

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**Between**

**The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Liberia**

**And**

**Peace Corps**

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") made and entered into on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, 2008 by and between Peace Corps, through its office in the Republic of Liberia, represented by Henry McKoy, Regional Director, hereinafter known and referred to as Peace Corps ("The Party of the First Part"), and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Liberia, represented by the Honourable Minister of Education, Joseph D. Z. Korto, hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Education ("The Party of the Second Part"). Reference is hereby made to that certain Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Liberia Concerning the Program of the Peace Corps in the Republic of Liberia, signed on August 15, 2008.

### **1. Term; Renewal and Extension; Additional Changes**

1.1 That for and in consideration of the collaboration between the parties regarding education training in Liberia by Peace Corps Response Volunteers ("PCRVs"); and need for mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities in this collaboration, the parties mutually agree to execute this MOU.

1.2 That it is agreed between the parties that this MOU shall be effective for two (2) years, and that these years should be the same as the budget year of the Republic of Liberia, commencing as of the date of signature by the parties, up to and including the 30th day of June, of the following year. It is further agreed and understood that at the expiration of the given period provided for herein, the parties to the MOU shall have the option to alter and extend this Memorandum in writing based on mutual agreement

1.3. It is also agreed and understood that in the event of disagreement, dispute or conflict pertaining to any provision of this MOU, or interpretation thereof, each party shall make maximum efforts to resolve it through constructive dialogue and consultation in a spirit of collaboration. However, either party may terminate this MOU without further obligations to the other party by providing the other party 30 days' prior written notice.

### **2.0 Purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding**

2.1 This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to articulate the roles and expectations of the parties; to provide a framework for the collaboration between Peace Corps and the Ministry of Education to support to the national education goals; and guidelines, and collaboration and harmonization of the resources of the parties in the interest of education recovery in Liberia.

### **3.0 Background - The Liberia Education Landscape**

3.1 Long years of civil war damaged school infrastructure; brought on a flight of trained teachers from the classroom; and experienced administrators from the school system. When teachers were repeatedly told they would not be paid their meagre salaries for months on end, they abandoned the classrooms for other forms of employment. School funding was gradually reduced, and re-allocated to other efforts, including the war. Following the end of the civil war, and the holding of democratic elections, the new government of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf made education a high priority for her administration. School buildings are being renovated, and new ones constructed; learning materials are being designed and provided; and teachers are being trained to meet the challenges of Liberia's new education recovery plan.

3.2 A modern Education Management Information System is being established provide reliable and comprehensive data on the system that would inform effective school planning. Through the cooperation and support of Liberia's education development partners, various interventions are planned to address the weaknesses of the system. Many assessments are planned or being conducted. These include Early Childhood, Curriculum Reviews, Peace and Human Rights Education, teacher matters, public expenditure on education, Early Grade Reading, and a Country Status Report on Education. These will feed into, and lead to, the formulation of a 10-year Education Sector Plan. These augur very well for the recovery and expansion of education in Liberia. Finally, a robust intervention for training and building the human and organization capacity of the Ministry of Education is being planned. These are extremely optimistic times for education in Liberia.

### **4.0 Background – Peace Corps**

4.1 The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship. Since that time, more than 190,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. More than 3,800 Volunteers served in Liberia between 1962 and close of operations in 1990, when the program was suspended due to the civil war. During those 28 years, Volunteers served in every facet of Liberia's development efforts. Program emphasis was on education, agriculture, rural development and health.

The Mission of the Peace Corps is:

- To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
- To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

### **5.0 Project Description; Organization**

5.1 Peace Corps and Ministry of Education agree to collaborate on enhancing primary education through support of the Rural Teacher Training Institutes, County Education Officers, and Learning Resource Centers in Liberia. A detailed description of the project is contained in the attached Peace Corps Response Volunteer Position Description(s). The project will begin on or about November 1.

5.2 Each party to this MOU is a separate and independent organization. As such, each organization retains its own identity in providing services and each organization is responsible for establishing its own policies and financing its own activities, other than as described herein and/or in the attached Position Description(s). The undertakings of the parties to this MOU are subject to the availability of funds. This MOU does not create any employment, partnership, agency, joint venture or other similar legal relationship between Peace Corps and the Ministry of Education, and neither Peace Corps nor the Ministry of Education has the authority to bind or act on behalf of the other. PCRVs shall at all times remain Peace Corps Volunteers and employees of the Ministry of Education shall at all times remain employees of the Ministry of Education during any period of collaboration between the parties. The use of the official seal, emblem or name of Peace Corps by the Ministry of Education shall be allowed only with the prior written permission of Peace Corps pursuant to collaborative efforts specified herein and/or in the Position Description(s).

#### **-6.0 Target (Geographic) Area(s) of Program Delivery**

6.1 In the programmatic context of the MOU, Peace Corps and the Ministry of Education will collaborate on enhancing primary education through support of the Rural Teacher Training Institutes(RTTI) , County Education Officers, and Learning Resources Center in selected geographical locations of the Country.

The RTTIs in Kakata, Zorzor and Webbo in Margibi, Lofa and River Gee Counties respectively, and the Learning Resources Center in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh county

#### **7.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

7.1 The parties' undertakings under this MOU are set forth as follows:

##### **7.1.1. Volunteer Selection And Orientation**

A. Recruitment and Selection. The Peace Corps, through its Peace Corps Response Program, will recruit and select PCRVs with the skills outlined in the attached Position Description(s) who have already served successfully as Peace Corps Volunteers. Peace Corps' selection of PCRVs for this project will be made after screening for language and technical skills, regional work experience, professional references, suitability for service, and legal and medical evaluations. The Ministry of Education will fully entrust recruitment and selection of the PCRVs to the Peace Corps.

B. Orientation. Peace Corps Washington will provide PCRVs the attached Position Description(s) (or other Position Description(s) that may be written throughout the duration of this MOU) prior to their arrival in Liberia. The Peace Corps staff in Liberia will provide a brief orientation to PCRVs upon their arrival to Liberia that will involve a review of their benefits and obligations as Peace Corps Volunteers; administrative, medical, and safety and security sessions; cross cultural considerations; and expectations regarding their Volunteer performances. The Ministry of Education will provide PCRVs with an orientation to the project and the community to be served, an introduction to their organization and staff (including but not limited to the Ministry of Education's policies and procedures), and performance expectations. In the event of a conflict between the Ministry of Education's policies and procedures and Peace Corps' policies and procedures, the latter shall govern.

### 7.1.2. Volunteer Assignment

A. Length of Assignment. Volunteer assignments for this project will be for the academic school year, not to exceed nine months.

B. Extension of Assignment. Brief extensions of service (one to two months), beyond a total of nine (9) months, may be granted in unusual cases with the concurrence of the PCRV, the Ministry of Education, the Liberia Peace Corps Country Director and the Director of the Peace Corps Response Program in Washington, DC.

C. Early Termination of Assignment. The Peace Corps may terminate the service of a PCRV pursuant to Peace Corps Manual Section 284, but will notify the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education may request that Peace Corps terminate a PCRV's assignment for poor performance or other good cause. Supporting documentation must be supplied to Peace Corps by Ministry of Education justifying any request for termination of a PCRV's assignment. Peace Corps retains sole authority for any final decision regarding termination of any Volunteer assignment.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges that service in the Peace Corps is voluntary and that a PCRV may resign at any time. If a PCRV is unable or chooses not to complete the assignment established by this MOU and resigns mid-service, standard Peace Corps policies will apply. The Peace Corps will be under no obligation at any time to the Ministry of Education to replace a PCRV who resigns or is terminated.

### 7.1.3. Supervision Of Volunteers

A. Supervision. Supervision of the PCRVs is shared between the Ministry of Education official designated on the position description and the Liberia Peace Corps Country Director. The Ministry of Education will assume primary responsibility with respect to supervision on project-related and job-performance issues and adherence to policies and regulations of the Ministry of Education. The Peace Corps Country Director will assume primary responsibility for supervision of PCRVs with respect to Peace Corps policies, regulations, and benefits. Any disciplinary or similar action to be taken regarding any Volunteer shall be determined solely by Peace Corps. Both the direct supervisor of the PCRV and Peace Corps Country Director will review a summary of activities written and submitted by the PCRVs in the middle and at the conclusion of the assignment.

B. Leave. PCRVs accrue two days of vacation per month of service. PCRVs must request leave clearance from their Ministry of Education supervisor and from the Peace Corps Country Director. PCRVs will earn annual leave pay in accordance with Peace Corps' leave policy for Volunteers.

### 7.1.4. Volunteer Support

A. The Peace Corps shall pay or otherwise provide to the PCRVs:

1. A monthly living allowance, an initial settling-in allowance, leave allowance, and a readjustment allowance, as provided by the Peace Corps Act and applicable Peace Corps regulations;

2. All health-related and medical costs and services, including immunizations, primary and emergency care, medical evacuations, and, pursuant to the Federal Employee's Compensation Act, post-service benefits for injuries or illnesses incurred during Peace Corps service; and

3. All Peace Corps-related travel (e.g., initial airfare to country, return airfare to home-of-record, travel required by Peace Corps) and security evacuation travel.

**B. The Ministry of Education shall pay or otherwise provide to the PCRVs:**

1. Appropriate housing at or near the work location/appropriate assistance regarding housing; the Ministry of Education will provide housing for PCRVs in Liberia that meets the criteria for housing for Peace Corps Volunteers established by the Peace Corps program in Liberia (a copy of which is hereby provided to the Ministry of Education). The Ministry of Education's selection of housing for the PCRVs is subject to approval of the Peace Corps Country Director or designated staff member.

2. Office/work space;

3. Volunteer project-related travel costs (transportation, per diem, accommodations) in amounts as determined by the Ministry of Education;

4. Project materials approved by the Ministry of Education for the project and transport of such materials to work sites on a timely basis; and

5. Other approved project-related costs.

## **8.0 – Safety, Security and Health**

8.1 PCRVs will not be assigned to work in areas determined "off-limits" by the United States Embassy or Peace Corps Country Director in Liberia and will be prohibited from traveling in those areas. The Peace Corps in Liberia has in place a volunteer support system to minimize safety risks as prescribed by Peace Corps policy. PCRVs will be included in the Peace Corps' Emergency Action Plan and contacted in the event that there is a personal or Peace Corps emergency. PCRVs will be advised of changes in the threat environment and included in any Peace Corps emergency communications. The Ministry of Education will assist Peace Corps, as necessary, by coordinating PCRV medical and emergency evacuations, facilitating communication between the PCRV and Peace Corps, and contacting Peace Corps in a medical or security situation in which the PCRV is unable to contact Peace Corps. Peace Corps will assume all health, medical and evacuation related costs.

## **9.0 Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Ministry of Education and the Peace Corps shall jointly develop and implement a plan to monitor and evaluate the activities arising out of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

**10. Signatures**

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have on behalf of the Partners hereto signed the Memorandum of Understanding at the place and on the day written below:

**On Behalf of the Peace Corps**

Name: Henry McKoy

Designation: (Official Title) Regional Director

Signature: Henry McKoy

Date: 11/9/08

Witness: [Signature]  
Peace Corps-Liberia Country Director

Date: Sept. 11, 2008

**On Behalf of Ministry of Education**

Name: Dr. Joseph D.Z. Korto

Designation: Minister of Education

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 11-9-08

Witness: [Signature]  
Deputy Minister for Planning Research & Planning

Date: Sept. 11, 2008

## **HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION and COMMUNICATIONS REQUIREMENTS**

Our Liberian hosts, whether they are community, school, government, or collaborating institutions, must provide housing facilities for each Volunteer for the period of their service within the community they are to serve. Peace Corps Volunteers are expected to live modestly by the standards of the communities and schools where they live. They are not required to have running water or electricity but there should be access to a well or bore hole. The accommodations should be consistent with local conditions. They should live like their Liberian counterparts, yet in a manner that will ensure their health and safety. These minimum standards are required:

### ***Housing***

1. Two private rooms with adequate space in a traditional house, bungalow, or apartment. If only one room is available, a separate cooking area is required.
2. Mosquito screening in good state on all windows and doors.
3. Well-plastered walls and floor with cracks sealed.
4. Enough windows to provide cross-ventilation and light.
5. Leak and vermin-proof and bat-proof roof. Roof can be thatch grass. There must be a ceiling made of either mat, wood, felt, or rubber. It should be sealed to prevent rodents and bats from entering from the outside.
6. Burglar proofing on all windows. This can be one-inch metal mesh or metal bars.
7. Secure locks on all outside doors and windows. Doors should close well.
8. Sanitary facilities should be within 50 feet of the house and preferable private for the sole use of the Volunteer. If shared, should not be more than five people. The toilet can be a slab latrine or VIP. The super-structure with roof can be appropriate to the local conditions. The latrine and shower area should be private and have doors that can lock from the inside and outside.

### ***Furnishings (requirement waived for 2008-2009)***

One bed with a board and firm mattress in good condition if possible. One writing table, three chairs on any kind, and shelves (or wardrobe) to arrange clothes on.

### ***Transportation***

The community must be accessible by a 4-wheel drive vehicle throughout the year. If there is no means of public transportation such as taxi, pickup, or bus that stay overnight within the community, it is preferred that there are at least three individuals who own private means of transport in working order such as vehicles, trucks, school vehicle, or market vehicle who will be willing to transport the Volunteer in case of emergency.

### ***Communications***

If there is no means of communication in the community, the Volunteer must live within one-hour travel time from a means of communication. The means of travel can be taxi, bus, private car, bicycle, or on foot. By whatever means, it should not take more than one-hour to reach the point where there is communication. That means of communication can be landline telephone, cell phone, high frequency radio such as with police or Ministry of Health, or sat phone.

### ***Safety and Security***

All housing, transportation, and communications should meet minimum safety and security standards to insure, as reasonable as possible, the health and safety of the Volunteers throughout their stay in country.