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# Advancing Youth Project

Labor Market Assessment – Liberia

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABE	Alternative Basic Education
BEE	Business Enabling Environment
CSI	Center for Skills Innovation
EDC	Education Development Center
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
LMA	Labor Market Assessment
LRC	Learning Resource Center
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoC	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoG	Ministry of Gender
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoL	Ministry of Labor
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YDLC	Youth Development and Livelihoods Coordinators
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Acronyms and Abbreviations	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction and Background	1
Context for Youth Employment and Self-Employment Opportunities in Liberia	1
Executive Summary	3
LMA Key Findings and Recommendations	3
LMA Objectives, Methodology and Tools	11
Assessment Findings and Implications by County	16
Bong County	16
Grand Bassa County	20
Lofa County	23
Montserrado County	26
Nimba County	29
Private Sector Engagement: Next Steps	32
Iterative Market Research Process	34
Suggested Implementation Plan and Key Action Items for LMA Findings	35
Conclusion	35
Annexes:	
Key Informant Interviews	A-1
Assessment Teams and Sites	A-3
Advancing Youth Site Selections	A-5
Value Chain Summary of Findings and Potential Entry Points	A-10
Value Chain Findings	A-17
Tools:	
Key Informant Interview Guide	A-21
Value Chain Focus Group Discussion Guide	A-24
Youth Focus Group Discussion Guide	A-27
Business/Employer Survey Questionnaire	A-30

# Introduction and Background

*Young people have a very challenging situation here in Liberia...  
Youth are between a state of hopelessness and survival.*

*– Honorable S. Tornorlah Varpilah, Minister of Youth and Sports, Republic of Liberia*

To address the challenges of youth employment and take advantage of economic opportunities in Liberia, the five-year USAID Advancing Youth Project works closely with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and local organizations to increase access to quality Alternative Basic Education (ABE) services, social opportunities, leadership development, and livelihood training for out-of-school youth aged 13-35 who have low or no literacy and numeracy skills.<sup>1</sup> Advancing Youth also aims to increase access to sustainable livelihood pathways for targeted youth through the facilitation of market-driven skills training, soft skills, and identification of short and long-term training and job-placement opportunities.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the program seeks to stimulate job creation via business development support and partnerships with stakeholders such as private sector actors.

A key activity of Advancing Youth is the youth-led Labor Market Assessment (LMA). The findings from this research seek to identify opportunities and constraints for employment and self-employment for Liberian youth. The LMA seeks to illuminate livelihoods, gender, and private sector engagement strategies for youth, both Advancing Youth participants and other Liberian youth. The LMA also will contribute towards the program's site selection process in year two and ongoing curricula development. The study includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and builds upon initial findings from the January 2012 Youth Mapping Activity (Mapping Activity). The LMA took place in the five counties where Advancing Youth operates: Bong, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Montserrado, and Nimba. This study has identified specific and current economic opportunities for youth in each of these counties.

## Context for Youth Employment and Self-Employment Opportunities in Liberia

The challenges and opportunities related to youth employment and self-employment in Liberia should be viewed in a historical context. Over the last few decades, Liberia has been embroiled in political turmoil with civil conflict characterized by significant violence. The protracted instability impeded economic growth and trade, destroyed the educational and health systems, and displaced thousands. Although the conflict officially ended in 2003, the country is still recovering. The war suppressed private sector activity, and this prolonged stagnation has severely impacted Liberia's economic growth. With a population of 3.7 million, the formal employment rate hovers at just 15

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1 The current Advancing Youth project has a female participation rate of more than 70% and engages low-literate and illiterate youth.

2 Advancing Youth is implemented by Education Development Center (EDC), Mercy Corps and YMCA of Liberia, and partners with World ORT and other organizations and businesses.

percent with the majority of Liberians (85 percent) living below the international poverty line.<sup>3</sup> Liberia is ranked at 182 of a total of 187 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI).<sup>4</sup> The life expectancy at birth for Liberians is 57 years for females and 54 years for males.<sup>5</sup>

These complex realities impact young Liberians acutely, as 75 percent of Liberia's population is under the age of 35, with the median age being 18 years.<sup>6</sup> The Liberian conflict created a "lost generation" of youth with limited education and few technical, employable skills. More than 56 percent of female and 39 percent of male youth have reportedly never attended school.<sup>7</sup> While literacy rates are over 50 percent for both males and females, Liberia's educational system is remarkably weak.<sup>8</sup> Due to protracted instability, schools lack proper infrastructure and academic rigor. Many schools are staffed by unqualified teachers and reports of teachers, students and parents encouraging bribery to promote passage through the educational system are widespread. Young people often move through the school system lacking basic literacy and numeracy skills. This situation has thwarted youths' transition into the labor market. The official (formal wage sector) unemployment rate for youth is difficult to measure, but experts estimate that it may be as high as 90 percent. Compounding these circumstances for young women, Liberia's teen pregnancy rate is one of the highest in the world – it is estimated that one in three Liberian women will give birth before reaching her 20th birthday.

Despite this challenging environment for Liberian youth, at least in some respects the situation is improving. For example, the presidency of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has made improving opportunities for Liberian youth a top priority. Empowering young women to lead lives of equality has also been a significant focus of the current administration. Moreover, the economy is slowly demonstrating signs of independent growth and recovery. Liberia's economy grew by 6.1 percent, in 2010, up from 4.6 percent in 2009, with 2012 estimated to experience a growth rate of 8.9 percent.<sup>9</sup> Major international companies such as Firestone Natural Rubber, ArcelorMittal Steel, and Chevron Corporation are making significant financial and social investments in Liberia. The private sector is emerging. While informal employment still prevails, there are more structures and mechanisms for strengthening this important part of the economy.

Furthermore, a renewed sense of focus on revitalizing the educational system has the potential to enable young people to graduate from the Liberian school system with marketable skills and knowledge. In 2011, the Education Reform Act mandated free education through Grade 9. Similar youth-focused investments by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labor also show commitment to furthering the young people of Liberia. As youth comprise an undeniably large part of the whole population, they are also faced with an unprecedented opportunity to be a catalyst for positive change.

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3 A Rapid Assessment of the Global Economic Crisis on Liberia. ILO. November, 2009. *However, it is important to note that this statistic varies by source.*

4 Human Development Index (2011). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

5 World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/countries/lbr/en/>

6 Youth Fragility Assessment, USAID (2009). [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADQ258.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADQ258.pdf)

7 Women's Refugee Commission, "Dreams Deferred: Educational and Skills-building Needs and Opportunities for Youth in Liberia," September 2009. [http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/liberia\\_youth\\_report\\_2009\\_final.pdf](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/liberia_youth_report_2009_final.pdf)

8 UNICEF. [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/liberia_statistics.html)

9 Netherlands-African Business Council, 2010.

# Executive Summary

## LMA Key Findings and Recommendations

### Tap the Informal Economy

The informal economy in Liberia is a significant source of employment and self-employment opportunities for youth.<sup>10</sup> Formal employment, especially outside of major city centers, is scarce and sometimes nonexistent. Small, informal businesses need to be better understood and tapped to identify promising entry points for young people in the Liberian economy. Of businesses surveyed in the LMA, twenty percent have no employees other than the owner and 22.5 percent have just one employee. Still, placements for low-skilled youth are possible, as 74.4 percent of businesses surveyed in the LMA said they would be interested in hiring on-the-job trainees. The nature of these businesses and informal private sector will shape the mechanisms and processes in which youth identify and receive on-the-job training, internships, and full-time job placements. Understanding the nuances of these small enterprises deeply embedded in the informal economy is critical to understanding the potential job opportunities for Liberians.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

*Possibilities for mentoring, on-the-job training, and employment and self-employment opportunities in the informal economy need to be thoroughly tracked. For example, a farmer may need assistance during a specific season; therefore, it is important to act on these opportunities quickly. This may require a more intensive process for communication, tracking, and monitoring youth placements. Moreover, to fully understand concrete opportunities for youth, it is important to stay abreast of trends, changes, and shifting priorities in the workplace and private sector in the informal economy. A plan for iterative market research should be developed.*

*Although background research and qualitative interviews paint a dismal picture of the landscape for employment, the LMA Business Survey findings show signs of optimism.*

### LMA Businesses Surveyed . . . at a Glance

- **43%** employ 0 or 1 persons
- **76.1%** of current employees are youth (18-35)
- **70.3%** are willing to hire in the next 6 months
- **41.1%** said basic literacy skills are very important
- **83.3%** believe women and men should be paid equally
- **30%** said education is most important when hiring

### Encourage Agriculture as a Business

On one hand, employment and self-employment opportunities for youth exist in urban areas and in such sectors as mining and construction. However, agriculture (primarily production of crops and livestock) is a vital sector in Liberia that cannot be ignored, especially in rural areas and particularly among young. Liberia has relatively favorable agricultural conditions; it is a non-landlocked nation without water scarcity issues and with predominantly rich soil and suitable agro-ecological conditions for farming. Many youth are already engaged in some form of agricultural

<sup>10</sup> For purposes of this assessment and in keeping with the Liberian context, the “informal economy” refers to largely unregistered small enterprises, generally employing few people (e.g., under 10). The informal economy includes the agricultural sector, although formal enterprises also exist in the agricultural sector.

work. However, these activities are often at the subsistence level. The LMA found that youth often are not knowledgeable about the entire range of the agricultural value chain across different commodities, where income may be higher, or of potentially profitable new commodities, as well as promising ancillary value chain opportunities such as transport. Not surprisingly, then, youth often do not wish to work in agriculture.<sup>11</sup>

Where the opportunities in agriculture are promising, Liberian youth should receive information about how and where these opportunities are profitable. Furthermore, as many youth do not see high “status” or respect attached to agricultural activities, youth must adapt their mindset around the value of such work. Moreover, Liberian youth should receive relevant skills training and other start-up support, and exposure to how they can take advantage of their current skills and future learning opportunities in relatively promising agricultural work. For example, while some young people expressed an interest in this type of work, they expressed doubt that they will be able to succeed without proper technology, machinery, and technical skills.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Work in agriculture should be promoted and integrated in the classroom (and in the case of Advancing Youth, throughout all ABE activities). Curricula focused on work readiness and life skills could also reflect positive perceptions of youth working in this sector. Young Liberians need a shift of mindset. They must see clear, profitable, and proven opportunities for economic success with this kind of work and must view agriculture as a business. Exposure to successful private sector agribusiness leaders and mentors will also increase youth’s perceptions of agriculture as a professional pathway. Private sector business that support the agriculture sector such as input suppliers, equipment distributors, and transportation agents should be actively engaged for internships, mentorships and on-the-job training placements.*

*Furthermore, the LMA identified some key potential entry points along targeted agricultural value chains in each of the program’s counties which may provide youth with good opportunities. Additionally, where appropriate, advocacy efforts with relevant government ministries should be undertaken to promote policies that promote the accessibility of value-added technologies to younger rural farmers.*

#### **Coordinate and Collaborate with Similarly-Focused Stakeholders**

Advancing Youth recognizes that there are ample on-the-ground opportunities for partnering with private sector, public sector, and civil society stakeholders. A pillar of the program is the belief that positive change in Liberia can be stimulated through strategic partnerships and common goals. This model is evidenced in the program’s County Alliance structure, where youth, government, business, and community officials will routinely meet to discuss local synergies and opportunities for Advancing Youth students. This approach ensures that activities among groups and organizations are not duplicated but instead are reinforcing and complementary of one another.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Advancing Youth will regularly identify linkages to private sector partners. Via the LMA, numerous opportunities (with both multinational and local firms) for activities such as internships, mentoring, and jobs have been determined and will continue to be identified. With regards to public sector coordination, Advancing Youth will continue to work with targeted*

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<sup>11</sup> USAID’s Youth Fragility Assessment (2009) also cited an FAO survey that found that only 3 percent of Liberian youth are interested in farming. [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNADQ258.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADQ258.pdf)

*Ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth and Sports, to ensure that our activities are in sync with national and county level strategies. Furthermore, Advancing Youth hopes to influence youth policy in Liberia through our holistic approach to education and economic development. The program also will collaborate with stakeholders focused on similar youth, education, and livelihoods programming. This means we will work with partners such as World ORT, YMCA, Federation of Liberian Youth, and Chevron to determine where we can leverage opportunities for youth. The program will continue to seek to create new synergies with upcoming programs from SIDA and others. Through coordination, information sharing and synced objectives, these programs can together impact the enabling environment for positive youth economic engagement in Liberia.*

### **Strengthen the Capacity of Youth in Their Current Work**

Although formal sector unemployment statistics for Liberian youth are remarkably high, most young people engage in some form of income-generating activities. This work can often be inconsistent and/or provide simply for basic needs, but also should not be ignored. Among respondents for the business survey, for example, approximately fifty percent were between the ages of 18-35. As the data illustrates, young people are active in the economy. While youth should receive help in identifying new, market-driven economic opportunities, it is important to understand these existing diverse roles in the informal and formal economies and help to enhance and increase productivity of youth in their current work. For example, if younger people sell mangoes to earn income for their families, it is important to see how lessons from curricula such as ABE (e.g., engaging with customers) are enhancing youths' business activities.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Teachers and livelihoods staff should understand the varying ways that many youth are already economically active and strengthen the skills that youth have already acquired. For example, curricula in work readiness and life skills can enhance youth's business management capacity and current work through modules such as communication skills and time management as well as improving youths' understanding of the value of the activities that they are currently carrying out. Mentors from the private sector should be engaged to help inspire and guide youth to increase their productivity through discussions on work ethic, etc.*

### **Improve Opportunity and Capacity for Self-Employment**

For many young Liberians, starting a business seems an insurmountable challenge. As the LMA revealed during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) across the five counties, young people expressed that while interest in self-employment exists, significant barriers impede them from following up on this interest. As entrepreneurship often presents many risks in a stable economy, these obstacles are magnified in the Liberian context. In the locations where Advancing Youth operates, the lack of access to financial services was cited as the most common challenge for youth. According to the business surveys conducted under the LMA, businesses cite poor financial services (23 percent) as the greatest challenge. Young people also acknowledged that start-up capital and accompanying services are very difficult to access.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In the counties where Advancing Youth operates, respondents mention lack of financial access as a significant barrier to youth employment/self-employment. In Grand Bassa (35.6 percent) and Nimba (26.6 percent) counties, lack of financial services was cited as the most common challenge. In Bong (18.7 percent), Lofa (18.2 percent), and Montserrado (18.3 percent), it was cited as the second largest challenge.



Tara Noronha/Mercy Corps

One of the main roads in Lofa County. Across all counties, transportation was cited as a major hindrance to good business.

Lack of transportation was identified as the second biggest challenge facing businesses (18.9 percent) and youth across FGDs also mentioned poor transportation as a major hindrance to earning money. Competition associated with lack of market information on supply (youth equipped with market-driven skills) and demand (needs of the labor market) was also noted as a large obstacle by both businesses and youth. Self-employment in Liberia is difficult for the general population, but particularly for young people as they lack social capital, resources, and the experience needed to start a business.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Making large-scale changes at the policy level towards more inclusive and accessible financial institutions and infrastructure/transportation are outside of the mandate of programs such as Advancing Youth. It may be beneficial, however, to work with select aspiring young entrepreneurs at the micro-level, connecting them to experienced private sector experts, to address some of these policy-related issues. It may be possible to collaborate with youth that have a specific interest in self-employment in multiple ways, including: 1) linking youth to mentors; 2) connecting youth with financial institutions; 3) ensuring youth engage in relevant life skills, work readiness, and financial education curricula; and 4) addressing potential solutions to other major barriers such as transportation.*

### **Promote Appropriate, Meaningful Opportunities for Young Women**

Young women in Liberia need more positive role models and advocates to help counter negative perceptions and provide younger women with more promising visions about their futures. Younger women face unique challenges, particularly in the workforce. During the LMA, many young women expressed frustration at limited options for work, particularly if lacking education, work experience, or literacy skills. Negative perceptions of younger women may be constraining meaningful work opportunities.

For example, young women in Liberia suffer from the image of being untrustworthy. One female employer in Gbarnga City mentioned that she would not hire a young female for fear that she would run away with her husband and cause problems in their marriage. Young women, who have higher rates of illiteracy than young men, often face an uphill battle in terms of acceptance in the workforce.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps due to these negative perceptions as well as other factors, in many areas of the country, prostitution and transactional sex have apparently become commonplace. This behavior appears often to be accepted and tolerated by men and women. Across focus groups, and particularly apparent in Bong and Montserrado Counties, young women and men cited prostitution as a common form of income generation among females with many women believing that there are no other options for making money.

However, the LMA found that there are positive opportunities for younger women in the workplace. For example, more than 37 percent of total businesses surveyed were owned, managed, or staffed

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<sup>13</sup> United Nations Liberia. <http://unliberia.org/doc/genderemail.pdf>

by females. Over seventy percent (71.4) of total businesses surveyed said they are willing to recruit young females. Furthermore, many young women feel confident that the Sirleaf presidency will promote the role of women in Liberia and elevate them to new levels. They believe she is a strong advocate for the empowerment of women, particularly young women. As one young woman in a focus group said, "She will help us."

Young Liberian females believe President Sirleaf has proven to be a powerful, positive role model, but more such figures are needed. Young women in Liberia need advocates, both personally and professionally. This includes day-to-day mentorship (e.g., advice on how to balance multiple demands and identifying promising opportunities specifically for younger women) and continued efforts to improve public perception, policies and legislation related to employment and self-employment for younger women.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Youth and adult "gender champions" should be engaged as change agents. These gender champions should be male and female leaders who will serve as ambassadors of gender equality in the labor market, and must include successful female business owners. Young females must be empowered to be positive, thoughtful business leaders. Furthermore, employers and the community at large must respect and view young women as professional and capable employees. To further this goal, gender champions should ideally participate in such institutions as county alliances and should also work with program staff to break down gender divides in the classroom and in the labor market. Additionally, the program must identify economic opportunities that are appropriate for young women; this type of initiative should take into account safety, the special needs of working mothers, etc.*

#### **Promote Self-Reliance**

International NGOs (INGOs) and NGOs have been a predominant part of Liberia's economy for decades alongside relatively few promising private sector entities. Perhaps understandably, then, younger Liberians often depend more on donor-driven assistance than working to build their skills or identify employment or self-employment opportunities elsewhere. Aid organizations populate the streets of Monrovia but also remote areas in counties such as Nimba and Lofa. Many members of the Advancing Youth assessment team mentioned that getting interviews and mobilizing focus groups were difficult because participants expected something (payment, food, t-shirts, etc.) in return. Furthermore, some youth expressed a higher interest in receiving cash than participating in the ABE program or learning a new skill. In Bong County, youth mentioned that while they believed they needed more specialized skills to earn more money and gain a better income, they also mentioned that young people were not interested in investing the time required to learn. The Minister of Youth and Sports noted that young people do not see the value in dedicating time to learning or proactively seeking better income opportunities over the longer-term. According to him, Liberian youth are in "survival mode," planning to live from one day to the next with the thought of long term success often difficult to imagine.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Where feasible, initiative and an earning mentality should be promoted among students participating in ABE and livelihoods activities. Youth should be encouraged in concrete ways to see that hard work, determination, and perseverance in education and professional development can enable them to achieve success in society and the workplace. Youth must actively invest in their futures. Private sector entrepreneurs are a good source of inspiration and learning in this*

area and should be recruited for mentoring, on-the-job placements, and discussion of earning mentality within curricula such as ABE. All of these can help overcome pervasive dependency and promoting self-reliance.

### Highlight the Importance of Role Models

As noted above, positive role models for younger Liberian women are critical. More broadly, male and female youth need positive mentors and role models that can inspire them to strive for financial and personal independence and security. "Role models don't exist in Liberia," says the Minister of Youth and Sports. Young people aren't aware of the professional and educational success they have the potential to achieve because they don't see other similar success stories. Exacerbating this situation is the fact that during the conflict, those in power promoted weapons and violence over education and stability. Said one local official, "Young people have seen leaders who promoted guns over school. They still have the mentality that you don't need an education to be powerful and succeed." Furthermore, only 57.9 percent of businesses surveyed stated that youth are professional workers. Role models and mentors can work with youth to enhance this perceived work ethic.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

*Young people must become more aware of Liberians who have overcome the odds to achieve professional and personal goals in a socially positive manner. Liberian youth need inspiration and motivation to action. These role models, which can include gender champions, should play a role in the classroom and through livelihoods activities as mentors, but should also participate on local and regional bodies such as county alliances. Role models should span sectors and be diverse in order to demonstrate to youth a variety of potential career opportunities – male and female farmers, local business leaders, etc.*

### Build Positive Perceptions of Youth

Closely related to the recommendation above, if young people feel hopeless and do not feel empowered to seek a better, positive life, they are unlikely to smoothly transition to adulthood. Furthermore, if adults and employers do not view youth as professional, capable employees, young people will not find success in the labor market. Therefore, youth must engage the larger community in building positive perceptions of them.

Young people in Liberia suffer from a mixed identity, among their peers and within the larger community. During the youth focus groups, young people referred to themselves as "lazy" but also as "leaders." In conversations with employers, business leaders, and government officials, conflicting perceptions of youth were also abundant. Some believed in the positive power of young people and expressed optimism about their future. However, others asserted that young people are untrustworthy and unmotivated. These trust factors may be a large reason why many surveyed business only hire people in their existing networks. For example, 68.6 percent of all surveyed businesses said they primarily recruit friends and relatives.

Who does your community describe as youth? (Youth FGD, Question 1)

leaders smart  
aged 13-35 Lazy  
social STRONG  
someone who can do physical work

Despite qualitative data presenting these mixed views of youth, employers surveyed were overwhelmingly positive regarding young people in the workplace. This may be influenced by the fact that the LMA assessors were selected based on their education, professionalism, and experience. Advancing Youth recognizes that the positive perceptions of youth are critical to success in the labor market, as well as in the transition to adulthood; therefore, the program will work with youth and the larger community to ensure that these positive perceptions grow.

### Positive Perceptions of Youth by Employers

- **72%** said youth are reliable
- **81%** said youth are hardworking
- **57.9%** said youth are professional

#### RECOMMENDATION:

*Positive perceptions of young people need to be more actively promoted. Engaging youth as LMA assessors represented one such step in the process of enabling the business community to view young people as articulate, professional individuals. The business community must see the great potential of youth. These perceptions can be built through activities such as community dialogues, successful internships, engagement with Liberia Business Association (LIBA), and other various leadership opportunities for youth. Furthermore, youth also must be empowered to view themselves and their potential positively.*

#### Harness the Power of Mobile Technology

Mobile phone penetration among businesses surveyed by the LMA was relatively high and is an indication that businesses can benefit from the power of technology. Therefore, there is opportunity to harness this technology in order to share information, strengthen current business activities and stay connected to employment opportunities for Liberian youth.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

*Mechanisms for connecting program staff, businesses and youth via mobile networks should be identified and acted upon. Exploring innovations in technology may take the shape of partnering with an IT company to develop a platform for ongoing communication, sharing market information, or job blasts via SMS messaging. Additionally, mobile technology can be utilized to notify businesses of graduates who are looking for on-the-job training opportunities or full-time work. Partnerships with organizations such as SoukTel or local Liberian IT companies such as MTN-Lonestar may offer promising opportunities for sharing savings tips or information on financial institutions via SMS, and should be explored.*

### Percentage of Mobile Phone Owners among LMA Businesses Surveyed

Bong County. . .	<b>75.7%</b>
Grand Bassa County. . .	<b>73.3%</b>
Montserrado County. . .	<b>84.6%</b>
Lofa County. . .	<b>59%</b>
Nimba County. . .	<b>60.8%</b>

#### Enhance Curricula to Respond to Needs of Labor Market

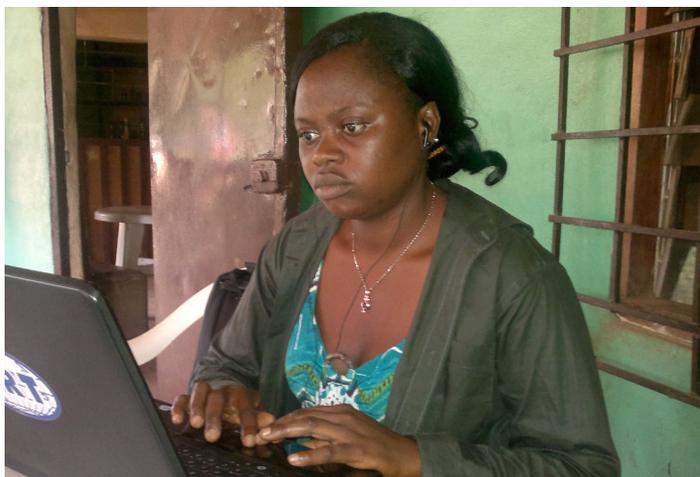
One major goal of the LMA was to determine the skills and characteristics that are currently in demand in the labor market. These findings will influence the ABE curricula and more specifically serve as a guide to future modifications of the life skills and work readiness curricula. The data will hopefully improve understanding of relevant skills building activities and therefore ultimately provide better matches between youth and the job market.

Some of the key LMA findings related to desired skills and characteristics include:

- Most important characteristics in an employee: Education 24.4%
- Second most important characteristic in an employee: Job experience 17.7%
- Most important requirement in an employee: Marketing skills 30%
- Second most important requirement in an employee: Financial management skills 21.3%
- Critical job-related skills mentioned by businesses when discussing future employees:  
Many employers also listed trustworthiness, honesty, discipline, and having a good character as attributes they seek in potential employees. Therefore, in addition to the above, a focus on having a solid work ethic is a suggested theme for both ABE curricula and mentoring opportunities.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Youth livelihoods and workforce development programs in Liberia should pay careful attention to the skills and characteristics demanded by the labor market and tailor curricula and workplace experiences (e.g. internships) with this market-driven approach in mind. Further and ongoing consultation will take place with business leaders to ensure evolving variations including geography, sector-specific growth, and support services, are considered and incorporated.*



Mathew Ndote/Mercy Corps

Marcella R. Lassanah, 31, participated in the LMA as a youth assessor. Due to her professionalism, she has now been hired by Advancing Youth partner, World ORT, and works with the organization's Center for Skills Innovation.

# LMA Objectives, Methodology and Tools

## Objectives

### **The primary objectives of the LMA were the following:**

- Identifying high potential growth sectors, hiring trends, and forecasts for youth
- Analyzing the constraints to the current labor market system for youth with low literacy
- Analyzing selected value chain constraints to take advantage of identified opportunities for youth with low literacy where Advancing Youth is working
- Developing livelihoods strategies and recommendations for the short, medium, and long term for youth with low literacy where Advancing Youth is working
- Developing best practices and systems for iterative market research
- Identifying the most promising employment and self-employment opportunities for Advancing Youth participants with low literacy primarily in the informal sector, including agriculture
- Building capacity of Advancing Youth staff with regards to market research and private sector engagement
- Identifying program sites based on livelihoods opportunities

### **The LMA followed an approach understanding two core principles:**

**Market Driven.** Understanding that Advancing Youth's livelihoods activities must be relevant to realities on the ground, the LMA employed a market-driven approach throughout the duration of the project. This is based on the principle that Advancing Youth will first identify local opportunities for youth employment and self-employment and will then work to match Advancing Youth participants appropriately and accordingly (based on skills relevancy, livelihoods activities learners are engaged in currently or other potential but untapped livelihoods opportunities). The findings from the LMA will be incorporated into later revisions of Advancing Youth's project planning and ABE Life Skills and Work Readiness curricula depending on the demands of the labor market (employers' needs, etc.).

Following this market-driven process, the LMA occurred in April – May 2012. Subsequent assessments intend to follow on an iterative basis to ensure that the Advancing Youth program remains well informed about market dynamics which may impact youth in their pursuit of sustainable livelihoods. Given the dearth of information on Liberia's current informal economy, Advancing Youth will work to ensure that its interventions are rooted in economic realities which bridge the gap between the supply (youth equipped with market-driven skills) and demand (needs of the labor market).

**Youth-Led.** An integral component of the assessment process is youth participation. The YMCA and Advancing Youth staff identified and selected Liberian youth who contributed to nearly every step of the assessment process including:

- Tools development: Developed survey and FGD questions to the context of Liberia and the state of youth employment
- Assessment implementation: Conducted surveys and served as facilitators and note takers for FGDs
- Community mobilization: Worked with community leaders to organize key informant interviews, assemble focus groups, and identify local businesses
- Data entry: Entered survey data using computer skills

Through these processes, young people developed invaluable market research, business skills, and life skills (such as communication and professionalism), as well as gained a better understanding of local economic realities.



Tara Noronha/Mercy Corps

Tina, age 23, is studying Accounting at the University of Liberia in Monrovia. As an LMA assessor, she refined her communication and data entry skills. She believes that employers in Bong County were impressed with the professionalism of the LMA assessors and are interested in supporting the Advancing Youth Program.

**Labor Market Assessment Tools.** The LMA utilized multiple tools in order to achieve the outlined objectives: 1) Business Survey tool; 2) Youth Focus Group Discussion Guide; 3) Value Chain questionnaires; 4) Private Sector Mapping tools; and 5) Key Informant Interview questionnaires.

Through a youth-led, participatory approach, nineteen young people (including project participants and youth with similar profiles as project participants) identified by Advancing Youth and partner organizations, participated in a two-day survey tool design workshop in early April 2012. Via guidance from Advancing Youth staff the design workshop developed and refined two tools: the Business Survey and the Youth Focus Group Discussion tool. Additionally, key program stakeholders, such as USAID and World ORT, also provided guidance and suggestions on the tools.

### **1) Business Survey tool (quantitative)**

The goal of this tool was to capture local businesses' perceptions of youth, determine opportunities for mentorships, apprenticeships, and job placements, and identify high potential growth sectors plus challenges in running businesses. This tool identified individuals who will potentially participate in alliances such as the Advancing Youth County Alliances. Additionally, the tool gathered information on self-employment challenges, such as the constraints to starting a business, and also identified skills (both soft skills and technical skills) and characteristics most desired by employers versus the existing skills and characteristics of current employees. This information will also aid in the revision of the Life Skills and Work Readiness ABE curricula.

Due to sparse economic activity in some rural areas, in addition to pre-identified targeted sectors of interest to Advancing Youth, the business survey implementation process did not employ random sampling. Instead, the LMA aimed to target 120 business surveys per county, in order to adequately capture both informal and formal businesses across both rural and urban spreads. Each of the county LMA leads worked with a team to determine survey activity for each studied district.

The number of businesses surveyed per county is as follows:

County	Total Businesses Surveyed
Bong	136
Grand Bassa	120
Lofa	134
Montserrado	136
Nimba	130
Total	656

## 2) Youth Focus Group Discussion Tool (qualitative)

The goal of the youth FGDs is assessing youth (Advancing Youth participants as well as other youth with similar profiles) perceptions of their current skills and opportunities for economic engagement. The FGD determined any gaps in perception between youth and the larger labor market: perceptions of youth as employees, youth attitudes towards employment, etc. Understanding how youth view their current economic conditions is key to developing strategies for improving their livelihoods.

The number of Youth Focus Group Discussions per county is as follows:

County	Male Focus Group Discussions	Attendees	Female Focus Group Discussions	Attendees
Bong	1	16	1	17
Grand Bassa	1	19	1	24
Lofa	1	25	1	30
Montserrado	1	15	1	15
Nimba	1	17	1	15
Totals	5	92	5	101

## 3) Private Sector Mapping tools (qualitative)

The goal of the LMA in this particular exercise was to map the private sector in general to identify specific firms and/or business sectors for engagement in Advancing Youth. Specific tools include a business sector scan tool, and a private sector firm identification tool, using tools and processes developed by Mercy Corps. Additional tools were referenced including a business enabling environment tool and a due diligence assessment. During each day of data collection, each LMA County Coordinator led the assessors through a structure Private Sector Debrief tool in order to draw together impressions and observations from each location.

Outputs from this mapping are included in this report, including the findings and impressions of our private sector engagement capacity building at the county level. It is also anticipated that further mapping and firm identification may be required based upon learning from the LMA process. Post-LMA, private sector engagement activities will continue to further deepen relationships and opportunities with specific private firms.

#### 4) Value chain tools (qualitative)

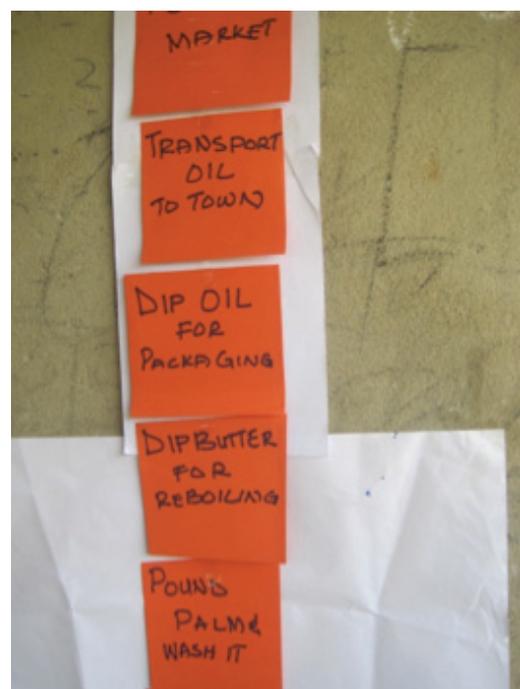
In addition to the two tools developed by youth, the assessment team developed questionnaires dedicated to understanding current and potential entry points for our youth along existing value chains. The LMA Team identified constraints, as well as opportunities, in promising value chains which have been pre-selected for each county by the Advancing Youth livelihoods team. These constraints and opportunities will also be identified via a gender lens so that Advancing Youth can tailor its activities appropriately for young men and women. While identified opportunities can be engaged in by both genders, the tools asked participants to identify potential, promising areas which are appropriate specifically for young women and specifically for young men. The value chain-related tools were developed from existing Mercy Corps documents as well as those from USAID.

The two tools included a Key Informant Tool, as well as a Focus Group Discussion tool for diverse players around each value chain.

The Value Chains selected for each county include:

County	Promising value chains/commodities potential
Montserrado	Cassava, Palm Oil
Grand Bassa	Cassava, Fish
Bong	Palm Oil, Peppers, Bitter Ball, Watermelon
Nimba	Plantain, Goats and Sheep
Lofa	Palm – Tobogi Oil, Cowpeas

Specific value chains were selected by the Advancing Youth livelihoods team via desk research on current economic activity in each county and consultations with program staff representing each county. Value chains were chosen based on current prominence in each county. In future iterations of this market study, Advancing Youth will explore additional value chains.



Tara Noronha/Mercy Corps

Palm oil value chain FGD in Fuahmah District.

### 5) Key Informant Interviews (qualitative)

In order to determine the larger ecosystem and enabling environment for youth employment and self-employment, as well as gather rich, qualitative data on opportunities for program linkages, the assessment team developed tailored, supplemental Key Informant Interview questions to be administered to targeted stakeholders. Based on availability, Key Informant discussions were held with a diverse group of stakeholders including government officials, NGOs, and private sector leaders.

The number of key informant interviews per county is as follows:

County	Completed Key Informant Interviews
Bong	7
Grand Bassa	15
Lofa	12
Montserrado	2
Nimba	7
Total	43

# Assessment Findings and Implications by County

## Bong County .....

### Landscape for Employment and Self-employment

**Strong potential in urban areas:** Employment and self-employment opportunities for Advancing Youth students are likely higher in urban areas with more densely populated commercial centers, particularly Gbarnga City and Palala. Within Gbarnga, 22 of the 36 businesses responded that they planned to hire employees within the next six months.

**Key skills needed:** In urban areas, employers listed the most important job-related skills as financial management skills and marketing skills, as well as interpersonal/communication skills. Additionally, many employers noted the importance of good character and honesty among potential employees.

**Weak rural private sector:** The livelihoods situation for rural Bong County presents more significant challenges. The private sector in rural areas assessed is weak, typically consisting of small kiosks or stalls operated by one individual and often selling similar items, such as soap, palm oil, and salt. Unlike all four other Advancing Youth counties where poor financial services was noted as the top constraint to businesses, in Bong County competition in the market was named the biggest challenge to businesses at 27.6 percent. Furthermore, while the informal economy is active, there is little diversity in economic activity presenting serious challenges to the availability of work for youth who seek jobs. The effort by World ORT, an Advancing Youth Partner, to expand the skills menu by promoting diversity and innovation by training trainers in new skills at Centers for Skills Innovation is, therefore, a much needed activity that may help address this constraint.

*In Bong County, 83 percent of business survey respondents were between the ages of 18 – 35, demonstrating that young people are economically active. Additionally, 53 percent of total respondents were female.*

## ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Support small projects for youth clubs in vegetable gardening through demonstrations
- ✓ Establish partnerships with MoA, FAO, ACIDI/VOCA to promote access to farming inputs
- ✓ Link youth clubs engaged in farming activities to restaurants, cook shops and traders
- ✓ Seek internship placement opportunities for at least 10 learners with each of the main mining sector entities including ArcelorMittal Steel, BHP Billiton, etc.
- ✓ Place at least 50 learners with road construction companies
- ✓ Provide training to learners and youth clubs engaged in palm oil extraction and oil processing using freedom mills (palm oil processing machine) and business skills training and link them to buyers wholesale/retail buyers from Monrovia
- ✓ Incorporate basic vegetable growing techniques in the school curricula
- ✓ Liaise with LEED Business service providers to organize training sessions for learners involved/interested in running small businesses to introduce them to basic business skills
- ✓ Organize guest speaker sessions with MFIs, susu clubs and available savings options to familiarize learners with available savings and loan options
- ✓ In partnership with MoG, organize guest speaker sessions with female learners with special focus on commercial sex exposure and alternative means of income

**Need for focus on agriculture in rural areas:** Agriculture presents a strong but largely uninspiring pathway for youth. In Bong, two major hindrances to youth activity within the agricultural sector are the lack of technical inputs and expertise, as well as the difficulty in seeing this work as a viable, respectable pathway for good income (where such opportunities along higher levels of the value chain, for example, can be identified). With these two significant challenges addressed, youth may feel more confident to pursue both employment and self-employment in Liberia. While common farming areas include palm oil and peppers, there are some potentially interesting and profitable opportunities in value chains such as pineapple, cocoa, watermelon and rice.

### **High Potential Growth Sectors and Suggested Entry Points for Youth Along Value Chains**

**Palm Oil Value Chain (Fuahmah District):** Palm oil is the primary commodity produced and sold in the Fuahmah District and in many other districts of Bong County. During the Value Chain Focus Group Discussion in Haindii, producers, farmers, and other market actors agreed unanimously that there is great potential for large profit in palm oil. Some members of the focus group even mentioned that they think they could be “millionaires” if they had the right machinery and tools for production.

The majority of participants in the value chain discussions on palm oil agreed that Advancing Youth should focus on income opportunities for youth within this sector. Specific suggested entry points for youth include transportation (for males) and canning, warehouse and storage assistance (for females). However, many individuals expressed a great need for improved tools and machinery. For example, the Freedom Mill processing machine was mentioned multiple times as an input that could significantly improve and increase palm oil production. The issue of transportation and price of fuel was also a frequently mentioned challenge.

**Bitter Ball, Pepper, and Watermelon Value Chains (Kpaii District):** Although the participants believe that all three commodities in these value chains are highly profitable and relatively easy to grow with minimal inputs, very few vendors at the Palala market sell these three produce items. Further research should be done to understand why this gap exists and identify if there are opportunities to encourage youth to enter these markets. Furthermore, there were very few market stalls selling fresh vegetables or fruits. The most commonly sold items, as identified by participants in the FGD, were used clothes, dried fish, and small household items such as soap, pens, etc. Respondents also mentioned fine rice and palm oil as market items in short supply.

One clear area where youth were mentioned as playing a vital role in these value chains is the clearing of the fields through the kuu mechanism. These informal structures are self-organized youth groups that work together primarily to clear land for hire, but also engage in harvesting and planting work. FGD participants mentioned that both young men and women participate equally in these groups. Advancing Youth students could potentially, in classroom cohorts, participate in this work, with academic links to the life skills and work readiness skills curricula.

**Need to strengthen small enterprise management skills and market information:** In Bong County, 47 percent of businesses reported having no employees and 28.4 percent reported having only one employee in addition to the owner. Many youth, particularly in urban areas such as Gbarnga City, are already working in small businesses such as phone card shops, mattress stores, etc. Financial management and marketing skills were frequently mentioned as areas that entrepreneurs could enhance to increase their business opportunities. Market information on competitive pricing, demand, etc., could also improve business activity.

**Transportation:** Transportation was cited as the single biggest challenge faced for 21 percent of businesses in Bong. This issue was also frequently referred to in value chain discussions. Slow movement of commodities from production centers to market centers is a significant hindrance to economic activity. Additionally, high fuel prices, poor roads, lack of vehicles and driving skills also pose problems for businesses. During conversations with youth, some suggested that work in these areas could be lucrative, seeing the huge demand for affordable, reliable services.

**Hospitality Services:** Urban areas such as Gbarnga are seeing an increase in demand for hotels and restaurants although some of this may be driven by the large NGO and INGO presence. However, these business centers may be able to provide openings for young people and may be a good match for youth with basic numeracy and literacy skills. Catering services may also provide an entryway for low-skilled youth.

### Miscellaneous Findings

- The **lack of positive role models** was a theme throughout conversations with key informants. Says Minister Varpilah, who is originally from Bong County, “Role models do not exist in Liberia. . . . Without role models, youth don’t know who they want to become.” Youth also mentioned the lack of positive peer and adult mentors and role models, in both the personal and professional realm. Young people want to see other young Liberians who have accomplished academic and economic success. Advancing Youth staff, particularly the YDLCs, should be viewed as important mentors to the program’s students and leaders in the community should be identified to participate in classroom and livelihood activities.
- Young **women appear to face extreme challenges** in gaining meaningful, appropriate employment even though 70 percent of businesses surveyed in Bong County said they were willing to recruit young females for work. Prostitution was mentioned as a common, accepted form of income generation in youth FGDs. Some young women explained that these activities were often the only way to put food on the table or provide for their families. Transactional sex at school and the workplace was also mentioned as frequent. Furthermore, during some business surveys, particularly in urban areas, female employers expressed that they would not want to hire young females, as they would “cause trouble” with their husbands. Urban areas may see higher levels of transactional sex as areas such as Gbarnga are often used as transit routes between Montserrado and other areas of the country. Young women in Bong County do not feel like they are viewed as respectable potential employees.
- **Poor perceptions of youth** among adults, employers and among young people themselves were also prevalent findings in Bong County. During the FGDs, youth used words such as “lazy” and “irresponsible” to describe themselves. Said one female youth, “Youth people in Bong County don’t do nothing.” She feels that youth do not work but are also not interested in working. Additionally, many local employers cited “honesty” and “trust” as key characteristics for future employees. Youth must be perceived as reliable, trustworthy workers if looking to succeed in finding a job, whether informal or formal.
- One strategy for livelihoods activities in Bong County could be **developing economic links among districts**. For example, the palm oil producers in Fuahmah have a desire to sell their oil beyond the boundaries and borders of their district. Virtually every vendor at the weekly market in Handii was selling palm oil among other items. On the other hand, very little palm oil was

found for sale at the weekly market in Palala, although demand was high. Therefore, Advancing Youth could potentially facilitate links between these districts in order to spur economic activity and trade.

## Suggested Next Steps for Bong County

### Recommended Sites Based on Livelihoods Opportunities

- Jorquellah District – Due to the vibrant presence of Gbarnga City and the program’s Learning Resource Center (LRC), Jorquellah District is a natural fit for Advancing Youth activities. Gbarnga is an important economic center for Bong County and therefore provides opportunities for low-skilled youth. Small enterprises – such as mobile phone charging stations, etc. – and opportunities in hospitality services are possible options.
- Kpiai District – As Advancing Youth is planning to open a school in this district, the Palala market area provides strong potential for synergies with local economic activity, including agricultural productions (bitter ball, peppers, watermelon, etc.)

### Highlighted Advancing Youth Engagement Opportunities

Name	County	Description	Type of Opportunity
Westwood Corporation	Bong	Construction company	Internships, full-time employment
GST Stationary	Bong	Stationary store	Internships, full-time employment
Twins Mattress Store	Bong	Youth-owned mattress store	Internships
Association for Career Development	Bong	Tailoring and literacy school for young females	Mentoring, internships, County Alliance participation



Tara Noronha/Mercy Corps

Some young Liberians are already economically active. In Bong County, the LMA team interviewed a youth-owned and youth-managed mattress store. Understanding the importance of practical experience, the owners are willing to mentor Advancing Youth students in their shop.

# Grand Bassa County .....

## ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

### Landscape for Employment and Self-employment

#### **Potential for large scale private sector engagement:**

The employment landscape in Grand Bassa appears promising. Firms such as Odebrecht, Buchanan Renewable, Liberia Agriculture Company, ArcelorMittal Steel and various other large companies have been identified as potential employment partners for Advancing Youth students. Furthermore, there are also employment opportunities within the public sector. For example, the Office of the Superintendent is planning a three-city beautification cleaning project which will provide job opportunities for youth.

#### **Need for information on market opportunities and financial services:**

Self-employment and employment appear to be possibilities for youth in Grand Bassa but the extent of these opportunities is difficult to determine. Relevant authorities such as Liberia Marketing Association and the Office of the Superintendent have little or no data or market information particularly for youth. In Grand Bassa, 26 percent of businesses stated that 1-5 other businesses in the areas provided the same goods and services and 21.6 percent stated that competition existed between 6-20 other firms. As market competition is high in Grand Bassa, local businesses could benefit from understanding local supply and demand, as well as other relevant market information. Furthermore, 35.6 percent of businesses in Grand Bassa mentioned the lack of financial services as the biggest challenge to managing their business. Sharing information on existing financial institutions in the areas could promote private sector growth, thus enabling future job creation.

#### **Potentially Promising Employment Opportunities for Females:**

78 percent of business survey respondents expressed willingness to hire young females, more than any other county surveyed in the LMA.

### High Potential Growth Sectors and Suggested Entry Points for Youth Along Value Chains

**Cassava Value Chain:** In Grand Bassa, youth view traditional agriculture, particularly cassava planting, as laborious work and are not prepared nor particularly interested to venture into this type of activity. Despite the disinterest, entry points for youth have been identified in areas such as warehousing support and transportation (for males) and

- ✓ Work with World ORT to implement food preservation training to learners who are interested in the fish industry
- ✓ Identify training partners, such as ILO TREE program, to organize training sessions for learners/youth clubs engaged in cassava production
- ✓ Discuss with Superintendent and MoC to support development of simple community-managed information sharing and dissemination system through radio, notice boards and SMS
- ✓ Conduct rapid survey on savings and loan options and share information about available options to learners
- ✓ Organize training of cassava youth clubs on cooperative/collective marketing concepts and groups dynamics
- ✓ Organize exchange visits among youth clubs engaged in fish and cassava income generation both within Grand Bassa
- ✓ Organize regular guest speaker sessions with relevant ministry officials - MoYS, MoE, MoG, and MoH - to gather youth views and provide an opportunity for leaders to share ideas on youth issues
- ✓ Identify youth leaders and private sector leaders for Grand Bassa County Alliance
- ✓ Seek partnerships for internship placements within rubber and cassava farms
- ✓ Organize guest speaker sessions with cassava, equatorial palm oil, and rubber farms

retail sale (for females). These youth could be connected to microfinance institutions (susus)<sup>14</sup> financial club, microfinance business, etc. to access loans, save, and therefore expand current activities.

**Fish Value Chain:** Success in the fish sector is often reliant upon proper tide and currents, clear weather, and strong boats – and some of these challenges are unpredictable and uncontrollable. However, the fishing industry provides great income potential for the youth of Grand Bassa. Specific opportunities along the value chain include warehousing, transportation, and canoe pulling (for males) and cleaning, selling and cooking of fish (for females). Storage appeared to be a significant issue; therefore, there may be opportunities for Advancing Youth students to enter the value chain at this entry point through activities involving mini-cold rooms, etc. Technical skills in smoking and cooking techniques were also identified as useful, and Advancing Youth sees opportunities to link with World ORT regarding building skills in fish preservation.

**Artisanal and Other Vocational Skills:** The LMA team also found potential in vocational skills such as chair weaving, basket weaving and carpentry. Masonry and mechanical skills were also mentioned.

### Miscellaneous Findings

- Youth in Grand Bassa shared that the desire for **public officials to be held accountable** to their promises with regards to youth-focused initiatives. Furthermore, young people would like to be included in public planning efforts. Young people in Grand Bassa shared that they do not always feel that they have a positive relationship with local government figures. Developing a relationship and mutual trust between young people and local government is critical to the advancement of youth in this county.
- According to the Development Superintendent of Grand Bassa County, there is a **shortage of trained manpower in mining**. Those who have the skills are typically older people and are primarily former employees of Bong Mining Company and LAMCO. As a result, mining companies in Grand Bassa have to recruit workers from other counties. An opportunity for Advancing Youth could be to connect these elderly workers and those who have retired with youth that are interested in pursuing mining. These adults could serve as mentors or also provide training. Mining activities in Bong require technical skills but do not necessarily require advanced education.
- The LMA team found that there were **few programs that cater to disabled youth** in Grand Bassa. Additionally, public facilities lack proper infrastructure for those who have physical disabilities. If Advancing Youth engages disabled youth in the ABE program, we must also determine appropriate economic opportunities in environments that are suitable.

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<sup>14</sup> Susu clubs represent informal, traditional banking in Liberia. A susu is an informal group of people who commit themselves to paying a fixed amount over specific intervals. The collected funds are given to members individually in rotation. The process continues until everybody has received payment.

## Suggested Next Steps for Grand Bassa County

### Recommended sites based on livelihood-related opportunities

- Buchanan District – Buchanan has diverse potential entry points for youth along the value chain for fish. Additionally, major companies are located in this district and have expressed willingness to employ youth.
- District #1 – Chair weaving and fishing have been identified as possible activities.
- District #3 – The LMA identified potential opportunities in rubber production and cassava production.

### Highlighted Advancing Youth Engagement Opportunities

Name	County	Description	Type of Opportunity
Cestos Wood Workshop	Grand Bassa	Furniture store	Internships
Frank Motorcycle & Garage	Grand Bassa	Motorcycle repair	Internships
Grace Bread Business	Grand Bassa	Bakery	Internships, skills in baking
DIS & DAT Beauty Shop	Grand Bassa	Beauty salon	Internships



Mathew Ndote/Mercy Corps

Daniel Swaray (left) and Samuel Varmoh (right) participate in a working session during an Advancing Youth quarterly review workshop. They engaged as LMA youth assessors in Grand Bassa and have now been employed by the program as Youth Development and Livelihoods Coordinators for Grand Bassa County.

### Landscape for Employment and Self-employment

**Exploring the informal economy:** The informal sector has most of the employment opportunities, including artisanal activities such as carpentry, blacksmithing, and welding. Other opportunities exist within service sectors particularly in providing transport, though the type and availability of transport is influenced by the lack of access to roads. Other sectors include operation of guest houses, cook shops and catering, and hair cutting/dressing. Although retail and wholesale trade employ a few youth, petty trade - including selling of scratch cards and other roadside vendors in agricultural and industrial goods – present self-employment opportunities for youth. It is important to note, however, that formal employment also exists as 44 of 134 surveyed businesses in Lofa have 10 or more employees.

**Need for a holistic approach to youth unemployment:** The attitude among some youth (especially among educated youth) is that employment is only considered to be in the formal sectors. Hence, the employment potential within the informal and the agriculture sectors is overlooked or dismissed. Additionally, 43 percent of employers surveyed noted that they believe youth demand higher salaries than other employees. Based on these findings, youth need information on the profitability of a wide array of job opportunities across sectors, including those operating informally, as well as information on what constitutes reasonable salaries. Activities to improve the perception of youth are also important to undertake. Furthermore, existing skills training offered by NGOs and government is only short-term and is often not accompanied by the relevant start-up kits, mentoring, and/or placements; hence, even trained youth fail to utilize learned skills.

### High Potential Growth Sectors and Suggested Entry Points for Youth Along Value Chains

**Tobogi Oil Value Chain:** Tobogi oil can be used to prepare different kinds of sauces along with meat, fish, beans, bitter ball and spices, a unique food consumed by majority of Liberians. The oil has high demand across the neighboring counties and in Monrovia. The LMA value chain activities found various potential entry points for youth in this value chain, including oil extraction and transportation including motorcycles (for males) and marketing, and assistance with the fermentation process (for females). The majority of the youth is involved in the lower levels of the value chain, either as gatherers or oil cutters, and in the processing stages. Lack of business skills, capital and linkages to market opportunities has created a gap where other retailers take advantage of market intelligence and resources to buy locally produced commodities at significantly lower prices and subsequently sell elsewhere at a higher profit. Advancing Youth needs to link participating youth with necessary technical and business skills, market information,

- ✓ Seek placement opportunities for learners with private sector entities including Kelvin's Water Incorporated
- ✓ Identify mentors for young entrepreneurs
- ✓ Support/link youth club projects around extraction of tobogi oil and usage and sharing of freedom mills
- ✓ Organize guest speaker sessions to familiarize learners with skills on increasing oil extraction during rainy season
- ✓ Support youth clubs engaged with cowpeas production by linking to other training organizations to provide information on topics such as pest control, harvesting and preservation
- ✓ Liaise with MoA to organize guest speaker/training sessions on poultry management including cooperative formation and collective marketing
- ✓ Organize youth club training session on organic farming
- ✓ Organize guest speaker sessions from construction companies to explain/share available and upcoming job opportunities and associated requirements
- ✓ Partner with TVET and project partners engaged in skills training, such as Plan International, CSIs, and community colleges
- ✓ Seek partnership with MoYS to engage more youth in the upcoming construction of Vojama stadium



Tara Noronha/Mercy Corps

A youth assessor in Lofa County surveys a local business.

and linkage to services that will enable them take part in high income-generating areas of the value chains.

**Cow peas (Pkwaputokwe) Value Chain:** *Pkwaputokwe* is a local bean/pea commonly grown and consumed as a sauce in Liberia. The product has high demand and attracts traders from across districts in Lofa County and neighboring counties. Specific entry points for male youth include assistance with transportation (motorcycles, etc.) and marketing activities. Female youth may see some opportunity in sewing of plastic storage bags and then bagging of the cow peas. Assistance with more advanced agricultural techniques and harvesting techniques would also improve the income potential for youth in this value chain.

**Livestock husbandry:** A ready market for meat and livestock products exists all over Lofa County and across the neighboring counties. However, very few families rear livestock and chickens and the county is reliant on imported goats and sheep from Guinea. Chickens and eggs are also imported from Guinea or brought from elsewhere outside Liberia via Monrovia. It may be promising to encourage small holder farmers to engage in the production of small livestock (goats, sheep, and chickens), as well as address technology gaps and provide veterinary services.

**Retail trade:** Most people engaged in retail trade are youth that currently operate as petty traders. Hawking roadside vendors are common place in most of the towns. They are faced with challenges related to the lack of adequate business skills, competition from larger retailers and wholesalers, and lack of access to business capital and business development services. With improved business skills and access to business development services, petty traders have the potential to grow and expand their businesses and create employment for others.

**Infrastructure and construction:** According to the County Superintendent, there is growing demand for labor in the infrastructure industry. The ongoing construction of the Voinjama–Vahun road has provided employment to over 200 male youth and reportedly reduced the level of crime in Voinjama City. The government has planned to extend road projects to Konia, Kolahun, and Holima in order to continue offering employment to youth.

### Miscellaneous Findings

- Due to lack of employment opportunities, **youth in Voinjama City have resorted to petty theft** and crime until a major road construction project absorbed the majority of them. This has reduced the level of crime in the city significantly.
- The most prominent businesses within Lofa are motorbike transport, petty and retail trade in agricultural and industrial goods (food items, household goods, and clothes). Most of these businesses operate informally, without formal registration or trade licenses and do not maintain business records. The majority of the **main players in the private sector are youth**. Of the business survey respondents in Lofa, 60.9 percent of individuals are between the ages of 18 – 35.
- There are **formal employment opportunities for youth** with a few lead private companies operating in the area. Some companies with potential employment or franchise potential for

youth include Lonestar-MTN, Total gas stations, Coca-Cola, Ecobank, LEAP microfinance, Liberia Cocoa Cooperation and some construction companies. However, some private companies confirmed that lack of appropriate skills have hindered youth from seizing available job opportunities. As a result, companies have had to recruit staff from elsewhere to work in Lofa County.

## Suggested Next Steps for Lofa County

### Recommended Sites Based on Livelihood-Related Opportunities

- **Vahun District:** Due to a high concentration of unskilled but motivated youth, the proximity to Sierra Leone and other areas with strong cross-border trade, and improving roads, Vahun District holds the potential for youth-related activities. Additionally, fertile land and good climatic conditions for highly marketable crops such as cassava, rice, vegetables and pineapples present opportunities for work in agriculture.
- **Voinjama District:** It is recommended that Advancing Youth operate in Voinjama District, specifically Barkedu Town. There is very high potential for youth work in agriculture – including rice and palm oil. Additionally, there are available business financing options including the presence of susu clubs and LEAP microfinance.

### Highlighted Advancing Youth Engagement Opportunities

Name	County	Description	Opportunity
Kelvin's Water Incorporated	Lofa	Mineral water company	Internships, full-time employment
Kutuacquoi's Farm	Lofa	Commercial farmer of sugarcane, nuts, cowpeas, palm oil, etc.	Internships and employment in agriculture
SFF Enterprises Inc.	Lofa	Road construction	Internships, full-time employment
Ministry of Youth and Sports	Lofa	Youth-focused health, education, athletic, and economic programs	Mentoring, training, and full-time employment
Curran Hospital	Lofa	Provides training for nurses, midwives and community health volunteers	Training and employment

# Montserrado County .....

## ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

### Landscape for Employment and Self-employment

**Limited formal opportunities in rural areas:** Montserrado County has the highest amount of economic activity and can be divided into urban or peri-urban districts and rural districts. In rural Montserrado, there appears to be very limited opportunity for formal employment. Using the total number of employees as a measure for livelihood opportunities, only 23 percent of surveyed businesses in Careysburg and Todee districts (12 total) have greater than four employees (including owners), and one third are charcoal production enterprises that are poor partner choices.

In spite of observing only small numbers of formal and informal enterprises in both districts, there were complaints from business owners about too much competition, particularly in Careysburg due to the number of small retail outlets selling the same handful of products scattered along the main highway. Regardless, some businesses indicated they need staff and would employ youth if they had adequate basic business skills, and were trustworthy and hardworking. Interviews with business owners indicated that there are self-employment or franchising opportunities for entrepreneurial-minded individuals.

**Bright spots in urban and peri-urban areas:** In both Paynesville and Greater Monrovia #2, significant formal and informal commercial activity was observed in petty trading, small retail, light manufacturing and in some larger enterprises. More formal activity was observed Greater Monrovia #2 including larger retail stores, wholesale suppliers, and manufacturing. Of the 79 businesses surveyed in these districts, 63 percent employed more than four employees.

In both districts, employment opportunities for women lag behind those for men with only 70 percent of the employers (with more than four employees) surveyed who are planning to hire in the next six months, stating that they are willing to hire women. Unsurprisingly, employers willing to hire women currently have higher percentages of female employees compared to overall respondents; this indicates that once a woman is employed in a business there may be greater opportunities for other women to follow. In both districts, high-potential employment opportunities appear in numerous sectors including retail and wholesale sales, light and heavy manufacturing (including tailoring and handicraft production), hospitality, distribution, warehousing, construction and shipping. Self-employment opportunities also abound in petty trading, transportation (motorbike taxis), and fishing.

- ✓ Seek partnerships with palm oil farms for internships and job placements
- ✓ Ensure that Advancing Youth representatives are linked in with Monrovia-based Corporate Social Responsibility Forum activities
- ✓ Place at least 50 youth in urban internships
- ✓ Support implementation of youth club projects on palm oil extraction and marketing
- ✓ Introduce urban gardening through youth clubs
- ✓ Introduce lessons on garbage recycling into compost
- ✓ Seek partnership with Green Center for training of youth clubs on garbage collection
- ✓ Identify mentors for young entrepreneurs
- ✓ For youth interested in hospitality services, provide business skills training on topics such as customer care and hygiene
- ✓ Ensure appropriate linkages with Chevron-funded PROSPECTS program

*Of businesses surveyed in Greater Monrovia only 20 percent have more employees compared to last year, but 68 percent plan to hire in the next 6 months. Furthermore, 66 percent of these businesses indicate willingness to take on an intern or on-the-job trainee.*

### **High Potential Growth Sectors and Suggested Entry Points for Youth Along Value Chains**

**Palm Oil Value Chain:** In Todee district, palm oil production is done on large commercial farms that grow their own trees, from palm grown on smallholder farms or cut from the jungle. There are some self-employment opportunities in male dominated areas of palm oil production, specifically in production and transportation and in other skilled labor areas. Other entry points are areas in which men and women are already currently predominant. Challenges in palm oil

production include the high cost of labor, requirements for large amounts of water, inadequate transportation, and poor road infrastructure.

**Cassava Value Chain:** In this value chain, women are typically active in farming and in marketing and selling products once they are processed, and men are predominant in transportation and in warehousing services. Entry points for both young men and women largely follow this pattern. The majority of the employment opportunities are self-employment activities with the exception of warehousing services, and with some smallholder farms that hire laborers at specific times in the growing cycle.

**Small Enterprises:** Research indicated opportunity for youth to engage in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the retail and manufacturing sectors; however, to fully take advantage of these opportunities, youth will need additional training in small business and financial management (inventory, bookkeeping, marketing etc.), which may be outside the ABE curriculum. They will also need to better develop and demonstrate work-readiness skills including dependability, commitment and honesty.

**Hospitality and Security:** Engagement opportunities in the hospitality and security sectors appear to be expanding. These have also been identified as sectors where low-skilled job opportunities will potentially be available as a result of the growing number of foreign concessionaires in the mining and agriculture sectors.<sup>15</sup>

### **Miscellaneous Findings**

- One potential cause of the **limited economic activity in Careysburg** district and to some extent in Todee district is their proximity to the commercial hub in Paynesville due to better price and selection available there. In Careysburg, charcoal production appears to be a viable employment opportunity, with large production teams (5-15 individuals). However, the work requires little of the skills ABE is focused upon and has significant sustainability and environmental issues.
- Significant **enabling environment constraints** on economic activity were observed including poor infrastructure (roads, transportation and electricity). In rural areas, another constraint is the presence and competitiveness of roving sales agents selling household goods, used clothes, cell phone/scan cards, etc., and undercutting the local businesses.

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<sup>15</sup> A Strategy for the Promotion of Business Linkages in Liberia, Report to the Liberian National Investment Committee. Alex Burger, 2011. [http://www.ticafcafrica.com/NIC\\_Linkages\\_Report\\_12\\_5\\_11.pdf](http://www.ticafcafrica.com/NIC_Linkages_Report_12_5_11.pdf)

- Respondents also indicated that youth **lack basic business management skills** including simple bookkeeping. This was seen as a big constraint for SMEs hindering their expansion, and impacts many youth self-employed in petty trading impacting their likelihood of success.
- The **lack of appropriate economic activities for young women** was also noted during conversations with youth in Montserrado. Particularly during the female FGD, young women acknowledged the frequency of prostitution and transactional sex among themselves and their peers.

## Suggested Next Steps for Montserrado County

### Recommended Sites Based on Livelihood-Related Opportunities

- **Paynesville District:** This district has significant livelihood opportunities in SMEs, including those in small manufacturing, distribution and retail that may be appropriate for low-skilled Advancing Youth learners.
- **Careysburg District:** Community members indicated a strong desire for alternative basic education and there are some formal employers that may offer opportunity for internships and entry-level employment (agriculture, hospitality, etc.)

### Highlighted Advancing Youth Engagement Opportunities

Name	County	Description	Type of Opportunity
City Parking	Montserrado	Parking business	Short and long-term employment
Jeety Trading	Montserrado	Has 8 stores, large employee base and interested to take on interns	Internships
Parker Farm	Montserrado	Agricultural Production	Short and long-term employment

## Nimba County .....

### ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

#### Landscape for Employment and Self-employment

##### **Potential for large scale opportunities with big businesses:**

Large businesses such as Jungle Water Investment have the potential for employing many youth in their chain of businesses (hotels and shops) and enabling youth to gain self-employment through different marketing schemes, including opportunities for micro-franchising, and selling items like flour and rice. The agriculture and mining sectors have a high potential for employment prospects as well. Nimba has rich mineral deposits and, in addition to the presence of mining companies such as ArcelorMittal and B.H.P. Billiton, more companies are slowly growing. For example, IronBird, an Australian Exploration Drilling Company, is currently exploring prospects for business in Nimba County. These formal employment opportunities may also point towards the importance that employers place on education of their employees. In Nimba, 55 percent of businesses surveyed stated that basic literacy of their employees is very important.

**Need for Stronger Coordination among NGOs:** The LMA team highlighted the strong presence of various NGOs operating programs in Nimba County. However, coordination and sharing information on ongoing projects appears to be low. Advancing Youth should connect with projects run by organizations such as ACDI/VOCA and others, so that efforts can be collaborative when possible, instead of duplicated.

- ✓ Promote improved coordination among NGOs by identifying all youth or livelihoods focused programs in Advancing Youth areas and partnering where necessary
- ✓ Seek internship or job placement opportunities for 20 learners at Jungle Water and ArcelorMittal Steel
- ✓ Identify blacksmith training opportunities for learners
- ✓ In Tappita, train learners in proper cassava farming through potential partnership with ARS
- ✓ Identify youth leaders and private sector leaders for Nimba County Alliance
- ✓ Identify opportunities to improve transportation challenges via coordination with local Ministries and other NGOs
- ✓ Place learners in motorcycle repair shops to be trained in motorcycle repair

#### High Potential Growth Sectors and Suggested Entry Points for Youth Along Value Chains

**Plantain Value Chain:** The LMA did not find great diversity in opportunities for female youth along the plantain value chain, other than selling. For male youth, opportunities have been identified in the areas of transportation and clearing of trees. Young people feel that in order to see plantain farming as a viable form of income generation, they need advanced skills in growing and harvesting techniques. Aside from large commercial plantain plantations, however, this crop is easy to grow and harvest and requires few “advanced techniques” so these comments may be more reflective of a general unwillingness to enter the agricultural sector than a comment on the technical constraints to plantain production. Furthermore, some youth expressed that they were interested in “quicker” ways of earning money despite the fact that plantain trees are quick growing and more profitable than bananas.

**Goats/ Sheep Value Chain:** In Nimba County, youth are already active along the livestock value chains. Male youth are currently engaged in the areas of breeding and trading. The LMA identified additional opportunities in transportation and the expansion of current activities via access to loans or business support such as marketing. For female youth, entry points exist in selling and marketing.

**Blacksmith industry:** As it is currently nearly nonexistent in supply but high in demand, the blacksmith industry has significant growth potential. Youth could be trained as blacksmiths and serve as input suppliers for farming tools. With the need for large amounts of farming tools and the heavy reliance on imported tools which is often unaffordable for many farmers, revamping this industry by training lots of interested youth will assist in generating income.

**Hospitality services:** Ganta City serves as host to hundreds of visitors every month, with motorcycle services serving as the lead means of transportation. As demand is high for these services and the need for transport from farm-to-market are high, major income potential for youth exists within these services. Additionally, in places such as Ganta and Sanniquellie, hotels and restaurant staff are needed in existing hotels to accommodate the growing surge of visitors.

### **Miscellaneous Findings**

- **Transportation issues remain significant** for Nimba County, due to its distance from Monrovia and very poor roads and infrastructure. Farmers cite these challenges as great barriers to the production and sale of their crops. However, as demand is high and the gap has been identified, this may be an area where Advancing Youth could find opportunities for income generation.
- **Access to finance** was also identified as a major challenge for individuals in Nimba County. Of employers surveyed, 26.6 percent stated that the lack financial of services was the biggest challenge facing their business. Both farmers and SMEs are looking to expand their business and production, but financial institutions are unable to serve the full demand of customers. This is due to a dearth of such providers, as well as often complex processes for obtaining a loan.

## Suggested Next Steps for Nimba County

### **Recommended Sites Based on Livelihood-Related Opportunities**

- **Tappita District:** Livelihoods opportunities exist in the agriculture sector, particularly in cattle rearing and agriculture such as plantain, rubber, cassava, and pepper. In addition to Toweh Town, some other communities should also be assessed to understand their livelihoods potential.
- **Saclepea-mahn and Zoegeh Districts:** Although the team did not visit these areas, findings from previous work done by the Youth Development and Livelihoods Coordinators (YDLCs) in these districts revealed that there is a high presence of interested and willing youth to join the program. Furthermore, livelihoods opportunities exist but there is very low presence of NGOs to help empower youth.

### Highlighted Advancing Youth Engagement Opportunities

Name	County	Description	Opportunity
Jungle Water Investment	Nimba	Lead company of hotels, stores, radio stations, etc.	Internships, full-time and short-term employment
Arcelor Mittal	Nimba	Global mining company	Internships, full-time and short-term employment
ARS	Nimba	Lead agriculture organization	Mentorships and internship
Lake Teleh Security Guard	Nimba	Security firm	Mentorships, internships, full-time and short-term employment
B.H.P. Billiton	Nimba	Global mining company	Internships, full-time and short-term employment

# Private Sector Engagement: Next Steps

At a broad level, the next steps for engaging the private sector in Liberia based on the LMA findings and interactions with the private sector during the LMA process will focus on clarification of our engagement methodology, development of a detailed workplan, and outreach and relationship building with high-priority private sector businesses.

**1. Methodology:** The methodology will outline the priorities for our engagement and the goals (short-, medium and long-term). It will also describe the approach we will take with our engagement, and a general management framework that will ensure all our engagement actors (Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party, Livelihoods Coordinator, Assistant Livelihoods Coordinator, Team Leaders, Youth Development and Livelihood Coordinators, etc.) are operating in a coordinated manner. It should also address the roles and responsibilities of our partner organizations as they relate to engagement with private businesses.

**2. Foundational Activities:** There are a number of general activities that support the workplan and the subsequent *Outreach and Relationship Building*.

- **Firm Identification:** Using a modification of the Firm Identification Tool, this process will help further filter and prioritize the private business identified through the LMA, the Labor Mapping, and other research and outreach activities.
- **Business Enabling Environment (BEE) Assessment:** A number of enabling environment constraints arose from the labor market assessment including poor infrastructure (i.e. roads, electricity, etc.), while others have been reported in outside research (i.e. Doing Business Reports). Some of these apply to all five Advancing Youth counties while others are more localized or more pronounced in some counties/districts. This activity will help clarify these constraints specifically related to the livelihoods activities for Advancing Youth.
- **Inventory of Existing Private Sector Contacts:** A complete inventory of EDC, Mercy Corps and Advancing Youth contacts with private sector businesses should be completed which will help streamline and coordinate communication and relationship building. In the case of multi-national corporations, that inventory should be cross-referenced with relationships taking place outside of Liberia.

**3. Private Sector Engagement Workplan:** The workplan will outline the specific action items we will take to implement that methodology and will include activities and a timeline for completing the activities described below. Specifically, the workplan will include prioritizing contacts, setting priorities for engagement, assigning relationship managers, developing a timeline, capturing critical learning, completing background research, etc.



Tara Noronha/Mercy Corps

Decontee, 25, of Montserrado County, participated in the January Mapping Exercise and also was an important Youth Facilitator during the LMA. Her professionalism led a large business to offer her a job during the assessment process!

**4. Capacity Building:** Critical to implementing the workplan will be continuing to expand our capacity for private sector engagement and to ensure that adequate technical assistance is available to the Monrovia-based Advancing Youth management and the county-based Youth Development and Livelihood Coordinators. Specific activities under this umbrella will be included as part of the workplan but may include further focus on Interest and Incentive Analysis which helps clarify the interests of a potential private sector partner and understand if the benefits we will provide will be adequate, and Feasibility Analysis which enables us to quickly assess a potential partner's ability to meet our goals and requirements based on up to six aspects of feasibility.

**5. Outreach and Relationship Building:** Fundamental to our engagement is a proactive approach toward building relationships. In many cases we have started that process with the LMA. Follow-up with key potential engagement partners should happen soon.

In other areas, specific firms have not been identified but value chains have been observed that might offer livelihood opportunities (i.e., banana growing in Nimba, rubber-tapping in Montserrado.) Firms operating in these value chains will be explored as part of our outreach. Additionally, the LMA revealed a number of high-potential sectors that are present. Those include construction, shipping, tailoring, handicraft making, and hospitality. Those sectors should be explored in more depth and the plan for doing so should be included in our engagement workplan.

There is also a notable and growing presence of global businesses and concessionaires operating in Liberia. These firms may have great potential for engagement for Advancing Youth, particularly those in mining and agriculture, and specific attention will be placed on outreach and relationship building with those actors.

Additional private sector engagement activities will include:

- Specific mapping of the global/concessionaires that are operating now and expected to operate in the near future. Prioritization of that mapping for outreach.
- Immediate outreach to high-priority businesses to build upon the nascent relationships established as part of the LMA research. This should include all businesses contacted as part of the mapping exercise unless specifically excluded.
- Further research into the well-established agriculture businesses in Todee engaged in palm oil production, and research and outreach to rubber-producing firms.
- Outreach to relevant NGOs in Liberia. For instance, such NGOs may include Building Markets, an INGO with a Liberian presence that is seeking to strengthen linkages between local business and buyers in the extractive sector and is developing an online business directory for Liberia which is presently concentrated on Monrovia businesses. <http://liberia.buildingmarkets.org/>

## Iterative Market Research Process

The Advancing Youth livelihoods strategy will only be realized if its activities are synchronized with the current needs of local labor markets. As Liberia's national economy is constantly evolving, with each county growing in distinct areas, it is important to remain abreast of changes and trends in these individual labor markets. Therefore, while this initial assessment provides a critical starting point, it is important to reevaluate this analysis throughout the duration of the program.

In accordance with this market-driven approach, Advancing Youth will undertake various additional assessments at strategic points throughout the program. The program's Livelihoods team will work with the YDLCs in each county to determine next steps for these assessments. In this assessment, the team selected two promising value chains to examine for each county. There are likely to be various additional sectors and commodities worth exploring, so the program will develop plans to study other potential income opportunities for young people. Through the assessment and discussions with key informants, additional possible value chains (below) have been identified. These include:

County	Promising value chains
Bong	Cocoa, Pineapple, Rice
Grand Bassa	Pineapple, Rubber
Lofa	Poultry
Montserrado	Vegetables
Nimba	Plantain, Cassava

Additionally, as program staff continue to build relationships with the private sector and local businesses, additional opportunities for job placements are likely to be identified. Therefore, local scans of the private sector will also occur on a small scale throughout the duration of the program. As a key part of the LMA process, YDLCs participated in a Private Sector Engagement session with staff and this training will help to guide the subsequent analysis of the local employers with whom the program will engage. After the data collection portion of the assessment, the YDLCs also participated in a review of the survey tools so they can be easily modified for future use.

## Suggested Implementation Plan and Key Action Points for LMA Findings

- Follow-up with employers on mentoring, on-the-job-training, and job placements for youth. (Ongoing)
- Identify sites for future ABE activities based on livelihoods opportunities. (June 2012)
- Adapt FY2013 Advancing Youth livelihoods workplan based on LMA findings. (August 2012)
- Disseminate LMA findings to external stakeholders. (October 2012)
- Work with ABE curricula team to discuss curricula revisions based on LMA findings. (October 2012)
- Establish Youth Mentorship program including guidelines and toolkits focused on career development and entrepreneurship. (September through October 2012)
- Identify how the LMA findings have been used to inform the livelihoods activities and how the process can be improved. (December 2012)
- Conduct LMA 2 to validate original LMA findings and identify economic opportunities in new communities. (April through May 2013)

## Conclusion

Young people in Liberia are faced with exceedingly difficult challenges in obtaining employment and self-employment. However, young people can be catalysts for change and economic growth in their country. In this respect, the LMA has identified key opportunities for youth to participate in diverse labor markets. Through relevant curricula and appropriately matched livelihoods activities, young people will have the power to smoothly transition to adulthood, creating the basis for a strong, vibrant Liberia.

# Annexes

## Key Informant Interviews

April - May 2012

Date	County	District	Town	Organization/ Business
27-Apr	Bong	Jorquellah	Gbarnga	Association of Career Development
27-Apr	Bong	Jorquellah	Gbarnga	Central Agriculture Research Inst. (CARI)
28-Apr	Bong	Jorquellah	Gbarnga	Ministry of Youth and Sports
30-Apr	Bong	Sonoyea	Totota	Independent Consultant
30-Apr	Bong	Sonoyea	Sonoyea City	Sonoyea City
1-May	Bong	Fuamah	Haindii	Haindii Town
3-May	Bong	Kpaii	Palala	Palala market
28-Apr	Grand Bassa	Buchanan	Buchanan	Youth Action International
28-Apr	Grand Bassa	Buchanan	Buchanan	Liberia Marketing Association
28-Apr	Grand Bassa	Buchanan	Buchanan	Federation of Road Transport Union
30-Apr	Grand Bassa	Buchanan	Buchanan	Ministry of Internal Affairs
30-Apr	Grand Bassa	Buchanan	Buchanan	Ministry of Education
30-Apr	Grand Bassa	District #1	Compound #1	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1-May	Grand Bassa	District #3	Compound #3	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1-May	Grand Bassa	District #3	Compound #3	Ministry of Internal Affairs
1-May	Grand Bassa	District #3	Compound #3	National Legislature
1-May	Grand Bassa	District #3	Compound #3	Gbole Youth Association for Development
1-May	Grand Bassa	District #3	Compound #3	Food & Enterprise Development (FED)
3-May	Grand Bassa	District #1	Little Bassa	Progressive Women of Little Bassa
3-May	Grand Bassa	District #1	Little Bassa	Marie Kamara Phone Charging Center

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Date	County	District	Town	Organization/ Business
3-May	Grand Bassa	District #1	Little Bassa	Ministry of Internal Affairs
30-Apr	Lofa	Voinjama	Voinjama	Ministry of Youth and Sports
1-May	Lofa	Voinjama	Voinjama	Lofa County
1-May	Lofa	Voinjama	Voinjama	Lofa County
30-Apr	Lofa	Voinjama	Voinjama	Lofa County
3-May	Lofa	Zorzor	Zorzor	YMCA Zorzor Branch
3-May	Lofa	Zorzor	Zorzor	IRC Zorzor
30-Apr	Lofa	Voinjama	Kissi Community	Ministry of Commerce, Lofa
28-Apr	Lofa	Voinjama	Kazu	Volunteers to support International Efforts in Development (VOSIEDA)
3-May	Lofa	Zorzor	Zorzor	Zorzor City Council
3-May	Lofa	Zorzor	Zorzor	Zorzor District
29-May	Lofa	Voinjama	Kazah	Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)
29-May	Lofa	Voinjama	Teboma	Peace & Development Outreach Volunteers (PDOV)
28-May	Montserrado	Todee	Mojoe Town	Palm Oil Crew
30-May	Montserrado	Todee	Koon's Town	Parker's Farm
28-Apr	Nimba	Tappita	Toweh	Toweh Town Development Committee
30-Apr	Nimba	Gbehlay-geh	Karnplay	Government of Liberia
30-Apr	Nimba	Gbehlay-geh	Karnplay	Government of Liberia
2-May	Nimba	Sanniquellie-mah	Sanniquellie City	Jungle Water Investment
3-May	Nimba	Sanniquellie-mah	Sanniquellie City	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
3-May	Nimba	Sanniquellie-mah	Sanniquellie City	Ministry of Gender and Development
3-May	Nimba	Sanniquellie-mah	Sanniquellie City	ArcelorMittal Steel

# Assessment Teams and Sites

April 24th – May 6th 2012

COUNTY	TEAM LEAD	YOUTH & LIVELIHOODS COORDINATORS			
<b>1. Bong County</b> <u>Districts</u> - Jorquellah - Sonoyea - Kpaii - Fuahmah	<b>TARA NORONHA</b>	J. Preston Weber			
		Dave T. Blaye			
	YOUTH ASSESSORS	SEX	AGE	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
	Tina Benson	F	23	University Student	
	Kwetur Sulonteh	M	27	University Student	
	Daniel H. Barclay	M	27	University Graduate	
	Nora N. Jamison	F		University Student	
	Betty Taigbailee	F	25	High School Graduate	
Joseph O. Jackson	M	29	University Student		
COUNTY	TEAM LEAD	YOUTH & LIVELIHOODS COORDINATORS			
<b>2. Grand Bassa County</b> <u>Districts</u> - District #1 - District #2 - District #3 - Buchanan District	<b>ABRAHAM BEAIRGAI</b>				
	YOUTH ASSESSORS	SEX	AGE	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
	Samuel Wilson	M	27	University Student	
	Victor Flomo	M	26	University Student	
	Augusta Roberts	F	21	University Student	
	Mardin Gargo	F	23	High School Graduate	
	Daniel Swaray	M	35	University Graduate	
	Tifinneh Reeves	M	35	University Graduate	
	Elijah Zorkpa	M	35	University Student	
	Ferrington Fiske	M	26	University Graduate	

COUNTY	TEAM LEAD	YOUTH & LIVELIHOODS COORDINATORS		
<b>3. Lofa County</b> <u>Districts</u> - Vahun - Kolahun - Voinjama - Foya	<b>MATHEW NDOTE</b>	Edwin Jallah		
		Zelah Kolubah		
	YOUTH ASSESSORS	SEX	AGE	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
	Zokolee G. Zubawuo III	M	25	Undergraduate Student
	Paye Layweh	M	35	University Graduate
	Andrew Williams	M	23	University Student
	Carlton Kruah	M	35	College Student
	Garmai Zarwu	F	22	High School Graduate
Marcella R. Lassanah	F	29	University Graduate	
COUNTY	TEAM LEAD	YOUTH & LIVELIHOODS COORDINATORS		
<b>4. Montserrado County</b> <u>Districts</u> - Careysburg - Todee - Paynesville - Greater Monrovia #2	<b>TED VOLCHOK</b>	Felicia G. Andrews		
		Alvin Yellowway		
	YOUTH ASSESSORS	SEX	AGE	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
	J. Lawrence Fahnbulleh	M	29	Senior Student, UL
	Samuel Varmo	M	26	University Graduate
	Paul S. Gobah	M		University
	Decontee E. George	F	25	Senior Student, UMU
	Socrates Wleh	M	26	Senior Student, AMEU
J. Mentor Gborlay	M	30	Senior Student, UL	
COUNTY	TEAM LEAD	YOUTH & LIVELIHOODS COORDINATORS		
<b>3. Nimba County</b> <u>Districts</u> - Tappita - Twah River - Sanniquellie-Mah - Bain Garr	<b>VARNEY GAIE</b>	Gwendolyn M. Gborweah		
		C. Jenkins Doloquee		
	YOUTH ASSESSORS	SEX	AGE	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
	Charles Delgual	M	29	High School Graduate
	Bob Kartoe	M	24	College Student
	Oretha Queeglay	F	28	College
	Sam Ta-Kruah	M	23	College Student
	Joyce Kehnel	F	26	High School Graduate
Anita Duawo	F	23	University Student	

# Advancing Youth Site Selections

## Recommendations for New Sites Based on Livelihoods-Related Opportunities

District/Site	Justification/Comments
	<b>LOFA COUNTY</b>
Vahun District - <b>Vahun City</b>	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a high concentration of unschooled and unskilled youth who are dedicated to improving their livelihoods.</li> <li>• There is economic potential due to cross border trade with neighboring country, Sierra Leone.</li> <li>• There is improving access since the government is working on the trunk road connecting Voinjama-Kolahun-Vahun cities.</li> <li>• The local community has traditional skills in weaving of country cloth and there is good will from skilled people to train others in the making of country cloth. These individuals can be utilized as either trainers to program learners or as master trainers.</li> <li>• There are several streams and rivers which run throughout the year, offering opportunities for fish farming and irrigated agriculture.</li> <li>• Fertile land and good climatic condition for highly marketable crops such as cassava, rice, vegetables and pineapples.</li> <li>• Many young people are mainly engaged in farm work and selling of crops like cassava, pepper bitter balls etc and have a positive attitude towards farming.</li> <li>• The community and district leadership has goodwill to support any development efforts.</li> <li>• Youth have experience and have participated in past livelihoods projects including community service projects such as road rehabilitation previously supported by other NGOs.</li> <li>• There is presence of a local and few INGOs including ACF and YMCA.</li> <li>• This district has been one of the most isolated in the entire county; therefore, distribution of services has been very poor.</li> </ul>

District/Site	Justification/Comments
Voinjama District - <b>Barkedu Town/  Community</b>	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good presence of organized farmer groups engaged in production, value addition and marketing of rice, cowpeas and palm oil products.</li> <li>• High production potential and skills in cow peas, which brings traders from Voinjama and Monrovia to the town.</li> <li>• Most people are engaged in farming activities and have started producing surplus agricultural products for sale during market days in the town or beyond in Voinjama City.</li> <li>• Easily accessible with paved road and short distance to Voinjama City.</li> <li>• There are available business financing options including presence of susu clubs and LEAP microfinance.</li> <li>• High potential for value addition for rice and palm oil.</li> <li>• There is a communication network available.</li> <li>• Presence of other NGOs offering complimentary projects such as farmer training and value chain support.</li> <li>• High concentration of youth with limited or lack of skills, but enthusiastic and involved in farming.</li> </ul>
Voinjama District - <b>Kurkan/Mandingo  Community</b>	<p><b>Recommended Site Not Visited by the LMA team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the major sources of agricultural supplies and vegetables to Voinjama.</li> <li>• Easily accessible with good road, close to Voinjama City.</li> <li>• Plans are underway to assist the Mandingo community into an independent district, which offers an opportunity for emergence of a new city in the area.</li> </ul>
Zorzor District - <b>Borkiza Town</b>	<p><b>Not Recommended at this Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a high concentration of uneducated youth.</li> <li>• Vibrant business activity due to cross border trade with Guinea and supply of agricultural products to Monrovia and Zorzor town.</li> <li>• High potential for honey and palm oil. Most residents are familiar with traditional hunting and gathering of honey and have ready market within the town and in Zorzor market centre.</li> <li>• The trunk road to markets in Zorzor and Monrovia is well paved.</li> </ul>

District/Site	Justification/Comments
	<b>BONG COUNTY</b>
Kpahi District – <b>Palala Town</b>	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soap making enterprises present potential.</li> <li>• Most people are engaged in agriculture (mainly growing of watermelon, bitter ball, pepper and other vegetables).</li> </ul>
Jorquellah District – <b>Gbarga City</b>	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people are engaged in small business (petty trade and retail trade), especially youth. Therefore, supporting young entrepreneurs with basic business skills, life skills, financial management, etc., is a requirement for the growing number of youth population.</li> <li>• There is increasing opportunities and need for vocational training but this training should be targeted to needs of the community in areas such as plumbing and catering.</li> <li>• Good potential for Advancing Youth programs due to commercial activity.</li> </ul>
Sonoyea District – <b>Sonoyea Town</b>	<p><b>Not Recommended at this Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dominant sector is agriculture which poses high economic opportunity for youth.</li> <li>• A high and growing number of youth are engaged in micro and small businesses.</li> <li>• Small business support (most of Sonoyea town are engaged in petty training).</li> <li>• The Bong staff believes that Sonoyea would be a difficult area to work and given the dearth of opportunities for income potential.</li> </ul>
	<b>GRAND BASSA COUNTY</b>
District #1	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people can be engaged in chair weaving.</li> <li>• Mini cold room management (fishing) has high potential since fishing is highly practiced.</li> </ul>
District #2	<p><b>Not Recommended at this Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pineapple production and preservation is a promising opportunity; we should explore value chain/value addition for pineapples).</li> <li>• The population is actively involved in agriculture, specifically cassava production.</li> <li>• The LMA team did not find adequate information demonstrating livelihoods opportunities in District #2.</li> <li>• There is a need for further assessment; therefore, is not recommended at this stage.</li> </ul>

District/Site	Justification/Comments
Buchanan District	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational and technical skills training (carpentry, masonry, mechanical skills, etc.) is a potential intervention for the many youth in the district.</li> <li>• Fishing is a common activity, hence strengthening/improving gaps within fish value chain would be a potential entry point.</li> </ul>
District #3	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people need basic skills in cassava production.</li> <li>• Rubber growing is also commonly practiced and many youth are engaged with casual labor in rubber farm, management, and tapping.</li> </ul>
<b>MONTSERRADO COUNTY</b>	
Paynesville	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a lot of unskilled and uneducated youth and there is high demand for education.</li> <li>• Many opportunities for youth development such as vocational training institutions.</li> <li>• Small and medium enterprises are available hence internship and job placement or self employment opportunities may not be a challenge.</li> <li>• Small manufacturing businesses (carpentry, craft, etc.) are very common.</li> </ul>
Careysburg	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for engagement in Farming activities (especially vegetables and livestock management) – there are two large farms within the area (Wulkin ad Quelu) which pose opportunity for placements and training.</li> <li>• Water processing factory available within the location- potential for franchise or commission sale of cold water.</li> <li>• There is willingness from the community to learn and receive basic literacy skills.</li> </ul>
Todee	<p><b>Not Recommended at this Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promising livelihoods opportunity within agricultural value chain specifically in palm oil.</li> <li>• High potential for cassava production but more assessment info needed.</li> </ul>

District/Site	Justification/Comments
	<b>NIMBA COUNTY</b>
Tappita	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a large population of youth that fit our categories of livelihoods opportunities – example: cassava, rubber, plantain, peanuts, etc.</li> <li>• There are also ongoing road construction projects which pose opportunity for employment.</li> <li>• Jungle Water is present and willing to offer internship/employment opportunities to Advancing Youth learners.</li> </ul>
Saclepia-mahn and Zoegeh Districts	<p><b>Recommended</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings from previous work done by the YDLCs in these districts revealed that there is a high presence of interested and willing youth to join the program.</li> <li>• There is very low presence of NGOs to help empower youth and livelihoods opportunities exist.</li> </ul>

# Value Chain Summary of Findings and Potential Entry Points for Advancing Youth Learners

Total Value Chain FGD participants = 325 (209 Male; 116 Female)

Commodity/Findings	1a. Essential skills in production	1b. Essential skills in marketing
Cassava (Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil selection</li> <li>• Weather observation</li> <li>• Brushing and clearing of land</li> <li>• Identification of soil</li> <li>• Planting of the cassava</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pricing</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Weighing</li> </ul>
Palm Oil (Bong and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutting palm, using cutlasses, spears and ladders</li> <li>• Packaging and removing palm from shells</li> <li>• Pounding and refining palm nuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and communication skills in contacting motorcyclists and drivers</li> <li>• Communication techniques for engaging with marketers</li> <li>• Customers service skills</li> </ul>
Palm Oil/Tobogi (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservation skills after harvest of the palm nuts</li> <li>• How to cut the palm nuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When to sell</li> <li>• How to advertise</li> </ul>
Horticulture - Pepper, Bitter Ball, Watermelon (Bong County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of seeds</li> <li>• Knowledge on pest protection</li> <li>• How finance to cover labor costs</li> <li>• Knowledge on seasonal planting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to find the right buyers in marketing of product</li> <li>• Knowing the customers</li> <li>• How to transport</li> <li>• When to sell</li> </ul>
Fish (Grand Bassa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drying • Cleaning</li> <li>• Smoking • Swimming</li> <li>• Sewing • Paddling</li> <li>• Timing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pricing</li> <li>• Grading (separation and identification)</li> <li>• Weighing</li> </ul>
Cow Peas (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land selection and cultivations</li> <li>• Time to plant and harvest (takes 70 days from the time of planting to harvest)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storing after harvest until prices are strong and demand is high</li> <li>• Understanding where the products are in high demand</li> <li>• How to sell</li> </ul>
Plantain (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land preparation skills</li> <li>• Transplanting</li> <li>• Pruning and harvesting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packaging skills</li> <li>• Storage skills</li> </ul>
Goats/Sheep (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breeding and selection skills</li> <li>• Cattle crossing skills</li> <li>• Feeding skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills in determining which animals are market ready</li> </ul>

Commodity/Findings	2a. Main inputs/raw materials	2b. Input-sources
Cassava (Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land</li> <li>• Cassava seeds</li> <li>• Fertilizers</li> <li>• Hoes, cutlasses, rakes</li> <li>• Diggers</li> <li>• Shovels</li> <li>• Knives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchased from Monrovia and nearby markets</li> <li>• Some locally made by blacksmiths</li> </ul>
Palm Oil (Bong and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom mill machines (hand mills) for production</li> <li>• Palm nuts</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Cutlasses, hoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally available</li> <li>• Neighboring cities</li> <li>• Monrovia</li> </ul>
Palm Oil/Tobogi (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climbing rope (used for climbing palm trees to harvest)</li> <li>• Cutlasses for brushing/clearing the farm</li> <li>• Hoes for tilling the land (commonly acquired from local blacksmiths)</li> <li>• Seeds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local artisans and blacksmiths</li> <li>• Local markets (Zorzor and Voinjama)</li> </ul>
Horticulture - Pepper, Bitter Ball, Watermelon (Bong County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutlasses</li> <li>• File</li> <li>• Hoes</li> <li>• Spray cans</li> <li>• Axes</li> <li>• Motor pumps (connects to river) for irrigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gbarnga</li> <li>• Monrovia and other surrounding villages in Kpiai district</li> </ul>
Fish (Grand Bassa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net from Monrovia</li> <li>• Swamp Wood from local markets</li> <li>• Baskets</li> <li>• Mud dryers</li> <li>• Knives</li> <li>• Tapoline from Monrovia</li> <li>• Wires</li> <li>• Rope</li> <li>• Hooks/needles</li> <li>• Compasses</li> <li>• Motor engines</li> <li>• Canoe (from Ghana, River Cess)</li> <li>• Anchors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally available</li> <li>• Buchanan</li> <li>• Monrovia</li> <li>• Others imported from Ghana</li> </ul>
Cow Peas (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutlasses</li> <li>• Hoes (commonly acquired from local blacksmiths)</li> <li>• Seeds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voinjama</li> <li>• Local blacksmiths</li> <li>• Other farmers (seeds)</li> </ul>
Plantain (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fertilizer</li> <li>• Cutlasses, hoes</li> <li>• Pickering</li> <li>• Axes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local farms</li> <li>• Saclepea</li> <li>• Ganta city</li> <li>• Monrovia</li> </ul>
Goats/Sheep (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal feed</li> <li>• Medicines/vaccinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From community</li> <li>• Sanniquellie</li> <li>• Karnplay</li> <li>• Monrovia</li> </ul>

Commodity/Findings	3a. Main buyers	3b. Main markets
Cassava (Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wholesalers, retailers, individual consumers, marketers</li> <li>Mostly community members</li> <li>Traders from Monrovia and neighboring villages.</li> <li>'Fufu' and starch sellers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local markets</li> <li>Dogbaloe town</li> <li>Monrovia</li> <li>Kakata city</li> <li>Harbel town</li> <li>Gbarnga city in Bong</li> <li>Buchanan city</li> </ul>
Palm Oil (Bong and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monrovia marketers</li> <li>Retailers from neighboring villages</li> <li>Wholesalers and local residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monrovia</li> <li>Neighboring villages</li> <li>Residents of Koon's town</li> </ul>
Palm Oil/Tobogi (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local households in Borkiza town</li> <li>Local traders who buy oil from Borkiza to sell locally</li> <li>Other traders who buy large quantities to sell in Zorzor and Monrovia</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: women are the main traders in oil value chain</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borkiza community</li> <li>Zorzor</li> <li>Monrovia</li> </ul>
Horticulture - Pepper, Bitter Ball, Watermelon (Bong County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wholesalers</li> <li>Retailers</li> <li>Households</li> <li>Farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monrovia</li> <li>Tomato Camp</li> <li>Palala</li> <li>Gbarnga</li> <li>Neighboring towns</li> </ul>
Fish (Grand Bassa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainly women traders</li> <li>Monrovia</li> <li>Kakata</li> <li>Harbel town</li> <li>Gbarnga City</li> <li>Buchanan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monrovia</li> <li>Kakata</li> <li>Harbel town</li> <li>Gbarnga City</li> <li>Buchanan</li> </ul>
Cow Peas (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traders from Bakedu who sell in Voinjama and Monrovia</li> <li>Local Households in Bakedu</li> <li>Neighboring villages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monrovia</li> <li>Voinjama city</li> <li>Bakedu town</li> <li>Neighboring villages</li> </ul>
Plantain (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketers from Monrovia</li> </ul>	Monrovia
Goats/Sheep (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local households</li> <li>Neighboring communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women from Monrovia</li> <li>Restaurant owners from Sanniquellie and Ganta</li> </ul>

Commodity/Findings	4a. Main players	4b. Main processes
Cassava (Grand Bassa and Montserrat Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers • Wholesalers</li> <li>• Retailers • Marketers</li> <li>• Households • Individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearing of land • Planting of cassava</li> <li>• Weeding of grass • Harvesting</li> <li>• Packaging/bagging • Storage</li> <li>• Processing it into 'dumboy' and 'fufu'</li> <li>• Sale of the product</li> </ul>
Palm Oil (Bong and Montserrat Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planters/farmers • Cleaners</li> <li>• Pruners of palm trees</li> <li>• Palm cutters/harvesters, grinders/pounders and beaters</li> <li>• Palm oil producers/manufacturers</li> <li>• Wholesalers • Retailers • Households</li> <li>• Community members • Individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harvesting • Packaging • Chopping/plugging</li> <li>• Boiling • Pounding/grinding/beating</li> <li>• Boiling of butter • Dipping of oil</li> <li>• Canning/packaging of oil in containers</li> <li>• Sale of oil</li> </ul>
Palm Oil/Tobogi (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutters of palm oil</li> <li>• Transporters</li> <li>• Beaters/laborers</li> <li>• Local households in Borkiza</li> <li>• Local traders</li> <li>• External traders</li> <li>• Final consumers outside Borkiza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of palm trees and mature nuts</li> <li>• Cutting/clearing of access path</li> <li>• Cutting/harvesting • Picking of dropping nuts</li> <li>• Chopping palm heads and extraction of nuts</li> <li>• Soaking with cold water in the pit (cover with banana leaves) to ferment</li> <li>• Boil new palm nuts and add to the fermented heap</li> <li>• Beat to extract the oil • Pack into containers</li> <li>• Strain to separate oil from refuse</li> <li>• Selling to final consumer/users (used to prepare tobogi sauce/ soup)</li> </ul>
Horticulture - Pepper, Bitter Ball, Watermelon (Bong County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketers • Transporters • Harvesters</li> <li>• Sprayers • Grass cleaner • Planters</li> <li>• Nursery caretakers • Digger</li> <li>• Cleaners • Seed selectors brushers</li> <li>• Site selectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing • Pricing • Transportation</li> <li>• Harvesting • Weeding (cleaning of grass)</li> <li>• Fertilizing • Spraying • Planting</li> <li>• Digging of beds • Cleaning • Spraying of seeds</li> <li>• Preparing seed beds • Burning • Felling of tress</li> <li>• Brushing • Selection of spot</li> <li>• Purchasing of seeds • Seeds selection</li> </ul>
Fish (Grand Bassa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input suppliers (nets, boats, etc.)</li> <li>• Fishermen • Fire makers</li> <li>• Canoe pullers • Net cleaners</li> <li>• Local households as consumers</li> <li>• Wholesalers • Urban Marketers</li> <li>• Retailers • Final Consumers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing to obtain fresh fish • Cleaning</li> <li>• Washing • Roasting, sun drying or frying</li> <li>• Packaging • Selling</li> </ul>
Cow Peas (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers</li> <li>• Retailers who sell to local households</li> <li>• Cook shops • Food sellers</li> <li>• Retailers • Farmers</li> <li>• Final consumers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing the farm/brushing</li> <li>• Planting/sowing using broadcasting method</li> <li>• Scratching • Weeding/cleaning</li> <li>• Harvesting • Sun drying • Including fanning</li> <li>• Bagging and storage • Selling in the market or keeping in airtight container and selling as seeds</li> <li>• Cooking processes</li> </ul>
Plantain (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kuu groups • Wholesalers</li> <li>• Households • Retailers • Consumers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farming • Brushing • Cleaning • Planting</li> <li>• Harvesting • Storage • Selling</li> </ul>
Goats/Sheep (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livestock/Cattle Farmers • Associations</li> <li>• Households • Women's traders</li> <li>• Restaurant owners • Meat roasters</li> <li>• Retailers • Final Consumers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising cattle • Feeding • Treating (medication)</li> <li>• Slaughtering • Sale fresh • Roasting</li> </ul>

Commodity/ Findings	4c. Most important/required services	4d. Current occupations for youth in the value chain
Cassava (Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Rental services</li> <li>• Financial services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Laboring, transportation, rental, farmers, consumers, storage and sales</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Farming, wholesale and retail of product, marketing, consumers, harvesting, storage and sales</p>
Palm Oil (Bong and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation (wheel barrows, vehicles, and motorcycles)</li> <li>• Warehouse/ storage</li> <li>• Communication and financial services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Palm planting, cleaning or serving as laborers, pruners, palm harvesters, grinders, palm oil producers, consumers, transporters, communicators, financiers, canning of palm oil, dipping of oil, boiling of oil, pounding/ beating of palm nuts, chopping/plugging off of palm nuts, packaging and harvesting</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Sale of palm oil, canning of oil, production of soap, preparation of palm butter, financial services, communication, warehouse, consumers/ households, wholesalers and retailers</p>
Palm Oil/ Tobogi (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport (motorcycles and lorries)</li> <li>• Communication/scratch card sellers</li> <li>• Daily laborers, such as kuu</li> <li>• Beating/extraction</li> <li>• Financial services (Susu groups/MFIs/ banks)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Cutting, beating for oil extraction, motorcycle transport, daily hire/labor, and final consumers</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Oil extraction process, retail trade, engagement in financial/savings activities and susu networks</p>
Horticulture - Pepper, Bitter Ball, Watermelon (Bong County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport • Medical Services</li> <li>• Financing • Communication</li> <li>• Provision of inputs/raw materials</li> <li>• Linkages between buyers</li> <li>• Labor, including family support and kuu</li> </ul>	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Transportation, farm operations (weeding, pest control), and land preparation/ cleaning</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Marketer, transporter, harvester, planter, and nursery caretaker</p>
Fish (Grand Bassa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor • Financing (microfinance)</li> <li>• Communication • Transportation</li> <li>• Warehousing/storage</li> </ul>	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Warehousing, transportation, communication, laborers, input supply, fishing, fire making, canoe pulling, fish consumers, and financial services</p> <p><b>Youth Female:</b> Financial services, laborers (cleaning, drying, frying), input suppliers, cleaners, sale of fresh fish, packaging, selling, wholesalers, marketers and retailers</p>
Cow Peas (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport (motorcycles and canoes)</li> <li>• Communication/scratch card sellers</li> <li>• Laborers required in farm preparation processes and bagging</li> <li>• Financing (Susu groups/MFIs/ banks)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Farmers, consumers, credit officers working with LEAP micro finance, motorcycle transport, daily hire/labor in the farm, sowing, bagging, storage after the harvest, and selling scratch cards</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Farmers, retail trade, food processing, and sale</p>
Plantain (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-financing of farm operations/buyers by marketers • Transportation</li> <li>• Labor • Susu club or VSLA</li> <li>• Mobile phone companies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Transportation, laborers in brushing and clearing land</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Financial services and selling of plantain</p>
Goats/Sheep (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketers (provide medicine for animals)</li> <li>• Transport • Labor</li> <li>• Community savings club (CSC) or VSLA</li> <li>• Mobile phone companies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Communication, transportation, Laborers, livestock owners, and traders</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Cook shops /restaurants, meat roasters, marketing, and savings and credit groups</p>

Commodity/Findings	4e. Promising opportunities for youth	4f. Required technical skills
Cassava (Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties)	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Farming, warehouse, wholesale, retail, and transportation</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Wholesale, retail, and farming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation skills</li> <li>• Farming/production skills</li> <li>• Rental/warehouse management skills</li> <li>• Marketing • Education/development</li> </ul>
Palm Oil (Bong and Montserrado Counties)	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Transportation</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Warehouse/storage, soap production, and sale of palm oil (wholesalers and retailers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Training in transport sector</li> <li>• Marketing</li> </ul>
Palm Oil/Tobogi (Lofa County)	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Local and external trade, oil extraction by use of improved technologies</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Transportation to various markets (if using own vehicles), selling of scratch cards, and daily labor/hires</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to process oil • Marketing</li> <li>• Customer care</li> <li>• How to use improved technologies on oil extraction to reduce labor (such as freedom mills)</li> <li>• Preservation/storage</li> </ul>
Horticulture - Pepper, Bitter Ball, Watermelon (Bong County)	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Transportation (motorcycle) and storage</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Marketing and farm management/farm operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture skills</li> <li>• Cooperative knowledge</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Driving skills</li> </ul>
Fish (Grand Bassa County)	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Warehousing, transportation, communication, laborers, input suppliers, fisherman, fire making, canoe pulling, fish consumers, and financial services</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Financial services, laborers, processing (cleaning, drying, frying), input suppliers, cleaners, sale of fresh fish, packaging, selling (wholesalers), marketers, and retailers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Drying methods</li> <li>• Smoking methods</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Sewing of nets</li> <li>• Timing of fishing</li> </ul>
Cow Peas (Lofa County)	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Running cook shops/restaurants, retail, and local buyers</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Sale of scratch cards, sewing, bagging, storage, and daily laborers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farming skills</li> <li>• Financial management (including working with MFIs and banks)</li> <li>• Basic reading and writing</li> <li>• How to do business and start a business</li> </ul>
Plantain (Nimba County)	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Laborers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farming as a business skills</li> <li>• Storage and post-harvest skills</li> </ul>
Goats/Sheep (Nimba County)	<p><b>Male Youth:</b> Financing (savings and credit groups), transport, and communication</p> <p><b>Female Youth:</b> Retail trade for livestock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal farming</li> <li>• Business skills</li> <li>• Animal maintenance skill (treating and feeding)</li> </ul>

Commodity/Findings	4g. Main constraints for youth	5. Promising opportunities
Cassava (Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low education</li> <li>• Low business activities and limited demand for products</li> <li>• Bad roads and limited access to transport vehicles</li> <li>• Lack of access to land</li> <li>• Lack of food</li> <li>• Inadequate tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing of palm oil</li> <li>• Burning of charcoal</li> <li>• Tapping of rubber</li> <li>• Sand mining</li> <li>• Sale of gasoline</li> <li>• Video clubs</li> </ul>
Palm Oil (Bong and Montserrado Counties)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited education or no education</li> <li>• Lack of technical knowledge and training</li> <li>• Bad character and behavior of youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sale of rubber</li> <li>• Sale of vegetables</li> <li>• Cassava</li> <li>• Corn</li> </ul>
Palm Oil/Tobogi (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of skills in cutting of the palm</li> <li>• Males are unfamiliar with the process of fermentation during the extraction process (activity currently done mostly by females)</li> <li>• Youth are not willing to learn/ ignorant about all the skills involved in the value chain process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peanuts</li> <li>• Honey/ bee keeping</li> <li>• Cassava</li> <li>• Bitter ball</li> <li>• Pepper</li> </ul>
Horticulture - Pepper, Bitter Ball, Watermelon (Bong County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of warehousing</li> <li>• Lack of finance</li> <li>• Poor food preservation</li> <li>• Poor roads and lack of good transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Carpentry</li> <li>• Tie and dye</li> <li>• Soap making</li> <li>• Computer processing</li> <li>• Microloans providers</li> </ul>
Fish (Grand Bassa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive heat</li> <li>• Lack of proper drying oven</li> <li>• Storm-high tides</li> <li>• Ocean currents</li> <li>• Rough weather</li> <li>• Poor compass reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cook shop/restaurants</li> <li>• Hair plaiting</li> <li>• Basket weaving</li> <li>• Cutting of wood (logging)</li> <li>• Soap making</li> <li>• Video clubs</li> </ul>
Cow Peas (Lofa County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of the necessary skills required in production and selling</li> <li>• Females do not have skills for riding motorbikes or canoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrowroots • Cassava • Bitter ball and peppers</li> <li>• Bananas/plantain • Groundnuts • Honey</li> <li>• Rearing and selling of chicken</li> <li>• Rearing and selling of goats/sheep</li> </ul>
Plantain (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth feel motorcycle transport is a quicker way of making money than production of plantain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peanut • Pepper</li> <li>• Cassava</li> </ul>
Goats/Sheep (Nimba County)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grazing of animals has hindered youth from going to school</li> <li>• Youth are impatient and therefore do not care properly for animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beans • Vegetable farming</li> <li>• Cassava • Swampland rice farming</li> <li>• Fish pond/ farming</li> </ul>

# Value Chain Findings

## Analysis and Implications for Advancing Youth

Findings	Analysis	Implications for Advancing Youth
1a. Essential skills in production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is existing knowledge of the essential skills required for production in each value chain commodity; however not all were listed.</li> <li>• Most of the essential skills fall within site selection, farmland preparation and basic agronomic and animal husbandry practices across all value chains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic agronomic practices for crop and animal husbandry should be emended into ABE Curriculum to create more awareness.</li> <li>• Livelihoods strategy needs to engage youth into practical projects learning sessions with demonstrations (at school or other progressive farmers) of these required skills.</li> <li>• Support value chain projects where Advancing youth learners are engaged.</li> <li>• Provide 'Farming as a Business' skills training to learners involved in production of promising value chain commodities.</li> </ul>
1b. Essential skills in marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market information for producers to know what is in demand, where to sell and at what price.</li> <li>• Value addition such as measuring, grading, packaging in order to meet the quality requirements in the market.</li> <li>• Marketing skills including advertisement, and customer service/care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a rapid market information assessment to identify and support bridge gaps within market information system.</li> <li>• Support establishment of a system for collecting and sharing of market information with key stakeholders including Advancing youth learners.</li> <li>• Provide business skills training to marketers and traders involved with promising value chain commodities.</li> <li>• Support promising value chains where advancing youth learners are engaged with.</li> </ul>
2a. Main inputs/ raw materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most producers and actors involved in value chains use traditional rudimentary hand tools and implements in production and processing stages. This limits the production level to only subsistence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify other technologies, tools and implements that can help to increase production levels.</li> </ul>
2b. Input-sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the agro inputs suppliers/dealers are located and operate from Monrovia. This makes access to farm inputs difficult and expensive for rural farmers.</li> <li>• Main source of seeds is local farmers, most of who do not have sufficient to meet the required quantities and quality.</li> <li>• Local Blacksmiths play an important role in supplying farm tools, however the production capacity is insufficient to meet market demand.</li> <li>• Often, most of the tools and inputs are brought into the community from Monrovia are imported from neighboring countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and engage private sector in agro-input supply to open outreach branches in counties.</li> <li>• Support initiative for local seed production/ seed fairs to stimulate seed production entrepreneurship.</li> <li>• Training of interested youth in blacksmith and metal wok skills including facilitating them with essential toolkits and assistance to set up their production units.</li> <li>• Support local artisans and dealers interested in supply of inputs including capacity building where necessary in order to effectively stock/produce required inputs for easy access by farmers.</li> </ul>

Findings	Analysis	Implications for Advancing Youth
3a. Main buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trade in high value commodities is dominated by a chain of middlemen- (wholesalers, retainers, petty traders etc). As a result the buying price at farm gate is quite low as compared to final market prices and farmers feel exploited.</li> <li>Most middle men buy from individual producers; thus it takes time to consolidate the required quantities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support formation of producer marketing cooperatives around promising value chains for Advancing Youth learners.</li> <li>Embedding the concept of cooperative formation into ABE curriculum.</li> <li>Linking producer and marketing cooperatives to market opportunities.</li> <li>Providing producer and marketing cooperatives with market information.</li> </ul>
3b. Main markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is overwhelming demand for most of the high value commodities, within local markets, neighboring districts and counties and capital city Monrovia.</li> <li>Traders have travel long distance from Monrovia to rural villages to find the commodities they would like to buy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formation of producer marketing cooperatives where advancing youth learners are involved will be helpful to facilitate consolidation of the produce for easy marketing.</li> <li>Facilitating linkage of cooperatives with buyers/market opportunities.</li> <li>Focus on supporting high value commodities with proven ready market.</li> </ul>
4a. Main players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local farmers, traders and service providers are familiar with their roles at various stages of the value chains.</li> </ul>	
4b. Main processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are various processes different commodities have to go through to reach the final consumer in the required quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider familiarizing Advancing Youth with value chain processes for different activities they are engaged or interested in as part of ABE.</li> </ul>
4c. Most important/ required services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most required services/ demanded have been identified in communication, motorbike transport, financing and provision of casual labor force.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide to advancing youth learners involved or interested in motorbike business with training on; safe motorbike driving, entrepreneurship, customer care and linking them to potential employers in delivery of consignments and goods.</li> <li>Linking learners to financial services.</li> <li>Training learners on how to deliver these services effectively.</li> <li>Linking learners to franchise opportunities with communication, transport and financial companies.</li> </ul>

Findings	Analysis	Implications for Advancing Youth
4d. Current occupations for youth in the value chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is high concentration of male youth in provision of casual labor and management of basic farm operations (mainly at the lowest level of the value chains).</li> <li>• Male youth are also dominant in provision of motorbike transport and communication – (sale of scratch cards, charging phones, entertainment).</li> <li>• Females are actively involved in most of the processes as laborers and are dominant in businesses – retailers, wholesalers.</li> <li>• Females are also actively involved with social group activities including savings clubs and susus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on the outcome of youth profile training youth both male female on enterprise specific technical skills required at the specific areas of occupation. This should include production/agronomic skills for the specific commodity, or process or trade they are engaged in.</li> <li>• Developing producer/marketing cooperatives including training on group dynamics for effective mobilization of produce, sharing of processing equipment and bargaining power and linkage to market opportunities.</li> <li>• Supporting and initiatives and facilitating linkages to access to business capital and inputs (e.g. pre-financing as part of buyers agreement).</li> </ul>
4e. Promising opportunities for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are promising opportunities for both male and female youth within current occupations. However youth are constrained to maximize tapping on these opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve skills through training and linkage to business opportunities geared towards maximum production and returns.</li> <li>• Introducing technologies that will improve efficiency along the value chains as may be required thus making it attractive occupation for youth such as introduction of learners to freedom mill for palm/Tobogi oil extraction, use of hand tractors.</li> <li>• Private sector engagement to assist setting up small or medium scale processing plants where youth with basic existing manual skills can be absorbed for employment, e.g. fruit juice processing, vegetable processing, oil processing etc. This will also provide market for locally produced commodities.</li> </ul>
4f. Required technical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There exists a wide gap in technical and entrepreneurship skills required along the entire value chain.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filtering out skills gaps through a capacity analysis of participants in specific value chains and offering enterprise specific technical training, mentoring through support guidance and monitoring progress of learners.</li> </ul>

Findings	Analysis	Implications for Advancing Youth
4g. Major constraints to youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth prefer occupations that yield quick income; therefore, they are less involved in activities that may yield high income over time.</li> <li>• Lack of education and required basic and technical skills.</li> <li>• Lack of entrepreneurship culture including marketing skills to be good business people.</li> <li>• Lack of technologies and equipment such as machineries that may accelerate value chain processes, reduce labor and increase production beyond household consumption (examples include irrigation, processing equipment, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing multiple livelihoods options for choice and diversification of income sources for Advancing Youth learners.</li> <li>• Identify innovative partners and support introduction of improved technologies through small and medium sized value chain projects.</li> <li>• Advocate for improvement of feeder roads including linkage to other organizations engaged in road rehabilitation projects in areas where Advancing Youth is operating.</li> <li>• Through youth clubs, facilitate exposure/ exchange visits for learners to progressive youth-led value chain projects sites for experience sharing.</li> <li>• Identify and support promising youth to serve as peer trainers.</li> </ul>
5. Upcoming/ongoing projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In all counties, most of the ongoing projects visited were road construction initiatives.</li> <li>• Road construction poses a huge employment opportunity; however required skills may be difficult to find in Advancing Youth learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constantly pursue any arising opportunities for skills development in road construction- with SIDA, private construction companies, etc.</li> <li>• Take part in emerging forums to gather information on any employment or training opportunities arising for youth and providing linkages.</li> <li>• There is need to follow up any other available opportunities for youth employment.</li> </ul>
6. Other promising opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are other important and highly demanded promising value chains such as bee keeping, poultry, rice, fish farming, peanuts, edoes, horticulture- fruits and vegetables.</li> <li>• Other promising opportunities include cash crops (including rubber tapping); service industry (entertainment, cook shops, and guest houses); and mining (minerals and stones sand).</li> <li>• There is high potential for farming enterprises (crop and livestock).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts a rapid market survey to identify commodities, goods and services that are most demanded with possible high economic returns.</li> <li>• Select few priority enterprises- on farm and off farm- and implement pilot micro-projects to demonstrate recommended strategies.</li> </ul>

# Tools

## Key Informant Interview Guide

For NGOs, government ministries, youth institutions,  
and other key stakeholders

This interview guide was created in March-April 2012 as part of a market assessment for USAID's Advancing Youth Project. Questions have been gathered from a variety of sources including tools from Mercy Corps and Women's Refugee Commission.

Name of Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization/Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_ Town/village: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What goods or services are unavailable in this county that you wish were available here?

2. What sectors or services have a shortage of workers? Explain.

3. What challenges do youth with basic literacy and numeracy skills face in gaining employment and self-employment?





# Value Chain Focus Group Discussion Guide

*This focus group discussion guide was created in March-April 2012 as part of a market assessment for USAID's Advancing Youth Project. Questions have been gathered and organized from a variety of sources, including surveys and tools from Mercy Corps past projects.*

**Note: This tool will be administered to a group(s) of farmers, input suppliers, traders/wholesalers, processors, buyers and other service providers. Focus groups should consist of 10-15 individuals. Estimated time of discussion is 1 hour.**

County: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Village/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Value Chain Commodity: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the 3 main skills and technologies required in:
  - a) Production of this product.
  - b) Marketing of the product.
2. What are the main inputs or raw materials required for production of this commodity? Where do they come from? (*Probe: seeds, pesticides, tools, etc.*)
3. Who are the main buyers of the final product? Where are they located?

#### 4. Mapping the Value Chain

- a. List (by names) the main players involved in production and delivery of the product to buyers in the market. *(Prompt roles of each player: input suppliers, processors, traders, distributors, other service providers, etc.)*
  
- b. List various processes, technologies and functions the product has to pass through in order to improve its quality or value in the market *(Probe: processing, grading, packaging, labeling, storage, etc.)*
  
- c. List the most important service providers necessary for smooth flow of the product as it moves from one stage to the next. *(Probe: financial, communication, transportation services, etc.)*
  
- d. Using the colored cards: Map out the main players including how the product moves between different players.
  
- e. Using the colored cards: Map and draw the flow of processes that the tangible product goes through in order to improve quality and be delivered to the final market. *(Probe: cleaning, grinding, threshing, storage, packaging, labeling, etc.)*
  
- f. Map out the most important service providers, mark with letters SP for readily available service providers. Use dotted lines to demonstrate how these services they connect with the main players and value addition processes.
  
- g. Within the value chain map, identify with letters **Ym** for male and **Yf** for female where youth are currently involved.



# Youth Focus Group Discussion Guide

*This focus group discussion guide was created in March-April 2012 as part of a Labor Market Assessment for USAID's Advancing Youth Project. Questions have been gathered and organized from a variety of sources, including surveys and tools from Mercy Corps and Women's Refugee Commission.*

**Note: Focus groups should consist of 10-15 individuals. Groups will be gender exclusive – all male or all female. Estimated time of discussion is 1.5 hours.**

**Facilitator:** *Introduce the assessment team, Advancing Youth Project and the purpose of the discussion.*

1. Please explain: who does your community describe as youth?
2. Describe the state of youth unemployment in your district or county. (Probe: Has conflict (war) impacted youth unemployment?)
3. Has lack of employment or income generating opportunities contributed to any social problems (including negative behaviors) in your community? If so, please explain.
4. What challenges do youth face in making money? (Probe: How does lack of financial independence impact a young person's personal development: self-esteem, decision making ability, etc.)
5. What do the majority of male youth engage in to earn a living in your community? (Probe: to meet their daily subsistence requirements or generate income)

6. What do the majority of female youth engage in to earn a living in your community?  
*(Probe: to meet their daily subsistence requirement or generate income)*
  
7. What skills or experience do most youth have that you think are useful in the local economy? Why?
  
8. What local employment opportunities (including self-employment and small businesses) do you think are the most promising for the youth in your county?
  
9. Are young people aware of what viable or better opportunities there are for making more money (apart from the common businesses)? *(Probe: How do youth get accurate information about the most viable and profitable businesses self-employment activities?)*
  
10. Which kind of businesses, organizations or institutions employ many youth in this community?
  
11. How do local employers and businesses perceive youth in your community?
  
12. Who are the main/potential employers of young people in the district/county (consider government, NGOs, private sector or self-employment)? Please name and give details.
  
13. What are some of the factors that make someone a successful entrepreneur or business owner? *(Probe: Personal characteristics, skills, and traits, as well as enabling environment.)*

**14.** Do local businesses in the district/county support youth to engage in new business ideas? If yes, please explain how.

**15.** Has the local government been supporting young people to engage in new business ideas? If yes, please explain.

**16.** Do the local schools, vocational training centers, NGOs and entrepreneurship institutes provide youth with the required knowledge, skills, and tools needed to become successful entrepreneurs or business owners? Explain which ones and how. (*Probe: What about access to these centers*).

**17.** How do young people get money for starting a business or running a business? (*Probe: whether they are members of susus, borrow from MFIs, banks, etc.*)

**18.** Are youth interested in the Advancing Youth Project?

**19.** Additional thoughts and observations?

- Remember to ask whether respondents have any questions.
- Mention that the information will be useful to inform development of further activities for Advancing Youth Project.

# Business/Employer Survey Questionnaire

#	Category	Answers (and Coding)	Comments
1	Name of Assessor		
2	Date	____ / ____ / ____ (dd / mm / yy )	
3	County		
4	District		
5	Community/Village		

## SECTION 1: REFERENCE DETAILS

### Informed consent

*The interviewer should read this aloud. If necessary, please also refer to the Survey Tip Sheet/ Guide.*

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_

and I am conducting an assessment for the Advancing Youth Project. The project works closely with the Ministry of Education and local organizations to provide Alternative Basic Education (ABE), social opportunities, leadership development, and livelihood training for out-of-school youth aged 13-35. As we engage with these activities, we would like to talk to a few people like yourself to help us understand the situation of young people in your town and the district as a whole.

I would therefore like to request your time to discuss a few questions I have prepared for you. The questionnaire should take no more than 30 minutes.

Is this OK with you? Yes: ..... No:.....

If Yes, thank you. I will try not to take much of your time.

Signature of Assessor \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 2: SURVEY QUESTIONS**

#	Questions	Answers (and Coding)	Comments/ Instructions
6	Full name of respondent		
7	Respondent's sex (circle)	Male . . . . . 1 Female. . . . . 2	
8	Respondent's age (circle)	Under 18 years. . . . . 1 18 – 35 years . . . . . 2 Over 35 years. . . . . 3	
9	Position of respondent in the business (circle)	Owner . . . . . 1 Manager. . . . . 2 Salesman/Employee. . . . . 3 Other (Specify: _____) . . . . . 4	
10	Name of business and address of business	Name: _____ Address: _____ _____	
11	Phone number of respondent		
12	How long has the business been operating? (circle)	1 year or less . . . . . 1 More than 1 year to 3 years . . . . . 2 More than 3 years . . . . . 3	
13	What type of business is this? (Circle one sector that most applies and put the specific type of business at bottom.)	Agriculture/crop farming . . . . . 1 Livestock . . . . . 2 Manufacturing/processing . . . . . 3 Retail trade . . . . . 4 Wholesale trade . . . . . 5 Construction . . . . . 6 Hotels and restaurants . . . . . 7 Transport . . . . . 8 Finance/insurance . . . . . 9 Real estate/renting . . . . . 10 Education . . . . . 11 Health and social work . . . . . 12 Logging . . . . . 13 Mining . . . . . 14 Other. . . . . 15 SPECIFIC BUSINESS: _____	

14	Who are the main buyers and consumers of the goods/services you provide? (Circle only one that most applies.)	Individuals or households . . . . . 1 Small businesses/traders . . . . . 2 Large businesses. . . . . 3 International/export market. . . . . 4 Government agencies/public enterprises . . . . . 5 Non Governmental Organizations . . . . . 6 Other. . . . . 7 (Specify: _____)	
15a	What is the biggest challenge the management faces in running this business? (Circle one BIGGEST CHALLENGE.)	<b>Biggest Challenge</b> Market information . . . . . 1 Financial services. . . . . 2 Government regulations . . . . . 3 Competition in the market. . . . . 4 Availability of labor . . . . . 5 Appropriate skilled labor force . . . . . 6 Transportation. . . . . 7 Supply of raw material. . . . . 8 Access to technology . . . . . 9 Labor costs . . . . . 10 Costs of raw material . . . . . 11 Security . . . . . 12 Weather . . . . . 13 Political Uncertainties . . . . . 14 Other. . . . . 15 (Specify: _____)	
15b	What is the second biggest challenge the management faces in running this business? (Circle one SECOND BIGGEST CHALLENGE.)	<b>Second Biggest Challenge</b> Market information . . . . . 1 Financial services. . . . . 2 Government regulations . . . . . 3 Competition in the market. . . . . 4 Availability of labor . . . . . 5 Appropriate skilled labor force . . . . . 6 Transportation. . . . . 7 Supply of raw material. . . . . 8 Access to technology . . . . . 9 Labor costs . . . . . 10 Costs of raw material . . . . . 11 Security . . . . . 12 Weather . . . . . 13 Political Uncertainties . . . . . 14 Other. . . . . 15 (Specify: _____)	

<b>16</b>	How many other businesses provide the same service or goods in this district?	None . . . . . 1 1 – 5 . . . . . 2 6 – 20 . . . . . 3 21 or more . . . . . 4 Not sure . . . . . 5	
<b>17</b>	How many people in total work in the business, including you?	_____ (number of people)	
<b>18</b>	How many male employees work in the business?	_____ (number of total male employees)	
<b>19</b>	How many female employees work in the business?	_____ (number of total female employees)	
<b>20</b>	Of the total number of persons employed in the business, in which age category are the majority of employees? (circle)	17 years and below . . . . . 1 18 – 35 years . . . . . 2 36 years and above . . . . . 3	
<b>21</b>	At this time last year, were there more, fewer or the same number of employees in the business? (circle)	Fewer . . . . . 1 Same . . . . . 2 More . . . . . 3	
<b>22</b>	Have you faced problems recruiting the kinds of employees you require for your business? (circle)	Yes . . . . . 1 No . . . . . 2	
<b>23a</b>	Have you hired any employees within the past 6 months? (circle)	Yes . . . . . 1 No . . . . . 2	
<b>23b</b>	Do you plan to hire any employees in the near future (within the next 6 months)? (circle)	Yes . . . . . 1 No . . . . . 2	<i>If 23b(No) skip to Question 24</i>
<b>23c</b>	If yes, do you plan to hire any youth age 35 or under? (circle)	Yes . . . . . 1 No . . . . . 2	
<b>24</b>	Is this business willing to take on interns/ on-the-job trainees? (circle)	Yes . . . . . 1 No . . . . . 2	

<b>25</b>	Is this business willing to actively recruit young females as employees, interns, or on the job trainees? (circle)	Yes . . . . . 1 No . . . . . 2	
<b>26</b>	How do you normally find new employees? (Circle only one that most applies.)	Advertisements . . . . . 1 Through relatives or friends . . . . . 2 Referrals from education/training institutions . . 3 From employment agencies . . . . . 4 Promotion from within (already employed in the business) . . . . . 5 Through an internship . . . . . 6 Other (Specify: _____): . . . . . 7	
<b>27</b>	What kind of employment arrangement does your business offer for young people? (circle)	Daily casual contract . . . . . 1 Monthly contract . . . . . 2 Seasonal contract . . . . . 3 Other (Specify: _____): . . . . . 4	
<b>28</b>	If you had to hire someone for your business, would you prefer to hire: (Go to 28a-28d and circle one answer for each category.)		
<b>28a</b>	Age	25 years and below . . . . . 1 26 -35 years of age . . . . . 2 36 years and above . . . . . 3 No preference . . . . . 4	
<b>28b</b>	Gender	Female . . . . . 1 Male . . . . . 2 No preference . . . . . 3	
<b>28c</b>	Marital status	Unmarried . . . . . 1 Married . . . . . 2 No preference . . . . . 3	
<b>28d</b>	Basic literacy skills	Not important . . . . . 1 Somewhat important . . . . . 2 Very important . . . . . 3	

<b>28e</b>	Education	Completed Alternative Basic Education . . . . . 1 Completed primary school . . . . . 2 Completed secondary school . . . . . 3 Complete college/vocational school . . . . . 4 Completed university or above . . . . . 5 No preference . . . . . 6	
<b>29a</b>	Which of the following statements do you most agree with? (circle)	Youth are reliable employees . . . . . 1 Youth are unreliable employees . . . . . 2	
<b>29b</b>	Which of the following statements do you most agree with? (circle )	Youth are hardworking . . . . . 1 Youth are lazy . . . . . 2	
<b>29c</b>	Which of the following statements do you most agree with? (circle)	Youth have skills and knowledge for work . . . . . 1 Youth lack skills and knowledge needed for work . . . . . 2	
<b>29d</b>	Which of the following statements do you most agree with? (circle )	Youth are professional employees . . . . . 1 Youth are unprofessional employees . . . . . 2	
<b>29e</b>	Which of the following statements do you most agree with? (circle)	Youth are agreeable in dealing with issues . . . . . 1 Youth are confrontational in dealing with issues . . . . . 2	
<b>30</b>	In your opinion, do youth expect lower, the same, or higher salaries than other (adult) employees? (circle)	Expect lower salary . . . . . 1 Expect to earn same as other employees . . . . . 2 Expect higher salary . . . . . 3	
<b>31</b>	In your opinion, should young men and young women be paid equally for the same position? (circle)	Young men and women should be paid equally . . . . . 1 Young men should be paid more than young women . . . . . 2 Young women should be paid more than young men . . . . . 3	
<b>32</b>	What is the average salary paid to the majority of young employees in your business per day?	Less than 1 US\$ . . . . . 1 More than 1 US\$ – 5 US\$ . . . . . 2 More than 5US\$ – 10 US\$ . . . . . 3 More than 10US\$ – 30 US\$ . . . . . 4 More than 30 US\$ – 50US\$ . . . . . 5 More than 50US\$ . . . . . 6	

<p><b>33</b></p>	<p>Based on past experience, general perceptions and personal opinion, please rate the skill levels of youth for each category.</p>	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Good</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Average</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Poor</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>a. Communication skills</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Technical skills</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. Appropriate level/type of education</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. Ability to apply knowledge learned in school to work</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. Commitment and discipline</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. Realistic expectations about world of work</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. Problem solving/ decision making skills</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> <tr> <td>h. Overall ability</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> <td style="text-align: center;">[ ]</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Good	Average	Poor	a. Communication skills	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	b. Technical skills	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	c. Appropriate level/type of education	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	d. Ability to apply knowledge learned in school to work	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	e. Commitment and discipline	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	f. Realistic expectations about world of work	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	g. Problem solving/ decision making skills	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	h. Overall ability	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
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<p><b>34a</b></p>	<p>When recruiting your employees, what is the one most important characteristic you look for in an employee? (Circle only one MOST IMPORTANT characteristic.)</p>	<p><b>Most Important Characteristic:</b></p> <p>Education . . . . . 1</p> <p>Marital status . . . . . 2</p> <p>Age . . . . . 3</p> <p>Gender . . . . . 4</p> <p>Past training . . . . . 5</p> <p>Job experience . . . . . 6</p> <p>Presentation . . . . . 7</p> <p>County of origin . . . . . 8</p> <p>Religion . . . . . 9</p> <p>Personal connection . . . . . 10</p> <p>Other (Specify: _____) . . . . . 11</p>																																					
<p><b>34b</b></p>	<p>When recruiting your employees, what is the one second most important characteristic you look for in an employee? (Circle the one SECOND MOST IMPORTANT characteristic.)</p>	<p><b>Second Most Important Characteristic:</b></p> <p>Education . . . . . 1</p> <p>Marital status . . . . . 2</p> <p>Age . . . . . 3</p> <p>Gender . . . . . 4</p> <p>Past training . . . . . 5</p> <p>Job experience . . . . . 6</p> <p>Presentation . . . . . 7</p> <p>County of origin . . . . . 8</p> <p>Religion . . . . . 9</p> <p>Personal connection . . . . . 10</p> <p>Other (Specify: _____) . . . . . 11</p>																																					

35a	When recruiting your employees, what is the one most important requirement for a potential employee? (Circle only one MOST IMPORTANT requirement.)	<b>Most Important Requirement</b> Marketing skills . . . . . 1 Basic literacy skills . . . . . 2 Financial management skills . . . . . 3 Computer skills . . . . . 4 Technical skills . . . . . 5 English . . . . . 6 Local language . . . . . 7 Personal reference . . . . . 8 Age requirement . . . . . 9 Local residence . . . . . 10 Interpersonal skills . . . . . 11 Other (Specify: _____) . . . . . 12	
35b	When recruiting your employees, what is the second most important requirement for a potential employee? (Circle only one SECOND MOST IMPORTANT requirement.)	<b>Second Most Important Requirement</b> Marketing skills . . . . . 1 Basic literacy skills . . . . . 2 Financial management skills . . . . . 3 Computer skills . . . . . 4 Technical skills . . . . . 5 English . . . . . 6 Local language . . . . . 7 Personal reference . . . . . 8 Age requirement . . . . . 9 Local residence . . . . . 10 Interpersonal skills . . . . . 11 Other (Specify: _____) . . . . . 12	
36a	When recruiting your employees, what are the 3 most important job-related skills a potential employee must have? (List 3 most important skills.)	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____	
36b	What kind of job specific skills training would you or your company be willing to provide to new employees? (List 3 if possible.)	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____	

Signature of Respondent \_\_\_\_\_