia are used?

**Responses:**

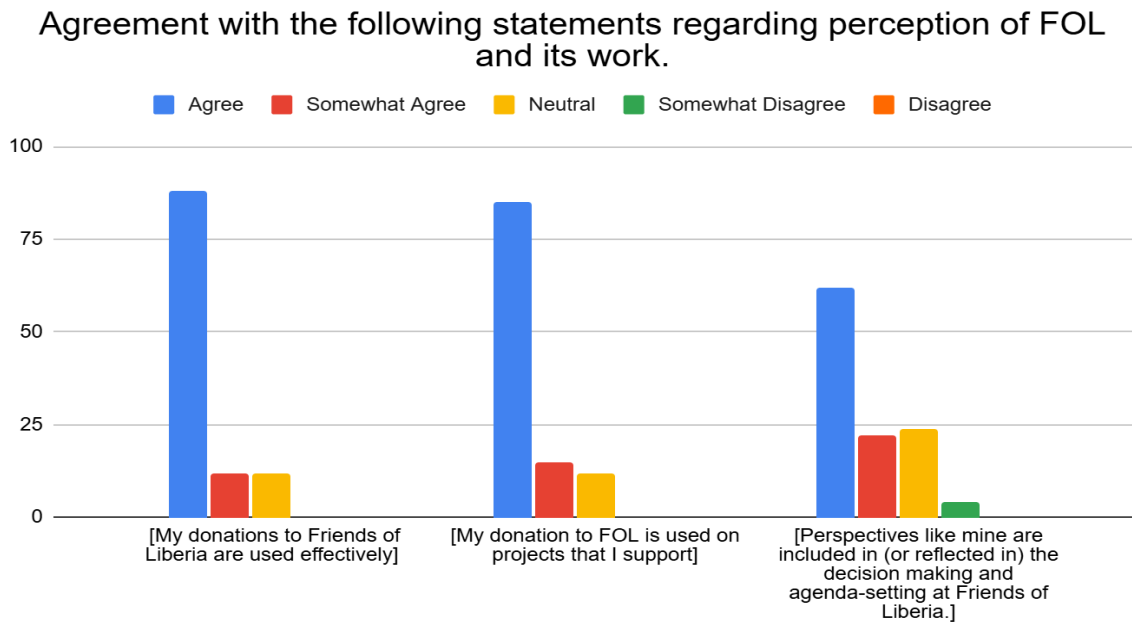


**Findings:**

- About 85% of respondents (and therefore FOL Membership) feel they are aware of how their donations are used by FOL.

**Survey Question:** Select your agreement with the following statements regarding your perception of FOL and its work.

**Responses:**



**Findings:**

This survey question asked FOL members to react to three statements concerning membership perception of FOL effectiveness, FOL's selection of development projects, and FOL's inclusivity in terms of setting goals and planning.

The first two statements received strong membership support with approximately 80% of respondents in agreement in agreement with:

1. *My donations to Friends of Liberia are used effectively.*
2. *My donation to FOL is used on projects that I support*

This indicates that a large majority of members believe that FOL is using its donations effectively and FOL is supporting a range of projects that members strongly support.

The third statement which members were asked to respond to was:

3. *Perspectives like mine are included in (or reflected in) the decision making and agenda-setting at Friends of Liberia.*

Although this statement was met with about 55% agreement from members, the fact that almost half of membership indicated that they did not feel that personal perspectives were not being reflected in FOL operations around agenda-setting and decision-making is important. The FOL Board of Directors should consider how to better address this issue. For example, FOL could request that more members join FOL project committees, on either short or longer term basis, so more voices can be heard on a wide variety of FOL administrative and program planning and decision-making. In addition, as part of our Small Grants program, FOL could expand and diversify, based on membership input provided elsewhere in this survey and by subsequent outreach efforts, the type of projects FOL will consider for small grants.

**Survey Question:** Is there any other feedback that you would like to provide regarding your experience as a member of Friends of Liberia?

**Responses:** Membership provided 32 responses including mostly positive feedback on FOL's work (17 responses). A summary of comments that included specific recommendations are listed below:

**Recommendations on Improving Membership:**

- I served as Membership Coordinator (for many years), during this time updated the FOL database using FOIA requests from Peace Corps - Washington.
- I continue to search for and download obituaries of RPCVs and staff. I believe FOL members would be interested if obituaries of these individuals be made available online.
- I wish more people would volunteer. I want more Liberians who live outside the country to volunteer for FOL.
- Too much emphasis is put on being a former Peace Corp volunteer. I just don't feel that much emphasis should be put on that aspect - especially if you want to expand the membership and support for FOL.

**Recommendations on Improving Communications:**

- The website needs to be updated and active rather than a stagnant site.
- The website needs to be updated.
- I would like more frequent personal outreach and discussions with members.
- I do wish we could have an (historic) event in Washington, DC for those who are interested, would volunteer to help, and would most definitely come.
- I would like to receive snail mail from FOL (e.g. newsletters)

**Recommendations on Improving Financial Reporting**

- I would like more timely reporting of use of funds.

**Recommendations on Improving Project Planning and Administration**

- Is there a U.S. point person, at FOL, who corresponds directly with the Liberians running the programs? It would be great to hear more often about successes and hurdles the programs have first hand.
- I would like to see FOL programs occurring in Sinoe.

**Findings:**

- Generally members are satisfied with their experience as members of Friends of Liberia.
- FOL Board of Directors should review and consider the specific recommendations and take actions as approved by Board members.

## Strategic Plan - Area of Focus

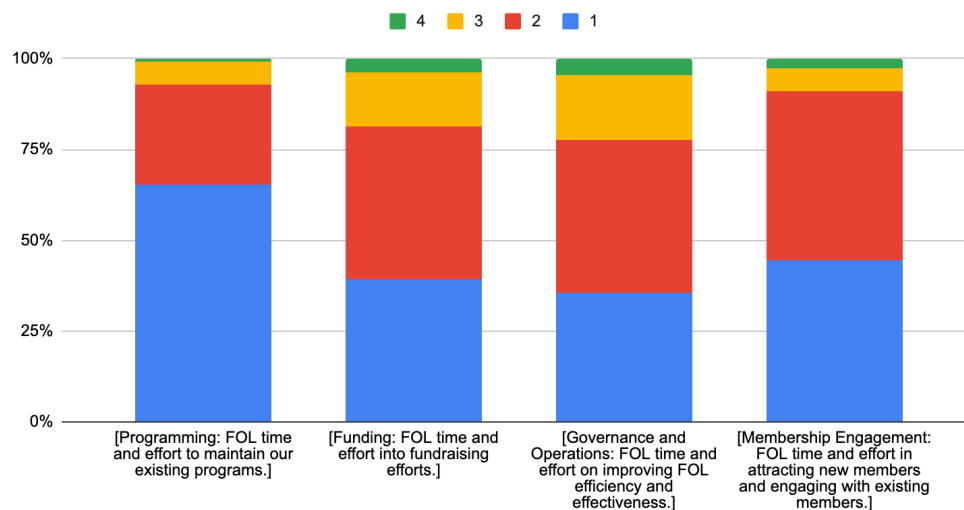
**Survey Question:** Please indicate your priority of interest regarding the following areas of focus of FOLs updated Strategic Plan as follows:

1 = *Very important to me. FOL Board should focus a great deal time on this topic.*

4 = *Not that important to me. FOL Board should focus more time on other topics.*

### Responses:

Agreement with the following statements regarding perception of FOL and its work.



### Findings:

- Starting from the left side of the above chart, the first bar chart concerns, "*Programming: FOL time and effort to maintain our existing programs*". This topic gained the strongest support with approximately 70% of considering this to be "very important" (rating 1, presented by the color blue in the bar chart). This implies that membership feels strongly that FOL should remain focused on the current universe of our programs and projects in Liberia.

- The next 2 bar charts covered the following topics:
  - *Funding: FOL time and effort into fundraising efforts.*
  - *Governance and Operations: FOL time and effort on improving FOL efficiency and effectiveness.*

Members rated these two topics approximately the same with the majority (approx. 55%) choosing rating 2 (color red in the bar chart) meaning that the topic is important or somewhat important and rating 3 (color yellow) was selected by 15% meaning that the topic is somewhat not important and 5% choosing rating 4 (green color) meaning the topic is not important to those members.

- The fourth and final bar chart topic concerned: “*Membership Engagement: FOL time and effort in attracting new members and engaging with existing members.*” FOL Membership rated this topic at about 45% “very important” rating 1 (blue) and 45% (“somewhat important”) rating 2, red color, with very few choosing ratings 3 and 4. This can be interpreted as almost all Members value membership engagement greatly.
- Overall, the results from this survey question can be interpreted to mean that Members understand that all 4 topics are important but wish to indicate that FOL Programming (i.e. FOL development projects in Liberia) and to a lesser extent Membership Engagement (FOL efforts to attract new members and engage with existing members) are the most important topics to the majority of Members.

**Survey Question:** Are there any strategic focus areas you think FOL should add to its strategic plan? If yes, please describe it below.

**Responses:**

Twenty-one (21) respondents provided input in response to this survey question. Responses are summarized and shared below:

Project Management and Financial Reporting

- Programs implemented should be periodically audited to see if the goals are being discontinued or more fully supported on the basis of their effectiveness.
- We must always prove our work through budget transparency because greater transparency enables better oversight, better access to credit, better policy choices, and greater legitimacy. Without access to information, supervisors, auditors, civil society groups, media, and the beneficiaries cannot effectively participate in decision making nor can they hold to account for the use of donor resources.
- Transparency and beneficiary participation enhances the credibility of policy choices and the effectiveness of policy interventions. Lack of transparency can lead to the selection of unpopular and inappropriate programs and to corrupt and wasteful spending. Budget transparency can benefit beneficiaries financially, since more transparent budgets tend to have better access to beneficiary financial markets and lower borrowing costs.
- Oversight for grant applications. Outlining what exactly you are looking for in a grant project and responding to grant applications in a timely manner. Offering feedback on why a grant is not approved.
- Focused interaction with other non-profit NGOs operating in Liberia to identify successes, best practices, overlaps, where we might work together for more impact.
- Discourage recruitment of grant recipients or partners into conflicts
- Encourage grant recipients with high respect for human rights.

Ideas for Future Programs

- Peace and Conflict Resolution--Liberia's civil war ended in 2003. However, the issues that led to the conflict and the atrocities committed during the war were never resolved. Today Liberians 21 years and younger never knew the war. This age group are the most likely to feel that war may be an answer to problems they perceive.
- Empowering Liberian counterparts to assume even greater leadership.
- Offer matching fund opportunities to potential Liberian partners for their projects.
- Create a cookbook
- I would like to see parent literacy training, nutrition (including country rice growing) and diet improvement strategies using local vegetables.
- Develop effective content communication that broadens the support base, especially among the Liberian diaspora.
- Focus on the obvious needs of Liberia: civil society, education, respect, honesty, work ethic, gender equality
- FOL is too stretched now to add more but environmental and economic would be important if more help was available.

### Membership

- Most of our dedicated members are aging out. We must attract new members and even those outside the Peace Corps. Make this an active engaging organization with new ideas and ways to communicate. Yes, there was a huge gap due to the civil wars. But that was then, this is NOW. I hope the newer/younger members will respond.
- Keep members engaged, appeal to younger members to join and support fundraiser activities.
- Focus on how to encourage 1) more RPCVs to donate to FOL and 2) those who already do give to give more with reminders four times a year.
- Along with this, FOL could describe what is happening in Liberia, anything new re: Training to go to Liberia , current Volunteers in Liberia, and what Liberia needs most from Peace Corps (PCVs). Years ago we had a newsletter every so often about what was happening in Liberia.

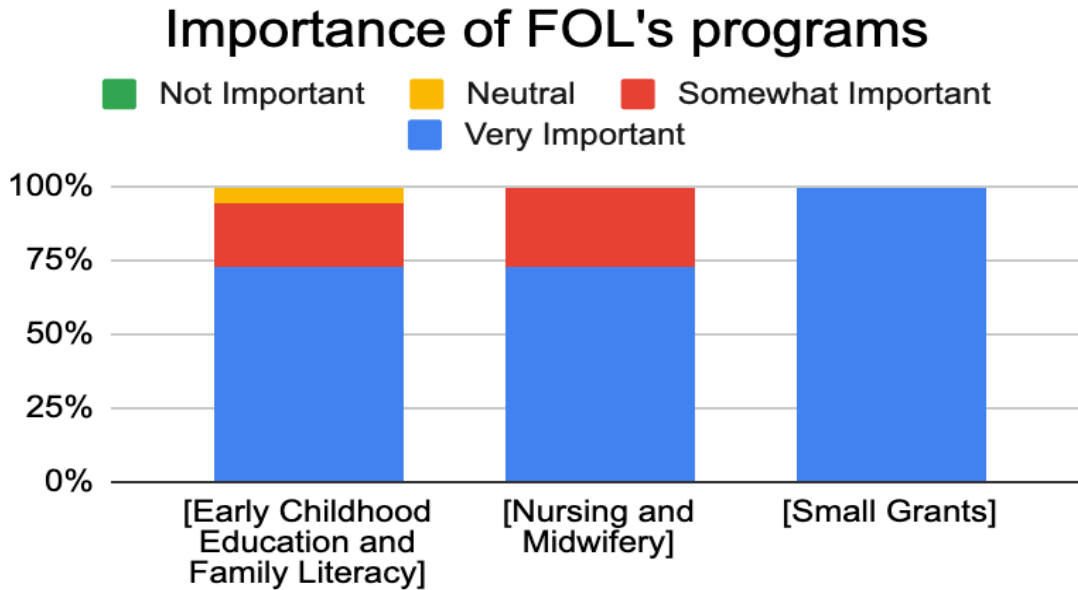
### **Findings:**

- As summarized above, Membership provided detailed feedback regarding any strategic focus areas that should be added to FOLs strategic plan.
- FOL Board to Directors should review and consider these suggestions and take action as approved by the Board.

## Future Direction of FOL

**Survey Question:** Please indicate the importance you place on each of FOL's programs.

**Responses:**



**Findings:**

- Membership feels that the all 3 current FOL programs are very important to them.



**Survey Question:** FOL is considering formally adding ENTREPRENEURSHIP as one of our key program areas under which we would actively develop a program devoted to supporting Liberian small business entrepreneurs.

Please rate the importance to you for FOL to develop and fund an Entrepreneurship program.

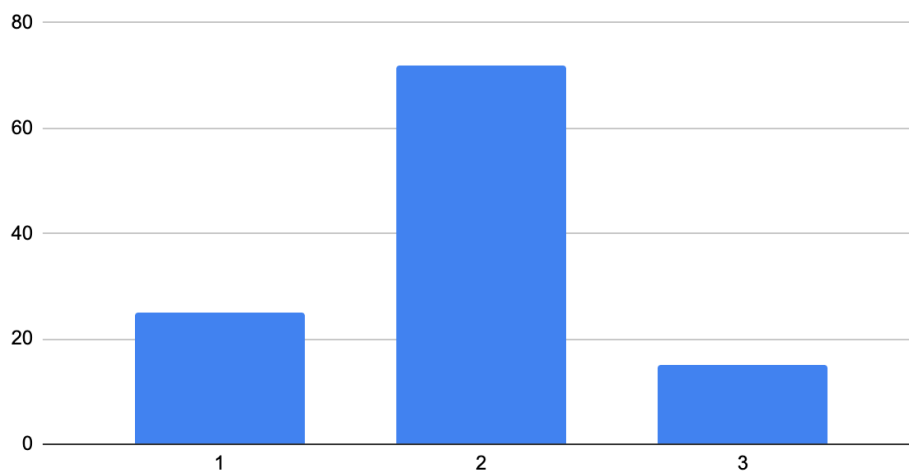
**Responses:**

Rating 1: Entrepreneurship would be my highest priority

Rating 2: I am neutral about Entrepreneurship

Rating 3: Entrepreneurship would be my lowest priority

Importance for FOL to develop and fund an Entrepreneurship program.



**Findings:**

- The vast majority (approx. 75%) of membership respondents selected Rating 2 which means that they are neutral, neither for nor against the inclusion of an Entrepreneurship program.
- This result can be interpreted to mean that the FOL Board to Directors should proceed with caution or not proceed at all with an Entrepreneurship program.
- These results can also be interpreted to mean that Membership is quite satisfied with our current universe of programs in Liberia and the FOL focus on ensuring those existing programs are well run and continue to expand and improve.

**Survey Question:** Are there any programmatic focus areas you think FOL should add? Please explain.

**Responses:**

Forty-six (46) respondents provided input in response to this survey question. Responses are summarized and shared below:

Environment

- Environmental
- Protection of Liberian forests
- a regenerative farming training program with the goals of reducing slash and burn farming and growing healthy food for market.

Creative Development

- Programs should be designed to meet the greatest need. Rather than develop new areas for FOL to focus on it might be wiser to support programs that are already in place to
- Inclusive development to ensure hard to reach groups benefit

Small-scale Industries

- I believe Liberia should seek help to develop small-scale industries such as furniture making, canning and other methods of preserving food and fruit crops. For furniture making, Liberia may need the help of major donors to provide sawmills, kilns for drying lumber, and, importantly, trainers for existing and new Liberian woodworkers. The FOL and international organizations should then commit to purchasing furniture made in Liberia ONLY IF it meets international quality standards.

Coordinate Existing Education Programs

- I wish all the early childhood ed programs that are currently in Liberia, would coordinate together. There are probably over 100 NGO/Churches that are independently supporting these programs there, but none or few coordinate together.

Youth Leadership

- Leadership development for local NFP groups
- At some point, I think it would be good to develop some programs about leadership, especially for young people, and some focused on community cooperation and development

Education

- Following students from the early childhood programs, through high school and then teaching job interview and resume writing.
- Early childhood education and education of parents
- I cannot stress how vitally important it is to respond to and teach literacy no matter what the age. Everything else follows when one is literate.
- FOL could provide scholarships

### Community Health Workers

- I would like to see an effort to develop a national community health worker program in order to expand public programs for the country.
- Public Health Outreach

### Expand Existing Small Grants Program

- It seems as if the Entrepreneurship program could exist with the small grants program.
- Broaden Small Grants to include entrepreneurship instead of failing to build another program.

### Entrepreneurship

- If FOL proceeds with developing entrepreneurship, but sure to include small grants. I have seen small grant projects wanting to expand to a worldwide internet program
- Add entrepreneurship only if we have additional volunteers/staff/expertise to do it as well as our existing education and health programs.
- Teaching entrepreneurship in junior high and high schools. These students leave school without educational tools to start or manage a micro- business, which is what 90% of students do when they leave school.

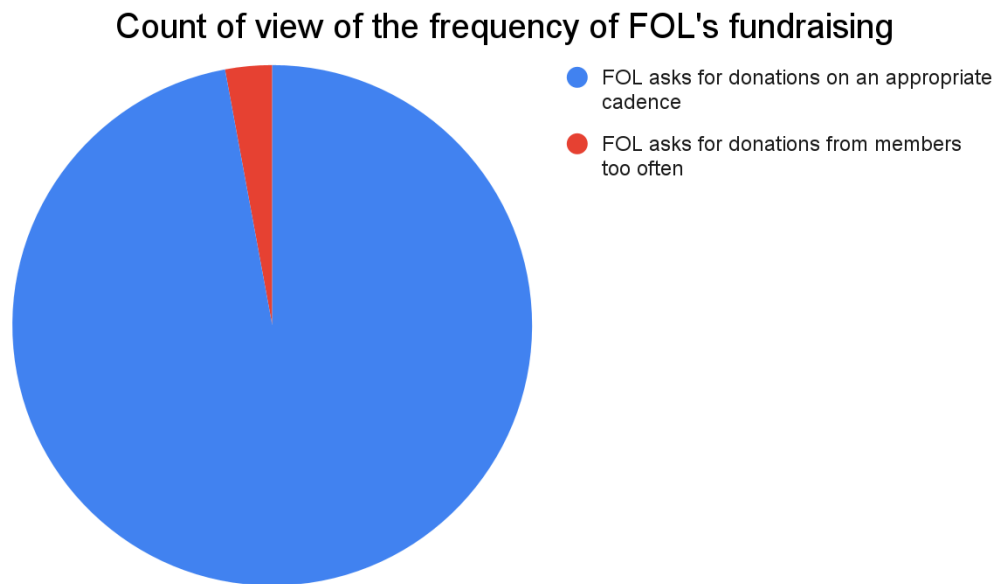
### **Findings:**

- As summarized above, FOL Membership provided a wide variety of specific ideas on how FOL could add to its current set of programs.
- FOL Board to Directors should review and consider these suggestions and take action as approved by the Board.

## Fundraising

**Survey Question:** Which best describes your view of the frequency of FOL's fundraising.

### **Responses:**



### **Findings:**

- Ninety (90%) of respondents feel FOL asks for donations on an appropriate cadence
- 3% of respondents feel FOL ask for donations from members too often.
- 7% of responses included other responses including:
  - Studies have shown that one can not ask for money too often. That being said, FOL should seek funds as often as they have things needing funding. As a fundraiser once told me, "People don't fund needs; they fund exciting ideas."
  - FOL does not ask enough.
  - It should be four times a year.
  - FOL could ask for funds more often through appeals listed in next question

**Survey Question:** FOL raises funds through promotional boosts (double your donation type promotions), direct request to all FOL members, special requests to high amount donors, and legacy giving (donations through wills, living trusts, and special accounts). How else could FOL raise funds?

**Responses:**

Forty-five (45) respondents provided input in response to this survey question.

Responses are summarized and shared below:

Auctions

- I loved the (past FOL) auction!
- Auction off all our old Liberian art that we all have in storage!
- Selling merchandise
- Online auction
- Sale of objects bought and brought home from West Africa
- Auctions, I know they are a lot of work.

Outreach to Corporate Partners and Private Foundations

- Expand the membership to welcome corporate members based in the US and Liberia.
- Work with private foundations to support specific projects
- Research family and charitable foundations (Guidestar is good) that give to African programs. Then send an inquiry letter that is short and to the point.
- Investigate funding per area of focus - education, nursing, entrepreneurship. Certainly there are grants and/or a way to collaborate with others in Liberia as NGOs - if nothing more than for information
- Are there corporate donations that could be pursued?
- Through international partners

Partner with Peace Corps and Existing Peace Corps Volunteers

- Appointment FOL champions among current PCVs in Liberia
- Ask Peace Corps or RPCV's for email addresses of their group for fundraising. Every RPCV should be reached. Publish a book about PC experiences.

Go Fund Me

- For small ad hoc projects, perhaps Go Fund Me or other online requests for money.

Apply for Grants

- Grants through US government
- Applying for grants (if available) from gov't entities (e.g. USAID, UN), WHO, foundations (e.g. Soros, Gates, Melinda French, etc).

Have FOL Members Fundraise Locally

- Provide a cheat sheet to FOL members on how to solicit donations from their community when appropriate...ie at a book club or community presentation.

### Automatize Fundraising Process

- Is there an option for regular monthly automatic withdrawals from bank accounts or credit cards?

### Organized Travel and Social Events

- Organize and sponsor Trips to Liberia
- Social events in various areas (dinners, music, auctions)
- Activities like banquets, guest speaker events,

### Advertise

- Do some Google advertising.

### Miscellaneous

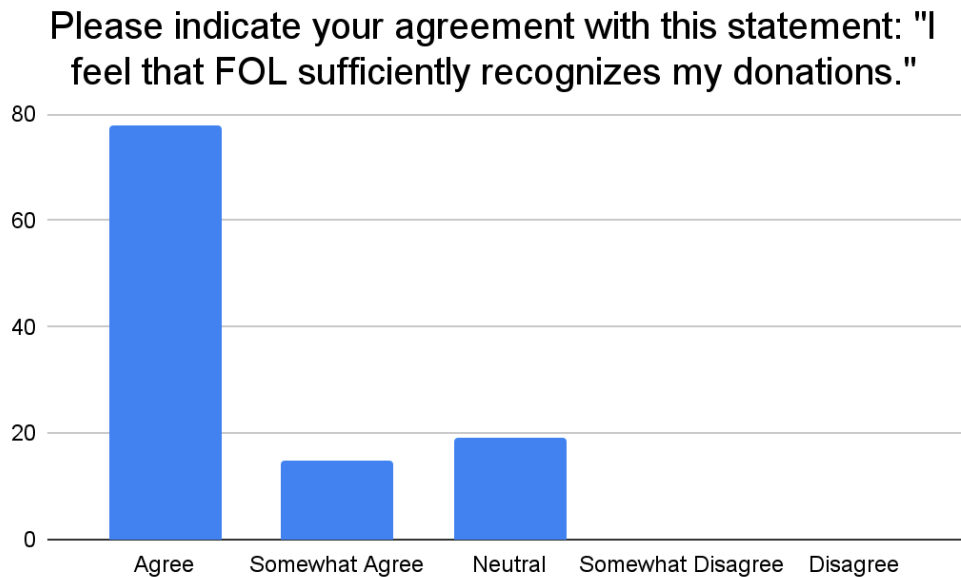
- IRA RMD (Required Minimum Distribution) donations
- Ask someone who donates often and/or in one big chunk if he/she would speak to the group who is online about giving: Make it a special giving day with plenty of notice so people can tune in. This should be a person who is confident about her or his group speaking skills.
- Follow up with people who have donated to ask them to consider legacy donations and make it easy for them to make these.
- Make creative videos concerning the specific fund-raising topic and/or the progress by the Liberians so far.

### **Findings:**

- As summarized above, FOL Membership provided a wide variety of specific ideas on how FOL could modify or expand its fund-raising efforts.
- FOL Board to Directors should review and consider these suggestions and take action as approved by the Board.

**Survey Question:** Please indicate your agreement with this statement: "I feel that FOL sufficiently recognizes my donations."

**Responses:**

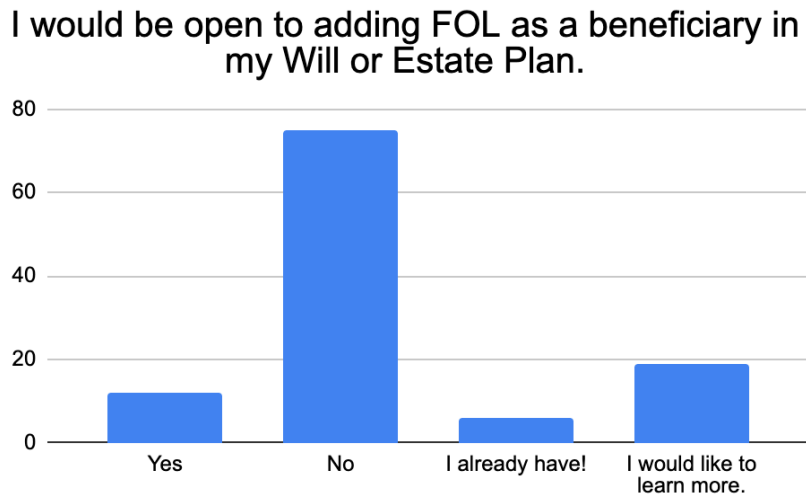


**Findings:**

- Seventy-eight 78 responses (70% of 112 responses) of member respondents agree with the idea that FOL sufficiently recognizes their donations.
- Thirteen percent (13%) of the responses somewhat agreed and 17% were neutral with this statement.
- Overall, donors to FOL feel recognized for their efforts. However, FOL Development Chair should continue to create creative and impactful way to recognize donors.

**Survey Question:** I would be open to adding FOL as a beneficiary in my Will or Estate Plan.

**Responses:**



**Findings:**

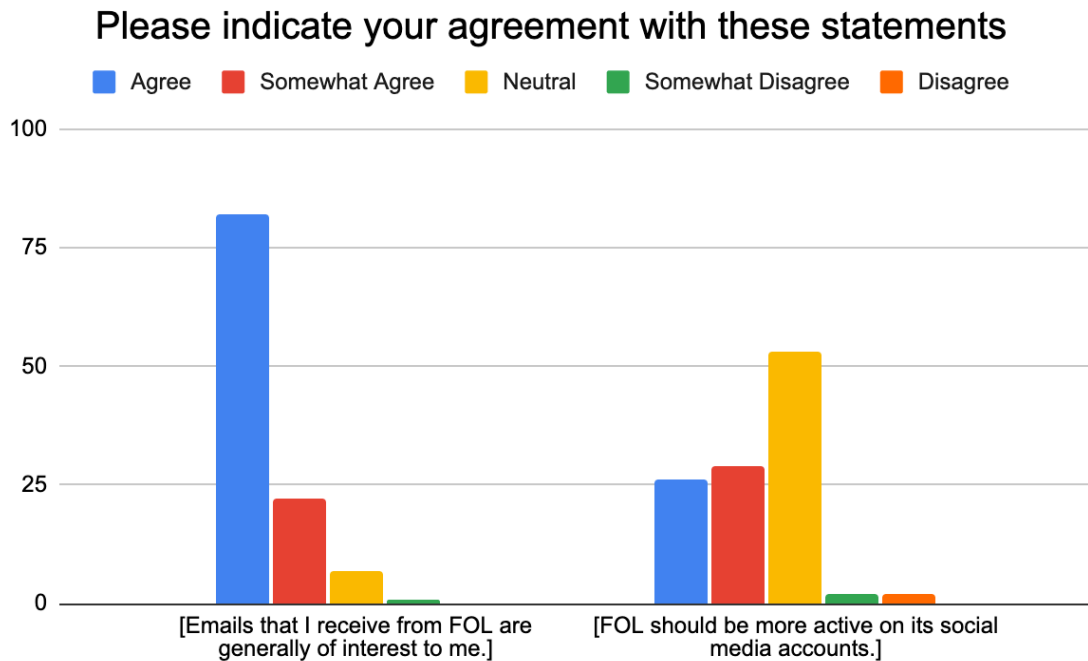
- The response indicates that most (67%) FOL members (75 out of 112 responses) indicated that they are not open to adding FOL as a beneficiary on their Will or Estate Plan.
- However, 6 members (5% of the respondents) have indicated that they have already put FOL in their Will or Estate Plan with an additional 12 members (10%) indicating that they are open to this idea.
- Nineteen members (17%) said that they would like more information.
- FOL will remind all members about the availability of presentation materials associated with FOL's online workshop (held August 6, 2024) regarding legacy giving and how to add charities to your will or estate plan.



**Survey Question:** Please indicate your agreement with each statement:

1. "Emails that I receive from FOL are generally of interest to me."
2. "FOL should be more active on its social media accounts."

**Responses:**

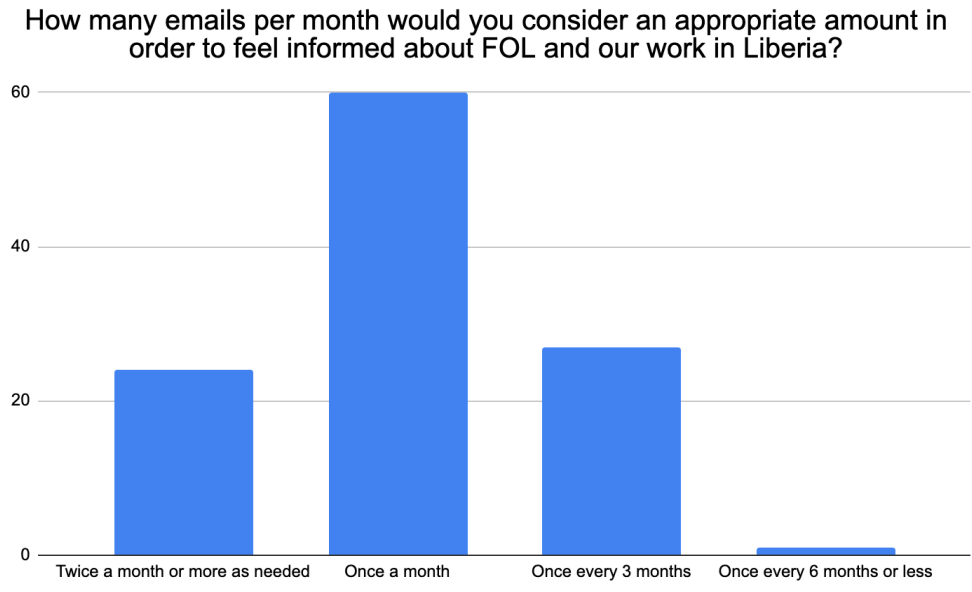


**Findings:**

- There is strong agreement (approx. 80%) from membership regarding interest in emails sent from FOL.
- Respondents were mostly neutral (55%) on the idea of FOL being more active on social media accounts. Therefore, most members appear to be satisfied with our current level of activity on social media.

**Survey Question:** How many emails per month would you consider an appropriate amount in order to feel informed about FOL and our work in Liberia?

**Responses:**



**Findings:**

- Most (60%) of members feel it is best for FOL to send an email once a month to maintain communication with members.

**Survey Question:** Please share your email address if you are interested in further supporting FOL.

**Responses:**

- In response to this survey question, thirty-three (33) members provided an email address.

**Findings:**

- FOL will follow-up with members who expressed interest in helping out with FOL work. [Note: FOL has already followed-up with these members and several are now helping out on various committees.]