

Committee: UNICEF

Topic: Education

Country: Republic of Liberia

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Liberia is a very poor country in Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean and its capital is Monrovia. Liberia was created by freed slaves from the US, on July 26, 1847; they founded the Republic of Liberia. In 1989, a civil war began that it was originated by a rebellion in the country eventually killed almost 150,000 people and left 300,000 refugees. It was. After the war ended in 2003, education in Liberia was very bad. Malnutrition and diseases in the children are very important for development. Liberia has one of the worst HDI (The Human Development Index) and 55.5% is the adult literacy rate. Liberia has signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child which says “States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life”.

According to UNICEF, half a million children do not attend school and girls’ enrolment rates lag far behind those of boys. In this country, more than 15 per cent of children die before reaching their first birthday. Also thousands of children have been mobilized by the military. The highest quantity of schools is located in the capital; however there are very few in rural areas. In 2000, the adult illiteracy in women was 30.1% and in men was 63.2%. After the civil war, the number of girls who are enrolled in schools is very low in relation to children. In an agreement with WHO (World Health Organization), in 2006, the net primary school enrolment ratio is 39% in boys and 40% in girls. In the public schools, the resources are very low and they aren’t free. Respecting to university, the variety is very limited and students must travel to find a university that they want.

As the attendance to class of girls in Liberia is a topic very important, the government of Liberia and UNICEF has submitted a Girls’ Education National Policy, the 18 April of 2006. This initiative is to achieve a universal primary education for all boys and girls, in special. It is a Millennium Development Goal, so Liberia wants to accomplish. Literacy rate for women in rural areas is 26%, extremely low; in relation to urban women with a 61% (rates in men are more balanced). The 90% of women are employed in the informal sector or in agriculture. In Liberia, 44% of women have experienced physical violence since they were 15 years old. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, says “we are working to see a new country with a shared vision for girls’ education...to free humankind from poverty, discrimination and disease” and “the new policy will serve as a catalyst to end illiteracy and underdevelopment to create literacy and development.”

In February 2007 a conference sponsored by the UN which it discussed how to improve the situation of the educational system of Liberia, after nearly fifteen years of civil war that devastated the country. At this conference participants addressed the theme of education as the key to rebuilding the country. Approximately three-quarters of boys and more than half of all girls are enrolled in primary school; therefore, the Government of Liberia hopes to achieve a free and compulsory primary education for all young. Cream Wright, UNICEF's Global Chief of Education explained that “We need to reclaim the potential of these children because they are the greatest hope for Liberia’s development” and that “Ensuring

the Liberia's children get an education is essential not only for their own well-being but for their country's recovery." Liberia can benefit from the \$ 201 million donation Netherlands made to the agency, on the topic of education and support for young.

On 2 December 2005, UNICEF took school supplies 400000 Liberian children. These supplies are intended for children of all elementary schools in the country. UNICEF Representative in Liberia explained "Starting last month in Maryland County, in south eastern Liberia UNICEF is distributing 5,500 educational kits – each kit consists of enough school supplies for 80 children for three months. The supplies include exercise books, pens and pencils, and crayons. They also have teacher's supplies like chalk, erasers, and flipcharts." In addition, this project is a good way for children to attend school. UNICEF, working with the Liberian government has also launched "Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)"; it is to recover the lost years of education due to war. UNICEF works with schools and with teachers who are trained to carry out this mission. ALP also operates in rural areas, in total are 115 schools which will implement this program. It is a way to create gender equality in this country. There are 500 teachers that have been trained to do this Project. This plan also wants to improve the situation of girls in schools (students and teachers). That is why UNICEF and the Liberian government are working on educating women teachers (both are sensitized on the importance of providing opportunities to women). Since 2004, UNICEF provided educational tool for students and for teachers, but even more help is needed to rebuild the country.

In conclusion, Liberia is working on children's education to build a better future in this country, its position is clear, Liberian children need better resources. The civil war in Liberia has been very important in the development of education. The country of Liberia suggests the committee to take the following actions. Liberia recommends that:

1. United nations continue to cooperate with the Government of Liberia and help to more children go to school, with free education and encouraging them.
2. Provide funding for other topics, such as malnutrition and diseases, that are linked to education. These other topics are essential for a student to work well in the school.
3. Improve access to schools in rural areas so that all children can attend school.
4. Trying to achieve Millennium Development Goal #2, which is "to achieve total primary education for all youth" and in addition, it achieves free and compulsory education.