

*Bridging
The
Gap
Through
Sharing*

ACE Liberia

AFRICA COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

13TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER WINTER 2019

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Messages from Our Partners on the Ground

Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute (KRTTI)

The affiliation with ACE started in 2017 through a conversation with the Former Director of KRTTI and a member of ACE Board, Ms. Rose Sherman. We learned that ACE had decided to contribute to teacher development in Liberia to make a greater impact on quality education. The focus was on underqualified teachers in low-income, community-based schools. ACE believed that they could better achieve this goal by partnering with an institution that was already training teachers, hence the involvement of KRTTI. We welcomed the idea and assured ACE that we would support the initiative. We felt that this effort would complement ours at KRTTI, since one of the objectives of the program was for the teachers to ultimately obtain the “C” Certificate to officially qualify as primary school teachers.

In 2018, a memorandum of understanding was signed between ACE and KRTTI for the pilot program. KRTTI selected me as the contact person/coordinator. Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. – Alpha Alpha Lambda Zeta Chapter (based in UAE) was a third partner to this MOU. Eight Zeta sisters later travelled to Liberia to facilitate a train-the-trainer seminar for KRTTI instructors and the school principals.

In 2019, KRTTI was unable to host the training on its campus due to other national obligations. The situation led to sourcing an alternative venue. This was the most challenging moment we ever had, but we were able to surmount it thanks to the resilience of all parties concerned.

My association with ACE has afforded me the opportunity to affiliate and interact with Ms. Sherman whose principles are quite admirable. I have come to consider her a mentor. I hope that in the near future, our training activities will be extended to other counties of need beyond Montserrado and Margibi Counties.

Sorna F. Sherif
Coordinator
ACE Teacher Development and Continuing Education Initiative

Thanks to you, our supporters, ACE is proud to announce that we have grown from supporting 3 schools and 1100+ students to now supporting 20 schools and 5,600+ students.

Our Mission

To support a model of education for youth that helps to meet their basic needs and normalize their lives, allowing them to overcome the impact of disaster and conflict.



Sorna Sherif



Leabeh Gbowee



Desmond Diggs

Learn more about ACE at: www.anceliberia.org

US Peace Corps Liberia

It has been a pleasure working with ACE! One year ago, I sat in on the train-the-trainer seminar and observed many of the new teaching strategies that we strive for all teachers to implement in their classrooms. We were able to share the five components of literacy that every child needs to become an independent reader. After our presentation, we were asked to assist with the 3-week intensive teacher training workshop, which was followed by monthly tutorials and classroom monitoring for the teachers to encourage implementation of the strategies learned. We are pleased to participate again this year. The dedication from the ACE team has been really impressive, I applaud their work. Teachers who have been in the classrooms with little or no training are now receiving professional development, making them stronger and better qualified. Thank you, ACE, for your dedication to education; a key factor to national growth and development.

Geri Mezzoni (Gorma)
Literacy Coordinator, US Peace Corps

Ann Sandell Independent School (ASIS)

Ann Sandell has received support from ACE for 12+ years in the areas of facility improvements, textbooks and instructional supplies, lunch program, and so much more. Thanks for also focusing on teacher qualification by providing the Mathematics and Language Arts specialty teachers. With the help of those specialty teachers, the teaching skills of the teachers and learning capacity of students have improved: teachers use more visual aids; they allow students to think for themselves and make contribution to the topic under discussion; teachers use their phonetic skills to pronounce words in *all* subjects correctly and provide definitions that enable the students to understand what is being taught; the specialty teachers also facilitate enrichment classes for their fellow teachers during the weekend.

Students' learning capacity has improved as well. Students are excited about doing their own work and spending longer time in school. The school now runs from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM instead of 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM. With more visual aids, the students are able to relate what they learn to real life situations, which is helping them to learn and comprehend better.

In addition, ACE teacher training program conducted during the summer, coupled with year-round tutorials, has really improved the teaching skills for all of ASIS staff. In appreciation of ACE's humanitarian work in Liberia, our school family and others will continue to uphold the standards and objectives of the teachers training and specialty teachers program.

Leabeh Gbowee & Eric M. Gboe
Administrators

Teach For Liberia (TFL)

Thanks to ACE for being one of the earliest supporters of TFL. The relationship continues to strengthen with a mutual focus on training quality teachers for Liberia. In a recent press release by Teach For ALL, it was announced that TFL has formally joined Teach For All as its 52nd network partner. TFL is working to address its country's educational crisis by enlisting promising young leaders to ensure that all Liberian children can attain an excellent education. TFL, an active member of the local Education NGO Forum, is aligned with the Ministry of Education's "Getting to Best Strategy," with a focus on professionalization and accreditation.

A General Auditing Commission report found that over half of Liberian teachers had not obtained the required credentials to teach. TFL has already recruited and placed its first cohort of Teacher Fellows in high-need schools in underserved communities. By 2020, they aim to expand their reach and place a second cohort of 40 Teacher Fellows.

Desmond Diggs
Founder/Executive Director

ACE Upcoming Events

Projekt for Progress

ACE partners with the Richmond band sensation, DJ Williams Projekt (djwilliamsmusic.com), and the popular Richmond restaurant, The Answer Brewpub, for a night of food, drinks, music, and fun. A silent auction of African artifacts, local services and venues is a big hit of the night. All proceeds from this event go to support ACE's Teacher Training Initiative and ASIS. **The next Projekt for Progress event is scheduled for Thursday, April 2nd, 2020 at 6pm.** Please plan to join the fun for a worthy cause. Raised \$18K in 2019.

Unity Church Charleston African Market

For 12 years, the Unity Church of Charleston has hosted the Annual African Market fundraiser in support of Ann Sandell Independent School. The event includes a presentation about the school at both Sunday morning services—followed by a silent auction, drumming and dancing performances; a simulated African market with food, clothing, and artifacts; and a celebration of unity. **The next African Market at Unity Church of Charleston is scheduled for Sunday, April 26th, 2020.** Please join us in support of primary education in Liberia. Raised \$4k in 2019.

Africa Community Exchange, Inc. is a charitable non-profit identified by the US Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization, making all gifts and donations tax deductible. You can make contributions or contact us by mail: ACE, P.O. Box 444, Midlothian, VA 23113, or by visiting our website: www.anceliberia.org. Thank you for your support.