

PROSPECTS 3

A Youth Employment and Livelihoods Program

PROGRAM BRIEF | SEPTEMBER 2017

Program Summary

Prospects is an urban youth livelihood program with a mission to empower young Liberians to find meaningful, market-driven employment or self-employment through increased skills, self-confidence and economic opportunity.

Through direct implementation, national and private sector partners, the program connects youth to market opportunities, either by placing them in a workforce development program for job opportunities or, supporting them as they develop and operate micro-enterprises. Mercy Corps

also supports the private-sector through competitive provision of financing and business advisory support to firms poised to create youth employment opportunities.



- › **Program Goal:** Young Liberians (15-35 years) are able to find meaningful, market-driven employment or self-employment through increased skills, self-confidence, and market opportunities.
- › **Timeframe:** September 1, 2017- August 31, 2020
- › **Location:** Bong, Ganta, Nimba and Montserrado Counties, Liberia

Prospects Program Strategic Approach

Mercy Corps Prospects 3 pursues a multidimensional approach combining skills building and trainings, entrepreneurship, apprenticeships/internships and micro-venture seed funding and through promotion of private-sector job creation and youth-centered national policy. The program seeks to address constraints to both labor demand and labor supply in the market. It accomplishes this by building the self-confidence of youth and training them to succeed as employees or entrepreneurs.

Labor Supply

Prospects 3 implementation is focused on providing demand-driven, market-oriented services to young Liberians to address; lack of skills, confidence, and provide opportunities to construct meaningful livelihoods that promote economic stability and engagement in the well-being of youth and their communities

Labor Demand

Through external business incubation, Prospects 3 provides performance-based financial and business advisory services to private-sector firms (SMEs) including green energy/solar to create new jobs for Liberian youth. This includes identifying capacity gaps that often prevents businesses from meeting their performance goals, and intentionally targeting intensive capacity development and support, specifically in the areas of financial management and marketing, which will greatly increase likelihood the partners' business success.

Partnerships and Sustainability

In its third phase, PROSPECTS will work closely with private sector and national partners including the Ministries of Commerce, Youth and Sports, Labor with collaborative focus on the E+ program, Apprenticeship and employability training, and with the Ministry of Education on the adaptation and validation of the curricula in an effort to:

1. Transfer the employability curricula to government-run TVETs in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports;
2. Establish training-of-trainers' modules to transfer the employability and business skills curricula to private TVETs;
3. Develop an open source digital platform for dissemination of Prospect's work readiness and business skills workbook, curriculum, training manual, and training presentations.
4. Network with other youth-focused organizations in Liberia regularly, to create and offer larger menus of options for young people to pursue programming that best fits their needs

The Sub-programs

Employment & Entrepreneurship	Social Business Development	Results, Learning and Research
<p>Demand-driven provision of business, life skills and work-readiness training, apprenticeships and business start-up grants to youth through 2 Youth Opportunity Centers, TVETs, and partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trainings- 16,500• Apprenticeships- 1,302• Seed Funds Businesses- 1,355• Financial Linkages- 100	<p>Competitive provision of financial and business advisory support to private-sector firms piloting innovative solutions to labor market failures and/or creating youth-focused employment opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support - 25 SMEs• Job Creation-100 New Jobs• Business Toolkit- 15 Businesses Seminars	<p>Research and studies that advance Mercy Corps and partner understanding of Liberian youth livelihoods and constraints to youth employment and self-employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 Research• 3 Practice papers• 9 Stakeholders Engagement Meetings

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