

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY TEACH FOR LIBERIA

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From the Desk of Executive Director, Desmond Diggs



“

IF I CAN HELP SOMEBODY AS I PASS THIS WAY, THEN MY LIVING SHALL NOT BE IN VAIN...

”

“If I can help somebody as I pass this way, then my living shall not be in vain;” these words sung and celebrated by my father in the baptist churches that raised me globally became a personal mantra. I've told the story of Teach For Liberia a million times (and I'm sure I'll tell it a million more) but no singular statement describes my world view more pointedly. As I reflect on a decade of commitment to this work, I'm humbled and privileged to be able to commit myself daily to the support of an emerging group of young people that will no doubt actualize their fullest potential and manifest the Liberia in which we all wish to live and thrive. The journey of leading the movement that is Teach For Liberia has taken me around the world and back again (quite literally). From the breeding ground of Morehouse College to the cobble stoned lined streets of the 9th Arrondissement in Paris; from Chugbor, Old Road to Bunda, Tanzania - it has been a journey to say the least! I am ever thankful for my family both biological and made along the way, that has been the wind at my back and at times even the calling credit in my phone; they are inextricably linked to every stage of my personal and professional growth.

In December of 2010 I arrived in Liberia after a 20+ year sojourn. I knew nothing of Liberia but the romanticized memories my parents had recalled so often. It was a paradise lost, eager to be reclaimed again, certainly I possessed the passion, the intellect, and the resolve to contribute significantly to the country's resurgence. In retrospect my naivete was laughable, but it very well may be what kept me driven for years despite what seemed at times to be a fruitless endeavor. The first two years alone I was stricken with malaria eleven times and twice with typhoid! I recall during my first bout with this lethal combo, motioning for a nurse to come so I could make clear that it was not my portion to perish at this juncture in my journey, driving the point home by stipulating, “If I die here, my mother will kill me.”

Fast forward to the present day, the growth has been awe-inspiring. The last year our reach has surpassed 105,000 Liberian students, provided direct training and professional development to nearly 2,500 teachers. We laid the groundwork for our support of 100 fellows annually that each year will embark upon a two year transformational journey to support their own personal and professional growth while intentionally driving positive student learning outcomes and creating safe learning environments. We have not done it alone! Our partners at the Ministry of Education have cooperated at every step and have proven to be a partner in every sense. Our community school partners have evidenced again and again that we lack nothing in the way of resource, organization, or dynamism. Our children have displayed a resolve and hope that keeps me eager to match their efforts with the often early mornings and late evenings it takes to circumvent the challenges that our countrymen and women know all too well. Last, but certainly not least, we are thankful to our nearly 60 partners in the global Teach For All Network for their intentional thought partnership and support on every level. We know we never walk alone...

Being raised by a baptist minister has the tendency to make one long winded but I will close by making one thing abundantly clear, we have just begun.

Cheers to our next and best decade thus far.

Yours in Service and Solidarity


Desmond Diggs
Founder/Executive Director, Teach For Liberia, Inc.

YEARLY RECAP



It does not need to be said that 2020 will go down in history as a year of alternative plans. We all had plans and targets for the year, but COVID-19 has demonstrated that it has no respect for individuals' plans, so we had to pivot more than ballet dancers! Having said that, we, at Teach For Liberia, are very pleased and proud to say that we succeeded in hitting all the big targets we set for the year inspite of the challenges brought forth by the pandemic.

RECRUITMENT

We successfully recruited 70+ fellows into our Pre-service Institute and matriculated 46 fellows into the Fellowship.

PROFUTURO TRAINING

We exceeded our target of training 1,875 teachers through our Profuturo Partnership by 25%! We actually trained 2,345 Liberian teachers across the country.

SCHOOL PLACEMENTS

We have doubled the number of counties where we have school placements! Bomi and Montserrado will now be joined by Grand Bassa and Margibi in the list of counties where we place teachers to provide quality education to children.

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

Our number of full time staff members has grown from 4 to 12! In this year alone, we have hired a Program Manager, a Head of Recruitment, Selection & Marketing, a Head of Training, a Development & Administrative Manager along with an Associate, a Teacher Training and Support Manager, two Recruitment Associates, and two Teacher Training and Support Mentors!



YEARLY RECAP CONT'D

COMMUNITY FEEDING PROGRAM

When COVID-19 hit Liberia, a significant portion of the population had to choose between “the certainty of starvation and the possibility of contracting the virus,” as TFL’s CEO, Desmond Diggs, put it. Teach For Liberia’s team instantly thought-partnered with our first cohort of fellows to design an intervention that provided support and awareness in various parts of Liberia. Thanks to a generous donation of \$25,000 USD by the Cummings Africa Foundation, our team was able to exceed all expectations and successfully impact the lives of 5,567 Liberians, 85% more beneficiaries than initially intended!



NATION BUILDERS LECTURE SERIES

TEACH FOR LIBERIA'S NATION BUILDER'S MINDSET LECTURE SERIES

This week we highlight an esteemed member of the education sector and our very own Program Manager. She possesses extensive experience and has a passion to contribute to the growth of Liberia's youth.

ELAINE SABA
Program Manager - Teach For Liberia

TEACH FOR LIBERIA'S NATION BUILDER'S MINDSET LECTURE SERIES

This week we will focus on entrepreneurship and pressing forward to achieve your goals with Mr. Natty B. Davis III. He will share his experience as well as interesting tips to benefit all young professionals.

NATTY B. DAVIS III
Business Development Manager - Easy Solar

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE OUR NATION BUILDER'S MINDSET SERIES

Join us as we kick off our first lecture with Attorney Gray to openly discuss her career trajectory as a young Liberian professional.

ATTORNEY SAIFUAH-MAI GRAY
President/CEO National Oil Company of Liberia

TEACH FOR LIBERIA'S NATION BUILDER'S MINDSET LECTURE SERIES

We are excited to highlight a dynamic Liberian educator. She has nearly two decades of experience in international development as a professor, technical advisor, consultant, facilitator, and researcher.

TANYA ANSAHTA GARNETT, PhD
Acting Chief of Party, USAID Liberia Strategic Analysis

TEACH FOR LIBERIA'S NATION BUILDER'S MINDSET LECTURE SERIES

This week we highlight another passionate educator and our very own Head of Training. She possesses extensive experience and has been working closely with the government to better Liberian education.

YARVO JONES BOAKAI
Head of Training - Teach For Liberia

TEACH FOR LIBERIA'S NATION BUILDER'S MINDSET LECTURE SERIES

This week we welcome Miss Massaquoi to discuss her career as a development professional and give salient advice to emerging Liberian leaders.

BINTA BEATRICE MASSAQOUI
Education Specialist - World Bank Group

In the third quarter of last year, we launched our Nation Builders Lecture Series. The aim is to provide our Fellows access to professionals who share with them insights, salient advice, and career prospects. So far, we have had professionals from the Education, Law and Entrepreneurship sectors.

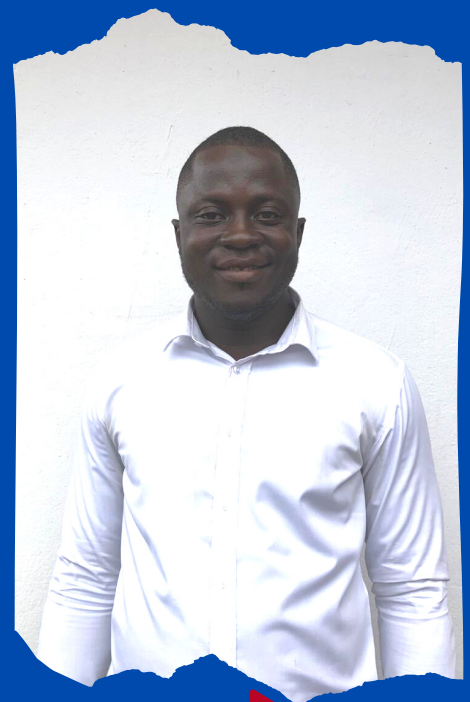
OFFICIAL CLOSE OF INSTITUTE 2020!

We are elated to announce that we have officially reached the end of our 2020 Pre-Service Institute! This means that we have successfully started the two-year process of providing Liberian children with more teachers who are equipped with the skills they require to furnish them with quality and contextualized learnings.

We asked a few of our fellows to tell us how the Institute has impacted them, and here is what they had to say:

“Before this institute, I had a fixed mindset that the teaching profession is a very challenging one and not one suitable for a female. But the training has made me realize the important role a female teacher can play in developing the next generation of leaders. A woman’s tender heart, combined with a vision to transform education, can make a huge difference because what all children really need is the right guidance and environment to flourish.”

Ruphena Miller - Cohort 2 Fellow



“The training has been great and impactful. Before the institute, I thought being a professional rested solely on your knowledge attained and the type of degree you acquired. However, I have now learned more about the importance of Professional Etiquette and how it is about the manner in which I present myself, interact with others, and the behaviour I exhibit in a work environment. Now I know that whenever a person presents or exhibits good professional behavior, it reflects positively on their personality and the institution they represent.”

Mohammed Deygbo - Cohort 2 Fellow



MENTORSHIP PLANS

As part of the continuous support to our fellows, one of the pathways we have designed to reach our goals of creating nation builders equipped for high impact roles are our mentorship programs.

The first one, our Fellow to Fellow Mentorship, will take place between a fellow who has lived through the experience and an incoming fellow who is new to our Leadership Development program. This setup is aimed towards fostering a healthy relationship between fellows of different cohorts as well as developing their leadership skills.

Then, at the beginning of the second year of fellowship, our Professional - to - Fellow Mentorship plan commences. During this phase, we match each fellow with a mentor who is a professional in their field of interest. By so doing, our Professional mentors will be offering the Three C's of Mentorship:

- **Consultancy** - Mentors will provide specialized recommendations based on a wealth of industry knowledge; they are responsible for sharing their own professional insights gained through years of real-world experience.
- **Counseling** - Mentors would listen and guide the mentees, i.e. allow mentees to make mistakes and gain valuable insights from them. The role of a counselor would be to provide guidance but not answers, enabling their mentee to figure out the right course of action.
- **Cheer Leadership** - In addition to all of the constructive feedback and advice that a mentor can give, they would also provide support and enthusiasm.

We, at Teach For Liberia, understand the importance of receiving guided and intentional advice from an individual who is fully invested in the success of others. That is why we pair our fellows with mentors who create fruitful relationships that help both parties have more fulfilled lives and careers.

FELLOW SPOTLIGHT



Onekia Dwalu is a 2017 graduate of Cuttington University in Bong County, Liberia where she obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Biology. During her time at the university, she volunteered with the organization Developing Every Society into Nation (DESiN) where she served as a mentor for kids in the nearby village who were not privileged to receive a formal education. Her goal was to teach them basic reading and writing, as well as personal hygiene; she also convinced the parents to send them to school. Among her achievements, Onekia also worked as a secretary for a campus-based organization called Concerned Students Initiative whose goal was to educate high school students on leadership skills and provide them with professional skills.

Onekia was awarded in high school the title of the Most Cooperative Student, and that attribute has certainly helped her stand out in her professional life.

After graduation, Onekia taught science in 2nd grade at Aware International School for a year. Her long-term goals are to attain a Master's degree in Public Health, specifically in Community Health Development, and to develop an orphanage and retirement home that works to provide scholarships for students in need.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Teach For Liberia would like to wish you all a Happy New Year!

2020 has been a year of ups, downs and curveballs, which resulted into a year of growth. We're immensely grateful to all of our partners, supporters, and fellows who have grown with us throughout this year. We're staying the course, and we will continue to work and ensure that every Liberian child gets a quality education.

A PEEK INTO 2021

What three words would you use to describe 2020? In our perspective, it's been full of surprises, changes, and motivations. Unprecedented advances have given hope in science, technology, digital health, leadership, and basic human care and kindness. Although the current affairs consistently took the focus away from the aforementioned positive breakthroughs, they were present and will stay with us as we move forward.

For this reason, Teach For Liberia remains optimistic and ready for continued growth in 2021. This optimism begins with recruitment of our third cohort of 100 incoming fellows! The online application will open next week Monday, February 1, 2021; we will let you all know how to apply very soon. During this time of exponential growth, we will focus on building rapport in communities and partner schools through our training endeavors. Building relationships with key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education, will remain of utmost importance.

A new addition to our program will be the implementation of a Learning Management System (LMS). This software will house Teach For Liberia's administration, documentation, tracking, and reporting of training programs, classroom and online events, e-learning programs, and training content. It will keep educators abreast of professional standards and allow our fellows, as well as community teachers, to engage in self-paced professional development and best practices. This will also help in our effort to create more platforms for aspiring Liberian teachers.

In conjunction with a Learning Management System, our largest innovation of 2021 is undoubtedly the Digital Divide Campaign. As experts continue to warn about the exacerbation of the already vast digital divide by the COVID-19 pandemic, we refuse to let our fellows fall behind. To prevent this, Teach For Liberia launched a sustainable campaign to raise funds for 100 laptop computers equipped with antivirus software, a computer case, and a charging device for those driving our organization's mission forward.

However, the Digital Divide Campaign cannot succeed without **YOU**. Please continue reading to see how you can make a difference!

DIGITAL DIVIDE CAMPAIGN

Our Digital Divide Campaign is a sustainable campaign created to raise funds for 100 laptop computers. This one investment will create a chain effect that ensures every subsequent cohort of 100 Nation Builders have one of the most essential tools of the 21st century: a computer. Every month, a small amount will be deducted from the fellows' stipends, and by the end of their 2 years, they would've completely paid back the cost of the laptop assigned to them. The money collected will then be used to buy the laptops for the next cohort, and so on and so forth. Let's face it, they need laptops to thrive both during our fellowship, and as they begin their career paths.

Eager as you are now to make a difference, visit our online campaign <https://www.givegab.com/campaigns/dismantling-the-digital-divide> to donate to this very important cause. All donations made through a US bank account are tax deductible. If you wish to donate through Mobile Money or Orange Money, please email us at info@teachforliberia.org.

Thank you ever so much for investing in our fellows. As a result of having this technology, our fellows will be able to do even more for our students and themselves. Let's face it, they need laptops to thrive both during the fellowship, and as they begin their career paths.

PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP: ELAINE SABA

Happy 1 year anniversary to an esteemed member of the education sector and our very own Program Manager, Elaine Saba! She has devoted her life to teaching and brings an assortment of experience to Teach For Liberia's Team. She holds a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Dallas Baptist University. In addition to her academic achievements, Miss Saba has many years of related knowledge and acquired significant practical experience while teaching, training, and mentoring in various districts of Texas, USA.

Upon returning to Liberia, she volunteered her skills and services to several schools and has not looked back since. When interviewed about her philosophy on education, she responded without hesitation and said, "I believe that all children have the right to learn and get a quality education. As members of the human family, regardless of location, we impact each other in many ways. It is my desire to help students discover their potentials while learning respect and acceptance of others."

Elaine Saba has received many awards in recognition of her professionalism, and dedication in the field of education, and for her contribution to the improvement of education in Liberia. Today we also award her as she has served as an inspiration to both our fellows and team - her passion is infectious!

Miss Saba we appreciate you, all that you have done, and all that you will do to further our mission.

