



## ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

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## I. INTRODUCTION OF ARISE FROM ASHES

Arise From Ashes (AFA) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, operating in Liberia. AFA has offices in Liberia and Switzerland.

- Monrovia, Liberia: Zubah Town, Paynesville, Montserrado County
- Geneva, Switzerland: Maison Internatioanle des Associations, Rue des Savoises 5, 2015 Genève.

AFA has a tax-exempt status from the Swiss authorities. One of the primary benefits is the ability to accept contributions and donations that are tax-deductible to the donor.

On July 21, 2021, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to grant special consultative status to Arise From Ashes Incorporated.

The Economic and Social Council is at the heart of the United Nations system to advance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. It is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

ECOSOC links a diverse family of UN entities dedicated to sustainable development, providing overall guidance and coordination. The entities include regional economic and social commissions, functional commissions facilitating intergovernmental discussions of major global issues, and specialized agencies, programmes and funds at work around the world to translate development commitments into real changes in people's lives.

AFA has experience and expertise in supporting the 2030 Sustainable development goals, which are well valued by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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Building on its coordination role within the UN system, ECOSOC is a gateway for UN partnership and participation by the rest of the world. It offers a unique global meeting point for productive dialogues among policymakers, parliamentarians, academics, foundations, businesses, youth and more than 3,200 registered non-governmental organizations.

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AFA's vision and strategic framework is totally in line with SDGs aimed at ending poverty and inequalities. AFA's activities have an impact on goals 1(ending povety), 2 (zero hunger) , 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 13 (climate action), 15 (life on land), 17 (partnerships for the goals). See AFA's mission, vision and

activities in the attached Activity reports attached. AFA empowers marginalized disadvantaged and abused Liberia, mainly the homeless through vocational training. By this, they can find jobs and become independent men and women and have families. The different projects develop the above SDGs, for example, the agro-ecology project will not only provide education for beneficiaries, but they will have a career, a job, leave the streets, have self-esteem, (including women and girls), etc.

AFA is in partnership with several like-minded organizations to achieve nine of the SDGs, namely, fight against poverty, hunger, illiteracy, gender inequalities, unemployment, environmental degradation, homelessness (SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17).

## 1. VISION AND MISSION

Our goal is to help transform the lives of the country's homeless, poverty-stricken and marginalized, women, children and youth, into self-sufficient men and women, by developing sustainable community-based programs.

Our approach in fighting poverty is holistic. We aim at building an accommodation and a vocational training center where the marginalized homeless beneficiaries will learn a variety of skills and live for the duration of their training program. The accommodation is meant to take some of the youth from the streets and host them for the duration of their training, while providing them all the necessary tools to become autonomous. By so doing, the center will bring together all projects on the same campus instead of having them in several communities.

The center will contribute to the economic activities of the county and serve as a basis to fight poverty through job creation, not to forget psychosocial counseling.

We created this special focus on girls/women because in the Liberian society, when one educates or provide skills to girls, they help their families, friends and become pillars of the society.

## 2. OUR STORY

Liberia is a demographically young country; more than half of the population is between 15 and 24 years old. In addition, the population is growing rapidly with a fertility rate of 4.3 children per woman in 2018. Majority of the youth are left to fend for themselves, they spend their lives on the streets; many fall into drugs, prostitution, crimes, delinquency and are victims of abuse.

This population has been rapidly growing to the extent that the society created a new term to classify them and they are now known as "Zogos" (males) and "zogeses" (females). They are considered a threat to peace, stability and security. They influence many other youth living poverty level including those who have a place to sleep. Arise From Ashes rather considers them as untapped potentials. It is important to note during the war, the education system collapsed and children, to this day, suffer an irreparable delay.

Many of the youth in Liberia could not complete primary school education and find themselves on the streets today. Several research, reports and interviews suggest that the best way out for them is vocational and skills development.

These grown-up children, the youth, now find themselves with no prospects, no hope for the future. Indeed, youth unemployment rate is approximately at 85%. Unemployment is a problem that affects the entire population and is overrepresented among young people given their share in the Liberian population. They have no other choice but to turn to the informal sector, which most of the time, is not sufficient to meet their needs and immobilizes them in an unstable and precarious situation.

These youth have over and over again expressed the desire to receive skills development training to be able to fend for themselves.

These youth, the future of Liberia, are our targets.

Our mission is to fight poverty by empowering youth to rise from the ashes - Arise From Ashes - and regain control over their lives for a more dignified future through vocational training and skills development.

### 3. FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS – DONORS AND CHALLENGES

This year, AFA witnessed an growth in its activities in different aspects thanks to generous donations we received from our donors. AFA also contributed to approximately one third of the income, especially with respect to the tailoring and fashion center as well as all events which took place this year.

We believe in strong governance and financial management. We have achieved a balanced budget while at the same time increasing our scope of action and impact. Our gratitude goes to the Ville de Genève and the Ville de Carouge for their valuable financial assistance which enabled us to launch "Resilience Farm" (see below).

Our financial statements were audited by Mr. Philippe Sandoz, Financial Officer, Administration & Billing, Fabrique d'Avenir.



We also thank Janet Gomez (Geneva, Switzerland) and Felicia Schiffer (Basel, Switzerland) for their generous donations of three electric sewing machines.





The contribution we received from the community in Barrobo is more than valuable: thanks to their kindness, we were able to have a good quantity of **volunteers** to enable the agro-ecology project to begin (10 volunteers helped with the preparation of the land) and even to assist the farmers (2 volunteers assist the farmers).

You will find more details in the financial report attached.

## II. PROJECTS IN 2021

### 1. LAUNCHING OF RESILIENCE FARM



#### a. OBJECTIVES

The creation of the training center will take place in three major stages, the first of which is the creation of an agro-ecological farm, “Resilience Farm”. “Resilience Farm” is located in Barrobo, Maryland County, in south-eastern Liberia.

"Resilience Farm" serves as the basis for the creation of the training center. Indeed, it is very necessary to have an operational farm and a good command of production and sales processes before integrating young people into training. This is therefore the objective of this first stage of the project.

"Resilience Farm" identified and began with basic products that are among the staple food of the local population, namely plantains, cabbages, eggplants and peppers. The income generated from the first phase will be used to integrate new crops, always in line with the local population's consumer behavior.

The duration of this project is estimated to take place over 11 months, from the preparation of the land to the first harvest. The implementation of "Resilience Farm" project began with some delay due to COVID-19 related restrictions. These restrictions were lifted by the government in June 2021. This first phase was scheduled to begin and end in 2021.

Phase 1 will end in May 2022 and phase 2 will begin in June 2022.

"Resilience Farm" perfectly meets the expectations of the community. It represents a very positive contribution towards youth employment and food security.

## **b. HUMAN RESOURCES**

The key stakeholders during this first phase are the contractors (five), community volunteers (10), the coordinator, the supervisor and the two farmers.

The contractors carried out the felling, brushing, clearing and weeding of the land from mid-June to mid-July. The land was in the state of a forest. Considering the unplanned increase in the surface of the land on which crops were to be cultivated, the community reacted quickly by appointing 10 volunteers to help the five contractors (paid).

The Agronomist was unable to join "Resilience Farm" for family reasons. He was replaced by two unemployed young men from the community (23 years old and 32 years old) to help the farmers especially with the weeding. Although this responds positively to skills development and the employment rate, it adds more responsibilities to the Supervisors workload. In addition to his work as a supervisor, he trains the two young people.

The security guard will join the project in a few months, just before harvest.

The women of VSLA who will sell the products will start during the harvest period.

The community is playing an active role in 'Resilience Farm' - they provide assistance whenever needed. They have started providing ash which is used in place of chemical pesticides / insecticides to control pests and diseases.

AFA Switzerland's mission to Liberia has been postponed until further notice due to COVID-19. For this reason, we could not go with the seeds offered by Kokopelli. So we bought seeds on the spot.

## **c. ACTIVITIES**

### **• PREPARING THE LAND**

Activities on the farm began with a delay mainly due to COVID-related restrictions and lack of funding. "Resilience Farm" therefore started six months later than planned. This delay has repercussions on the rest of the activities.

Slash-and-burn agriculture (shifting cultivation) is prohibited according to AFA's agro-ecological charter that each stakeholder must sign before entering "Resilience Farm". They were expected to use one hectare, which represents 2.5 acres of land. But the local team decided to use more land, i.e., two hectares (five acres), because they need more space to allow crops to grow and develop better since they cannot slash-and-burn. This technique requires more time for the area to decompose.

Crop cultivation order also respected climate change. The dry season ended in June, much later than the normal period – consequently, the rainy season also started later. The local team therefore began planting plantains, then cabbage, eggplant and pepper.

During the months of June and July 2021, the Contractors (3 groups of 5 men each – 15 in total) carried out the brushing, felling, pegging and clearing on “Resilience Farm”.

The Supervisor tested the soil to see which crops can be planted in which areas.

The land was designed according to permaculture principles.

The team is using intercropping to help with pest management and weed suppression.

Farmers assisted with the demarcation, clearing, preparing for the compost, etc.

Covering the soil with mulch and plants is a technique which limits evaporation of water from the soil and controls soil erosion. These plants come from the local flora. “Resilience Farm” is already putting this technique into practice.

#### • **MAKING COMPOST**

The compost was put in place during the land preparation phase according to schedule.

The wood from felled trees as well as other remnants from the vegetation were collected and used for compost. Compost takes a few months to be ready to use, so for the initial planting activities we had to purchase some. Compost from “Resilience Farm” will be ready for subsequent crop cycles. “Resilience Farm” is using the “crop rotation” technique in order not to deplete nutrients in the soil. Each plant requires different amounts of nutrients to grow.

Weeding is done on a regular basis.

Watering is also done once or twice a day.

#### • **VEGETABLES AND SEASONALITY**

For the rainy season (May/June - October/November) – it was appropriate to grow plantains, peppers, eggplants and cabbage. The next crops will be okra and cucumber. It should be noted that climate change has affected this seasonality for several years.

#### • **PEST MANAGEMENT**

Pesticide made from ashes

Wood ash is used in agriculture as pesticide, fungicide and fertilizer (source of potassium). Barrobo is not supplied with electricity, and this is mostly the case in all rural areas. Wood is the main source of energy used to cook.

Thanks to the participation of the community, we were able to get sufficient quantity of ashes to fight and manage pests.

Although “Resilience Farm” had recourse to mosquito nets, which are specially adapted for crops to protect the cabbages, the cabbages were damaged by heavy rains (rainy season). The other crops (pepper, bitter balls and plantain) resisted well to the rain.

#### • **COORDINATION**

The Coordinator visits “Resilience Farm” once a week and sends us photos and videos of the important stages of the project.

AFA Switzerland holds a virtual meeting with the Coordinator and the Supervisor once a month.

The Supervisor sends periodic reports to Mr. Harmon which he forwards to AFA Switzerland.

The team is doing an incredible job on the farm and is trying to meet schedule.

Some pictures highlighting the activities of Resilience Farm are attached to this report.



## 2. TAILORING AND FASHION DESIGN SCHOOL

The tailoring school which started in July 2020 expanded with the enrollment of 6 new students in 2021. The six new girls/young ladies between the ages of 20 and 26 were also selected based on their socio-economic backgrounds.

These are mostly girls who cannot afford regular school and have turned to AFA for help through the New Georgia Community to offer them hope for the future. AFA intends to develop and extend this program to more girls. 30 other girls have expressed interest in this course, but we do not have the capacity to accommodate them. AFA is devising means to expand the school's program. This school is run by AFA's Director of Operations and two professionals.

We maintained the two professional Tailors.

The older students are in their second year. The new students are in their first year – 2 levels.

### a. Vision of the School

Our vision for this school is to offer tailoring and fashion design to its students to enable them to fulfill their dreams by having a place in the fashion world. We have often heard that tailoring was one of the last options for youth who perform poorly in schools. We consider tailoring and fashion design to be a profession of its own, a fulfilling career path which entails being meticulous and tuned into artistic expressions. We believe that fashion designing adds value to tailoring. Fashion design is a very profitable industry which positively impacts many economies and nations. This industry employs millions of people worldwide.

Developing creativity is an integral part of their courses – through various exercises they develop their creativity in order to become excellent designers. They learn how to transform any little idea into a professionally finished item.

We selected girls in the same community in which the school is located. By this, they will have no extra costs to bear for transportation to and from the school.

Skills development in tailoring remains very well-grounded. After 18 months of training, our young female students are making their own clothes, those of their families and acquaintances. These new skills they have acquired, reduces the amount of money they, their families, friends, neighbors, would have to pay to outside tailors. These young ladies have begun earning some money for their families.

### b. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Women in poor and marginalized settings often have recourse to sex for money, drop out of school due to pregnancy, cannot afford to buy sanitary pads, products like soap, deodorant, etc. due to poverty. They find themselves either living with men who ill-treat them or get married at an early age.

Offering them vocational training is a good way for them to gain economic independence and to help other family members.

### c. Curriculum - Year two

Advanced Pattern development and construction for fashion and clothing  
Exploiting ideas in fashion design  
Advanced drawing techniques  
Advanced garment production  
Production of Bathroom sets, kitchen sets, table sets, etc.  
Fashion Promotion

Fashion entrepreneurship

Production of fashion collections: garments, accessories, decoration items.

### 3. EVENTS

- **International Women's Day – March 8, 2021 – Awareness On The Benefits Of Using Reusable Sanitary Pads**

In Liberia, many teenagers do not go to school during their menstrual cycle due to poverty. They stay home approximately one week every month during each menstrual cycle.

In preparation of the International Women's Day, AFA engaged Dr. Kathi Gutierrez, President of [Dignity Liberia](#) to teach students from the school on how to make reusable sanitary pads. She conducted this training on February 17, 2021 during her mission to Liberia, where the 12 students of AFA's Tailoring School actually learnt how to make reusable sanitary pads.

According to Dr. Gutierrez, it was easy for AFA's students to learn because they already knew how to sew before the workshop.

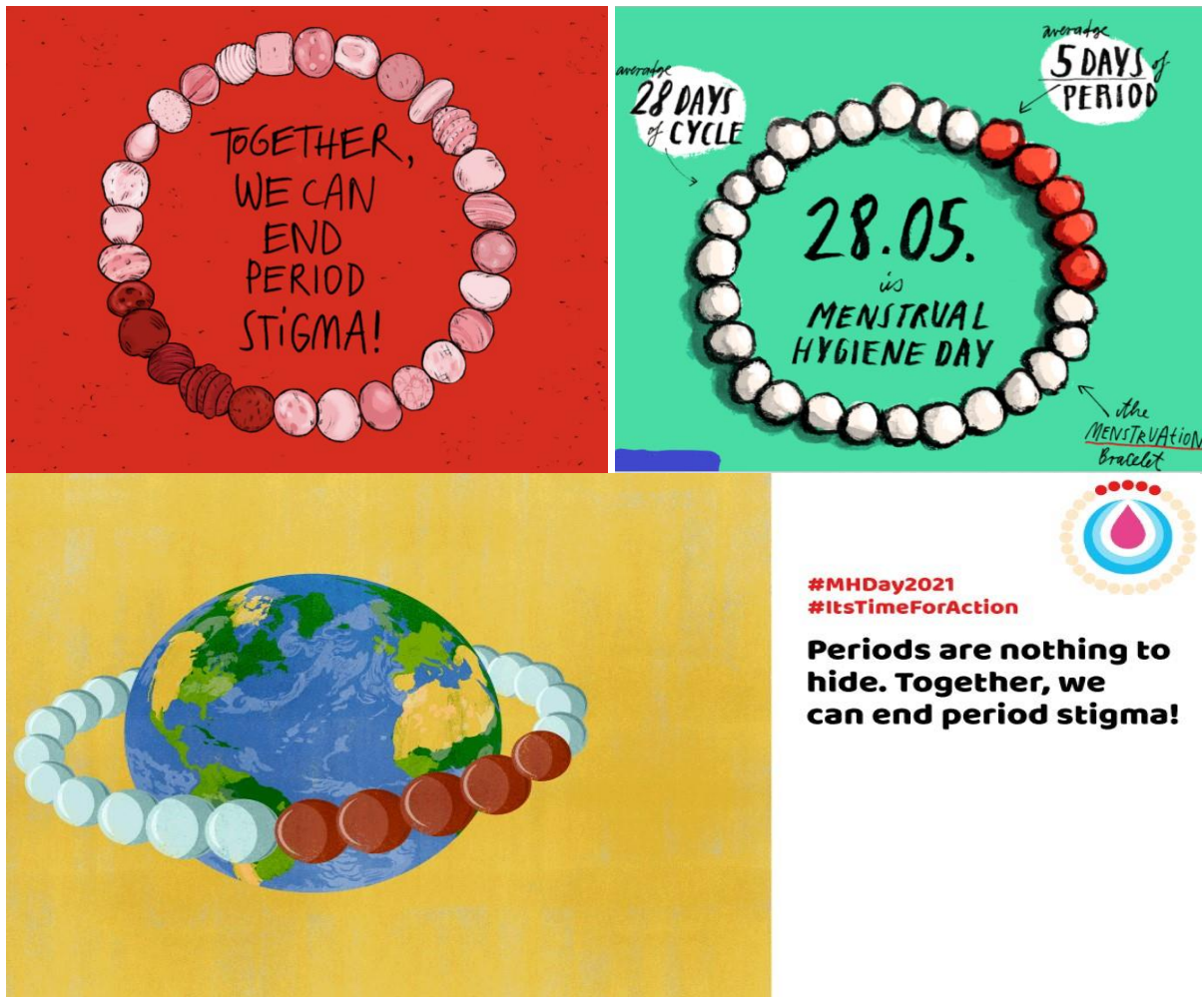
AFA celebrated the International Women's Day with 38 girls in 7th – 9th grades from the Island Community School in New Georgia Estate where the Tailoring School is located. AFA presented each girl with a kit comprising 2 reusable sanitary pads, 1 bar of soap, 1 pack of powder soap, 1 fabric pouch, 1 wash towel. The reusable sanitary pads were made by students from AFA's Tailoring School. These pads have health and environmental benefits.



- **World Menstrual Hygiene Day – May 28, 2021 – Awareness On Menstrual Hygien Management And Removing Menstruation Stigmas**

The International Menstrual Hygiene Day is celebrated around the world on May 28 because the average days of the menstrual cycle is 28 and the length of the period or menstruation is an of average 5 days. May is also the 5th month of the year. This is how the date May 28 was selected. This year, the world used the Menstruation Bracelet as a simple and powerful symbol for menstruation on Menstrual Hygiene Day. The Menstruation Bracelet consists of 28 beads, 5 of which are red (28 = average duration of the cycle; 5 = average days of bleeding. Girls wore the bracelet to show support to those who experience menstruation as a taboo. This also supports the end of the period stigma.

Some bracelets with slogans are below :



All countries around the world use this day to speak about the problems girls and women face due to their menstruation and to propose solutions to these problems.

In Liberia, many teenagers (girls) do not go to school during their menstrual cycle because they cannot afford to buy sanitary pads.

AFA marked this occasion with a celebration at the Gabriel Kpollah Elementary, Jr & Sr. High School in New Georgia Housing Estate's Morning Session. The event was attended by the Principal of the School, AFA's Director of Operations, all the students of the Tailoring School, the Head Teacher, the District Education Officer. AFA conducted an awareness session for 100 female students at the school on menstrual hygiene management, the health and environmental benefits of these reusable sanitary pads.

The main theme was : «*What is menstruation, what is the world menstrual hygiene day and why do all countries celebrate it on may 28*»?

Some of the solutions are: women and girls should not be ashamed of menstruation or period girls and women should have good menstrual hygiene local, national and global policies should support women and girls through programs, projects, activities.

AFA made a donation of over 100 kits containing reusable sanitary pads, soap, towels and underwears to female students from Gabriel Kpollah Ele, Jr & Sr. High School in New Georgia Housing Estate's Morning Session. The reusable sanitary pads were made by the girls from the tailoring school.

The Principal of the School immediately engaged AFA for assistance to counsel young students on the prevention of pregnancy and menstrual hygiene management in 2022.



This event was filmed by SPOON TV and can be viewed through the following link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/STLLIB/videos/331032725063561/?sfnsn=mo>.

A student from the tailoring school speaking to students on menstrual hygiene management and removing menstruation-related taboos:



AFA Tailoring School students



### • SOLIWAY SOLIDARITÉ INTERNATIONALE MODE D'EMPLOI(S)

For the past 13 years, the exhibition organized by the Cité de la Solidarité Internationale (CSI) has been an **information and orientation event on occupations and training in International Solidarity**. It's also a **meeting place for professionals** to network and reflect on their practices. Taking place near International Geneva, **SOLIWAY** is the only national and cross-border exhibition **dedicated to the occupations and the actors** of International Solidarity.

This year, AFA attended the SOLIWAY two-day exhibitions which were beneficial in so many ways :

- Many activities were presented to allow us to discover international solidarity at different levels
- More than 50 exhibitors were there to answer all kinds of questions concerning international solidarity
- Discussion slots on human resource management, project development methodology, etc.
- Networking opportunities between experts and actors of solidarity presenting new forms of cooperation
- Data management, needs analysis, implementation and monitoring of activities.

Some pictures during our day at SOLIWAY:





#### 4. TRAINING PROGRAM

Between October 13, 2021 and December 4, 2021, AFA participated in a training program offered by the Ville De Geneve, in collaboration with the Canton de Genève and the Maison Internationale des Associations (MIA). This program brought together 10 associations in Genève, each represented by two of its members, totaling 20 participants.

The training focused on how to present, manage and follow up on projects.

The training program was conducted by ISONGO.

It also presented a networking opportunity with other associations in Geneva.

This was a very rich experience!

## 5. WAY FORWARD - RECOMMENDATIONS

2021 was a very successful year.

We received more donations than 2020. These donations enabled us to begin one of our main activities, which is “Resilience Farm”.

The tailoring school doubled in terms of enrollment and the agro-ecology project was successfully launched despite the delay caused by COVID-19.

**Sources of funding remain our biggest challenges in achieving our vision, mission and goals.**

**PROMOTION** – This year, AFA will begin promoting the Tailoring School to showcase the beautiful items made by the young ladies – the objective is to find customers to buy those items which will contribute to the sustainability of the school.

For this reason, AFA entered into partnership with « Made in Liberia Fair » to have a stand every last Saturday of each month to display the fashion and accessories.

AFA will also begin promoting « Resilience Farm » this year.

The community is very satisfied with “Resilience Farm”. Its participation and support remain a key force in moving the project forward.

### 1. Seed bank

The seeds provided by Kokopelli will be taken to Resilience Farm and the seed bank will be created during AFA Suisse’s mission to Liberia.

We are planning this trip towards the end of 2022.

### 2. Harvest

The first harvest is scheduled for April 2022. Different markets for sales will be maintained according to schedule.

### 3. Employees

Due to the absence of the Agronomist, there is a shortage of workers. Two farmers and the supervisor are not enough to maintain the farm. The other two farmers who joined “Resilience Farm” are only volunteers. We are grateful to the community, but we must plan a solution in the coming months, for example, find new volunteers on a rotational basis or build the team with one full time farmer or two part-time farmers. This will compensate for the absence of the agronomist.

In addition to his workload as a supervisor, he also trains farmers. It is important to consider an increase in his salary in the future.

### 4. Competition

Tubman University has its farm not far from Resilience Farm. Farmers at this institution receive more than double the salary of farmers at Resilience Farm. This remains a major concern for which we must find a solution for fear of losing our farmers.

### 5. The way forward

Some important operations still need to be done at this stage:

- Irrigation – we are planning on building wells near the crops for irrigation
- Clearing the pathway that leads to the land
- Clearing the aisles
- The security guard

Nurseries were set up from July to September.

The eggplants did not suffer any major damages.

## 6. Members

Five new members joined AFA Suisse in 2021.

## 7. Website

AFA hired a professional to develop its new website to show case its activities. This website should be operational by the end of February 2022.

8. AFA will continue sensitizing young girls on menstrual hygiene management and the prevention of teenage pregnancy.

## 6. DONORS & PARTNERS

# DONORS



**Janet Gomez (Geneva, Switzerland) and Felicia Schiffer (Basel, Switzerland)**



# PARTNERS



UNITED NATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS



WANGO  
WORLD ORGANIZATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

WORLD ORGANIZATION  
OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATIONS (WANGO)



Made in **Liberia!**



**LINTA**  
LIBERIA NATIONAL TOURISM ASSOCIATION



BARROBO DISTRICT



## 7. OUTCOME - IMPACT

# AGROECOLOGY- IMPACT

# 4

Employment opportunities & capacity

# 12

 Volunteers

# 100%

 agroecological principles applied

# TAILORING – IMPACT

100%

increase in enrollment

360

Hours of training

2

employment opportunities & capacity

100%

students satisfied & eager to learn more

90%

students operational, sewing for family and friends

91.66%

students retained



# MENSTRUAL HYGIENE - IMPACT

100%

Teachers from Tailoring School & volunteers trained

2 schools benefitted

2

AFA members in Monrovia

10

students from AFA's tailoring school

138 female students beneficiaries



138 menstrual hygiene kits distributed

## 8. SUSTAINABILITY

Sources of funding remain our biggest challenges in achieving our vision, mission and goals. From its inception, AFA envisaged a strategy on how to solicit donations and grants in the early years to assist in developing the vocational training center and accommodation, while at the same time developing sustainable funding means.

To diminish donor-funded and grant dependencies, AFA focused on areas in which it could provide skills development and training to youth. This business development component of AFA's strategy will diversify its sources of income and fund its activities after the center is established.

AFA aims at developing the vocational training center and accommodation thanks to the donations it will receive from different donors. Products sold from the tailoring school and "Resilience Farm" will also contribute to sustaining programs.



## ANNEX PHOTOS

### RESILIENCE FARM HIGHLIGHTS

The picture below shows the preparation of compost



Cabbage being protected from insects and pests below





Nurseries were set up between July and September 2021



NURSERIES – PROGRESS BELOW





The bitter balls did not undergo any major damage





Plantain can grow up to 30-35 CM high

May 28 – Gabriel Kpolleh – New Georgia Estate



















### REUSABLE SANITARY PADS WORKSHOP WITH DR. KATHI GUTTIEREZ







## WORKSHOP ON PRODUCTION OF FAMILY BLANKETS



## WORKSHOP - KITCHEN ACCESSORIES – APRONS, GLOVES, PLACE MATS



## NEW STUDENTS IN 2021 PROUDLY SHOWING THEIR FIRST DRESSES MADE





## BATHROOM SETS – SHOWER CURTAINS, MATS FOR BATH TUBS, TOILETS



