

The Danish Union of Teachers in **Liberia**

Partner in Liberia	The National Teacher Association of Liberia, NTAL, organises all teachers in the public education sector. NTAL has approximately 11,000 members.
Development goal	NTAL is the result of the fusion of two national teacher organisations . Both unions were in ruins, both financially and administratively, after a series of civil wars that ravaged Liberia from 1989-2003. The current project supports the ongoing work to rebuild the organisation and to provide basic services to the members of NTAL.
Time frame and budget	The project is coordinated by Education International and it is carried out and financed in cooperation with teachers' unions from Sweden, Norway, USA and Canada. The current phase ends in 2011 and DLF has contributed approx. DKK150,000 (\$27,500), funded by the DLF members' fees.
Country facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liberia is located in West Africa and has a population of 3.4m inhabitants• Liberia was founded in 1822 by freed African-American slaves, who suppressed the local population up until the 1980's. This is one of the causes of the negative development Liberia has seen until 2003• The president of Liberia Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf is the first female government leader in Africa• Approx. 57 per cent of the population over the age of 15 can read and write• The GDP per capita is \$150, and 80 per cent of the population has to survive below the poverty line on \$2 per day
School situation	The civil war has made a clear mark on the education system in Liberia, where there is lack of both schools and teachers. 60 per cent of the teachers have a teaching degree and the remaining 40 per cent are employed by the schools and paid with funds collected among the parents. In Liberia, six years of basic education are compulsory, but more than half of the children do not attend school, because they can't afford to pay for books, uniforms etc
Background and project development	The leadership of NTAL has limited experience with union work and union leadership. At the same time they have to work in a democratic environment, which is a situation that many of the other players are also unaccustomed to. The internal challenge of NTAL is to create agreement between the NTAL Constitution and what is put into practice. Procedures and lines of communication that work in accordance with the political and administrative structure must also be developed. In a new democratic organisation as NTAL this development takes time and NTAL is faced with a long process. An essential challenge facing NTAL is to provide services to all teachers, including those who work in the most inaccessible and remote areas of the country. The project aims to ensure that NTAL creates results at national level and in this way legitimises its presence and also the recent rise in members' fees, which is a precondition for the independence of NTAL from external funds in the long term. Moreover, the NTAL puts a great effort into seeking out members close to their workplace in order to ensure better knowledge of the actual needs of the teachers.

