



## REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

*Promoting social stability through vocational training for vulnerable people and communities in Grand Bassa County, Liberia*

### Context

Liberia is a country richly endowed with natural resources and fertile land. However, the recent outbreak of Ebola has seriously affected its recovery from the destructive civil wars of the 1990s. Subsequent withdrawals from investors resulted in a reduction of revenue and budget shortfall. In particular, the country's large youth population faces the socioeconomic challenges of a disruptive and fragile post-crisis setting. Without the necessary skills and education, young people are confronted with an acute lack of job opportunities despite large corporations operating as potential job providers in the country. Building marketable skills and know-how among youth is vital in order to develop productive and labour-intensive industries, as well as prevent the destabilizing effects of large youth unemployment to the post-crisis rehabilitation of people and communities.

### Strategy

In line with the Liberian Government's long-term development plan, and based on UNIDO's extensive experience and expertise in post-crisis rehabilitation, the project aims to promote social stabilization by improving human security of vulnerable people and communities affected by concession projects (PACs). Building upon the successes of the previous UNIDO intervention, the projects seeks to provide technical and vocational training in coordination with transnational corporations (TNCs), as well as to utilize existing vocational institutions. Moreover, the project focuses on the economically attractive wood furniture industry and especially on the use of rubber wood as an environmentally sustainable alternative to tropical wood.

### Impact and Results

- **Trainings and participation:** The previous basic training program for unskilled youth and advanced training program for established carpenters have been updated to include a focus on rubber wood processing and an intermediary curriculum was developed. By February 2019, 147 beneficiaries have graduated from at least one of the trainings. 75 trainees have been provided with basic carpentry tool kits in order to facilitate their entry into apprenticeships in local carpentry workshops.
- **Community development and self-help systems:** Mentorship programs have been established in several communities matching recently graduated trainees with local carpenters.

Such local support groups help foster social cohesion as well as business development and alleviate youth unemployment through apprenticeships.

- **Business partnerships and industry development:** Locally operating TNCs have been mobilized for new business partnerships with vocational training institutions as well as the local private sector.
- **Knowledge transfer and intercultural exchange:** Representatives of the Liberian carpentry industry from the vocational, union and Government sectors participated in a study tour to Japan. The delegation received valuable insight into new production techniques, marketing strategies and industry management and in turn fostered intercultural exchange with Japanese carpenters and industry representatives.

### Outlook

By providing technical and vocational training in coordination with existing institutions and TNCs, the project aims to promote social stability and improve the human security of vulnerable people and communities in Grand Bassa County, Liberia. This comprehensive approach of human capacity-building, combining youth development, business partnerships and environmentally sustainable production, helps create a robust local economy.

### At a glance

**Project title:** Promoting social stability by providing technical and vocational training for vulnerable people in communities affected by concession projects in Grand Bassa County, Liberia

**Goal:** To promote social and economic resilience and stability through diversification and industrialization of the economy.

**SDGs:** Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

**Donor:** Government of Japan

**Project counterpart:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Liberia National Investment Commission, National Bureau of Concession

**Budget:** USD 600,000

**Duration:** April 2018 to March 2019