

Mercy Corps: Support to Prospects 3

	Implementing partner(s)	Mercy Corps Europe
	Location	Bong, Montserrado and Nimba counties
	Agreement period	2017-2021
	Budget total	46 985 000 SEK

Overview and objectives

The Swedish Embassy's collaboration with Mercy Corps focuses on young Liberians under the age of 35, who are the largest demographic group in Liberia and a critical population for the preservation and expansion of Liberia's peace-time gains. The goal of Prospects 3 is for young Liberians to find meaningful, market-driven employment or self-employment through increased self-confidence, skills and opportunities. Increased access to economic opportunity for youth will lead to more meaningful livelihoods and increased integration in, and responsibility for, the well-being of their communities. Investing in and developing youth by preparing them for the workforce and connecting them to economic opportunities can contribute to sustained peace and improved livelihoods for all Liberians.



Figure 1: Two young men sit outside the shop that's brought them a new source of income. Photo Credit: Tara Noronha/Mercy Corps

Activities

Working in Bong, Montserrado and Nimba counties, Prospects 3 has three interlinked and mutually reinforcing sub-programs that address constraints to both youth labor demand and labor supply. The project has three components: the first component focuses on building the self-confidence of youth by training them to succeed as employees or entrepreneurs. Through trainings on entrepreneurship and business-skills, youth will formulate business ideas and develop plans for meaningful and long-term self-employment, contributing to the economic health of their families and engage productively with their community. Additionally, through Mercy Corps contacts with Liberia's private sector, these youth will then be connected to formal opportunities in the workforce or to small business development support. The second component works to create new opportunities for young people by expanding engagement with the private-sector through competitive provision of financing and business advisory support to firms which are poised to create youth employment opportunities or correct labor market failures. Through the third component, Mercy Corps will influence the larger policy landscape that affects youth outcomes by conducting research, studies and policy analysis that advance understanding of youth livelihoods and constraints to youth employment and self-employment.

To date, about 11,750 young people have been impacted by the program, and 515 young Liberians have been trained in business development and supported to establish small businesses, and 613 young men and women were placed on apprenticeships and 177 received job offers from host businesses at the end of the apprenticeships.