

Emerging From War

4 February 2009

A brutal civil war ravaged the West African nation of Liberia for more than a decade. According to Debbie Sacra of SIM Liberia, after peace was restored to the country, new influences entered to create huge cultural gaps between Liberia's generations. 'Music on the radio, world news on satellite TV, movies from Nigeria and India, broader access to the Internet, cell phones, and even the presence of relief workers from around the world—all served to globalise the young people and alienate them from more mature community and church leaders. They don't understand one another, and sometimes they don't feel like they really want to.'

At a recent youth forum, many young people said that for now they want only to be free from rules and to have money. They told how a desire to succeed might mean giving sexual favors or payoffs. Most say they will think about church and 'God business' later, when they're older and want to settle down. Yet they indicated that beneath the material desires, they really want someone to care about them. This is the challenge facing youth ministries in Liberia.

Growing impact

Janna Henze has accepted responsibility for Training of Trainers (TOT) and Teacher Training Workshops (TTW). She began by training two Liberians, chosen by the denomination that relates to SIM, to lead TOT seminars. The three of them formed a Children's and Youth Committee within the national church. Those who successfully complete the TOT are certified as trainers. After two TOT seminars, there are now 10 certified trainers throughout Liberia—covering almost every church district.

The trainers are beginning to invite Janna and her team to come and help them put on District Teacher Training Workshops to empower their Sunday school teachers. Trainers are growing in personal skills and confidence. Other denominations have also invited Janna and her team to do workshops in Monrovia, the capital city.



Pray

- That mature Liberian Christians will understand young people and will relate to them authentically.
- That many more church districts will host Teacher Training Workshops.
- For trainers and teachers to be truly effective.

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Urgent Prayer Need

Pray for the country of Nigeria - for peace to be restored, and for the Lord's comfort for all those affected by the recent violence.