

# The Danish Union of Teachers in *Liberia*

Partner in Liberia	The teachers union National Teacher Association of Liberia, NTAL, organises all teachers in the public education sector. NTAL has approximately 11,000 members.
Development goal	NTAL is a joint organisation for the two national trade unions within the education sector. Both unions were in ruins, both financially and administratively, because of the civil wars that ravaged Liberia 1989-2003. The current project supports the ongoing work to rebuild the organisation and to provide services to the members of NTAL.
Time frame and budget	The project is coordinated by Education International and is carried out and financed in cooperation with teachers' unions from Sweden, Norway and Canada. The current phase of the project runs until the end of 2018. The DLF contributes DKK50,000 (\$27,500), which is funded by the DLF members' fees.
Facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Liberia is located in West Africa and has a population of 3.5 million inhabitants</li><li>• 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</li><li>• In 2014-15 Liberia was struck by Ebola, which took the lives of approximately 4800 Liberians.</li><li>• The current president of Liberia is George Weah, a former professional football player, who was elected in 2017.</li><li>• Approximately half of the population over the age of 15 can read and write</li><li>• The GDP per capita is \$370, and some 94 percent of the population has to survive below the poverty line on \$2 per day</li></ul>
School situation	The civil war has made a clear mark on the education system in Liberia, where there is a shortage of both schools and teachers. 60 percent of the teachers have a teaching degree and the remaining 40 percent are employed by the schools and paid with funds collected from the student's parents. In Liberia, six years of basic education are compulsory but more than half of the children do not attend school, because they cannot afford to pay for books, uniforms etc
Background and project development	The managers of NTAL have little experience with union work and union management and must at the same time work in a democratic environment, which is a situation that many of the other players are also unaccustomed to. The internal challenge in NTAL is to create agreement between the by-laws 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 democratic organisations, these developments take 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 deserted areas of the country. The project aims to ensure that NTAL creates results at the national level and thereby legitimises its presence and also the rise in members' fees, which is a precondition for the long term independence of NTAL from external funds. At the same time, NTAL puts a great deal of effort into reaching out to members at their workplace in order to ensure better knowledge of the actual needs of the teachers.

