



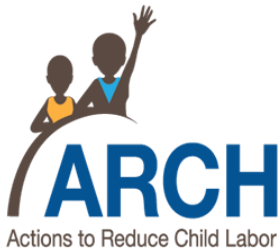
WINROCK
INTERNATIONAL

ARCH Newsletter

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Message from the Project Director



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Partners of the ARCH Project:

- **Government of Liberia**
- **NACOMAL**
- **ANPPCAN**
- **GAAWUL**

Note: To protect the identities of our beneficiaries, only first names are mentioned.

The Action to Reduce Child Labor Project (ARCH) is a four year project designed to initiate actions to reduce child labor in rubber production areas in Liberia. This project is financed by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) and is being implemented by Winrock International under the USDOL cooperative agreement number IL-23978-13-75-K.

Objectives

The ARCH project has eight basic strategic objectives for the enhancement of child labor reduction: Education, Livelihood, Social Protection, Youth Employment, Policy and Institutional Strengthening, Research and Data Collection, Transparency and Accountability.

Purpose

The overall purpose of the ARCH project under the USDOL Cooperative Agreement is to support efforts to reduce child labor in rubber growing areas of Liberia. The project is promoting improved policies to address child labor in rubber producing areas and enhanced monitoring and enforcement of such policies. The project is also supporting direct delivery of ser-

vices to children ages 5 through 17 years and their households who are engaged in or who are at-risk for various forms of child labor.

Achievements

The ARCH project has made significant strides during the three years of implementation, through partnerships with the Government of Liberia through her local ministries, Local NGO partners, Trade Unionists, Community structures and beneficiaries.

More than 10,100 beneficiaries who were previously involved in child labor or at risk of engaging in child labor have been enrolled in various components of the project and received project support. The project has enrolled 5,377 beneficiaries in formal education, with 240 children having completed the Model Farm School program and over 2,000 have been provided with alternative education services.

One of the core project components for sustainability lies in the application of the livelihood program for vulnerable households. This project has provided capacity-building and support to 2,409 vulnerable

households who are project beneficiaries. The project has also provided training for 34 community structures (PTAs) in writing Requests for Applications for small grants (RFP) and small grant implementations for the support of education for children.

At the national level, the project has supported the Ministry of Labor to establish the National Steering Committee that is responsible for the development of the National Action Plan for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Liberia. Generally, the NSC is to coordinate the efforts of child labor elimination in Liberia under the canopy of the National Commission on Child Labor (NACOMAL).

The ARCH project is building the capacity of the Government of Liberia to improve child labor monitoring and its policy implementation through the provision of training for Labor Commissioners and the Inspector General.

Best,

James Yekeh P.D. ARCH

“Grace,” The Transformed Girl

Grace is 17 years old and lives in Karnwee, Nimba County with her parents. According to Grace, she was nine years old when she started digging holes on her father's rubber farm to transplant young rubber trees. At the age of 13, her tasks increased to cleaning the rubber cups and pouring acids into cups bearing latex. She hated this work but had no other options. Between the ages of 14 and 16, Grace's tasks became even more difficult. She started carrying latex in buckets on her head. Grace said, *“the sting water will just be wasting on me. Coming down all on my face from my hair sometimes in my eyes, nose and even my mouth.”*

In 2014, the ARCH Project introduced the MFS program in Karnwee where several children between the ages of 16 and 17 participated. Among the youth was 17 year old Grace who took



Grace displaying vegetable products at the local market (Second from right)

interest in vegetable production and piggery.

Grace was one of the proud graduates from Karnwee who developed a passion for the MFS program. Grace took to the local market to display the produce from the MFS demo site where she worked .

Due to her courage and intelligence, Grace is now one of the upstanding peer mentors in Karnwee, Nimba Coun-

ty, advocating for the reduction of child labor.

She expressed sincere gratitude for the MFS program and highly lauded the WINROCK ARCH Project for the initiative taken in training young vulnerable children like her to realize their true potentials.

Most of the people like Grace's parents who live in Karnwee are engaged in rubber farming. This community is not far from the Cocopa Rubber Plantation Company, the major rubber buyer in Nimba County.

With the support of the United States Government through its Department of Labor, the WINROCK ARCH Project is now a beacon of hope for the sustainable future of many Liberian children.

FPS Preparing School Garden For School Feeding Program

With the sole purpose of creating Agri-demo sites in schools in order to provide technical skills to young children between the ages of 13 and 15, the ARCH Project has set up Agri-Clubs in schools in project areas. The Flumpa public school, besides benefiting from the PTA grant, has also benefited from the Agri-Club. The club has succeeded in producing a school garden which serves as a demonstration site for the club members.

The school garden will help to keep the students practicing improved agriculture skills while they are still in school. Moreover, the

school will now begin to use the produce grown within the garden.

With the introduction of the school garden there is hope that children will remain engaged with technical and productive activities, rather than turning to hard labor.

Additionally, in the near future, the Flumpa public school hopes to benefit from the School Feeding Program, which will soon be introduced by ARCH. If this program is successfully established in the Flumpa public school, the school garden would speak to the sustainability of the School Feeding Program.



FPS Students preparing the School Garden

ARCH Provides Hope For Flumpa Public School

In order to improve local schools and their ability to meet the academic needs of children, the ARCH Project seeks to promote quality education and a suitable learning environment for various communities within Liberia. The WINROCK ARCH Project has initiated several grants to transform schools in the ARCH Project areas of Montserrado, Margibi and Nimba Counties..

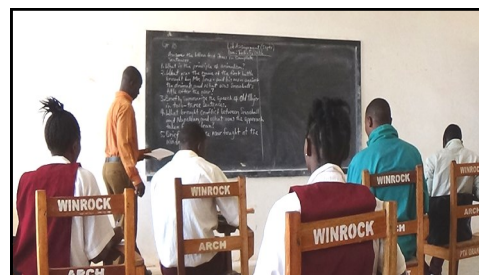
In Nimba County, the Flumpa Public School was one of the beneficiaries of the PTA Grant in 2015. The grant gave materials to the FPS authority including arm chairs, chalkboards, boxes of chalk and assorted sporting

goods.

According to Joseph Kogbay, the Principal of the FPS, they are overwhelmed with joy as they have not only received these materials from the ARCH Project, but have also received technical assistance with regards to instructional improvement. *"The donation has boosted the enrollment of our school and provided a good learning environment for the students."*

The teachers at the FPS were given refresher trainings in the areas of classroom management, lesson planning and the Accelerated Learning Program. (ALP). The

school, which now has one of the highest school enrollments in that community, has more than 500 students. The FPS is a semi-senior high school and hosts grades Kindergarten through grade ten.



F.P.S. Students using chairs donated by ARCH

From Rubber Tapper to Animal Farmer



David Zorboe in the poultry coop with his chickens

In its effort to reduce child labor, the ARCH Project seeks to give livelihood support to those communities that contain vulnerable households. The project provides livelihood support for goat raising, poultry, piggery, vegetable and cassava production.

David Zorboe is a resident of Blohn, Nimba County, and is a

father of 12 children. He initially planted rubber and sugarcane to sustain his family. Mr. Zorboe took advantage of the Livelihood program of ARCH. He is now thrilled to be raising chickens as a means of meeting his financial demands. Mr. Zorboe devotes most of his time to the poultry coop which is located near his house. The ARCH Project provided him with an improved breed of cockerel which he is cross-breeding with local breeds. He is positive about the outcome of selling goods to earn income and now sees himself as a poultry owner for the foreseeable future.

The ARCH Project provides technical support to beneficiaries of the Livelihood program by giving them appropriate medical treatment for animals in the event of a disease outbreak. De-wormers

and vitamins are also provided through the veterinarian as the need arises.

Until the farmers are experienced enough to work independently, ARCH will continue to give technical assistance to the farmers. The veterinarian is also available to address concerns from the farmers out-of-reach by way of telephone communication when there are needs for immediate concerns

Mr. Zorboe has dedicated himself to animal farming, as it is less labor intensive and a more sustainable endeavor.

"I used to farm rubber and sugarcane, but now I will stick to the poultry. I am sure something good will be there for me." Mr. Zorboe explained.

Purpose

The ARCH project is to support efforts to reduce child labor in rubber growing areas in Liberia. To fulfill this purpose, the project will: Promote improved policies to address child labor in rubber producing areas of Liberia and enhance monitoring and enforcement of such policies; direct delivery of services to children ages 5 through 17 years engaged in or at risk of various forms of child labor, and support the households of child laborers in communities where livelihood are largely dependent on smallholder rubber production.

Geographical Location

ARCH's interventions are targeting two child labor-free zones (CLFZ) in three counties and four districts in Liberia.—Kakata and Todee Districts in Montserado/Marvibi Counties in CLFZ one and Saclepea I and II Districts in Nimba County in CLFZ two.



MFS beneficiaries using a cassava processing machine

Model Farm School Brings Opportunities to Youth

Two-hundred and forty young children between the ages of 16 and 17 have benefited from the WINROCK ARCH Project's Model Farm School (MFS) training in Nimba county. The MFS training was initiated in 2014 in three communities: Karnwee, Yarsonnoh and Flumpa in Saclepea District. The training covers vegetables, cassava, and piggery.

The project enrolled 240 children- males and females- for the training and 227 of those successfully graduated and were awarded certificates at an elaborate ceremony, where both local and county authorities attended.

The beneficiaries were given start-up kits as a means of keeping them focused and thus discouraging them from engaging in hard labor.

One student named T-Girl expressed her gratitude by saying, "I am happy for the project in our community. I know my life will be better like my friends because I have learned something good and it will help me to be in school."

She is 17 years old and a 5th grade student of the Yarsonoh Public School in Nimba county, one of the 227 beneficiaries of the MFS training. She was trained in the area of vegetable and cassava production.

Before the ARCH Project was implemented in Nimba County, T-Girl was engaged in farm work with her parents. She started doing active work on her parents' farm at the age of nine. "I never started school because of the farm work business", T-Girl explained.

Many smallholder farmers struggle

to make a living from their farm labor. Thus, children from such vulnerable households most likely suffer the consequences, either by not being properly fed or not being sent to school. T-Girl found herself in a similar situation. She helped her parents to maintain the farm and burn coal for the fire, a task that is hazardous to her health as a child, but she had no choice. "Sometimes the heat from the coal would make me sick," said T-Girl.

Because of the intervention of the ARCH Project in their community, T-Girl and most of her peers are now actively back in school.

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ARCH Project's Livelihoods Program Improves Opportunities for Producers and Transforms the Life of Jerry and his Family

Winrock International

Improving Lives and Livelihoods Worldwide



Jerry and his wife, the proud pig farmers, who transitioned from fire coal burning and rubber tapping to pig production through the ARCH project intervening in their community

“I am able to do it for my children now. Thank God for ARCH”

Jerry

In an effort to alleviate the high cost of living that leads to an increase in poverty rates among vulnerable households, the ARCH Project's Livelihoods Program has trained 3,323 households (166 adult producer groups) in various livelihood activities including poultry, piggery, goat raising and cassava and vegetable production. These groups were trained in a six-month intensive hands-on agriculture program in the three major project areas, Margibi, Montserrado and Nimba Counties.

Jerry T. lives with his family of seven, including his wife and children, in Gwee Town, Todee District, Montserrado County. Before the arrival of the

ARCH Project in his community, Jerry and his family had been surviving on the little earnings he received from fire coal burning, which involves slowly burning wood until it becomes a coal-like material that can be used for cooking. To supplement this income, Jerry found a job from a local rubber farm owner to rubber tap on commission. However, his earnings still could not meet his family's needs. In particular, Jerry found it very difficult to keep his eldest son in school because of his low earnings. He found it necessary to take his twelve-year old son with him to the fire coal mine and the rubber farm as a supplementary breadwinner. When the ARCH Project entered Gwee Town in 2013, Jerry could hardly pay the regular 500.00LD yearly tuition fee for his son at Nuquay Public School. “My son never used to go to school regularly because he used to help me,” Jerry said. The ARCH project identified his son as a beneficiary and gave him a School Success Kit that included uniforms, pencils, pens, copybooks and a book bag. Now, Jerry's son is attending 3rd grade at the local school, Nuquay Public School.

Since 2015, ARCH has provided support to vulnerable households of children identified as engaging in child labor or at risk of engaging in child labor. These households have been organized into producer groups within various areas of agriculture, including cassava, poultry, piggery and goat raising. After completing the agriculture training each producer group

was given a starter kit to assist them in starting their own businesses. These starter kits were tailored to what each producer group focused on during the training and contained an agro-processing machine, and assorted materials to refurbish the animal houses. Some starter kits also included a treadle manual water pump to help water gardens as well as a vegetable dryer for vegetable preservation.

ARCH staff worked with Liberian welding shops to produce these machines locally to ensure they met the needs of the producer groups. Made of strong, reliable materials, the machines work quickly and are capable of producing high-quality food. Following the training, producer groups were given possession of the machines, allowing them to be able to add value to their production and increase profits. This in turn will help to reduce poverty in homes, a main determinant of child labor, as some families rely on children for producing household income. Consequently, households will be more likely to send their children to school, increasing school attendance and retention.

Jerry took an interest in raising pigs and went through the six months of training, which included instruction on livestock production and management. His group graduated and was certified, confirming their completion of the training. The ARCH project



Jerry and the piglets, who used to live on muddy ground, but who now live in an enclosed pig pen with a cement floor

provided Jerry with 18 bags of cement to improve his pig pen. Just as he was committed to his previous work, Jerry did not take this opportunity for granted. He labored tirelessly at raising his pigs and did all he could to see the first piglets be born. His efforts paid off, and he had 11 piglets his first season. "I am so happy with the piglets," Jerry said. Jerry sold three of the piglets and used the money to supplement what he received from the project to do some major renovations to his piggery.

Jerry now sees himself as being prepared to face the challenges ahead. "I am able to do it for my children now. Thank God for ARCH," Jerry concluded. Jerry says he is now able to afford to send his five school-aged children to school with the income he is earning from the piggery. His oldest son is no longer working and, since his father began working with the piggery, hasn't missed a day of school.

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Labor. This material does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply en-



Beneficiaries celebrating around the cassava grater after testing it in the Yemen Community

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Food Security & Education

ARCH School Feeding Program

ARCH (Actions to Reduce Child Labor in Liberia) is a four-year program designed to complement efforts by the government, employers, workers, and civil-society organizations in fighting child labor in the rubber-growing sector in Liberia. ARCH is currently implementing a **School Feeding Program (SFP)** as a means of addressing food security and poor school attendance, two root causes of child labor.

Context

- The Ebola pandemic significantly worsened the country's already poor food security situation. Efforts to contain the virus cut off movement between food-producing, agricultural centers and the urban areas that buy their products. People fearing a potential lack of food purchased large amounts and the increase in demand combined with the decrease in supply led to a sharp rise in food prices.
- Since most children attending public school are from vulnerable homes where food is scarce, being fed at school becomes a necessity. In families that are food insecure, the biggest priority becomes finding additional sources of income to buy food. Consequently, parents withdraw their children from school and engage them in child labor activities instead.
- Action is needed to help families and farmers grow and harvest food and ensure that meals are provided to school-children otherwise unable to afford it.

Model

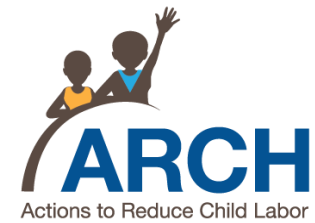
- Our approach is delivered through direct partnership with schools and by including Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members as participants in Winrock's Model Farm School (MFS) Program. PTAs are critical to the long-term success of the SFP. They serve as a coordination mechanism between schools and community members. For example, PTAs can negotiate with communities to secure land for school gardens.

With ARCH training and support, PTAs will learn how to grow feeding inputs and eventually fully assume management of the SFP. The end goal is to create a program that is self-sustaining and does not require direct food inputs from ARCH or other outside groups.

- The project's two-phase model gradually transfers ownership of the SFP to local stakeholders. During the first phase, ARCH provides the initial resources to deliver the feeding program, while initiating advanced agricultural and leadership trainings for PTAs through their participation in the MFS Program. During the second phase, the SFP will continue to expand, with PTA members able to practice high-yield farming techniques and provide the majority of food inputs. School employees, PTAs, and other community members will provide labor to cook and serve meals at the school.
- School feeding program committees receive school feeding management workshops to transfer and build skills related to daily food ration calculation, food ration management, and the adaptation of home-grown food production for sustainability. These committees will assume direct lead-



Rice, beans, oil and salt being distributed to Zinc Camp Public School in Todee District, Montserrado County.



- ership of their schools' individual programs.
- Participating schools are be linked with their community's existing adult Model Farm School producer groups. ARCH will provide high quality seeds and cuttings so these groups can increase their yields and contribute food inputs for the SFP.
- The Ministry of Education works in partnership with ARCH to jointly monitor the feeding program at the school level.

Impact So Far & Expected Outcomes

- Through direct implementation of the SFP, ARCH has provided the needed kitchen materials (e.g. pots and pans, utensils) to 20 schools in Margibi and Montserrado Counties.
- The PTAs manage newly-formed five-member subcommittees to lead efforts in each community. The subcommittees are comprised of key stakeholders such as the PTA chairman and secretary, local authorities, mothers' groups, and youth associations.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing roles and responsibilities has been signed with each community.
- Stakeholders such as County and District Education Officers, the U.N. Mission in Liberia, and Save the Children have been briefed on the project. District Education Officers actively participated in program design and will serve as key partners to sustain momentum after ARCH ends.
- Through December 2016, ARCH expects the SFP to provide meals for 6,000 students each school day, five days a week.

- ARCH is training over 200 community members on supporting the SFP, such as through providing volunteer cooks, storage facilities, security, development of school gardens and securing foodstuffs from ARCH-supported producer groups.
- ARCH staff, PTAs and MoE local officials have already observed increased school attendance.

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