



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 Liberia's rubber-growing sector. ARCH is currently implementing a School Feeding Program (SFP) to address 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. Fearing a potential lack of food, people purchased large quantities. This increase in demand, combined with the subsequent decrease in supply, led to a sharp rise in food prices.
- Since most children attending public school come from vulnerable homes where food is scarce, school-provided meals are a necessity. In food-insecure families, 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 to ensure that meals are provided to schoolchildren 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, as 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 assume full management of the SFP. The end goal is to create a self-sustaining program that 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 SFP, 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, enabling PTA members 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.

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

ACCOMPLISHED IMPACT & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Through direct implementation of the SFP, ARCH has provided the needed kitchen materials (e.g. pots and pans, utensils, etc) to 26 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 March 2017, ARCH has provided school-feeding programs to 7,415 beneficiaries.
- ARCH has trained over 200 community members on supporting the SFP through providing volunteer cooks, storage facilities and security; developing school gardens; and securing of foodstuffs from ARCH-supported producer groups.
- ARCH staff, PTAs and MOE local officials have observed increased school attendance and student retention rates.

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 endorsement by the United States Government.