

# Evaluation Report

## Liberia Faculty Enrichment Programme (LFEP) 2009

By Steffie Verstappen<sup>1</sup>, August 2009

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The Liberia Faculty Enrichment Programme (LFEP) 2009 was held from 6 through 17 July 2009. It was a teacher training program organized by the Association of Liberian Universities (ALU) and SPARK, supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Liberia, and hosted by the University of Liberia in Monrovia. The program boasted two two-week intensive academic courses, one focusing on research and one on teaching methodology. The program was a pilot of a much larger training program envisioned to take place from 2010 and onwards.

The idea for a summer programme originates from conversations between SPARK and Critical Thinking International involving various stakeholders in Liberia as well as CODE. The initial idea envisaged teacher training courses for faculty and school teachers and would link CODE and CTI's literacy and children's book production project called Reading Liberia to university and teacher training institutes<sup>2</sup>. Local stakeholders, including the ALU universities, the MoE and others showed great interest in the concept of a summer programme. A MoE representative visited similar projects initiated by SPARK in Southeast Europe, i.e. Kosovo and Macedonia and has strongly encouraged the development of a similar project in Liberia. The ALU, ALU members - particularly the University of Liberia, and the MoE jointly decided to run two or three pilot courses. Based on a rough needs and priority analysis to following project characteristics we agreed on:

### **Pilot project idea:**

This 2009 pilot project is to prepare the ground for a full yearly organized summer school or institute focusing on faculty development, starting in 2010. It calls upon highly committed teaching faculty from member universities of the Association of Liberian Universities to contribute to the improvement of university education in Liberia through the development of their own individual academic skills in the first place. This pilot provides opportunity to improve their writing, teaching and research skills through a series intensive summer courses, thereby contributing to faculty development at ALU members.

### **Pilot objectives**

- To improve teaching skills and research skills of ALU teaching faculty through 2 summer courses;
- To show to participating teaching faculty that summer courses:
  - Help them to increase their teaching and research skills and thereby perform more effectively and develop themselves as academics;
  - Make them more attractive for grant schemes and other training opportunities, including those offered abroad;

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<sup>1</sup> As a former project manager at SPARK (2002-2005), Steffie Verstappen was charged with the implementation of programs very similar to the LFEP in Southeast Europe. Throughout the implementation period of the LFEP, she was present on the ground to represent SPARK's Amsterdam headquarters and to monitor and contribute to the implementation process alongside SPARK Liberia, ALU, the Ministry of Education, and other local stakeholders. This evaluation report is a result of her direct involvement in the program implementation and represents her views on the process.

<sup>2</sup> SPARK's involvement in Reading Liberia (RL) is restricted to attracting EU funding for RL activities and incorporate RL teacher training components in a summer program involving universities and teacher training institutes. In addition, SPARK seeks Dutch publishers interested to contribute to the publisher development activity of RL based on their own or external funding.

- Include them into a group of Liberian academics that actively invests in their academic and professional development as well as in the development of their institutions – possibly enhancing esteem and appreciation from colleagues and students;
- Prepare (some) of them to be included as instructors in next summer courses.
- To show to university/faculty management the potential of summer courses as a basis for a faculty development program and curriculum reform relevant to a post-conflict society;
- To test logistical and academic challenges through a small and sober version for a more elaborate and larger summer event (15 accredited courses in 2010);
- To start increasing cooperation / coordination among ALU member universities through a concrete joint activity, while building the capacity of ALU;
- To increase the international academic network of ALU member universities and generate spin-off cooperation;

### **Target group**

- Primary: Teaching faculty of any academic discipline from ALU member universities.
- Secondary: Senior undergraduate students and teaching faculty of teacher training institutes and colleges, leaders in the university-department chairs, staff working in government institutions, writers of text & children's books, MoE paid teachers participating in Reading Liberia.
- Tertiary: Students participating in a demonstration classroom

### ***Courses***

The pilot edition will consist of 2 summer courses for in total 50 participants. Courses will start on Monday 6 July. During a period of 2 weeks teaching faculty and senior undergraduate students selected by the ALU member universities will be trained to improve their teaching and research skills by a team of professors, consisting of a visiting professor from a European or North-American university and a (co-) professor from an ALU member university.

The full project outline is enclosed as an annex to this report.

Despite the short period of time remaining to organize the pilot and inevitable mistakes in organizing the event, the LFEP proved to be a great success as it answers very directly to several very specific Liberian needs. Both professors and participants felt greatly inspired and encouraged by the program. Participants and stakeholders involved continuously emphasized the great need for such capacity building programs in Liberia at the moment. Judging from the overall response to the program, the organizers anticipated very well on the full range of opportunity that the program was able to offer, thereby realizing a wide variety of primary and secondary results.

The LFEP 2009 pilot provided stakeholders involved with the opportunity to experiment with the implementation of the program and develop a sense for the challenges that are likely to present themselves. The short evaluation report below will concisely report on the LFEP 2009. More importantly, it will make explicit the challenges that were met and will formulate recommendations in order to incorporate lessons learned in future editions of the program<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Recommendations are found below per heading and in bullet points.

## Participation

The course program targeted Liberian teaching faculty at different levels: tertiary, secondary and primary education. A total of 83 participants initially attended the program. 77 met all of the attendance and assessment requirements and were awarded a certificate of attendance. See table below for details.

	Research Methods			Active Classroom			LFEP Total		
		M	F		M	F		M	F
Number of participants	41	35	6	42	38	4	83	73	10
Drop-outs	5	5	0	1	1	0	6	6	0
Participants finishing course	36	30	6	41	37	4	77	67	10

## Course program

The recruitment of professors is based on course suggestions received by participating universities. In this case the ALU board provided a number of four broad topics to focus on: Writing skills / teaching writing, Research skills / teaching research, computer skills and course planning/ teaching skills. In order to facilitate the connection to the Reading Liberia project SPARK proposed to have a CTI associated professor teach a writing course involving faculty and a limited number of RL related participants. Unfortunately, the CTI professor had to cancel his participation due to personal circumstances and no alternative could be found. As a consequence the opportunity to clearly link to the RL project became less substantial. However, two excellent professors proposed by SPARK and approved by MoE/ALU were selected teaching prioritized topics: research skills and teaching skills.

### Course #1: Research Methods

Taught by: Dr. Martijn Meeter, Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Co-instructor: Mr. Tom Chie, Cuttington Graduate School / AMEU, Monrovia, Liberia

Course duration: 6-17 July 2009 (2-week intensive course)

Course level: Introductory

This course offered an introduction into the methods used in science, with an emphasis on the social sciences. These include: experimentation, quasi-experimentation, survey research, archive research and qualitative research and observation. Of each the merits and pitfalls were discussed. Data analysis was discussed on a conceptual level. Participants were required to develop and discuss several research designs during the course that were then discussed on the basis of their methodological merits. Participants were additionally required to write one design in a grant-proposal format. Participants were also given the opportunity to participate in an optional research project on the access to education of street vending adolescents.

Prerequisites: None

Teaching methods: Lectures, group assignments, presentations

Assessment methods: Internally assessed; participation, assignments, exam

Grading scale used:

Grade	Definition	No. of participants receiving grade
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A	EXCELLENT: outstanding performance, only minor errors	7
B	VERY GOOD: above the average standard, with some errors	19
C	GOOD: generally sound work, with several notable errors	10
D	SATISFACTORY: fair, but with significant shortcomings	0
E	SUFFICIENT: performance meets the minimum criteria	0
Total number of certified participants		36

Teaching / studying hours:

Category	Hours per day	Number of days	Total hours
Class hours	3	10	30
Fieldwork	Optional: 3,3	Optional: 3	Optional: 10
Reading	1	10	10
Home Assignments	2	2	4
Preparation for examinations	4	1	4
Examinations	2	1	2
<b>Total of hours</b>			<b>50 / 60</b>

33 out of the total of 36 participants took the opportunity to participate in the optional research project on access to education of street vending adolescents. Groups of participants went out to different parts of the city of Monrovia and interviewed 6 children each, using a standardized questionnaire that they had developed together using their newly acquired knowledge. Those participants that participated in the research project received a certificate of attendance indicating extra course work of approximately 10 hours. Refer to “teaching/studying hours” table above. The results of their research reveal that (from M. Meeter’s draft report):

*“Girls were more often not in school than boys; older adolescents had more often dropped out than younger adolescents.*

*The strongest predictor seems to be the presence of the father in the household, with as a good runner-up the kind of work that the father does. This is partly because fathers were absent a bit more often than mothers, and the work of mothers uniformly concerned selling goods on the market. Nevertheless, in the rare cases that the father but not the mother was present in the household, school attendance was good, while this was not true the other way around.*

*The outcome of the simple literacy test was very surprising. Some adolescents refused to read the sentence, and about a quarter (47 of 207) could read it fluently. The majority, however, could either only read it haltingly (60, or 30%), or could not start or finish the sentence (61 or another 30%). This was true for the adolescents that had dropped out of school, but also of those that still attended school, though their reading ability was better than that of dropouts (see Table X).”*

## **Course #2: The Active Learning Class Room: Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century**

Taught by: Dr. Jeffrey Ritter, La Roche College, Pittsburgh, U.S.A.

Co-instructors: Mr. Joe Flomo Nuweli, Cuttington University, Liberia  
Mr. Molly Massaquoi, Cuttington University, Liberia

Course duration: 6-17 July 2009 (2-week intensive course)

Course level: Introductory

Student learning in higher education is adapting to the changes in the work environments of the 21st century. Previously, a strong body of knowledge and practice in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics was

sufficient for many students to excel in their fields. Today, learners need a deeper understanding of their fields as well as multiple skills to prepare for an economy and society that is constantly changing. Faculty are still required to be experts in their fields and have genuine rapport with students and excellent communication skills, but an additional body of techniques can also help them prepare their students for the actual types of demands they will have in their careers and lives. This course therefore focused on classroom techniques that transform the traditional top down model of learning into a dynamic simulation of varied work environments. Using different techniques, the class was highly engaging and participatory. Students took part in multiple simulations, exercises, games, writing, readings, and presentations.

Prerequisites: None

Teaching methods: Lectures, group assignments, presentations

Assessment methods: Internally assessed; presentations, participation, assignments

Grading scale used: In this course a pass/fail grading scale was used. All 41 participants that attended the course sufficiently participated in the required assessments and received a “pass”.

Teaching / studying hours:

Category	Hours per day	Number of days	Total hours
Class hours	3.5	9	31.5
Fieldwork	1	1	1
Reading	2	2	4
Home Assignments			
Preparation for examinations	2	1	2
Examinations	2	1	2
<b>Total of hours</b>			<b>40.5</b>

The participants’ questionnaire results (results accumulated and presented by EvaSys of the University of Amsterdam) show that both courses and its teaching staff were positively appreciated. On detailed questions regarding the quality of the course the general response was very positive (scores above 4.5 on a scale from 1-5). A general question on the quality of the course scored 3.2 (similar scale), between neutral and positive. Although significantly below the average score for comparable courses initiated by SPARK elsewhere this score together with very positive scores on detail-questions on the quality of the course are more than acceptable for a pilot edition.

The EvaSys of the University of Amsterdam result are enclosed as an annex of this report.

## Selection of participants

Due to a fairly wide range of factors, and despite a pre-selection of participants by ALU, the selection had not been finalized at the start of the program on Monday 6 July. Additionally, this had not been communicated to the program coordinator, therefore presenting itself as a surprise on the first day of the course program and creating the need to organize an ad hoc non-transparent selection process at the very last moment. As a result, instead of the originally envisioned 25 participants per course, 41 and 42 participants respectively were recruited per course in a relatively disorganized manner at the very last moment.

The increase in the number of participants accounted for significant challenges to the budget and the aspired incorporation of Quality Standards into the program. The available total sum of sitting fees had to be divided among many more participants (in the end, each participant received only USD 15 for the two weeks, instead of the originally envisaged USD 30). Also, the budget reserved for reading materials did not allow for the distribution of reading materials to more than 25 participants per course, resulting in quite a number of participants not having access to any reading materials at all. Additionally, the higher number of participants made it difficult for the professors to develop a sense for the level and learning of each individual participant, thereby making it hard to assess them realistically. Self-evidently, all of this led to the partial obstruction of the implementation of Quality Standards required in SPARK programs, i.e. a maximum of 25 participants per course as to facilitate inter-active teaching.

The project's intention to involve mostly teaching faculty of ALU members combined with senior students, teachers, public officers and RL participants was partly realized. The participants' questionnaires show a somewhat blurred picture as participants from Cuttington University could not indicate on the form that they were related to this university and had to pick for the "other" category, unlike other ALU university related teaching faculty. The "other" category accounted for 52% (whereas 25-30% was aimed for) and included among others university teaching staff (possibly from Cuttington and United Methodist), teachers (of public primary schools) and senior students. However, half of the "other" category participants did not indicate their institution. Almost certainly, no Reading Liberia participants were among the course participants<sup>4</sup>.

For more detail: The EvaSys of the University of Amsterdam result are enclosed as an annex of this report.

Nevertheless, especially in view of the low sitting fees, the eventual overwhelming interest shown in the program—resulting in the participation of 83 rather than 50 persons—goes to show the great need for this type of capacity building in the country. Participants were very eager and committed.

Several of the factors attributing to the relative lack of organization and communication should be tackled in future editions of the program:

- ✓ The subsequent late appointment of a program coordinator further contributed to the lack of preparation time. In future editions of the program, the timely appointment and training of a program coordinator and, possibly, additional supporting staff, should be ensured.
- ✓ The Vice-Presidents of Academic Affairs, representing their respective institutions in the Coordinating Committee, all met with similar difficulties in their attempt to preselect participants. These difficulties were related to, first and foremost, the timing of the program as well as the benefits extended to participants. This will further be discussed below under "Overall program timing & planning".
- ✓ In future editions of the program, participants should be determined beforehand and participant lists should be ready prior to the first class meeting.

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<sup>4</sup> The organization approached the WECARE Foundation in Liberia, involved in the implementation of Reading Liberia for the selection of RL participants. However, due to the director's visit abroad timely selection was not possible.

- ✓ In order to make the selection process as transparent as possible, a set of more specific selection criteria should be determined and applied. A critical attitude towards applying these measures of transparency is a prerequisite for the success of the program in the long term.
- ✓ In order to attract the right type of participant in the future, benefit schemes should be further elaborated on. While wanting to attract the type of participant that has sufficient knowledge and experience in order to benefit from the training, at the same time, general conditions of poverty should be taken into account when determining overall benefits.
- ✓ Women were highly underrepresented in the course program: out of the initial 83 participants, only 10 were female (12% of 83). Interestingly, all of the 6 drop-outs were males. In future editions, reasons for female underrepresentation should be elaborated on in order to tackle this issue and make sure a more acceptable gender balance<sup>5</sup>.
- ✓ Participants roughly ranged in age from 24 to 57 years old. This made the participant body very diverse in terms of level and type of knowledge and experience. For future editions, it makes sense to demarcate the target group more clearly i.e. young faculty vs. senior faculty.
- ✓ At a very late stage it was decided to go ahead with the realization of the pilot, even though stakeholders and SPARK were aware that not much time was left for the preparation of the two courses. In future editions, sufficient preparation time will have positive effect on the quality of the organization and the even in general.

## Selection of co-instructors

Due to a wide range of factors, co-instructor selection had not been finalized until the very last moment. As a result, visiting professors and co-instructors had not been in touch prior to the start of the program and had not actually had the opportunity to make joint decisions on the course work or the co-teaching.

Recommendations 1 through 3 under “Selection of participants” above equally hold true with regard to the selection of co-instructors. In addition:

- ✓ In future editions, co-instructors should be determined beforehand, preferably well in advance of the start of the program. This will allow visiting professors and co-instructors sufficient time to jointly design and prepare for the course work of their respective courses.

## Co-teaching

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<sup>5</sup> Reasons quoted most for female underrepresentation: (1) Significantly more women than men are employed by NGOs. NGOs tend to pay higher salaries and, therefore, NGO jobs are more desirable than relatively underpaid teaching jobs; (2) The women that do opt for a teaching position often have a family at home to take care of and, therefore, they cannot afford the flexibility of having multiple jobs / responsibilities because of child care—unlike the men who tend to be much more flexible.

Both visiting professors and co-instructors signaled that the joint design of the course work and the co-teaching did not come about as originally envisioned in the program plan. This was largely due to the overall late start of the organization of the program. As a result, evaluations show that the visiting professors were perceived to have taught from 70% to 100% of the course.

In evaluating conversations, all co-instructors expressed regret with regard to not having been able to actually contribute more actively to the content of the course due to their very late appointment. “The principal teacher should always plan with the co-teachers. This will provide the opportunity for them to adequately and meaningfully align their impacts”. Both visiting professors and co-instructors shared the notion that co-professors should by definition be involved in the preparation of the course content with the visiting professor.

Following from this:

- ✓ Visiting professors and co-instructors should be allowed sufficient time to jointly develop and plan the course work.
- ✓ Means of communication should be facilitated by ALU/SPARK in this process. As most teaching faculty do not have consistent access to the internet, different ways of communication may have to be facilitated in order to ensure actual cooperation prior to the arrival of the visiting professors.
- ✓ A training manual may be formulated that is to be provided to the co-instructors (recommendation by one of the co-instructors).

## **Facilitation of visiting professors**

Although both visiting professors expressed their satisfaction with regard to the provided accommodation at the Liberia Media Center, accommodation should probably be of a somewhat higher standard in future editions of the program. The general state of the provided accommodation was mediocre: electricity was not provided around the clock, running water was not available, the air-conditioning system was out of date, and the internet service provided unstable. Additionally, the lack of mobility was another factor that caused some nuisance: being able to be more independent after class was a desire voiced by both visiting professors. Nevertheless, both visiting professors expressed that their communication with SPARK throughout the LFEP was excellent and that they felt supported in their work.

- ✓ In future editions of the program, accommodation provided should be of a higher standard. Electricity, running water, an air-conditioning system, and a stable internet service are all requirements that would provide for a comfortable enough stay.
- ✓ In future editions of the program, transportation—for both program-related and private purposes—should be made available at a much larger scale.
- ✓ In future editions of the program, visiting professors should be better prepared so they have a better idea of what to expect before coming to teach at the Liberia Faculty Enrichment Programme. Ideally, an information package would be prepared and provided, addressing the Liberian context as well as very practical issues, such as what to bring, etcetera.
- ✓ Ideally, in future editions of the program, professors would be provided with a work space with internet service, a printer, etcetera, that they could use to prepare the course work jointly with their co-instructors.

## Facilitation of co-instructors

All three co-instructors express regret for being appointed at such a late stage, not allowing for them to be actively involved with the visiting professor prior to the start of the program. In addition, information on remuneration fees and other benefits had not been clearly communicated to the co-instructors from the start, therefore creating some confusion and even discontent at the closing of the program.

- ✓ Information on remuneration / instruction fees and other benefits should be clearly communicated to the co-instructors prior to the start of the program.
- ✓ In future editions of the program, perhaps an extra allowance should be provided to those co-instructors coming from outside of Monrovia. The LFEP 2009 appointed two co-instructors coming from Cuttington, who therefore had to travel and spend two full weeks away from home.

## Certification

Certificates of Attendance were designed, in addition to separate grade sheets, which were handed out to all 77 successful participants at the formal Closing Ceremony on Friday 17 July. The Certificate of Attendance mentioned the program and course name, the name of the participant, the logos of both the Association of Liberian Universities and SPARK, and signatures of the visiting professor, ALU and SPARK representatives. The grade sheet introduced the program more extensively, as well as all relevant details on the specific course—course description, duration, number of hours spent studying, etcetera. The grade sheets were signed by the visiting professor, co-instructor(s), ALU and SPARK representatives.

- ✓ In future editions of the program, all certificates and grade sheets should be copied for administrative purposes well in advance of the Closing Ceremony.

## Participant evaluation

Generally, the majority of the course participants was highly appreciative and felt very encouraged by the program. Many participants expressed the great need felt for skill-based teacher training such as the LFEP provided. The breakfast and lunch service was also much appreciated. Participants generally arrived on time and were very committed and active in the classroom. This commitment and desire to acquire new knowledge and experience was further illustrated by the fact that few of the participants appeared to be particularly concerned about the availability and extent of the sitting fee provided.

A thorough participant evaluation was conducted by way of an extensive standardized questionnaire that was filled out by all participants. The data that these questionnaires provide will be analyzed and evaluated in a separate evaluation report.

- ✓ A short and simple questionnaire and/or series of open questions should be filled out by future participants *prior to* the start of the course and again at the end of it. This pre-evaluation may then be mirrored with the post-evaluation and increase our understanding of the participants' perception of learning.

## Related events organized

### Opening ceremony

An official LFEP Opening Ceremony was organized on Thursday 9 July 2009 at the University of Liberia Auditorium. Dr. Emmet Dennis, President of the University of Liberia, presented his welcome statement. The Liberia Faculty Enrichment Programme was introduced by Mr. Emmanuel Tokpah, Program Coordinator for SPARK, and Ms. Steffie Verstappen, SPARK Representative. The honorable Dr. Joseph Korto, Minister of Education, was the key note speaker and talked extensively about the importance of this event to the Liberian education system at large. Additionally, the honorable Dr. Natty Davis, Minister of State without Portfolio, spoke about the impact that the LFEP may have in the larger framework of Liberian post-conflict reconstruction. An approximate number of 100 persons were present in the audience. The media were represented and the event was widely reported on.

One half-hour debating session was inserted into the Opening Ceremony program to experiment with the organization of such an event. The debate focused on the prominence that West-African Examination Council (WAEC) testing has in the Liberian higher education system: Should WAEC certification be a fundamental requirement for entry into Liberian universities? Two groups of three students each prepared arguments in favor and against the use of the WAEC certificate as absolute requirement to Liberian higher education. The debate was lively yet orderly and very much suited to the occasion. Several of the special guests went on to mention their point of view on the matter in their formal closing remarks.

### **Closing ceremony**

An official LFEP Closing Ceremony was organized on Friday 17 July 2009 at the University of Liberia Graduate School Auditorium. The progress of the Liberia Faculty Enrichment Programme was briefly reported on by Mr. Emmanuel Tokpah, Program Coordinator for SPARK, and Ms. Steffie Verstappen, SPARK Representative. The honorable Blamo Nelson, Senator from Grand Kru County, was the key note speaker and talked extensively about the importance of continuously improving and renewing Liberia's teachers' skills and knowledge. He applauded the LFEP's significant achievements in this regard and emphasized the absolute necessity for such a program in Liberia. Certificates and grade sheets were handed out to all 77 successful participants by Dr. James Kollie, Vice-President of Academic Affairs at the University of Liberia Graduate School, assisted by Dr. Saaim Naame, Secretary General of the Association of Liberian Universities. An approximate number of 100 persons were present in the audience. The media were represented and the event was widely reported on.

- ✓ Room reservations (conference hall, auditorium, etc) for official events should always be double-checked with the President's Office and be confirmed in written.
- ✓ Formal guests should be invited well in advance.

### **Coordinating Committee / ALU Vice-Presidents meeting**

A meeting of the Coordinating Committee was organized on Tuesday 14 July 2009. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Saaim Naame, Secretary General of the ALU, and attended by representatives of 5 out of 6 ALU member institutions: Losay Kendo, Acting Vice-President of Academic Affairs, AMEZU; Joshua Giddings, Acting Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Cuttington University; Herman Browne, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, AMEU; James Kollie, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, University of Liberia Graduate School, and; Shelton Beedoe, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, University of Liberia.

Mr. Emmanuel Tokpah, SPARK Program Coordinator, and Ms. Steffie Verstappen, SPARK Representative, extensively briefed the ALU members present on the progress of the Liberia Faculty Enrichment Programme. Challenges to the program were shared and discussed. The difficulties that the Vice-Presidents of Academic Affairs

encountered when preselecting participants were elaborated on. Additionally, the timing of the program and the ideal timing and location of future editions were discussed by those present. Furthermore, the program of the LFEP Closing Ceremony was jointly decided on and a key note speaker determined. Additionally, those present were consulted on improvements to the program that may be implemented in the future and course suggestions were requested from the different ALU member institutions. Course suggestions should be expected mid-September at the latest.

- ✓ Coordinating Committee meetings should be announced well in advance in order to ensure attendance of all ALU member representatives.

### **Weekend excursion**

A day-long excursion into the country was organized for the visiting professors, Dr. Jeffrey Ritter and Dr. Meeter, on Saturday 11 July 2009. After a stop at former President Tubman's mansion, the CooCoo's Nest, a visit was paid to Cuttington University campus. Highlight of the trip was a visit to Kpatawee Waterfall and surroundings, near the Cuttington campus. The day was ended with a visit to the city of Gbarnga and the scenic cross-country ride back to Monrovia. Both visiting professors expressed their strong appreciation of the opportunity to travel outside of Monrovia during their stay in the country.

### **Cooperation between ALU, SPARK and the Ministry of Education**

Considering the fact that the LFEP 2009 was a pilot, the program ran fairly smoothly. Nevertheless, it was self-evident that working relationships and decision-making frameworks should be further fine-tuned and defined. Throughout the implementation of the program, it was not always clear who was the legitimate party to make decisions. Also, due to the speed with which the program took off at the very last minute, many decisions were made on a fairly ad hoc basis without clearly taking into account their potential consequences—and perhaps most importantly, the ownership of responsibility for those consequences.

- ✓ In the time that is left before the start of a follow-up edition of the LFEP, further steps have to be taken in defining as specifically as possible the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders in the program. As a result, each of the stakeholders will be aware of those aspects of the program that they are responsible for, as well as it being clear which stakeholders should be involved in which decision-making.
- ✓ In general, all relevant program decisions should be made jointly.

### **Funding of a future program**

The LFEP pilot edition was directly financed by SPARK ad 13,030 Euro excluding international staff costs (SPARK support). In kind and in cash funding was provided by the MoE (local transport), the ALU and University of Liberia (offices, class rooms, etc). The visiting professors taught pro bono.

With regard to the local funding of a LFEP 2010 and onwards, the Ministry of Education has implied several opportunities for finding funding in the government budget. E.g. a micro-research budget is available and funding may be awarded to the LFEP, particularly if training in research methodology is continued. Additionally, a development budget is being put into existence by the government. If the budget actually comes through, funds may become available here that the LFEP is eligible for.

In terms of the international donor community, it appears that Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland are the appropriate donor governments to talk to. In 2008, they were the four donor countries with the highest expenditure in Liberia, in addition to their focus gradually shifting away from humanitarian relief toward more structural development and capacity building<sup>6</sup>.

- ✓ ALU, SPARK and the Ministry of Education should follow up on this funding opportunity a.s.a.p. Eligibility for funding should be investigated and discussions about possibly slightly tweaking the program in order to attract funding should be considered.
- ✓ A close eye should be kept on the development surrounding the creation of the development fund. As soon as there is more information available on the working of the funding program, ALU, SPARK and the Ministry of Education should follow up with the government a.s.a.p. and investigate opportunities to attract funding from this source.
- ✓ International donor government spending on structural development, specifically in the field of (higher) education, should be further investigated and the appropriate donor agencies contacted.

## Overall program timing & planning

All of the ALU member institutions had some or all of their regular programs running throughout the duration of the LFEP 2009. This made it difficult for both co-instructors and participating teaching faculty to block space in their schedules to attend and actively prepare for the LFEP. It appears that serious plans exist to synchronize all ALU members' annual planning by the end of 2009. This would likely mean that all institutions end their academic programs at the end of June. If this happens, it will be much easier to plan a future edition of the program. July 2010 was frequently quoted as the most appropriate timing of such an event. Nevertheless, also February was quoted as a good option. Timing of the follow-up program was discussed during the Coordinating Committee meeting and will be followed up on in the next meeting in September 2009.

- ✓ The timing of the program in early July appears to have created difficulties for some individuals and institutions. For future editions of the program, a thorough investigation of appropriate timing should be made, taking into account that there are formal plans to synchronize teaching schedules across ALU member institutions. Questions to be answered are: Who has teaching obligations when? And, if one does not have teaching obligations, is the generation of extra income required in order to make participation in the program attractive? What is an appropriate place and time to conduct the LFEP to involve those participants that are required for the training program?
- ✓ Program references to "summer courses" raised continuous questions and caused much confusion. The Liberian climate divides up into the rainy and the dry season. "Summer" does therefore not have an indigenous meaning and the use of the term tends to be experienced—in the best case—as a consequence of internationalization and—in the worst case—as a sign of ethnocentrism.

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<sup>6</sup> In 2008, Denmark spent an approximate 5 million USD, Germany and Sweden each spent around 6 million USD, and Switzerland around 3 million USD in both emergency aid and structural development support. Please refer to the list of all commitments, contributions and pledges as of 6 August 2008, compiled by OCHA on the basis of information provided by donors and appealing organizations:

[http://ocha.unog.ch/fts/reports/daily/ocha\\_R10\\_E15466\\_asof\\_0908060205.pdf](http://ocha.unog.ch/fts/reports/daily/ocha_R10_E15466_asof_0908060205.pdf) (as seen on 30 July 2009).

- ✓ For future editions of the program, the question of venue should be addressed. For the moment, it appears that hosting the program in Monrovia is the most convenient. Venturing out of Monrovia to for example Cuttington may be an option, particularly since Cuttington has such good facilities and no large-scale programs running during July and August. However, the issue of opportunity cost should be investigated thoroughly. Questions to be answered are: What percentage of targeted participants would be expected to have multiple other teaching / work obligations in Monrovia and would therefore not be in a position to spend 2 to 3 weeks away? What percentage of targeted participants would be expected to have family and home care obligations and would therefore not be in a position to spend 2 to 3 weeks away? It is expected that a high number of targeted participants would have difficulties on both of these fronts. Therefore, venturing out of Monrovia would likely have a large impact on the eventual participant body.

## Operational issues

Below, you will find a mix of all other issues that need to be addressed.

- ✓ Again: More long-term planning in advance would benefit the program greatly.
- ✓ In order for LFEP operational staff to become more (and more quickly) acquainted to the program, staff visits should be planned to the Mitrovica course program in winter 2009. This type of staff visit would greatly benefit the expediency with which future editions could be implemented in Liberia.
- ✓ If the program is to be further implemented in 2010 and onwards, it is of great importance to furnish the SPARK office space a.s.a.p. so that it can be put into use and thereby be separated from ALU daily operations. This is of particular importance during the implementation of the course program.
- ✓ If the program is to be further implemented in 2010 and onwards, it is of great importance that SPARK opens its bank account in Liberia a.s.a.p. to avoid large sums of money having to be stored at the office.
- ✓ In future editions of the program, meal tickets should be handed out to the participants in order to avoid feeding non-participants.
- ✓ In future editions of the program, the catering service should deliver on time. During the LFEP 2009 both breakfast and lunch tended to be delivered late, some days one hour or even more. This obviously had implications for the teaching schedule. In the future, the contract with the catering service should include the necessity to be on time as a condition for the receipt of (full) payment.
- ✓ Both classrooms used were too small, even if the participant body would have consisted of the originally envisaged 25 per course. In future editions of the program, the class rooms used should be bigger.
- ✓ Additionally, the two classrooms used were right next to each other without doors. Therefore, group work and debating in one course would be of nuisance to the other and vice versa. In the future, classrooms used should be separated, either by doors and/or in terms of physical space.
- ✓ The temperature in the classrooms was too high. The lack of air-conditioning and/or fans often made it difficult for the professors to teach comfortably. In future editions of the program, there should be a way to regulate the temperature in the classrooms.

- ✓ For the planning of future editions of the program, the issue of the sitting fees should once more be discussed. Opinions differ on the question of whether or not a sitting fee should be provided to the participants. Considering the fact that the target group is teaching faculty, some type of income substitution may be appropriate. Alternatively, it could be argued that eliminating the sitting fee will automatically weed out the less committed participants.
- ✓ Breakfast and lunch should remain one of the program benefits.
- ✓ For programming continuity, participant information should be administered more thoroughly and, preferably, by making use of a standardized database system.
- ✓ Attendance lists should be kept in a more orderly manner. From the start of the course, a participant list should be available for each course so that attendance can be kept from the very beginning.
- ✓ Additionally, in future editions of the program, it is important to ensure that those people that sign the attendance list in the morning actually remain in class until the end. In one of the two courses of the LFEP 2009, it appeared that quite a significant number of participants would not actually attend the full session each day. Yet, they would sign off their names on the attendance list.
- ✓ In future editions of the program, more emphasis should be put on the requirements of the Quality Standards. Just as administrating attendance is a requirement for Quality Assurance, there is a series of additional requirements that should be made more explicit.
- ✓ A follow up programme should involve a longer term strategy for (i) the sustainability of the programme and (ii) the development of such a programme into an accredited and actually coherent faculty development programme, e.g. on MA level.
- ✓ Complementarity: great opportunities exist to make LFEP activities complementary to other teacher development/training programs. This should be further investigated, for example in relation to: Reading Liberia (CTI & CODE), The Mississippi Consortium and SPARK's entrepreneurship program under development.
- ✓ A joint fundraising and donor campaign should be developed and run by SPARK, MoE and ALU members. Donors could be attracted more effectively with early pledges from both SPARK and MoE.