



# SEHWAH LIBERIA Inc. & Sixth Regions Diaspora Caucus

## REPORT

ON THE EMERGENCY RELIEF  
PROGRAM: "COVID-19 FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN LIBERIA"



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## Introduction

On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology was reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. On 9 January 2020, China CDC reported a novel coronavirus as the causative agent of this outbreak, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Coronaviruses (COV) have been identified as human pathogens since the 1960's. Coronaviruses infect humans and many other vertebrates. Illness in humans is mostly respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, however symptoms can range from the common cold to more severe lower respiratory infections such as pneumonia. A broad range of coronaviruses are found in bats, which might play a crucial role in the virus evolution of alpha- and beta-coronavirus lineages in particular. However, other animal species can also act as an intermediate host and reservoir. Zoonotic coronaviruses have emerged in recent years to cause human outbreaks, such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) since 2012.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2020, the Government of Liberia declared State of Emergency, coupled with a Nationwide Lockdown. In the wake of this State of Emergency, SEHWAH and its collaborating US based partner organization SRDC (Sixth Regions Diaspora Caucus) launched food distribution drive to supplement the government's efforts in providing food assistance to the needy people. This was necessary in order to alleviate the hardship and suffering which came as the result of the government's stay at home order. While the government's stay at home order is necessary to prevent the spread of the deadly pandemic, enforcing it was very problematic because the common complaint of many people was, "how can we survive if we cannot go out to look for our daily bread?"

In wealthy nations, governments provide stimulus relief packages to their citizens while they are told to stay home and practice social distancing. In Liberia, such gesture from the government was not put in place and the economic hardship was creating problem among the citizens. As such, SEHWAH Liberia Inc. and its collaborating partner, SRDC joint together to launch the fund raising campaign in support of their food donation campaign. This campaign consisted of food and material distributions in various communities in Monrovia. This campaign mainly targeted the most vulnerable such as children, elderly men and women as well as the people living with disabilities.

According to Madam Louise Siaway, former Assistant Minister for Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of Information and founder of SEHWAH, the recipients of the food donation have been very grateful and thankful to the SEHWAH-SRDC partnership for thinking about them in this time of serious health crisis and its adverse consequences. Along with the food, we also donated face masks as well as bottles of hand sanitizer



## **One Month and 6 Days of Food Distribution**

The SEHWAH-SRDC food distribution initiative started on Saturday, April 17 and continued until May 23, 2020. We operated on the daily schedule from 9 a.m. to 2:00 pm, including weekends. We began with 100 50lbs bags of rice. The response to that initial distribution was so overwhelming and we saw the needs to continue. Along with rice, we also distributed hand sanitizers and face masks as well as carried out preventive health education along the way. Over this period of time, we served women with children, and people living with disabilities and elderly who are disproportionately affected by the state of emergency lockdown.

## **Impact on Food system**

Local food systems are fragile in a country like Liberia. About 85 percent of the total workforce is from the informal sector, they include agricultural and other workers who entirely depend on daily wages as a mode of living. These vulnerable groups and their families are the hardest hit during these unprecedented times. Even though the sudden imposition of the countrywide lockdown was a wise move to contain the spread of the coronavirus, local food systems were disrupted. The fear of the virus spread faster than the virus itself, leading to the following consequences below. The worst part of the countrywide lockdown was that it coincided with the country's rainy season and partial harvesting time of a variety of crops of the season. Vegetables and fruits were ripened and ready to pick. Following the lockdown declaration, temporary workers in cities had to leave to get back to their villages as surviving in the city without regular salaries was implausible. As transportation froze and sky rocketed, many people were left with no choice but to defy the curfew schedules. The most noteworthy thing was the exodus of local migrant from Montserrado to other rural areas of the country such as Nimba, Grand Bassa, River Cess, Lofa, Bong, Grand Gedeh, etc.

## **SEHWAH /SIXTH REGIONS DIASPORA CAUCUS INVOLVEMENT**

SEHWAH/SRDC emergency food distribution initiative was principally intended as an emergency food assistance under an emergency condition. It was intended to complement the efforts of the government. In order to facilitate the food distribution, SEHWAH/SRDC engaged the services of many volunteers. These volunteers were very instrumental in the overall success of our mission. These mobilizations were made through community leaders who played the major role in our efforts.





## ACCOUNTABILITY

As the curfew hours are extended from 6:00Am-3:00PM to 6:00Am – 6:00PM, economic activities are gradually picking up. As such, our food distribution campaign came to an end on May 23, 2020. Our efforts were aided greatly by the fund raising campaign. We received donations from individual Liberians as well as the SRDC. Below is the breakdown of the total amount raised and how it was expended.



<b>RICE</b>				
NO	ITEMS	DESCRIPTION/Quantity	UNIT PRICE (USD)	TOTAL(US)
1.	Rice	1 <sup>st</sup> Purchased of 100 bags of 25kg rice	13.00	1,300.00
2.	Rice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Purchased of 100 bags of 25kg rice	13.00	1,300.00
3.	Rice	3 <sup>rd</sup> Purchased of 57 bags of 25kg rice	14.00	798.00
	Sub total			<b>\$3398.00</b>
<b>PUBLICITY</b>				
1.	Media	Publicity on the distribution and awareness creation by 3 radio stations	100.00	300.00
	Sub total			<b>\$300.00</b>
<b>GASOLINE/FUEL</b>				
1.	Gasoline	Purchased for use by the vehicle. 47 gallon during the	4.3	200.00

		entire exercise		
	Sub total			
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>				
1.	Taxi	Transportation for 17 team members to get home and back to pick up point	5.00	85.00
	Sub total			
<b>FEEDING</b>				
1	Workers	Feeding of workers during the awareness and distribution process	Unit cost	452.00
	SUBTOTAL			<b>\$737.00</b>

**GRANDTOTAL \$4,335.00**

### DISTRIBUTIONS AND LOCATIONS

No.	Location	Quantity	Qty. per person/Cups	Beneficiaries
1.	Electoral District 5, Paynesville-Mont. Co. Block A-H	120 bags of rice	5 cups	1331 persons
2.	Electoral District 9, Vamuma, Sinkor Block A-C	46 bags	5 cups	506 persons
3.	District No. 8, Randall & Benson Street- People Living with Disabilities. Block A	15bags	5 cups	165 persons
4.	Muslim Community Montserrado County.	26 bags		231 persons
5.	Town Hall Community Paynesville-Block A	9 bags	5 cups	99 persons
6.	72nd Community, Block D	8 bags	5 cups	88 persons
7.	Clinic/Police	5 bags	5 cups	55 persons
8.	Group Home/ Old Road, Sinkor	3 bags	N/A	33 persons
9.	Community Watch Forum, Police Academy, Paynesville	5 bags	5 cups	55 persons
10.	Health Care Workers, Police Academy Community	4 bags	5 cups	44 persons
11.	Marketing Women Organization ELWA Junction Market	2 bags	5 cups	22 persons
12.	Police Academy Market Women	2 bags	5 cups	11 persons
13.	Churches, Police Academy	2 bags	N/A	55 persons
14.	Mr. Brown, Group Home-Church (Old Road Sinkor	2 bags	N/A	32 person
15.	S.K.D. Community Blocks	2 bags	N/A	55 persons

16.	Benson Street Community	2 bags	5 cups	44 persons
17.	Bassa Town Community, Paynesville	2 bags	5 cups	22 persons
18.	Suakamore Community	2 bags	5 cups	22 persons

## REACTION

The family head that received our relief items passed very positive comments. During distribution our team members interviewed a lot of affected people. The affected families appreciated our efforts as they received relief food items in timely manner. They said that SEHWAH Liberia/SRDC has selected genuinely affected and the poorest families who have no other alternative to provide food. Local people assisted our team members during distribution as they were satisfied with our beneficiary selection and quantity of food. Special emphasis was placed on the most affected families. We also involved volunteers from the local community to ensure that we identified real affected and poverty-stricken families. Local people gave us adequate cooperation in this regard.





## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of this project. We are thankful to the youths and leaders of the communities we served. We acknowledge with special gratitude the very important roles of SRDC in this effort to prevent the spread of the deadly pandemic as well as helping people with food donation. This symbolizes a genuine collaborative partnership between the Continental Africans and the African American communities. This truly indicates that we are working in the spirit of Pan Africanism as envisioned by our great leaders from Africa and the African diaspora. This project was a great opportunity and learning experience for us all, coupled with experience on the current situation and condition of Corona Virus and the adverse impact on the economy and the lives of the people of Liberia.

The elation and gratification of this project will be incomplete without mentioning and thanking all the people who helped to make it possible. Their supports and encouragements were very crucial in this endeavor. They are the two SEHWAH representatives in the US, Mr. Kalifala Donzo - SEHWAH's Outreach Coordinator and Mr. Nvasekie Konneh -SEHWAH's Public Affairs Coordinator. It was Mr. Donzo who suggested the idea. Having said that, I will like to reiterate that our success with this campaign would not have been possible without our collaborating partnership with Sixth Regions Diaspora Caucus (SRDC). This project should only motivate us to continue our discussion on the Library and other important projects we are hoping to carry on. We also like to extend gratitude to the Liberian media, both print and electronic.

It's always an amazing experience to work with people from diverse backgrounds. At last but not the least I am thankful to all SEHWAH team and friends who helped and encouraged us to move forward with the project.

We are thankful to my family for giving encouragement, enthusiasm and invaluable assistance of \$1500.00 to complete this food distribution projects.

Hon. Senator Prince Y. Johnson, for the use of his pickup two times to get to the rice store

- Mr. Amos Togba for used of his Jeep to delivered on Saturday April 18 and 19.
- Mr. Abraham Donzo for the use of pickup for delivers from April 19 to May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.
- Thomas Togba who input our daily beneficiaries' data
- Sermah Salassane head of youth that mapped the areas before delivery.
- Mrs. Victoria Kuma Richards - hand out the food

- Mrs. Pauline M. Korkor – hand out other items
- Ms. Mulbah – hand out food





