

THE NIAPELE PROJECT

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



Students don their new uniforms at the Happy Family Center for Children with Disabilities, an initiative of

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2009: A year of accomplishments

Beginning in August 2008, The Niapele Project moved its operations from Ghana to Liberia. Multiple factors contributed to this decision. First and foremost, a crisis between the Liberian refugee community in Ghana and the Ghanaian authorities precipitated the departure of thousands of Liberians from the Buduburam refugee settlement, where we had been operating since 2007. Of our three partner organizations in Buduburam - the Carolyn A. Miller Elementary School, the Abandoned Refugee Children’s Home and the Harmony Center for disabled children - only the founders and staff of the Harmony Center chose to stay in Buduburam, while the others made plans to return to Liberia.

The crisis also underscored the difficulty refugees faced in designing and implementing sustainable interventions in their communities. Uncertainty about the future and complex legal questions about refugee status were not allowing for the kind of long-term planning and commitment that Niapele and its partners had been envisioning. Starting over in Liberia was an opportunity - for Niapele, but especially for our partners - to create sustainable initiatives to benefit vulnerable children that could grow and strengthen over time.

But starting over in a new country presented many challenges to The Niapele Project and our partners. By remaining open and flexible, we began the process of re-designing our intervention, with the notion of putting community-based leadership at the heart of our approach. At the same time, we undertook consultations with the government, UN agencies, community leaders, and local and international NGOs, to better understand our operating environment. While we work at a grassroots level, we also tailor our initiatives to be consistent with the broader framework of Poverty Reduction Strategies of the Government of Liberia, and to meet gaps that are not already being filled by other local and international NGOs and agencies, particularly with regards to empowering and strengthening the ability of communities to address their own social and economic challenges.

Throughout 2009, we were faced with an increase in costs and needs due to the financial challenges of moving our operations from Ghana to Liberia, coupled with the higher cost of establishing and maintaining our programs in Liberia versus in the refugee camp. Our resolve to continue supporting genuine leaders and their causes remained strong, however, and we had a successful year. In 2010, with our Liberian presence established and initiatives now in place, we are poised to accomplish even more.

<h1>In Numbers</h1>	<h2>400</h2> <p>students and staff at the tuition-free Carolyn Miller School in Monrovia receive a nutritious daily meal</p>	<h2>60</h2> <p>students sponsored by the MacDella Cooper Foundation in local schools receive a nutritious daily meal</p>	<h2>\$1,989</h2> <p>Total amount received from the GO campaign; financed start-up costs for the School Nutrition Initiative</p>
	<h2>3</h2> <p>active partnerships with community-based organizations providing services and support for vulnerable children.</p>	<h2>1st</h2> <p>Niapele assisted HapFam in launching the first center in Liberia dedicated to supporting children with disabilities</p>	<h2>11</h2> <p>Number of children with disabilities under the care of HapFam when they launched. As of this writing, the number has increased to 16</p>

Liberia operations overview

Between the end of 2008 and mid-2009, The Niapele Project established operations in Liberia. Niapele hired a full-time Monrovia-based program manager. A Liberian national with experience working with the World Food Program and as a United Nations volunteer, Henry Snyder brings expertise and energy to our work in Liberia. In early 2009, we became an accredited international NGO in Liberia and set up a small office in downtown Monrovia. With this infrastructure in place, Megan Sullivan took on the role of country director, and dedicated five full months in the field to work with our partners on defining and designing their new plans. By September 2009, less than a year after moving our operations from Ghana, we were engaged in three active partnerships in Liberia and launched a fiscal sponsorship program in the United States.

In the field, our initiatives include one of our original programs from the Buduburam refugee camp, the School Nutrition Initiative, which is an offspring of a camp community program, Happy Family Center for Children with disabilities, and a brand new initiative in rural Liberia: Malaya.

The dynamics of operating in Liberia differ vastly from those in a refugee camp. Navigating the logistics of a sprawling bureaucracy in post-conflict nation with devastated infrastructure can be difficult. The increased bureaucratic and administrative requirements of an accredited international NGO in Liberia have translated into larger amounts of time and resources spent on these items. While our paperwork and inter-agency meetings have increased ten-fold from our time working directly with the community members at Buduburam, we have embraced the opportunity to collaborate with larger players on the post-conflict development scene, and have worked to increase the participation of communities and civil society members in their country's reconstruction efforts.

School Nutrition Initiative

The School Nutrition Initiative benefits the 400 students and 24 staff members of the tuition-free Carolyn A. Miller School (CAMES) in Monrovia. The Niapele Project's approach to community-based programming goes beyond ensuring sufficient caloric intake for the hundreds of students and dozens of staff members who spend a significant part of their day at the school: stakeholder involvement, cultural suitability, commitment to sustainability and attention to incorporation of best practices all drive our project planning and implementation.

The National Nutritional Policy of Liberia states as the number one guiding principle:



“Adequate food, health and care for the vulnerable are universal human rights and primary to ensuring nutritional wellbeing for a full and active life of dignity for all human beings. The Government of Liberia acknowledges the role of nutrition as a precondition for sustainable social, economic and human development.”

The School Nutrition Initiative is the result of a partnership with Vision Awake Africa for Development (VAAFD), which runs the Carolyn A. Miller School. CAMES was founded in 2003 by Karrus Hayes, a Liberian refugee living in Ghana, with a mission to provide a tuition-free education for the neediest children living in the Buduburam refugee camp, as all other educational establishments in Buduburam had prohibitive tuition and other costs.

In 2009, when the Carolyn A. Miller School opened in Liberia, about 400 students enrolled to receive a free education. CAMES offers one of the only opportunities for the most underprivileged, vulnerable children to have access to education and a genuine childhood. Several teachers and staff members from the refugee camp made the move to CAMES Liberia, and even some of the students from Ghana are now in attendance. As is the case throughout most of Liberia, there is extreme poverty in the area; students, teachers and staff, experience hunger on a daily basis. The School Nutrition Initiative seeks to reduce the impact of hunger and improve the overall nutritional status of this community.

The Niapele Project and the Carolyn A. Miller School completed an assessment of needs and projected costs for relaunching the much-needed School Nutrition Initiative in Liberia, and Niapele secured a grant from the GO Campaign to cover the one time start-up expense of \$2,000. This grant financed everything needed to initiate the program, including buying benches and tables for the cafeteria space, renovating a safe and clean storage area for food crops, purchasing stoves, pots, pans, bowls, spoons, and providing water storage.

Why a school feeding program?

The School Nutrition Initiative ensures school children receive the nutrients they need on a daily basis to ward off diseases and ill health. Many children come to school hungry; for some, the meal provided at school is the only one they can count on. In addition to stunting intellectual and physical development, malnutrition also reduces school attendance, particularly among girls. Educators and teachers observed that students would often lack attention or fall asleep in class due to lack of energy and adequate nutrition. In 2007, The Niapele Project and VAAFD identified child malnutrition as a critical issue among the students of CAMES in Ghana, and we collaboratively designed an intervention to address it.

The School Nutrition Initiative provides students with the incentive, motivation and energy necessary to take full advantage of their education. Many of the students are orphans or unaccompanied minors who were separated from their parents while fleeing the war. Even families still left intact find it very difficult to feed their children on a regular basis, let alone pay for school tuition, supplies, and uniforms.

In 2007-2008, the School Nutrition Initiative operated by The Niapele Project and VAAFD in the Buduburam refugee settlement proved to be an effective means of increasing attendance and reducing severe malnutrition rates.

Relying on local expertise and resources

The School Nutrition Initiative has been designed to rely exclusively on locally produced crops, as a way to encourage local food production and food security. A nutrition consultant from the University of Liberia and her students helped us to design the meal composition so as to ensure proper nutrition and caloric intake. Each meal provides approximately 500 calories and incorporates traditional Liberian fare, incorporating local vegetables and products.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial aspects of the success of this initiative, and The Niapele Project is proud that our joint work with VAAFD has undergone regular, rigorous monitoring. This has allowed us to continually improve the program throughout the implementation phase.

Each term, a nutrition consultant and a team of assistants weigh and measure Carolyn A. Miller students so that we can evaluate the progress of their physical development and the state of malnutrition among the students. The results of the initial evaluation at CAMES showed that 1.47% of students were currently malnourished based on weight/height indicators.

The evaluation also showed that 13% were severely malnourished, and 26% moderately malnourished based on low weight/age and height/age indicators. These numbers, which correspond to nationwide averages, indicate high levels of malnourishment in the past as well as stunted growth. The nutritious, reliable daily meal they receive through the School Nutrition Initiative ensures that these children can eventually overcome their nutritional deficiencies.

Results of anthropometric study at Carolyn A. Miller School - Fall 2009

“The introduction of the School Feeding Program will have a significant impact in supplementing the diets of the students by improving the nutritional status of the pupils provided all other factors are taken care of.”

Weight/Height

Severely malnourished: 0%

Mild to moderately malnourished: 1.47%

Normal: 98.5%

Weight/Age

Severely malnourished: 13.3%

Mild to moderately malnourished: 26%

Normal: 60.8%

Note: Weight/Height represents current nutritional status. Weight/Age reflects history of past malnutrition and stunting.

Source: University of Liberia Nutritional Consultant

Replicability

One of the goals of the School Nutrition Initiative is to create a model for school nutrition that is replicable. The approach we are currently developing with the Carolyn A. Miller School is structured with simple procedures and a logistical model so as to allow for skills transfer and for the program to be adapted in other communities. By ensuring that the program relies on easily accessible local resources and expertise, we hope to encourage community-based organizations in other parts of Liberia to adopt this model for feeding programs.

Long-term sustainability

In order for the School Nutrition Initiative to become a sustainable project, we are working with the Carolyn A. Miller School to define clear logistical and management procedures. As we continue to jointly implement this program, Niapele is aiming to increase the Carolyn A. Miller School’s ability to independently manage the School Nutrition Initiative.

In 2010, we will be developing specific standards for measuring capacity building achievements. These standards will provide a framework for monitoring the program’s progress towards autonomy and sustainability and will also allow us to develop a toolkit for other community-based organizations who want to replicate the approach.

Partnership with the MacDella Cooper Foundation

The [MacDella Cooper Foundation](#) (MCF) is a New York-based organization working in Liberia to provide youth, particularly orphans and abandoned children, with an education and the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter.

Malnutrition in Liberia

- 26% of children under the age of five are underweight for age
- 50% of general population is undernourished
- ‘Extremely alarming:’ Global Hunger Index

The Global Hunger Index ranks countries on the basis of three indicators: level of child malnutrition, rate of child mortality, and proportion of population that is calorie-deficient. The ranking is updated annually by International Food Policy Research Institute.

Source: World Food Program

Since December 2009, Niapele and MCF have partnered to provide 60 MCF scholarship students in Monrovia schools with the same daily meal served to CAMES students.

The MCF partnership represents Niapele's initial foray into sharing our model for school feeding. This partnership enables us to broaden the impact of our School Nutrition Initiative. More children are benefiting from a reliable, healthy daily meal, and we are purchasing more commodities from local farmers (therefore further supplementing their revenues), as well as introducing a sustainable model for school nutrition to MCF, which is slated to open its own academy in late 2010.

Reports from MCF indicate that their scholarship students are performing better in school thanks to the introduction of the daily meal.

Malaya

Founded in 2007 in Bong Mines -- a town about 100 km northeast of Monrovia, but isolated because of poor infrastructure -- Malaya is a rural women's group whose mission is to provide increased economic and educational opportunities to their families and community through farming. In September 2009, Niapele began sourcing crops for the School Nutrition Initiative from Malaya, and we became the organization's first reliable wholesale purchaser of crops.



Shattered by war and having witnessed the painfully slow pace of rebuilding their community in peaceful times, a core group of about 40 women and 10 men in Bong Mines decided to begin actively fighting chronic poverty. Starting with a micro-savings scheme -- called "susu" -- for 72 women in the community in 2009, they expanded their activities to include agriculture. Understanding that their farming activities could do much more than just feed their families, they began working toward bringing their crops to market. Prior to our involvement with this group, their market access was limited and inconsistent. Malaya would bring crops to market--women in Monrovia, and come back a week later to collect a portion of these women's earnings from the sale of the food crops. However, with this unreliable system they were seldom able to do more than recoup their costs.

At the onset, our partnership with Malaya was entered into in the spirit of a fair trade purchasing contract, but through the initial meetings we discovered a deeper potential. While the members and leadership of Malaya had set the process of fighting poverty in motion, they had lacked the tools and skills necessary to grow, turn a profit and reinvest responsibly.

So, in addition to engaging in a purchasing relationship with Malaya, The Niapele Project is working directly with the group to provide them with the business tools and skills necessary to design a more efficient and sustainable agricultural enterprise, including the development of an accounting system to keep track of their finances, logistical planning, management skills and connecting Malaya with local and international agricultural and agribusiness experts who can provide technical support on boosting productivity.

Niapele's work with Malaya represents our first foray into knowledge-intensive programming. In the spirit of fostering ownership and sustainability, we are not providing Malaya with financial support; instead we are encouraging them and

assisting them in developing their own financial capacity so that they may reinvest in their organization and their community.

Through this initiative, we hope to demonstrate that in addition to the critical need for cash infusions and financial support, community-based groups involved in economic empowerment and the pursuit of for-profit activities require - first and foremost - a patient, steady transfer of skills, knowledge and capacity.

Almost two-thirds of Liberians live below the poverty line, and the proportion is even higher in rural areas. Indicators of health, education, water, food security and infrastructure are all poor. Women are particularly vulnerable to poverty, especially in rural areas, because of both the precarious nature of women's employment and because of limited access to basic services such as health or education. Through a long-term partnership with this group, we hope to assist them in achieving their goal of lifting their community out of poverty, and creating new opportunities for growth, education and advancement for their children.

Happy Family Center for Children with Disabilities

In 2009, The Niapele Project began supporting a unique community-based effort, the Happy Family Center for Children with Disabilities (HapFam). HapFam, founded and managed by former refugees, is Liberia's only community-based initiative that offers children with disabilities and their families appropriate support, services and assistance. The Center provides the children a respite from a community where they are often marginalized due to their handicaps.

There are few statistics available on children and disability in Liberia. The last assessment was carried out in 1997 by the Center for the Rehabilitation of the Injured and Disabled on behalf of the United Nations Development Program/ World Health Organization. The study found that 16% of the Liberian population was living with a disability. Handicap International estimates that these numbers have likely increased due to the war. The Government of Liberia estimates that the vast majority of disabled Liberians are excluded from schools and from opportunities to work (only 1% of people with disabilities have access to gainful employment), and the social stigma associated with disability results in marginalization and isolation.



The National Social Welfare Strategy Paper notes that: "... the National Health Policy and Plan is silent on provision of rehabilitation services and equal access to health care for people with disabilities (PWDs). There is an internationally recognized vicious cycle of poverty and disability, with each mutually reinforcing the other." Within this context of great need, HapFam offers a welcome reprieve for the families of disabled children, who are faced with systemic challenges to educating and raising their children with dignity.

Focusing on developing the strengths of disabled children in a supportive and encouraging environment, HapFam staff use songs and games to build skills and supplement physical therapy and basic schooling. The children, their families and the staff all take an active role in the development of HapFam and in improving the lives of the students.

Formally launched in December 2009 in Liberia, HapFam is the continuation of the Harmony Children's Center, which was first founded at the Buduburam refugee settlement in Ghana by parents of children with disabilities. After seeing

the positive impact the Center had in providing the children with a safe and encouraging environment in which to play and learn, the parents and children alike became very attached to the Center, and strong bonds were formed between the students, staff and families. The Niapele Project supported The Harmony Center between 2007 and 2009, providing financial and program management support, including computer literacy classes and workshops for the organization's leadership.

Returning to Liberia to rebuild their lives meant that the parents had to make a choice between the best interests of their families and livelihoods and access to a center for their children with special needs. Despite all that had to be left behind at the refugee camp, for many residents of Buduburam, returning to Liberia was the only option.



Del Johnson, founder and director of HapFam, interviewed by LOVE TV, a local media organization.

Three of the five founding parents of the Harmony Children's Center soon discovered that they lived in the same area with their children who had been classmates. Faced with a lack of appropriate services for the education of their children in Liberia, they decided to recreate the opportunities their children had enjoyed as refugees at the Harmony Children's Center. Using their experience and knowledge and assessing the needs in the local community, the parents created HapFam as a place to nurture and stimulate their children and others with special needs.

HapFam provides appropriate learning and support for children who are not currently catered to in the national public school system, while reaching out to families and communities of children with special needs. Some of these children will be able

to make the transition and integrate into a regular school, while others' achievements may be more limited based on abilities and disabilities. However, all have the opportunity to participate in society and break the cycle of marginalization. The mission of the Happy Family Center for Children with Disabilities remains the same as its predecessor, the Harmony Center: "To help to improve the physical and mental development as well as the well-being of disabled children in Liberia."

The design of the program supports the rights of the children with disabilities in Liberia and is an affirmation of the rights found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Each of these conventions calls for overcoming discrimination and recognizing the right of children with disabilities to participate in their homes, communities, schools, and all other aspects of life, and to have access to health services and recreation activities.

About the children

The children of HapFam have a wide range of personal strengths and special needs. The staff tailors goals for daily learning activities (dressing, washing, and eating) to each student's capabilities and then designs exercises to help them reach these goals.

HapFam also focuses on a child's socialization with his or her peers, physical exercises and on providing a more traditional school session in order to study reading, counting and writing.

The children vary in capabilities and needs, but they all share an enthusiasm for the time they spend together at HapFam. Many sat at home for years, watching siblings and neighbors attend school. Now they beam with pride for having the opportunity to don their own school uniform.

The nurturing environment allows them to try new tasks and have an outlet for their energy and affection, and the children have thrived.

As of December 2009, HapFam had identified and enrolled 11 children in the Center. HapFam welcomes these children five days a week in their newly renovated center located in Paynesville.



HapFam's new building is dedicated by Rev. George Brown, Director Division of Rehabilitation and Special Education, Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

The Niapele Project and HapFam

The Niapele Project is working closely with HapFam to develop and implement the use of necessary financial, strategic and operational tools to enable this small community-based organization to strengthen its impact and improve the lives of children with disabilities in their community.

In Liberia, we began supporting HapFam by financing the rent and renovation of a new building in Paynesville, on the outskirts of Monrovia. The new center was outfitted with several wheelchair ramps and other amenities in order to meet the standards of accessibility dictated by the Liberian government. On December 11, 2009, the new center was dedicated during a ceremony attended by community members as well as representatives from the Ministry of Health and the National Union of Disabled Organizations. During these early stages of development, The Niapele Project is providing a fixed monthly budget for HapFam to pay its staff and purchase the items necessary to carry out its work. We offer this support so that the HapFam can focus its time, energy and resources on developing its organizational capacity and its ability to serve the needs of disabled children. The overall goal is to strengthen the organization's ability to seek funding locally and to develop its own income-generating strategies.

Part of our partnership agreement with HapFam requires it to provide Niapele with a monthly budget and qualitative reports, allowing us to keep track and evaluate the organization's progress over time.

Monitoring & Evaluation for HapFam

The leadership of HapFam provides detailed monthly reports to Niapele regarding its operations and financial management.

- The number of students enrolled at HapFam increased from 11 to 16 between December 2009 and April 2010. One additional staff member has been hired.
- HapFam generally spends 50% of its allocated funding on staff incentives. The other 50% goes toward supplies (cleaning, food, teaching materials).
- HapFam is in the process of registering as an official NGO in Liberia, and as a service provider with the National Union of Disabled Organizations. This will enable the organization to access new sources of funding and support locally.

Source: HapFam

New Liberian and Media Advocacy

Throughout our years working with war-affected communities first in Ghana, and then in Liberia, we learned first-hand of the difficulties refugees and displaced people in exile or in post-conflict environments have in affirming their rights.

The crisis that shook the Liberian refugee community in Ghana in 2008 shaped our decision to include advocacy in our work. While we remain focused on our community work, we also place an emphasis on collaborating with other organizations on advocacy activities, as we believe that these communities could not thrive and become self-sustaining without the human rights necessary to maintain personal independence and freedom.

In 2009, we became a fiscal sponsor of New Liberian, an online news organization that is an outlet for the Liberian diaspora, reporting on political, economic and human rights issues in Liberia. We strongly believe in the importance and necessity of strong, relevant and accurate reporting about Liberia's reconstruction. Access to quality information is one of the keys to ensuring the establishment and consolidation of peace and democracy. An empowered, well-informed citizenry is critical.

With this in mind, we are also working alongside CeaseFire Liberia, a multimedia project which aims to document the Liberian experience on both sides of the ocean. We are proud to be a part of an effort that seeks to provide local journalists, bloggers and writers with the resources necessary for them to carry out their work in an ethical, useful manner. In 2009, we launched a book drive to benefit Liberian journalists. Nearly 100 lbs of professional books, magazines and other materials have been collected to help Liberian reporters hone their craft and improve the quality of their work.

Discontinued Partnerships

ARCH and The Harmony Center

Abandoned Children's Refugee Home (ARCH) was launched in 2007 as a collaboration between The Niapele Project and Ms. Regina Krangar, who had been taking care of abandoned children in her own home at the Buduburam Refugee Camp for many years. Between August 2007 and June 2009, The Niapele Project provided ARCH with funding, capacity-building workshops and support.

Regrettably, following two years of close cooperation and a much-anticipated repatriation to Liberia, ARCH chose to return to Ghana and operate independently in July 2009. Ms. Krangar had originally moved ARCH to her homeland of Liberia in the wake of the 2008 crisis between Liberian refugees and the Ghanaian government. She believed that this was the best option to keep the family together

Transitions are never easy, and The Niapele Project had worked closely with Ms. Krangar every step of the way, from raising funds to cover travel costs to assisting in obtaining the travel documents required to legally move minors across international borders. Throughout this process, we listened to Ms. Krangar's concerns about returning to a country that she had fearfully fled long ago.

Ms. Krangar had overcome much hardship to provide a loving home for children separated from their parents at Buduburam; we always believed that she had the strength and determination to start anew in Liberia. Following Ms. Krangar and the children's repatriation to Liberia, however, she decided to take dramatic action and return to Ghana, in spite of all the challenges associated with living in a foreign country.

The Niapele Project regrets her decision; though we believe it underscores the extreme difficulty refugees face when repatriating to a home country in search of stability and peace of mind.

The lack of services and programs available for returnees remains a significant issue in Liberia, and alongside our partner organization, the Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), The Niapele Project is working to offer returnees the support they need in order to re-establish their livelihoods.

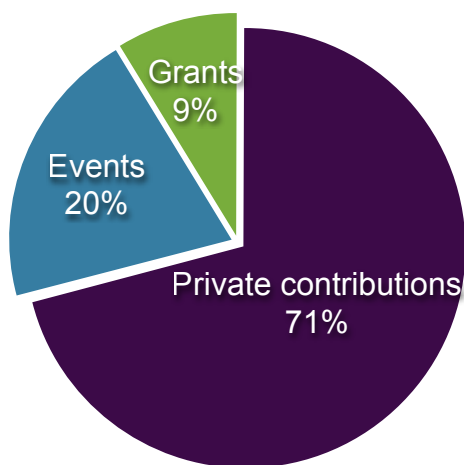
Ms. Krangar’s decision to return to Ghana was her own, and was not made in consultation with Niapele. Complex child protection issues in Liberia and the difficulty of supporting abandoned children in an effective manner has led us to reevaluate our ability to work with organizations like ARCH. Niapele is committed to supporting community-based projects which can become sustainable and that include some checks and balances for accountability (i.e., multiple staff members who serve as "eyes and ears" of initiatives on ground; parents/guardians who demand that the services promised are actually delivered, etc.)

The leadership of the Harmony Center - which provided the inspiration and template for HapFam in Liberia - decided to remain in Ghana. Because our work goes far beyond financial support and requires hands-on management and organizational support, Niapele and Harmony had to part ways in 2009. In order to allow Harmony to find new sources of support, Niapele continued to provide critical financial assistance to the organization in Buduburam throughout most of 2009. By mid-year, the Harmony Center has developed new relationships with funding organizations, allowing them to continue to serve the disabled Liberian refugee children in Buduburam.

Financial information

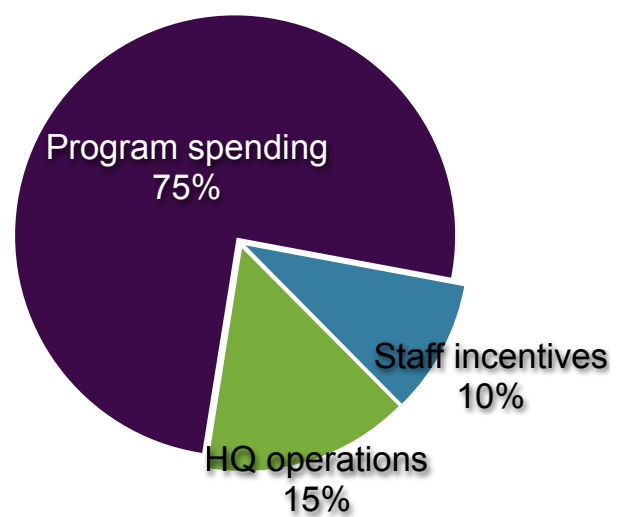
In 2009, The Niapele project spent the majority of its revenues (75%) directly on program costs, including 21% for field administration costs. While this may seem like a large proportion, it should be noted that due to the nature of our work in the field, the organization cannot avoid costs such as transportation, communications and other related expenses. We strive to keep our overhead as low as possible; only full time staff and one of our consultants in Liberia receive compensation, while the rest of the team has been working on a volunteer basis since our inception.

Total Revenue - FY 2009

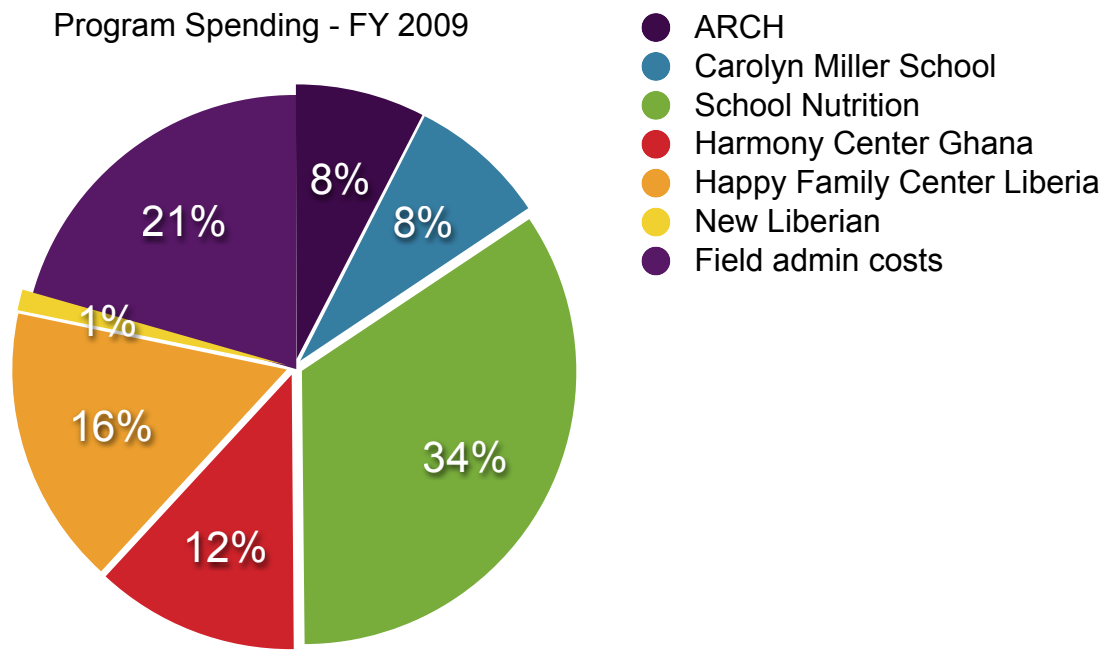


Source: The Niapele Project

Total Expenditures - FY 2009



Source: The Niapele Project



Source: The Niapele Project

Outlook for 2010

In 2010 we are continuing to strengthen our current projects, including: purchasing-partnership and business skill consultation with Malaya; the School Nutrition Initiative at CAMES, HapFam; and supporting local advocacy groups to ensure the continued freedom and human rights of Liberian citizens.

In order to accomplish this, we need \$30,000 USD to support current programs. With additional sponsorships, fundraising events and partnerships with other local organizations and non-governmental agencies, we intend to focus on the following activities:

- Improving our monitoring and evaluation capacity to ensure that community partnerships are progressing toward sustainability and independence.
 - o Niapele is developing unique performance indicators for each initiative, adapted from the Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook and the Harvard Business Review “Balanced Score Card” for performance measurement.
- Creating a clear set of Standard Operating Procedures and toolkits for the School Nutrition Initiative and HapFam, allowing for the replication and adaptation of these community-led initiatives in different parts of Liberia, and, potentially, further afield.
- Continuing to strengthen the management and organizational capacity of CAMES, HapFam and Malaya. Specifically:

- Improving HapFam and CAMES' ability to obtain funding for their work, by leveraging local government (eg. Ministries of Health; Education; Planning) and agency resources (eg. National Union of the Disabled), as well as international institutional funding (eg. UNICEF, European Union);
 - Assessing the possibility of developing income-generating initiatives for HapFam and CAMES to finance their not-for-profit work with vulnerable children;
 - Assisting Malaya in improving its financial management capacity and community investment planning, and leveraging local and international expertise to improve the efficiency and sustainability of agricultural production;
 - Brokering new working relationships between Malaya and other potential buyers for its agricultural products in and around Monrovia.
- Creating a Niapele board of directors to improve transparency, accountability and performance.
 - As part of our commitment to transparency and accountability, we hope to have the organization independently audited and/or evaluated for program effectiveness.
 - Developing and maintaining new funding relationships with foundations and private donors, as well as information exchange and “knowledge” partnerships with similar or complementary organizations
 - Pursuing relationships with schools, youth groups and universities to increase youth awareness and understanding on key issues:
 - African issues as well as human rights issues, including nutrition, living with a disability and the role of girls and women in society;
 - Philanthropy and social entrepreneurship;
 - Foreign aid and community-based development
 - Improve the visibility of The Niapele Project by writing articles for journals and other publications, and strengthening our online and offline communications strategies.

The Niapele Project Staff

Penelope Chester - Co-founder & Director (Toronto)

Celina Guich - Co-founder & Director (Los Angeles)

Megan Sullivan - Country Director (Atlanta)

Henry Snyder - Liberia Program Manager (Monrovia)

Elsie Guwor - School Nutrition Initiative consultant

Mayaedeheh Kemeh-Gamma - HapFam consultant

For questions regarding The Niapele Project programs, fundraising events and sponsorship, please contact Penelope Chester at penelope@theniapeleproject.org or visit our website at www.theniapeleproject.org