



Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment-RICCE

Strategic Plan



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AWDF	African Women Development Fund
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practice
IT	Information Technology
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
PADP	Pro-Poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity
RICCE	Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
SP	Strategic Plan
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association

1. Executive summary

This is a 5-year Strategic Plan prepared for the Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment (RICCE). The purpose of the strategic plan (2023-2027) is to provide strategic direction for RICCE for the next five years and guide decisions and actions of its Board members. The organisation was established in 2005, and since then has implemented programs, using a community centered approach, maximising genuine co-designing and co-delivery, in collaboration with Government, CSO networks, Private Institutions, including multi-lateral companies, farmers' cooperatives, youth and women groups and forest management committees.

The Strategic Plan was developed through broad based consultations with staff, beneficiaries, donors and other Civil Society Organisations. The process involves review and analysis of primary and secondary data, including a situation analysis from poverty, food security and livelihood and gender equality perspectives.

The information from stakeholder consultations and data analysed presents many significant factors regarding current fulfilment of poverty reduction goals, Natural resource management, food security goals, climate change actions and Gender Equality. Five national issues identified affecting the wellbeing of people in Liberia, especially rural populations are:

- Livelihood and food insecurity
- Loss of biodiversity including forests, ecosystems, marine, wetlands and mangroves
- Climate Change
- Gender Inequality and Violence Against Women and Girls
- Petty disputes, including land conflicts and nonviolent crimes

RICCE's Strategic Plan is built on the principles of Community Control and Leadership, capacity building, networking and partnerships at the local, national and International levels, and ensuring the Organisation's strategic response to poverty reduction through economic empowerment and livelihood creation, food security, sustainable environment programming and gender equality contributes to national development policies and agenda including the Pro-poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity (PADP) and the Country's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals.

RICCE will contribute to the creation of a sustainable environment in which the rights of women and girls are fulfilled by working with government and key stakeholders, including women rights organisations, empowering vulnerable populations in rural areas with tools to help them gain control of their lives. This will be done through more equitable delivery of programs in Gender Equality and VAWG prevention, food security, women and youth economic empowerment, biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of forest resources. RICCE will strive to place women and girls and their rights and empowerment issues at the Center of its agenda.

RICCE will facilitate the achievement of the below goals in five years, responding to the above mentioned national issues:

Rights of women and girls are prioritized and protected: Women and girls in Liberia know their rights and are able to use advocacy tools to hold the immediate duty bearers accountable for the promotion and fulfilment of their rights. They should be able to live their lives without fear of Gender Based Violence, including rape and other sexual violence, female genital mutilation(FGM) and forced/early marriage

Sustainable management and utilization of natural resources: Communities are empowered to contribute to natural resources management for sustainable development and rural livelihoods, at the same time addressing ways to boost agricultural productivity for food security and sustainable economic development, while conserving and restoring the natural resource base

Food security and improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture: Contribute to the creation of a vibrant and sustainable agricultural sector that builds food security and improved nutrition. Our programs will help to enhance food production and agribusiness, increased access to extension services that promote good agricultural practices and increased income for small holder farmers.

Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacities of communities to climate- related disasters and hazards: promotes better land management and farming practices to help reduce environmental degradation and lower greenhouse emissions, as well as training in sustainable agriculture, promoting social change for responsible climate action by disseminating accurate climate information.

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution: RICCE's comparative advantage in peace building and conflict resolution is deeply rooted in its programmatic focus on social and economic sectors and its partnership with a wide range of actors including forest dependent communities, farmer based groups, vulnerable women and girls. This gives us the opportunity to bring the voices of various marginalized groups, including women, children, youth into peace building and conflict resolution processes. Our program will develop the capacities of community structures, including stakeholders in the customary justice system to help them prevent and manage conflicts, including land conflicts and Protected and Conserved Areas related conflicts.

2. Learning from previous experience

RICCE, a National Non-Governmental Organisation was established in 2005 by development specialists, Engineers, health professionals, grassroots activists, and some professors at the University of Liberia who were alarmed by the exclusion of rural people especially women participation in decision making about national issues which have impacts on their lives. RICCE has its central office in Monrovia and sub Offices in Nimba and expected to open another field office in Grand Gedeh to cover its operations in the South east. Looking back at the activities of RICCE, it has worked with donors to promote women rights, advocating for gender just policies, at the same time empowering them to become self-reliant.

Violence Against Women and Girls prevention-In 2012, RICCE, with support from the African Women Development Fund(AWDF) implemented a Gender Based Violence risk mitigation project in reintegrated Refugees settlement near Monrovia, targeting 100 Sierra Leonean female refugees. The project supported vegetable Gardening, financial literacy skills building for the targeted women and established safe spaces to promote Gender Based Violence incident reporting.

Again, under the UN/EU Spotlight project RICCE led the establishment for the first time a Nimba County Women Advocacy Movement to End SGBV and Harmful Traditional Practices. Through the support of RICCE the group held a Policy dialogue with the County Legislature and presented a policy brief with recommendations for remedial actions to end rape, FGM and HTP in Nimba, to our credit this group that cut -cross the nine electoral districts headed by Ma Mary Vorhn is still exists and responding to women issues.

Peace building and Conflict resolution: RICCE with support from Women Campaign International worked with women of the Krahn and Gio tribes in Nimba County and settled a long standing tribal and political conflict between the two tribes that led to the killing, property destruction, disunity, coercion between the two tribes in Nimba County and found peaceful resolution using women and youths as the agent of change due to their crucial role as mothers, wives, care givers and peace makers.

Food and Nutrition Security project: With support from AccelorMittal Liberia RICCE introduced Conservation Agriculture (CA) as means to increase food and income for the local communities thru climate smart agriculture. RICCE supported Income Generation initiatives through the VSLA Model and Farming as a Business concept to enhance sustainable forest management thru CA

Biodiversity Conservation: With support from Conservation International, RICCE facilitated the delivery of benefit packages of Conservation Agreement within six communities around the East Nimba Nature Reserves. The objective was to promote Community participation in the Management of the East Nimba Nature Reserve.

Again, with funding from AccelorMittal Liberia, RICCE worked with communities around the East Nimba Nature Reserve improved food and nutrition security to promote the maintenance of ecosystem security. The project was implemented in phases with a goal of strengthening and expanding household food security and Income Generation through sustainable agriculture intensification.

Lessons learned during the period were identified as internal and external factors that impacted the RICCES's ability to perform effectively over the years. Internal factors were 1. Intermittent donor support and absence of a viable sustainability project that will allow continuity RICCE's programs after donor funding. 2. Absence of a local resource mobilization plan and program diversification approach.

Externally, the key lessons learned were 1. Change is possible when approached in a consultative manner and becomes sustainable when you do it with people and not for people, 2. During planning and designing projects, it is always good to put yourself into the shoes of beneficiaries, anticipate their concerns and interests and use it to inform the process.

3. Aligned strategic direction

This Strategic Plan is informed by clearly structured vision and mission statements supported by core values. The five years Plan presents the organizational vision, mission, and core values developed collectively to drive and guide the Organization's strategic engagement, relationship and interaction with key stakeholders and beneficiaries. Furthermore, it proposes key priority program response areas that will inform the design and implementation of projects.

Vision

RICCE envision a community of hope and social justice where all people live in harmony with nature.

Mission

RICCE was established to contribute to the empowerment of rural communities particularly women and girls through integrated programs.

Core values

RICCE's commitments to its vision and mission are guided by the following:

Transparency and Accountability: The Organisation will remain accountable to its partners and stakeholder and the general public during the performance of its work. We will remain responsible, honest provide information to partners and stakeholders about our activities that is accurate and reliable. The organisation will, at all times demonstrate transparency and integrity in the management of resources.

Gender responsiveness: We will promote gender equality by examining and actively addressing gender norms, roles, and inequalities.

Team Work and Team Building: Together, we can achieve better. RICCE will build the capacities of its staff and unite them to achieve a common goal.

4. Situational Analysis from poverty, food security and livelihood and gender equality perspectives.

Liberia is situated on the west coast of Africa, north of the equator and bordered by Guinea, the south by the Atlantic, to the east by Cote D'Ivoire and to the west by Sierra Leone

¹Liberia has a predominantly equatorial climate, with three distinct topographical belts: the low coastal belt, forested hills, and a series of low mountains and plateaus. The tropical forests do not only provide export earnings base for the Liberian economy, but also ensures the livelihood of majority of the rural population, especially women who make up 75% of farm labor and cheap source of food security and the nutritional needs of children.

The UN estimates that there are about 5.3 million people in Liberia, and there is a population growth rate of 2.4 per cent. Approximately 51.6 per cent of the population currently live in urban areas and this is projected to increase to 57.3 per cent by 2030, and 68.2 per cent by 2050. The country's GDP is dominated by the agricultural sector, including fishing and forestry, which accounts for 42.6 per cent of GDP. The industrial sector, including mining, construction, electricity, water and gas, contributes 11.7 per cent of GDP, according to 2020 data

An estimated 64 percent of Liberians live below the poverty line, of whom 1.3 million live in extreme poverty according to the World Food Program Country Strategic Papers (2018). Local factors contributing to this pervasive poverty in Liberia include lack of access to credit, lack of financial resources to cushion families against external shocks, lack of secure places to save, and a lack of trust and social cohesion within local communities that limits the transparent management of communal resources

The Environmental Performance Index, which ranks countries on environmental health and ecosystem vitality, ranked Liberia 180 of the 180 countries surveyed in 2020. The country received a score of 22.6 per cent, and was also ranked 46 of the 46 countries surveyed on the African continent. The key environmental issues in Liberia were identified as degradation of natural resources including forestry, land and water, and loss of biodiversity including forests, ecosystems, marine, wetlands and mangroves.

¹ Government of Liberia state party report on CEDAW 2018

Climate change is expected to exacerbate the existing stresses and enhance the vulnerability of communities to external shocks and crises²

Liberia is endowed with rich biodiversity; it holds 42% of the remaining proportion of the Upper Guinea Forest of West Africa³, a critical source of greenhouse gases reduction⁴.

Biologically, Liberia's forests are exceptionally diverse, with high rates of endemism and harboring many more species that are nearly extinct globally. Liberia is home to over 20000 flowering plants, including about 240 timber species, and approximately 125 mammal species, 590 bird species, 74 known reptiles and amphibians and over 1000 described insect species. Notable fauna includes the exceptional rare Liberian moose, significant populations of forest elephants and the pygmy hippopotamus.⁵

A significant number of the Liberia's population resides in rural areas and rely on the forest and ecosystem services for their livelihood. The forest and its biodiversity remains under extensive pressure principally from commercial logging, bush meat hunting and shifting and slash and burn agriculture, with localized disturbances from alluvial mining, settlement and Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) collection

Climate change will increase rainfall intensity and flood risks, and the potential for water-borne disease outbreaks in urban areas, especially in informal settlements. Rising sea levels will lead to more intrusive seasonal storms and tidal surges. These have the potential to destroy infrastructure, displace coastal populations, and threaten the vitality of coastal wetlands and mangroves. It has been predicted that the country will see an annual temperature increase of up to 2.6°C by the 2060s, alongside more high-heat events, increasingly extreme wet and dry seasonal precipitation, increasingly irregular rainfall, and a sea level rise of 0.13–0.56 meters by 2100

According to the Country's Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (2018), chronic food insecurity is a grave concern in Liberia largely due to poverty, unsustainable livelihoods, low agricultural production and productivity, land constraints and gender inequalities. The report further mentioned that Household food insecurity remains a persistent challenge in Liberia where 41% of households were food insecure in 2010, 49% in 2012, 16% in 2015 and 18% in 2018, and that high numbers of Liberians continued to suffer from hunger and under nutrition, the consequences of which severely hamper social and economic development.⁶

The report also stated that from 2017 to 2018 about 20% households consumed diets deprived of the most needed nutrients found in animal products, legumes, vegetables and fruits. Poor diets are intrinsically linked with poverty.

Key drivers of food insecurity identified by the survey include: low local agricultural productivity - Limited availability of agricultural inputs, mechanized equipment, financial capital and extension services are all serious challenges; highly dependent on imported staples (especially rice) - Seventy percent of rice consumed in Liberia is imported making the Liberian table vulnerable to global market price shocks, limited nutritional diversity of local production - Local markets for high nutritional value products are underdeveloped due to constraints on both the supply and demand sides, and extreme poverty

² National Policy and response strategy on Climate change –August 2018

³ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/lr/lr-nbsap-01-p1-en.pdf>

⁴ <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/lbrnc1.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/lr/lr-nbsap-01-p1-en.pdf>

⁶ Liberia comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition survey-2018

prevents Liberians from meeting basic food needs - More than 50% of Liberians live below the poverty line (\$1.90/day) and are unable to access sufficient food on a daily basis⁷

Women have played a major role throughout the history of Liberia. They comprise 54% of the labor force in both the formal and informal sectors. In agriculture they constitute the majority of smallholder producers and it is estimated that they produce approximately 60% of agricultural products, carry out more than 80% of trading activities in the rural areas and are heavily engaged in the artisanal fishing industry, in addition to fulfilling daily household chores. Yet women in Liberia remain among the most disadvantaged. Only 28% of women have access to account ownership with a financial institution or mobile money service provider. Lack of access to banking means that women are often unable to access loans and their economic opportunities are restricted⁸.

Inequalities in the society continue to hold back sustainable development and peace; gender discrimination being one form. Widespread patriarchal beliefs lead to limitations for women, for example through discrimination in practices related to property and inheritance within customary law⁹

Despite recent advances in the promotion of gender equality, it still remains the case that in most societies there are significant differences between the rights and opportunities of women and men. For poor women in poor communities, significant gender gaps persist. And these disparities are exacerbated when poverty combines with other forms of exclusion, such as ethnicity, caste and geographical seclusion

Gender-based violence, especially rape and intimate partner violence, is a huge problem in Liberia. In the first seven months of 2011, 1,325 cases of gender-based violence were reported to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection; rape-related incidents represented 68% of all reported cases. In the past four years, an average 55% of survivors who reported rape were less than 15 years old. Meanwhile, many cases continue to go unreported. Women, who are raped often, do not seek services due to the stigma and shame attached to the issue, and out of fear that they will not receive a sympathetic response” [Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP)-2012].

4.1 Institutional and Programmatic Assessment: SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many years of experience, working in the food and natural resource management sector in Liberia • Registered with government and strongly recognized, local and national. • Strong linkages with relevant networks and Alliances • Staff have the ability to cope with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low knowledge on the use and management of IT in project monitoring and data collection • Limited funded and sustainability plan to support the organisational goals • Limited funding • Staff turnover due to funding shortages

⁷ Liberia Food Security Fact sheet-USAID 2023

⁸Update Ministry of Agriculture- Gender Mainstreaming Strategy report 2022.

⁹ 1 Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation. 2012. For women’s full participation in conflict resolution and peace-building. How has the conflict affect women? Retrieved from the World Wide Web: <http://www.equalpowerlastingpeace.org/five-conflicts/liberia/>

<p>emergency situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly experienced and committed team • Strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including County authorities in Counties where we work. • Improved visibility, with a well-structured website • Decentralized Office locations 	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing donor interest in natural resource management programs in Liberia • Available opportunities to improve staff IT use and management knowledge • Available national and international instruments and policies that support program alignment • Available alliances and networks could support consortium building • Growing interest in RICCE’s work by local structures including Forest development management committees and FDA 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The War in Ukraine and other African countries could affect donor funding for programs in Liberia • Mounting political tension that may result into violence during the upcoming general and presidential elections • Inflation and uncertain economic environment • Computer hacking

The above SWOT analysis shows that the strength of RICCE is in the area of programming; particularly in Food security and Natural Resource Management. Knowledge and experience over time in economic empowerment activities; particularly the organization’s worth is also on its ability to engage with multiple layers of partners and stakeholders including community structures. Three key witnesses include: Low knowledge on the use and management of IT in project monitoring and data collection; limited funded and sustainability plan to support the organisational goals and limited funding. These weaknesses require attention because the RICCE needs to operate in a sustainable manner and the operational side needs to be as solid as the programming for interventions to be carried out in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

Recommendations to address weaknesses: Several suggestions have been made as a means of addressing the visible weaknesses at the institutional and programmatic levels, whilst moving ahead to develop initiatives to take advantage of emerging and existing opportunities to sustain the organization’s operations in Liberia.

Institutional:

- Plan and design a resource mobilization strategy to access funding from multiple donors, both internally and nationally.
- Assess and support the IT use and management capacity building needs of the organization's workforce

Opportunities

- Develop a communication plan and engage with National and International Partners to communicate RICCE's core programmatic areas
- Launch the final version of the strategic plan, targeting government, national and International partners to generate their support for RICCE's programs
- Finalize the Strategic Plan and add to RICCE's web page.

5. Strategic response and Program Approach

The Strategic Plan is built on the principles of Community Control and Leadership, capacity building, networking and partnerships at the local, national and International levels, and ensuring the Organisation's strategic response to poverty reduction through economic empowerment and livelihood creation, food security, sustainable environment programming and gender equality contributes to national development policies and agenda including the Pro-poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity (PADP) and the Country's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals. The Organisation's strategic responses address four key national issues affecting the wellbeing of vulnerable and marginalised populations, including women and girls in all their diversity.

- Livelihood and food insecurity
- Loss of biodiversity including forests, ecosystems, marine, wetlands and mangroves
- Climate Change
- Gender Inequality and Violence Against Women and Girls
- Petty disputes, including land conflict and nonviolent crimes in communities

6. Goals

The Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment(RICCE) will contribute to achieve the following goals:

Rights of women and girls are prioritized and protected: Women and girls in Liberia know their rights and are able to use advocacy tools to hold the immediate duty bearers accountable for the promotion and fulfilment of their rights.

Sustainable management and utilization of natural resources: Communities are empowered to contribute to natural resources management for sustainable development and rural livelihoods, at the same time addressing ways to boost agricultural productivity for food security and sustainable economic development, while conserving and restoring the natural resource base

Food security and improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture: Contribute to the creation of a vibrant and sustainable agricultural sector that builds food security and improved nutrition.

Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacities of communities to climate- related disasters and hazards: promotes better land management and farming practices to help reduce environmental degradation and lower greenhouse emissions, as well as training in sustainable agriculture, promoting social change for responsible climate action by disseminating accurate climate information.

Peace Building and Conflict Resolution. Our program will develop the capacities of community structures, including stakeholders in the customary justice system to help them prevent and manage conflicts, including land conflicts and Protected and Conserved Areas related conflicts.

7. RICCE's Programs

Program 1: Women rights and Gender Equality:

Program Title: Promoting gender equality and the rights of Women and Girls.

Program response: Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment(RICCE) in partnership with government of Liberia, national and International partners and other civil society Organisations in Liberia will facilitate program development and implementation that will empower women and girls to reduce inequalities and give them the opportunity to reach their full potential. Our initiative will help to prevent and respond to all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls, and also provide safe spaces that will allow women and girls to advocate for their sexual Health and Reproductive Rights. We will engage men, boys and other gatekeepers to change negative cultural norms that promote violence Against Women and Girls and enhance the use of technology and virtual spaces to report violence and connect with both national and local resources for support.

Program 2: Sustainable natural resource management and Biodiversity Conservation:

Program Title: Promoting environmental safety, natural resource management and Biodiversity.

Program response: RICCE in collaboration with Government, national and international partners, other national civil society organizations and rural forest-dependent communities will design programs that will drive conservation and natural resource management. We will strengthen the capacities of communities to help them contribute to the restoration and conservation of forest ecosystems where they live and on which they rely for basic livelihood and well-being. The organisation will promote lowland farming and conservation agriculture to reduce deforestation from traditional shifting cultivation slash and burn farming practice. RICCE will deliver inclusive and equitable sustainable livelihoods and long-term income generating activities to improve the economic wellbeing of communities in and around Protected and Conserved Areas in Liberia.

Program 3: Food security and improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture:

Program Title: Promoting increased agricultural productivity and Nutrition.

Program response: RICCE will collaborate with Government, national and international partners, Farming Based Organisations(FBOs), Cooperatives and small holder farmers to promote the zero hunger campaign in Liberia by boosting yields on existing agricultural lands, including restoration of degraded lands, through sustainable agricultural practices that would relieve pressure to clear forests for agricultural production. We will design innovative solutions to expand access to finance for farmers and agribusinesses, including the introduction of the VSLA model among small holder farmers, supply of

tools, seeds to improve agriculture productivity, and help communities adopt better environmental and social practices. Our integrated food security approach would promote improved nutrition to reduce the incident of non- communicable diseases in rural communities. We will join forces with other women rights actors and institutions to advocate for policies and law reforms that will generate sustainable changes to ensure that women and youth have access to land and are able to participate in sustainable environment management

Program 4: Climate resilient communities

Program Title: Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacities of communities to climate- related disasters and hazards

Program response: RICCE will collaborate with Government through the environmental Protection and Disaster Risk Management Agency to implement adaptation and mitigation projects anchored on the following National Adaptation Program Action(NAPA) thematic priorities: Agriculture/food security, water sufficiency, human security, environmental and ecological stability, sustainable energy, climate smart services, and knowledge and capacity development. Our gender transformative approach would ensure that women have equal access to knowledge, awareness, capacity building, resources and technology, which are prerequisites in influencing climate change

Program 5: Peace Building and Conflict Resolution:

Program Title: Strengthening local/ community and individual capacities to address conflict constructively

Program response: We will continue to build the capacities of our team members to help them gain knowledge on the gendered dimensions of peace building and conflict resolution efforts, which will include the relevance of promoting efforts to address the power structures, dynamics, roles and relations between women/girls and men/boys. RICCE will strengthen the capacities of community based structures, including youth groups and stakeholders in the customary justice system to reduce the risk of violence in communities and contribute to sustainable peace in Liberia. We will continue to work across communities to accelerate access to justice, increase women participation, settle long standing tribal conflicts thereby promoting horizontal social cohesion by building bridges within and among divided groups at the community level

RICCE will improve program design and management and emergency response capacity of its teams to help them perform efficiently and in a sustainable manner, in in the face of crisis, including pandemics. The capacity building events will consider topics on Gender Based Violence issues in emergencies and self-care to help the teams to manage ourselves as we continue our advocacy work in male dominant societies where negative cultural norms and stereotypes challenge efforts to end violence against women and Girls.

8. Intervention Strategy

The Strategic Plan is developed on the gains and experiences of past and existing programs over the last ten years and the main program approach is influenced by the Community Centered Development Approach. The approach is based on an inclusive and Gender Transformative Approach, and designed to facilitate, women, youths, men, boys and disabled persons participate actively and take leadership in their own development. The Community Centered Development Approach facilitates RICCE's interventions by creating demand and taking sides with women, girls and communities at the local level and considers,

women and girls, families and communities as right holders and owners of their empowerment and development process and RICCE will work with them from grassroots to national policy advocacy roles.

The Strategic Plan will contribute to the processes of increasing sustainable agricultural production and access to food security and economic empowerment, natural resource management, including biodiversity conservation, in order to protect the rights of vulnerable women and women, including communities in and around Conserved and Protected Areas in Liberia. We will continue to work with Government in alliances and networks with other Civil Society Organisations (International and National) to create an enabling environment where women and girls live their lives free of violence and abuses, and able to claim their rights from immediate and key duty bearers.

The strategic Plan will comprise the main strategic guidelines for the work of RICCE for the next five years, and RICCE will respond to the above mentioned issues through the below intervention strategies.

- Gender Transformative Approach
- Advocacy
- Human resource development
- Learning and research

A gender transformative approach: Program interventions will focus on improving the **conditions** (daily needs) and **social position** (value or status) of girls and young women, including vulnerable communities in and around Conserved and Protected Areas in Liberia. Our programs will consider **girls, boys, young women and young men in all their diversity**.

Advocacy: Government officials as well as community leaders will be educated about the economic empowerment and human rights of men, women, girls and forest dependent communities to influence the development and implementation of policies and laws that guarantee their rights, at the same time contributing to poverty reduction

Human resource development: We will strengthen the capabilities of our teams and volunteers to develop their self-reliance, resilience, and empowerment. This includes developing knowledge, skills, and practices around Food security, Agribusiness, natural resource management, including biodiversity conservation, women rights and Gender based violence prevention and reduction, and peace building.

We will support individual and collective capabilities to withstand shocks and crises. We will also work with duty bearers in government to promote gender equality and inclusion; and to improve the quality and reach of services for the most vulnerable and excluded people; especially forest dependent communities and those who live around Concession areas.

Learning and research: Whilst we will explore full scale researches on specific needs relating to the issues mentioned above, we will consciously integrate research needs into new project proposals. The aim is to be efficient whilst contributing to knowledge and practice nationally and globally. We will feed into the ongoing women rights and poverty reduction advocacy work at different levels, including but not limited to our **“Food and Rights for all”** campaigns to be designed and implemented over the next two years.

9. Resource implications

RICCE realizes that financial resources constitute the main strand of the Strategic Plan and will therefore commit itself and strive hard to aggressively access funding over the next five years through grants and organisational sustainability income.

RICCE's resource mobilization strategy will be the main road map for mobilizing and utilizing existing resources more efficiently and effectively, attracting new ones, thus ultimately positioning RICCE as a preferred Civil society Organisation in the Food security and sustainable Natural Resource Management sector.

ii) Grants Acquisition and Management: RICCE will pursue an aspiring grants acquisition and management strategy. We will refresh invest in our Business Development capacities; and diversify grants sources through a strengthened engagement with national and International donors; and consortia approach with both INGOs and other national Non-Governmental Organisations and private sector entities.

We will support our resource mobilization strategies with the following tactics:

- **Enhanced project proposal design process:** we will use Grant proposal development teams to seek donor funding for our programs.
- **Proactive and continuous engagement with in country and International Donors :** We will develop new programmatic products in line with this strategic Plan; engage in proactive marketing with in-country and International donors; identify technical working groups with donor and UN Agencies (especially UNWOMEN, UNFPA and UNDP) and ensure RICCE's active participation; update our donor intelligence and donor mapping continuously, including identification of new donors and opportunities; develop a plan to pre-position RICCE with potential consortium partners for selected key programmatic areas e.g. Violence Against Women and Girls programing, Food Security, Natural Resource management/Biodiversity Conservation, Peace building; and identify (and budget for) engagement activities, including communication materials(Web site and newsletters)
- **Appropriate management of grants (timeliness and quality):** through project inception meetings organized for all new grant projects; timely and quality implementation/reporting; and reflections and documentation of lessons learnt for every project. We will also develop a compliance guidance on typical operational areas such as HR, financial reporting, and procurement.

10. Expenditure projections by financial year

This section presents an overview of the financial resources needed to implement the Country Strategy and where they are expected to come from. **Expenditure projections** are presented for each programme for each financial year.

Expenditure Projections (USD '000)							
Programme Objectives	Year 1 (FY23)	Year 2 (FY24)	Year 3 (FY25)	Year 4 (FY26)	Year 5 (FY27)	TOTAL	% of Overall Total
Programme 1. Promoting gender equality and the rights of Women and Girls.	200,000	250,000	150,000	100,000	200,000	900,000	
Programme 2: Sustainable natural resource management and Biodiversity Conservation	500,000	300,000	200,000	150,000	300,000	1,450,000	
Programme 3: Food security and improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture:	400,000	450,000	300,000	150,000	300,000	1,500,000	
Programme 4: Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacities of communities to climate- related disasters and hazards	250,000	200,000	190,000	210,000	200,000	1,050,000	
Programme 5: Strengthening local community and individual capacities to address conflict constructively	200,000	100,000	100,000	150,000	100,000	650,000	
Overall Total						5,550,000	100

11. Implementation Framework

In the next 5 years, RICCE will deliver programmes and interventions as outlined in the results framework in table below.

Programme1: Rights of women and girls are prioritized and protected:			
Target Beneficiaries			
Women, girls and children in all their diversity			
Programme Objective:	Key Outcomes	Key interventions	Core indicators
Contribute to the promotion of gender equality and the rights of Women and girls, so they can remain free from all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls, including CEFM, FGM and other harmful practices; without discrimination, coercion, and violence.	1.1.Families and communities place value on women and Girl's rights and have the capacity to advocate for a reduction in VAWG.	<p>1.1 .1. Create community leaders and advocates to take up Girls and Women rights promotion activism in communities.</p> <p>1.1.2 Support men and youth led groups to advocate for gender equality and the prevention of Violence Against women and Girls(VAWG)</p> <p>1.1.3 Create safe spaces for vulnerable girls and women to help them to speak out and report the incidence of VAWG</p>	<p>% of community leaders engaged in advocacy activities</p> <p># of youth and men led groups engaged in Gender equality advocacy</p> <p>% of girls and young women engaged in safe space activities</p> <p># of girls and women report being safe in communities</p>
	1.2. Vulnerable girls and women have access to income generation activities and are able to take decisions on issues that affect them.	<p>1.2.1: Provide skills and income generating opportunities for girls and women.</p> <p>1.2.2. Advocate for girls and women access to livelihood opportunities, including formal education</p> <p>1.2.3 .strengthen networking and advocacy</p>	<p># of girls and women engaged in income generation/other livelihood improvement activities</p> <p>% of women and girls engaged in advocacy and remain in group memberships</p>

		skills of vulnerable women and girls	
Programme 2: Sustainable natural resource management and Biodiversity Conservation			
Target Beneficiaries			
Women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity			
Forest dependent communities			
Small scale farmers and their groups			
Programme Objective:	Key Outcomes	Key interventions	
Contribute to environmental safety and natural resource management, including forest ecosystems(CPAs)	2.1. Communities and stakeholders have the capacity to promote sustainable natural resource management	2.1.1. strengthen the capacities of Forest management groups (CFMB, CM C, CA and FAD) 2.1.2. Advocate for the inclusion of women and youths on forest management groups 2.1.3. Promote public awareness on laws and policies to improve the knowledge of communities and stakeholders on the goals and benefits of sustainable natural resource management. 2.1.4. support climate change mitigation knowledge building in rural communities	# of community structures with improved knowledge on natural resource management % of women visible in Forest management groups % of community members who are aware of the benefits of sustainable natural resource management
	2.2 .Forest dependent communities have access to alternative livelihood and are able to contribute to sustainable natural	2.2.1 promote the implementation of Conservation Agreements in communities around Conserved and Protected Areas. 2.2.2 Support green commodity value chains critical for livelihoods, building resilience	# of communities willing and effectively implementing Conservation Agreements

	resource management.	and prosperity in communities, including climate smart agriculture. 2.2.3.Promote village savings groups and cooperatives in communities around Conserved and Protected Areas.	# of communities practicing climate smart agriculture #of effective VSLAs and Cooperatives
<p>Programme 3: Food security and improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture</p> <p>Target Beneficiaries</p> <p>Women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity</p> <p>Forest dependent communities</p> <p>Small scale farmers and their groups</p>			
Programme Objective:	Key Outcomes	Key interventions	Core indicators
Contribute to improvements in Agricultural productivity and incomes of small scale farmers through advocacy for land access by women and youths, sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices.	3.1.Small scale farmers, including those around Conserved and Protected Areas demonstrate high capacity for climate smart food production systems and resilient agricultural practices	3.1.1. Strengthen the capacity of small scale farmers towards good and sustainable agricultural practices including climate smart agriculture- - facilitate extension service support by Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry Development Authority and other actors in the sector -establish farmer field schools and demonstration sites 3.1.2. support small scale farmers' households to improve yields	% of small scale farmers engaged in climate smart agriculture # of communities with high productivity yields and harnessing market opportunities # of women and adolescent girls engaged in income generation activities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supply of farm inputs and equipment - access to skills/technical knowledge on sustainable/ climate smart agriculture, encouraging lowland farming, slash and mulch on degraded land 3.1.3. support value chain improvements and market entry capacities of small scale farmers. -improve processing and packaging knowledge - create market linkages - Agribusiness trainings, including market surveys -VSLAs and cooperative capacity building -economic empowerment for women and vulnerable youths 	
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Programme 4: Climate resilient communities

Target Beneficiaries

Women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity

Forest dependent communities

Small scale farmers and their groups

Programme Objective:	Key Outcomes	Key interventions	Core indicators
Contribute to climate and disaster resilient communities	4.1 Vulnerable communities are safeguarded and have the	4.1.1. Support public awareness on environmental protection	% of community members with improved environmental

	<p>capacities to anticipate, plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change</p>	<p>- use community theater, school based groups</p> <p>-develop and launch Behavior change campaigns</p> <p>-integrate climate change mitigation and Disaster risk management topics in community level trainings.</p> <p>4.1.2. support community level climate change adaptation action planning</p> <p>4.1.3 capacity building for women and youths to enhance their participation in key climate change and disaster risk reduction planning processes</p> <p>4.1.4. establish and train climate change adaptation structures in schools and other learning institutions.</p>	<p>protection knowledge</p> <p># of communities implementing climate change adaptation action plans</p> <p>% of women visible in key climate change and disaster risk reduction planning processes</p> <p># of climate change adaptation action based structures in schools/other learning institutions.</p>
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Programme 5: Peace building and Conflict resolution

Target Beneficiaries

Women, youths and vulnerable communities

Communities around Conserved and Protected Areas.

Programme Objective:	Key Outcomes	Key interventions	Core indicators
Strengthening local/ community and	Women, youths and	5.1.1. Support the capacity, skills and	% of community members

<p>individual capacities to promote positive relations marked by respect, and where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live and socialize together, free from hate and intolerance.</p>	<p>communities have the capacities to promote positive relations and socialize together, free from hate, discrimination and violence</p>	<p>knowledge of members and related stakeholders in the customary justice system to respond to and manage conflict and peace building challenges in the most effective, sensitive and efficient way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -trainings -dialogues - media engagement <p>5.1.2. Organize youth conflict resolution forums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -train them in conflict transformation approaches -develop and build their capacities to use conflict mapping tools. 	<p>aware of conflict resolution approaches</p> <p># of conflicts resolved by customary justice actors in targeted communities</p> <p># of youths participating effectively in conflict resolution forums</p> <p># of youth related conflicts resolved by forums</p>
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12. Monitoring and Evaluation system

The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will formulate an M&E strategy and coordinate data collection and documentation of information on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Unit will support the various projects and departments in taking full responsibility for tracking results of the RICCE's activities. This support will involve the identification of an M&E Coordinator to lead internal M&E activities.

RICCE will use a standardized reporting system to provide updates on different projects. The updates will be upload on the organization's cloud storage for accessibility. This will be accessible to all staff where each staff can closely follow the performance of their own project indicators and program.

RICCE will adopt a participatory evaluation built on a sense of active participation of beneficiaries, promoting community ownership of results and impact. The goal is to ensure that what is learned through evaluation, and what actions might be taken as a result of the evaluation is the full responsibilities of all stakeholders and beneficiaries. A mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques will be used to evaluate projects. RICCE will use qualitative approaches such as Photo voice and Outcome Harvesting combined with the OEDC-DAC criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. Special attention will be given to dissemination of the evaluation findings. This will include using the Organisations web page, social media and other innovative means.

RICCE will implement a project cycle Management Response requirement as a means of documenting key learnings of projects. A detail of the analysis of the learning will be included in Quarterly and end of project reports.

13. Sustainability

Funding opportunities are getting limited. At the same time RICCE needs to be proactive and efficient and this will demand strong planning and structure to provide leadership, coordination, collaboration, and oversight to ensure that the Organisations programs support it vision and mission. The need for s resource mobilization plan remains eminent. A resource mobilization and Sustainability plan will be developed and implemented to support the resource needs of the Organisation. Through this, RICCE will remain efficient and relevant in the Sustainable Natural resource management and food security sectors. The resource mobilization strategy will consider the climate change and health emergency effects on local populations. When implemented, we will take into consideration a co-financing approach to complement viable donor funds to reach appropriate funding level during the delivery of programs included in this strategy.