

Strategic Plan



Self Help Initiative for Sustainable Development Liberia (SHIFSD-Liberia), Inc.

2024 - 2028

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD:

This strategic plan outlines our collective aspiration and vision for the development of the Self-Help Initiative for Sustainable Development (SHIFSD) over the next five (5) years. It highlights our vision, mission, values, goal and strategic objectives that will guide the implementation of the document.

The formulation of this document resulted from a participatory process that gathered the views from different stakeholders including partner organizations, community development facilitators, staff, and board members. We will continue to build on the achievements that the institution has made and to develop strategies to respond to emerging challenges as well as to integrate lessons learnt over the past five years in the implementation of the Plan.

This strategic plan sets the framework for a broader and more holistic approach to implementing development interventions including micro-finance, livelihood skills and adult literacy. We will pursue a more practical, sustained growth coupled with improvements in all areas of our work. In order to achieve this, all of our actions will be tied to supporting and working within national and international development frameworks including Liberia's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This SP highlights areas that SHIFSD needs to improve in order for the institution to be effective and efficient. Consequently, this SP will be implemented at two parallel levels: Internally, we are committed to the ongoing efforts by the management to ensure that staff members develop professionally to respond to the country's development needs.

Externally, we reaffirm our solidarity and commitment to the people of Liberia in working with diverse stakeholders to strengthen local mechanisms for advancing the rights of communities. Through the implementation of this SP, we are committed to ensuring that the interventions of the institution remain relevant, responsive, innovative, and supportive of communities. The Board extends its profound gratitude to All We Can/Y-Care International for the financial support to develop this document which will provide direction to the institution for the next five years.

Chairperson

Board of Directors

ACRONYMS:

| | |
|--------|---|
| BCC | Behavioral Change Communication |
| CSA | Climate Smart Agriculture |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| ECD | Early Child Development |
| ED | Executive Director |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| GoL | Government of Liberia |
| GHG | Green House Gas |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| INCHR | Independent National Commission on Human Rights |
| LDHS | Liberia Democratic Health Survey |
| LNP | Liberia National Police |
| LRA | Land Rights Act |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| NPHC | National Population and Housing Census |
| OCA | Organizational Capacity Assessment |
| PAPD | Pro-Poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity |
| PTA | Parent-Teacher Association |
| PESTEL | Political Economic Societal Technology Environment Legal |
| SGBV | Sexual and Gender Based Violence |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SHIFSD | Self -Help Initiative for Sustainable Development (SHIFSD). |
| SP | Strategic Plan |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| VSLA | Village Savings Loan Activity |

INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan (SP) which covers a five-year period (2024-2028) provides a roadmap and direction for the institutional and programmatic development of Self-Help Initiative for Sustainable Development (SHIFSD). While the SP is a living document that guides the operations of the institution, its contents are not set in stone and are subject to review and adjustments during the implementation period. The review process is intended to ensure that interventions contained in the document are responsive to the needs of target communities.

The SP is composed of three distinct yet interrelated pillars and its implementation is estimated at **US\$1,350,000**. The strategy has one overarching goal, three pillars and four strategic objectives. Each strategic objectives is supported by broad actions, expected results and an articulated strategy to achieve them. The SP also contains targets and a monitoring and evaluation plan to track progress.

The contents of the SP were generated from a participatory process involving the management team of SHIFSD, staff members, project participants and members of the Board of Directors. As part of the participatory process, a seven-day working session was held in Ganta, Nimba County from March 31 to April 8, 2023. This process was followed by the conduct of an Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) workshop by the All We Can National Facilitator.

Over the past five years, the core program areas of SHIFSD have focused on:

Economic Empowerment: This program includes the provision of training to 200 Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs) groups targeting 5,000 participants in 100 communities in Bomi, Cape Mount and Margibi Counties to help farmers and other community members to improve their livelihood through access to micro-loans.

Sustained Livelihood: This program focuses on the provision of agro-business and entrepreneurial training to 65 young people, especially women in Montserrado, Bomi, Margibi and Nimba Counties.

Adult Education: This program uses REFLECT as a participatory tool to provide functional literacy and numeracy training for underprivileged people in rural communities, particularly women in four communities in Gbarpolu County including that of the Sarpo National Park in Sinoe County.

Social Enterprise Initiatives: The focus of this program is to provide technical, vocational education and training (TVET), and academic activities at the **SHIFSD Multipurpose Youth Training Center** which hosts the SHIFSD Institute for Enterprise and Job Training (recently renamed as the **Holy Hands Institute**), the **Light Up the Bible Ministries** and the **Hummingbird Academy** including its Early Childhood Development (ECD) annex.

This SP contains three pillars including:

Pillar 1: Climate Smart Agriculture

Pillar 2: Education and Livelihood skills

Pillar 3: Financial Sustainability

2. SITUATION ANALYSIS

On October 10, 2023, Liberia will conduct its fourth successive presidential and legislative elections since the end of the civil conflict in 2003. The conduct of these elections will create the opportunity for the country to consolidate its peace and democratic gains that have been made thus far. The consolidation of peace and democracy will depend on the quality of the conduct of the elections and the response by the contenders to the outcome.

While elections are important for solidifying a country's democracy, they do not guarantee good governance in terms of transparency, creation of jobs and livelihood opportunities, addressing gender inequalities, access to justice, poverty reduction and inclusive access to public services.

In the meantime, the National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) preliminary results put the population at 5.2 million (5,248,621) which means that total population increased by 1,772,013 (50 percent) when compared to the 2008 census. Overall, the male population makes up 50.4 percent (2,644,450) of the people, and the female population accounts for 49.6 (2,604,171), given a national sex ratio of 101.5 males for every 100 females." The final results are expected to be released in July 2023 and according to projections by the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), half of the new population will be under the age of 18 years.

According to the World Bank, Liberia's economy expanded by 4.8% in 2020 despite the war in Ukraine, high global inflation, and depressed demands in advanced economies. The expansion was driven by mining and agriculture. Growth in the agricultural sector accelerated to 5.9%, from 3.3% in 2021, on the back of increased rice and cassava production. Industrial output grew by 10.4% in 2022 largely driven by increased gold production. Annual inflation remained low. Annual average inflation slowed to 7.6% in 2022, down from 7.8% in 2021. Food prices declined by 1.6 % due to relatively good agriculture harvests. The focus should be to sustain the recovery and ensure that growth is inclusive through investments in human capital, social protection and in labor intensive productive sectors including agriculture.

According to the UNDP Human Development Index Report of 2021/2022, Liberia remains in the low human development category, and is ranked 178 out of 191 countries, due to slow progress in education and health. Furthermore, a World Bank 2021 news feature estimates that in 2020 more than half of the Liberian households have fallen into extreme poverty (compared to 38.6 % in 2014), while two out of three households are found to be food insecure (World Bank 2021). Most of Liberia's citizens remain highly vulnerable and are affected by widespread poverty. Rural communities experience 71.8% poverty as compared to 31.5% in urban areas.

In 2021, the unemployment rate for Liberia was 4.1 % and it increased from 2.1 % in 2002 to 4.1 % in 2021 growing at an average annual rate of 4.11%. Based on a collection of development indicators, the World Bank reported that employment to population ratio, 15+, total % in Liberia was reported at 73.46% in 2021. The World Bank further reported that the % of the female labor force in Liberia was 2.991% in 2021.

Agriculture, including forestry, is the primary livelihood for more than 60 percent of Liberia's population and accounted for 31 percent of Liberia's 2021 real Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

It provides income for many households engaging in cassava, rubber, rice, oil palm, cocoa, or sugarcane production. Cassava and rice are the primary staple food crops. More households engage in cassava production than any other food crop. At the same time, there are barriers and constraints that hinder access to livelihood opportunities in the formal sector. Some of the barriers include lack of technical skills particularly among the youthful population, limited private sector investment, limited access to energy, poor road infrastructure (roads) in rural areas and limited income generating opportunities.

The majority of Liberians work in the informal economy and women still comprise the majority of these laborers. Seventy-four percent of all female workers in Liberia are informal laborers, and 41 percent of university-educated women work informally, compared to 24 percent of university-educated men. The most significant challenges faced by female informal workers, such as market sellers and street vendors, include a lack of access to credit and banking services, limited financial literacy and business training, few social protections or childcare options, harassment from citizens and local authorities, and poor sanitation within marketplaces.

Despite a strong legal and policy framework, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) remains a major issue facing the country. The 2022 US State Department Human Rights Report on Liberia quotes a report from the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) that perpetrators of rape enjoyed widespread impunity, in part because bureaucratic obstacles restricted the number of cases that could be heard in each judicial term, as well as institutional weaknesses of government agencies tasked with combating sexual violence. An inefficient justice system prevented timely prosecutions, and delays caused many survivors to cease cooperating with prosecutors. Authorities often dropped cases due to a lack of evidence. Survivors' families sometimes requested money from perpetrators as a form of redress; perpetrators sometimes offered money to prevent matters from going to court.

One of the main factors that contribute to GBV is that it is often seen as a private or family matter. The true number of rape cases in Liberia is not available because quite often cases are not reported and are compromised. According to the Sexual Gender Based Crimes Unit (SGBCU) of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), total new cases from January to June 2020 indicated: 107 cases tried in court, leading to 44 convictions and 42 acquittals. This includes all cases received from the Liberian National Police (LNP) and have or being adjudicated by the SGBVCU at the MOJ. The Data covered Montserrado, Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Maryland, Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Grand Kru.

Domestic violence is outlawed but the practice is widespread. According to the 2019-2020 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey, 60% of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence and 9% have experienced sexual violence. Less than half (42%) of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence have ever sought help. The maximum penalty for conviction of domestic violence is six months' imprisonment. According to the US State Department Human Rights Report, the government did not enforce the law effectively and that civil society observers suggested that lack of speedy trials led some survivors to seek redress outside the formal justice system.

Liberia has no law that prohibits the practice of Female Genital Mutilation/Circumcision (FGM/C) and there is little political will within the legislature to address the issue. According to the 2019-20 LDHS, the most recent data available, 38 percent of girls and women between

ages 15 and 49 had undergone FGM/C, with a higher prevalence in the northern regions of the country.

The Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) 2018–2023 is the second of a series of national development plans under the Liberia 2030 vision framework. Pillar 1 of the PAPD - Power to the People - involves provision of education, health, youth development, and social protection, with the planned education-related outcome of achieving more inclusive and higher quality education. Access to inclusive and quality education remains a challenge due to inadequate infrastructure, low incentives and salaries for teachers, inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials, and limited qualified and skilled teachers. These problems are compounded by limited budgetary allocation which undermines the quality of monitoring and supervision which is more widespread in the counties.

According to the PAPD, the government aims to have equitable safe, affordable and sustainable water and sanitation services for all Liberians. The WASH national policy aims to increase to 85% the access to equitable, safe, affordable and sustainable water supply for the population of rural communities and small towns in Liberia. The policy also seeks to eliminate open defecation nationwide and provide a minimum standard WASH package to 100% of the population, particularly targeting communities, schools and health centers.

Meanwhile, the country's economy slowed in the first half of 2022, even when mining and construction continued to perform well. In agriculture, rubber and cocoa production dropped by 13.5 percent and 27 percent, respectively. In the industrial sector, iron ore, gold, and cement production all increased, reflecting firmer international prices and an uptick in construction activity. The World Bank indicated that in 2020, the human capital gap in Liberia was mainly driven by poor education (contributing 50 percent), poor health (12 percent), and survival (7 percent). The underlying factors contributing to the country's low human capital outcomes are multiple and complex. They include weak institutions, ineffective service delivery, demographic pressures, and low and inefficient social spending.

3.0 SWOT ANALYSIS AT THE INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC LEVELS

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|--|---|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The institution has built on its own land ● Construction of a school as a good social enterprise model ● Expertise in VSLA scheme ● The institution is composed of committed team ● Acquired expertise in using multiple approaches in addressing the issue of illiteracy ● Expertise in running schools as a social enterprise venture ● Good communication with donors ● Financial management system in place and operational | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited human resource capacity ● Limited access to market to sell agricultural products ● Inadequate financial resources to expand interventions ● Lack of production equipment to add value to farm products ● No ownership of land for future expansion of social enterprise investments ● Lack gender mainstreaming in programming ● No social media marketing ● No accounting software |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School feeding programs in Liberia serves as incentive for children to enroll in school ● Exporting of locally made gari to Sierra Leone ● Potential for cassava flower production ● Youthful population | <p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Competitors in the gari production sector ● High inflation and hike in prices of farming tools and inputs ● Political uncertainty ● Tedious accreditation process instituted by the government ● The country is vulnerable to the outbreak of virus |

From the SWOT analysis, the greatest strength of SHIFSD is the investment the institution has made in carving for itself a particular niche in responding to the chronic problem of the low level of literacy among young people, particularly females. The institution has also developed competencies and experience in providing livelihood skills to out of school youth as a means for them to survive. These strengths can be used to leverage the existing opportunities to mobilize resources as well as to deepen its programmatic interventions and strengthen its institutional capacity.

Similarly, the weaknesses of the institution can be addressed by undertaking the following actions:

Limited Human Resource Capacity: Expand and diversify the institutional financial resource base that will create the opportunity to hire more qualified and competent staff members. This can be done by investing in the development of a resource mobilization strategy. This weakness can also be addressed by working with partners to identify opportunities for capacity development of staff members so that their work can be more effective and efficient.

Gap in value added to agricultural products: All future agricultural projects should include a component on the procurement of equipment that will add value to farm products that will be produced. This helps to increase income.

No land ownership: SHIFSD's operational partner, Kawadah Farm has extensive knowledge and expertise in the area of climate friendly agriculture and has built strong relationships with local communities in accessing land for farming. To make this investment sustainable in terms of expansion and increase in productivity, the two partners need to invest in the ownership of their own land through purchase from the community and obtaining title.

Lack of gender mainstreaming in programming: SHIFSD should engage its partners to provide training to its staff on the basic concepts and practice of mainstreaming gender in programming. A long-term solution will be to develop a gender policy to institutionalize the practice.

No social media marketing: Visibility is key in marketing the institution and its achievements. SHIFSD needs to develop its social media tools and regularly update them to increase the visibility of the institution.

No accounting software: Even though a financial management system is in place, the installation of an accounting software will contribute meaningfully to the effective management of resources and improve the quality of producing financial reports. SHIFSD needs to engage its partners to provide this kind of support as an institutional capacity building support.

4.0 ALIGNED STRATEGIC DIRECTION (2024-2028)

Strategic plans are informed by clearly articulated organizational vision and mission statements as well as core values. SHIFSD has been operating based on a five-year SP that expired in 2017. The document contained vision and mission statements as well as core values. Based on the outcome of the working sessions, the statements and core values were reviewed and the revised versions are highlighted below:

4.1 VISION STATEMENT:

Previous vision statement: SHIFSD envisage a just society free of illiteracy and poverty.

Revised vision statement: SHIFSD envisage a society free of illiteracy and poverty.

4.2 MISSION STATEMENT:

Previous mission statement: SHIFSD exists to reduce poverty through access to functional adult literacy and entrepreneurship.

Revised mission statement: SHIFSD exists to alleviate poverty through access to alternative sources of education and entrepreneurship.

4.2.1 Motto: Practical help for self-reliance

4.3 CORE VALUES: In pursuit of the above vision and mission statements, SHIFSD is committed at all times to the following core values:

| CORE VALUES | |
|--|--|
| Integrity | When we are faced with challenges, we will communicate them to participating communities and donors in a timely manner. |
| Justice | We will treat all staff members and stakeholders in a respectful, fair and honest manner. |
| Transparency and accountability | We will remain open in the management of programs and become answerable to the participating communities, donors and partners. |
| Participation | We value consensus building and shared leadership |
| Diversity | We will strive to accommodate and respect people of diverse backgrounds and affiliations |

4.4 STRATEGIC PILLARS:

The strategic pillars were developed based on the situation analysis, development issues identified by communities, as well as the mission and competencies of the institution. Through a process of scoring and ranking of the issues interventions were grouped into the following distinct yet interrelated pillars with accompanying Theory of Change (TOC). The pillars include:

Climate Smart Agriculture: The focus of this pillar is to identify innovative means of investing in climate smart agriculture.

Theory of Change: If communities invest in climate smart agriculture, the environment will be protected.

Education and livelihood skills: This pillar focuses on the provision of livelihood skills for young people and access to microfinance by women to improve their livelihood.

Theory of Change: If young people have skills and women have access to loans, their livelihood will improve.

Financial Sustainability: This pillar comprises two themes: Investment in agriculture and agribusiness.

Theory of Change: If investment is made in social enterprise development, it will create the opportunity for institutional financial sustainability.

4.5 Intervention Logic: This section provides a brief description of the underlying causes and consequences of each pillar and the rationale for choosing each one.

4.5.1 Climate Smart Agriculture:

Liberia is situated on 9.8 million hectares (ha) of land space. Land area available in the country for farming is estimated at 41% of the total land space or 4.02 million ha.¹ Of this arable land

¹ [https://www.moa.gov.lr/sites/default/files/documents/CSA%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Bassa%20River%20Cess%20%20Sinoe%20\(002\).pdf](https://www.moa.gov.lr/sites/default/files/documents/CSA%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Bassa%20River%20Cess%20%20Sinoe%20(002).pdf)

space 600,000 hectares is lowland. Farming practices in Liberia is predominantly subsistence in nature, rainfall dependent, where the smallholder farmers practice shifting cultivation using small hand tools as well as unimproved local seeds as planting materials. These factors combined result into low agricultural production and productivity.

Farming depends on the weather and most farming practices are season-based. Moreover, Season is determined by certain weather patterns and climatic conditions. Changes in climatic conditions can have profound impacts on crop, animal and fish farming productivity. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) is farming that sustainably increases productivity, enhances the resilience of livelihoods and ecosystems, reduces and/or removes Green House Gas (GHG) and enhances the achievement of national food security. Furthermore, it is an integrated farming approach to address the interwoven challenges posed by food insecurity and climate change thereby improving food security, environmental protection, reducing deforestation, and creating awareness on climate change.

4.5.2 Education and Livelihood Skills:

Liberia ranks low at position 176 on the 2019 Human Development Index making it one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty afflicts 50.9% of the population, more so women whose work is unpaid and goes unrecognized. In rural areas, poverty is higher (71.8%) compared to urban settings (31.5%). This is as a result of limited income-generating opportunities with only 18.1% of the workforce in paid employment, the informal sector accounting for 85% of all employment in the country. The declining economy is aggravating unemployment. The youth, under 25 years of age, constitute 64% of the population, and about (60%) of them have not completed primary schooling.

The majority of Liberians work in the informal economy and women comprise the majority of these laborers. Seventy-four percent of all female workers in Liberia are informal laborers, and 41 percent of university-educated women work informally, compared to 24 percent of university-educated men.² The most significant challenges faced by female informal workers, such as market sellers and street vendors, include a lack of access to credit and banking services, limited financial literacy and business training. Despite these challenges, women make significant economic contributions yet they are constrained from contributing even more due to their exclusion from productive opportunities. From macroeconomic, demographic and survey data, the World Bank analysis finds that women were responsible for 39 percent of market-based output produced annually in 2020, equal to US\$1.08 billion and contributed another US\$530 million in non-tradable sources of production such as household and domestic chores.³ These estimates reinforce the need for sustained investment in women's human capacity development as well as access to microfinance.

4.5.3 Financial Sustainability:

With a decline in resources from international development partners CSOs are challenged to formulate innovative social enterprise projects to respond to this challenge of donor fatigue.

² <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-global-economy/case-studies/liberia/>

³ <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/1813-9450-10425#:~:text=Using%20macroeconomic%2C%20demographic%2C%20and%20survey,namely%2C%20housework%20and%20domestic%20chores.>

The Business and Association Law of Liberia allows CSOs to generate income as long as such resources are used for the operations of the entity. What is important is that CSOs need to be strategic and creative in identifying the business model to guide its social enterprise investment in order to mitigate the risk of loss.

At the heart of social enterprise is not only to secure alternative and diversify sources of funding but to ensure that CSOs continue to operate and respond to the needs of the communities in keeping with their non-for-profit status. CSOs must therefore work to establish and improve their internal management system and identify products and services that are marketable in the areas they work.

5.0 Logical Framework: This portion of the SP outlines the overall goal, strategic objectives, expected results and specific interventions.

5.1 Goal:

The overarching goal of this SP is to improve the livelihood conditions of women and youth in target communities.

This goal will be achieved through strategic objectives, results and specific interventions.

Pillar 1: Climate Smart Agriculture:

Strategic Objective: To increase food security amongst 30% of smallholder farmers in targeted communities by 2028

Expected Results:

- Increase Smallholder farmers who practice climate smart agriculture by 30% by 2028
- Increased income of smallholder farmers by 60% by 2028

Pillar 2: Education and Livelihood Skills

Strategic Objectives:

- To Increase young people with demand driven skills in targeted community by 20% by 2028;
- To increase enrollment in formal school by 20% by 2028;

Expected Results:

- Increased in young people with demand driven skills in targeted communities by 20% by 2028;
- Increase in enrollment in formal school by 70% by 2028;
- Increased in women with livelihood skills by 15% by 2028;

Pillar 3: Financial Sustainability

Strategic objective:

- To increase annual income by 30% by 2028;

Expected Results:

- 100% of 25 acres of land cultivated for agricultural purpose;
- Increase in profit margin by 10% on agriculture produce;

5.2 INTERVENTIONS:

The table below provides an intervention framework that describes the required actions for the achievement of each strategic objective.

| Pillar 1: Climate Smart Agriculture | |
|--|--|
| Strategic Objective | Key Actions |
| To increase food security amongst 30% of smallholder farmers in targeted communities by 2028 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct land assessment to identify suitable farmland; 2. Develop a strategy for farm maintenance; 3. Conduct market survey; 4. Train 200 smallholder farmers in climate smart agriculture; 5. Provide 200 smallholders farmers with farm input in 26 communities; 6. Establish a demonstration site for climate smart agricultural practices; 7. Organize awareness raising sessions on climate smart agriculture; |

| Pillar 2: Education and livelihood skills | |
|--|--|
| Strategic Objectives | Key Actions |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To Increase young people with demand driven skills in targeted community by 20 % by 2028; b. To increase enrollment in formal school by 20% by 2028; | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct life skills survey; 2. Train teachers in effective teaching and learning approaches (T-Vet=15, ECD= 10); 3. Train 625 women in Village Saving & Lone Association (VSLA) Methodology; 4. Organize a review workshop of TVET Curriculum; 5. Construct staff (teacher & Trainer) hostel; 6. Construct additional school facilities; 7. Conduct community awareness raising on livelihood opportunities; 8. Establish 26 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA); 9. Conduct entrepreneurship skills training; 10. Train 625 community members in adult literacy; |
| Pillar 3: Financial Sustainability | |
| Strategic Objective | Key Actions |
| To increase annual income by 30% by 2028 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire land for agricultural investment purposes; |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Conduct a feasibility study to identify a suitable social enterprise model; 3. Formulate a comprehensive business plan; 4. Devise a marketing strategy tailored for the agribusiness; 5. Cultivate the acquired land for both food and cash crops; 6. Establish post-harvest facilities to enhance storage and processing capabilities; 7. Provide training for 40 staff members in resource mobilization; |
|--|--|

6.0 STRATEGIC APPROACH:

Given that the themes identified in this SP are inter-linked, an integrated approach will be adopted for its implementation. This approach will be reinforced by a four-pronged strategic approach. The first approach is a multi-sectoral engagement at county and national level. The second is building a network and alliance with other CSOs and international development partners. The third approach is media outreach and social mobilization. The fourth is policy advocacy and the last strategy is social entrepreneurship.

The programmatic themes and key interventions outlined in this SP are aligned with various pillars of the government's national development framework: Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), and the Education Policy of the Government of Liberia. Furthermore, the pillars of the SP are supportive of the government's efforts in attaining the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Number One: No Poverty; Number Five: Gender Equality; Number Eight: Decent Work and Economic Growth; and Number Ten: Reduced Equality.

6.1 MULTI-SECTORAL ENGAGEMENT:

The core issues that this SP seeks to address are complex and have multi-disciplinary implications. Consequently, interventions require a multi-sectoral approach that encompasses a deliberate collaborative effort among various stakeholders from different sectors at national and county level if the intended results are to be effective, efficient and sustainable. Stakeholders at the national level that are relevant to the implementation of this SP are the following ministries: Education, Youth and Sports, Gender Children and Social Protection, and the National Legislature. Other stakeholders include women-led CSOs. Stakeholders at the county level that are strategic for the implementation of this SP include the county administrative leadership structure and traditional leaders.

The Mendelow's matrix was used as a tool to conduct a stakeholders' analysis of the actors that SHIFSD needs to engage over time. The outcome is highlighted below:

High power and high interest: These actors are likely to have significant influence and most likely to drive the desired change. Actors identified that fall within this category include:

- Local county leaders (Superintendent, District Commissioners and focal persons of the various line ministries.
- International NGOs
- National and local CSOs
- Media
- Women's Groups

These stakeholders are key collaborators and SHIFSD needs to build strategic and collaborative relationships with them.

High power and low interest: This group of actors have the capacity to use their power to influence the outcome but do not demonstrate the interest required to bring about the needed change. Actors within this category include:

- Government Ministries and Agencies at national level
- Members of the National Legislature
- Political Parties
- Traditional Leaders

These stakeholders need to be kept satisfied through sustained engagement as well as providing them with information on a regular basis on the progress of SHIFSD's work. The rationale is that the provision of regular information will help increase their interest and with this, their power can be leveraged.

Low Power and High interest: These stakeholders demonstrate high interest in bringing about a change in society but may not have the power to make that change happen. Actors in this category include:

- Women and youth groups
- International development partners
- UN System

Low interest and low power: These are stakeholders that require minimal efforts of engagement because of their lack of interest in the action and power to make any change. Key actors in this category include marketers and others involved in petty trade.

6.2 BUILDING NETWORK AND ALLIANCES:

Building network and alliances with like-minded institutions is critical for the successful implementation of this SP document. In the implementation of this SP, networking and alliance building will take place at two levels: strategic and operational. Strategic networking and alliance building include establishing relationships with entities that share similar missions and programmatic areas or priorities with SHIFSD. Such entities include: organizations within the UN System such as UNICEF, UNDP and UN Women. Other strategic partners include international development partners such as USAID, EU, Irish Aid, World Bank, and Sida as well as international NGOs that implement programs for these named international

development agencies. Relevant government agencies whose priorities are aligned with the thematic areas highlighted in this SP are also strategic partners. They include the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

Building partnerships with these institutions creates an opportunity for SHIFSD to leverage financial resources as well as technical assistance for institutional capacity building and support. Engagement with these partners also creates the opportunity for SHIFSD to identify programmatic areas within this SP that can be addressed by the partners directly or through funding channeled through implementing institutions. By coordinating with these partners, they can provide information on funding opportunities that could be leveraged by SHIFSD in the implementation of this Plan.

Unlike strategic partners, networks and alliances can be built with organizations that are considered operational partners and they include national CSOs or Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) who are directly implementing programs and activities that are similar to those identified in this SP. For the agricultural and social enterprise components of the SP, SHIFSD will engage smallholders' farmers and cooperatives; building relationships with organizations to create opportunities for information sharing, collaboration and coordination of efforts.

6.3 OUTREACH AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

Community outreach and social mobilization serves as a dynamic and interactive process that creates the opportunity for communities to take ownership of their development efforts. The achievement of the programmatic areas outlined in this SP document cannot take place without the active participation of target communities. As a strategic approach community outreach and social mobilization include dialoguing with communities, building a trusting relationship with the different groups of the communities and identifying their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of development interventions. It also includes the provision of the necessary support for the implementation of those roles and responsibilities.

6.4 POLICY ADVOCACY:

The interventions of SHIFSD are informed by national and international development frameworks. At the national level, the development framework is formulated by policy makers both within the Executive and Legislative Branches of government. Because policy makers are key actors in developing and implementing government's development programs, they need to be strategically engaged in a sustained manner.

Building on the foundation laid out in this SP, SHIFSD will develop an advocacy strategy to provide the strategic direction on how policy makers will be engaged and on what specific themes or policy issues. The strategy will be informed by the identification of gaps in policy documents and how advocacy will be instrumental in getting policy makers to informed decisions on making changes to policies where necessary.

6.5 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT:

The legal and policy framework in Liberia allows non-profit-organizations to undertake investments that can generate income as long as said income is invested in the management of the organization. SHIFSDs' social enterprise development will be largely in two sectors: Education and Agriculture. In the education sector, SHIFSD has gained knowledge and

experience in the management of schools and it will use its experience to expand on existing educational infrastructures to enroll more students while maintaining high quality.

In the agriculture sector, the focus will be on investment in food and cash crop production. Strategic to this approach will be the formalization of land tenure security, working through smallholders' farmers, and value added to agricultural products. Other approaches will include introduction of new farming methods to increase productivity while reducing environmental impact and the use of technology to link farmers to the market.

6.6 GENDER MAINSTREAMING:

The issues highlighted in this SP affect men differently as compared to women due to social and cultural dynamics, deeply entrenched norms and traditions. As such, mainstreaming gender in the implementation of the SP will be a major focus. In the implementation of this SP, SHIFSD will conduct a gender analysis on how its interventions are responding to males and females disaggregated along demographics and geographic. The analysis will be focused on how interventions that will be developed from this SP will respond to the needs of women and men in light of the strategic objectives and expected results.

6.7 PRIORITIZING HIGH BURDEN COUNTIES:

This SP will be implemented primarily in Montserrado and Nimba. Maryland, River Gee and other high burden counties may be included as and when feasible. The burden on Montserrado is the high unemployment among young people due to limited opportunities to acquire livelihood skills. In Nimba, Maryland and River Gee Counties, young people experience similar challenges compounded by extremely bad roads, limited social services and adverse traditional norms. Addressing this situation will be key in reducing poverty among women and youth and increasing opportunity for sustained livelihood. According to a study conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP) and International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2019, two drivers of conflict were identified:

- A lack of socio-economic opportunities for young women and men, and
- Grievances over weak and exclusive state and non-state governance and land dispute resolution.

In these same counties (Nimba, Maryland and River Gee), women are grossly under-represented in leadership decision-making structures. This exclusion means that the voices of women are not heard in the decision-making processes in the communities. If addressed, the leadership structures will be gender sensitive and responsive. Nimba is considered as a food basket county so it has potential for agricultural investment and productivity.

7.0 INVESTING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN:

Access to resources for the implementation of this SP can be a challenge particularly in a context where competition for resources is stiff. In response to this factor, management needs to set up a strong structure and processes to provide leadership, coordination, collaboration, and oversight to ensure that various projects are adding to the achievement of set targets. These actions will be supported and reinforced by a strategy for resource mobilization that will target current but potential donors as well. Resource mobilization can be better coordinated if it is led by a team within SHIFSD which will make it more effective and efficient.

7.1 COSTING THE PLAN: ESTIMATED FINANCIAL RESOURCES NEEDED:

The current status of SHIFSD’s income is as follows: The total cost of this SP has been calculated at **\$1,350,000** over five years. The first layer of the table below shows the sources of income. From the breakdown, SHIFSD has two main sources of income and these sources are external. This amounts to a funding gap of **\$636,600.00**, holding all things constant.

| | Source | Year 1 (2024) | Year 2 (2025) | Year 3 (2026) | Year 4 (2027) | Year 5 (2028) | Grand Total |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Education Development Center (EDC) | \$75,000 | \$80,000 | \$85,000 | 00,000 | 00.00 | \$240,000 |
| 2 | All We Can-Y Care Int’l | \$38,400 | \$45,000 | \$50,000 | \$55,000 | \$60,000 | \$248,400 |
| 3 | Stichting INITIAT | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| 4 | Holy Hands Institute | \$10,000 | \$15,000 | \$20,000 | \$25,000 | \$30,000 | \$100,000 |
| 5 | Hummingbird Academy | \$15,000 | \$20,000 | \$25,000 | \$30,000 | \$35,000 | \$125,000 |
| | Total | \$138,400 | \$160,000 | \$180,000 | \$110,000 | \$125,000 | \$713,400 |

8. ACTIVITY PLAN:

The Activity Plan covers a period of five years and it is broken down on an annual basis corresponding to each of the three pillars enshrined in the organization’s 5 year Strategic Plan starting 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2028.

| SHIFSD Liberia; 5 year Activities Plan | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Pillar 1: | | Climate Smart Agriculture | | | | | | |
| Strategic Objective: To increase food security amongst 30% of smallholder farmers in targeted communities by 2028 | | | | | | | | |
| No. | Activity | 5yr Target | YR1 (2024) | YR2(2025) | YR3(2026) | YR4(2027) | YR5(2028) | Comment |
| 1 | Conduct land assessment to identify suitable farmland | 10 | | X | X | | | |
| 2 | Develop a strategy for farm maintenance | 1 | | X | | | | |
| 3 | Conduct market survey | 1 | | X | | | | |
| 4 | Train 200 smallholder farmers in climate smart agriculture | 200 | | X | X | X | | |
| 5 | Provide 200 smallholders farmers with farm input in 25 communities | 200 | | X | X | X | | |
| 6 | Establish a demonstration site for climate smart agricultural practices | 1 | | X | X | | | |
| 7 | Organize awareness raising sessions on climate smart agriculture | 125 | X | X | X | X | X | |

| Pillar 2: | | Education and Livelihoods Skills | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|--|
| Strategic Objective: a. To Increase young people with demand driven skills in targeted community by 20 % by 2028 b.To Increase enrollment in formal school by 20% by 2028. | | | | | | | | | |
| No. | Activity | 5yr Target | YR (2024) | YR (2025) | YR (2026) | YR (2027) | YR (2028) | Comment | |
| 1 | Conduct life skills survey | 1 | X | | | | | | |
| 2 | Train teachers in effective teaching and learning approaches (T-Vet=15, ECD=10) | 25 | X | X | X | | | | |
| 3 | Train 650 women in Village Saving & Loan Association (VSLA) Methodology | 650 | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| 4 | Organize a review workshop of TVET curriculum | 1 | X | | | | | | |
| 5 | Construct staff (teacher & Trainer) hostel | 6 | | X | X | X | X | | |
| 6 | Construct additional school facilities | 6 | | X | X | X | X | | |
| 7 | Conduct community awareness raising on livelihood opportunities | 8 | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| 8 | Establish 25 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) | 25 | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| 9 | Conduct entrepreneurship skills training | 1 | X | | | | | | |
| 10 | Train 625 community members in adult literacy | 625 | X | X | X | X | X | | |

| Pillar 3: | | Financial Sustainability | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Strategic Objective: To increase annual income by 30% by 2028 | | | | | | | | |
| No. | Activity | 5yr Target | YR (2024) | YR (2025) | YR (2026) | YR (2027) | YR (2028) | Comment |
| 1 | Acquire land for agricultural investment purposes. | 25 | X | X | X | | | |
| 2 | Conduct a feasibility study to identify a suitable social enterprise model. | 1 | X | | | | | |
| 3 | Formulate a comprehensive business plan. | 1 | X | | | | | |
| 4 | Devise a marketing strategy tailored for the agribusiness | 1 | X | | | | | |
| 5 | Cultivate the acquired land for both food and cash crops. | 25 | X | X | X | | | |
| 6 | Establish post-harvest facilities to enhance storage and processing capabilities. | 1 | | | | X | | |
| 7 | Provide training for 40 staff members in resource mobilization. | 1 | X | | | | | |

9. ANNEX 1: MEASUREMENT PLAN:

The Measurement Plan for monitoring and evaluation will be assessed half way into the implementation period through an internal review process or based on the availability of

resources, it will be done by an independent external professional. The outcome of the review process will be used to make adjustments to the results framework where needed in order to ensure that the objectives of the SP are achieved. See Annex 1 attached.

10. ANNEX 2: THEORY OF CHANGE:

The Theory of Change (ToC) presents a full picture illustrating the aforementioned strategic plan's key activities, assumptions, threats and barriers, collaborative learning and adapting processes that will facilitate the change we seek through the achievements of SHIFSD's desired outcomes thus contributing to the overall resultant impacts stated therein. See Annex 2 attached.

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