



## Civic Society & Education

## Actions to Reduce Child Labor (ARCH) Project

### Reducing Child Labor in Liberia

ARCH (Actions to Reduce Child Labor in Liberia) is a four year project designed to complement efforts by the government, employers, workers, and civil-society organizations in fighting child labor in the rubber-growing sector in Liberia. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and is implemented in Margibi, Montserrado and Nimba Counties in Liberia, by Winrock International in collaboration with African Network for Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse (ANPPCAN), General Agricultural and Allied Workers Union of Liberia (GAAWUL), Firestone Agricultural Workers Union of Liberia (FAWUL), Nimba Rubber Incorporated (NRI), Morris-American Rubber Company (MARCO), and the Government of Liberia (GOL). ARCH seeks to prevent and withdraw children ages 5-17 from child labor and its worst forms in the rubber-growing sector. It also aims to protect legally



working children—those between the ages of 15 and 17—in rubber-growing areas in the targeted communities. ARCH addresses both the social and economic factors that drive small-holder rubber farmers to employ children in hazardous work and those that impel children to seek such work.

### ARCH Objectives

- Improve access to and retention in education, leading to the withdrawal or prevention of at least 10,100 children from child labor; 6,100 children to be withdrawn and 4,000 children to be prevented.

- Increase household income through the provision of livelihoods services to at least 3,700 households.
- Strengthen household resiliency through provision of access by 2,000 children or vulnerable households to social protection services;
- Build capacity of stakeholders to develop, implement and evaluate policies and programs for child labor reduction, including establishment of over 30 functioning Child Welfare Committees and Child Labor Monitoring Committees.
- Spread awareness of child labor through radio programs, celebration events and newsletters.
- Increase the availability of reliable data on child labor, including through development of Comprehensive Monitoring and Evolution Plans, Direct Beneficiary Monitoring System, Government Performance Results Act data, Study on Occupational and Safety and Health Hazards in Agriculture, Compilation of the “Best Practices Document”.
- Engage in institutional capacity building in order to facilitate government coordination and ownership of national policies to eliminate child labor.

### ARCH Project Focus and Strategies

- Identifying community resources for preventing and withdrawing children from child labor through the formation and training of Child Labor Committees to identify and intervene in cases of child laborers, and to monitor their status.
- Improving access to and the quality of education and basic social services such as health, water, and sanitation through infrastructure development, scholarships, and increased after-school learning opportunities for students in formal school.
- Awareness-raising activities at the community, district, and national level on child labor.





- Building the capacity of farmers, workers' unions, community activists, district-level officials, ministry officials, and other national bodies to enable them to effectively use existing mechanisms and to enforce policies that will improve working conditions and encourage the withdrawal of children from child labor.
- Delivering modern agricultural-vocational training to beneficiaries of all ages and youth employment services to children age 16-17 found working in unacceptable conditions.
- Promoting increased knowledge, awareness, and enforcement of occupational, safety, and health (OSH) standards for youth of working age and their families working in the rubber-sector.

## Results-to-Date

- More than 9,000 children have been enrolled in education programs, including 6,735 working children and 2,279 at-risk children.
- Involvement of 3,323 households in livelihood support activities. Together these families form 166 agricultural producer groups organized as a means to diversify and build home economies.
- The first post-Ebola cohort of 549 beneficiaries enrolled at three Model Farm School centers all completed the program. Beneficiaries received training on agricultural production, small livestock keeping, child labor and business skills.

- Leadership of World Day Against Child Labor Celebrations partnership with the National Commission on Child Labor (NACOMAL), attracting 737 participants.
- Coordination of the national government's adoption of a list of hazardous occupations for children and a draft of a National Action Plan to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

For more information, please contact Project Director James Yekeh at [jyekeh@winrock.org](mailto:jyekeh@winrock.org)



World Day Against Child Labor Celebration Event

*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.*

Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.



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# Model Farm School & Livelihood Programs Change Life of Youth

Winrock International

Improving Lives and Livelihoods Worldwide



*Mercy Dahn after graduating from the ARCH Project's Model Farm School.*

**“It is the economic hardship that caused my daughter to do the kind of work she did. But thank God it’s over.”**

***Mercy Dahn’s father***

Mercy Dahn\*, 17, had been working on her father’s rubber farm in Karnwee, Liberia since she was nine years old. At first, her job was to dig holes and plant young rubber trees. But as she grew older, the work became more challenging and dangerous. Mercy was tasked with cleaning the collection cups used to harvest latex. This involved filling the cups with acid to remove excess latex – a task Mercy dreaded. The strong and unpleasant smell of the acid severely affected her health. Over the years, Mercy’s duties became even more labor-intensive, requiring her to carry heavy latex and

solid rubber materials in buckets and bags on her head. At times, latex wastewater would drip onto her face, getting into her eyes, nose and mouth. Mercy knew her family was depending on her, so she kept working.

Mercy’s life began to change in 2014, when the ARCH project, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and implemented by Winrock International, came to Karnwee. ARCH introduced the Model Farm School (MFS) program to 80 young people. Among them was Mercy, who quickly took an interest in vegetable production. Mercy received agricultural and alternative income generation training. After graduating from the program, Mercy started going to school for the first time.

The ARCH project also raised awareness among adults about the effects of hazardous child labor. That opened Mercy’s father’s eyes. He vowed his daughter would never do dangerous work on the family farm again. “It’s economic hardship that caused my daughter to do the kind of work she did. But thank God it’s over”, he said.

ARCH’s MFS program has inspired Mercy to tap into her own

potential and give back to her community.

She now serves as a peer mentor in her village, advocating for the elimination of hazardous child labor. When Ebola broke out in her community last year, Mercy stepped in to help educate her community about good hygiene and prevention practices.

The ARCH project has also introduced parents to new ways of generating income through animal husbandry, to replace their children's employment. The project established three producer groups, giving families the option to breed and manage pigs, chickens and goats.

Mercy considers herself lucky. She has her health, the chance to go to school, and the possibility of a career in vegetable production.

*\*Name changed to protect beneficiary's privacy*



*Mercy and her family have found new ways of generating income.*



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*Model Farm School Students display their produce at a local market in Karnwee village. The ARCH project introduced 80 young people in Karnwee to vegetable production as an alternative source of income.*

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