



Countries rich in natural resources are often those that suffer from extreme poverty. These resources should help reduce poverty and promote economic development. Yet large-scale oil, gas, and mining project frequently contribute to pollution, conflict, and displacement of farmers from their fields (Oxfam America).

Many poor Countries face this resource curse; will Liberia be exempted?

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The Activists

Who is RHRAP?

The Rural Human Rights Activists Programme (RHRAP) is a grassroots human rights and peace building organization working in Liberia with emphasis on rural communities. RHRAP was established in December 1997 to promote genuine reconciliation,

sustainable peace and development, as well as promote and protect the rights of rural inhabitants. For the past two years, RHRAP has been working with concession community residents, government agencies and ministries, civil society and International Non-governmental Organizations and other stakeholders to promote accountability in the extractive sector including efforts to increase concessional community resident's participation in the extractive process.

Promoting Accountability in the Oil Sector of Liberia

This program "Promoting Accountability in the Oil Sector of Liberia" is a social accountability initiatives aimed at strengthening transparency and accountability within the oil extractive sector of Liberia. The program seeks to facilitate citizen access to information on the oil sector in order to strengthen citizens' capacity to hold their leaders to account for

improved democratic governance. It also contributes to managing the realistic and unrealistic expectations of citizens concerning the oil sector thus helping to reduce tensions/conflicts.

This program seeks to promote two aspects of the World Bank anticorruption

tools, which are: The Beneficiary Assessment which is a qualitative method of investigating social deliverables; and the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) which refers to a growing family of participatory approaches and methods that emphasized local knowledge and enable local people to make their own appraisal, analysis, and plans. The Beneficiary Assessment (BA) involves systematic findings and consultations with citizens to help them identify and design development activities, signal any potential constraints to their participation, and obtain feedbacks on reactions to companies operations and government responsibilities to its citizens. The products of these activities are being disseminated through RHRAP's quarterly newsletter and distributed to the public on gratis.

National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL)

The National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL) was passed into law in 2000. It is an autonomous bureau heading the oil sector of Liberia, and Liberia Extractive Industry (LEITI) Transparency Initiatives is the monitoring arm of the extractive sector of Liberia while; the Ministry of

Lands, Mines, and Energy heads the entire extractive sector of Liberia in line with its statutory mandates.

The National Oil Company of Liberia has maintained of implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs to the

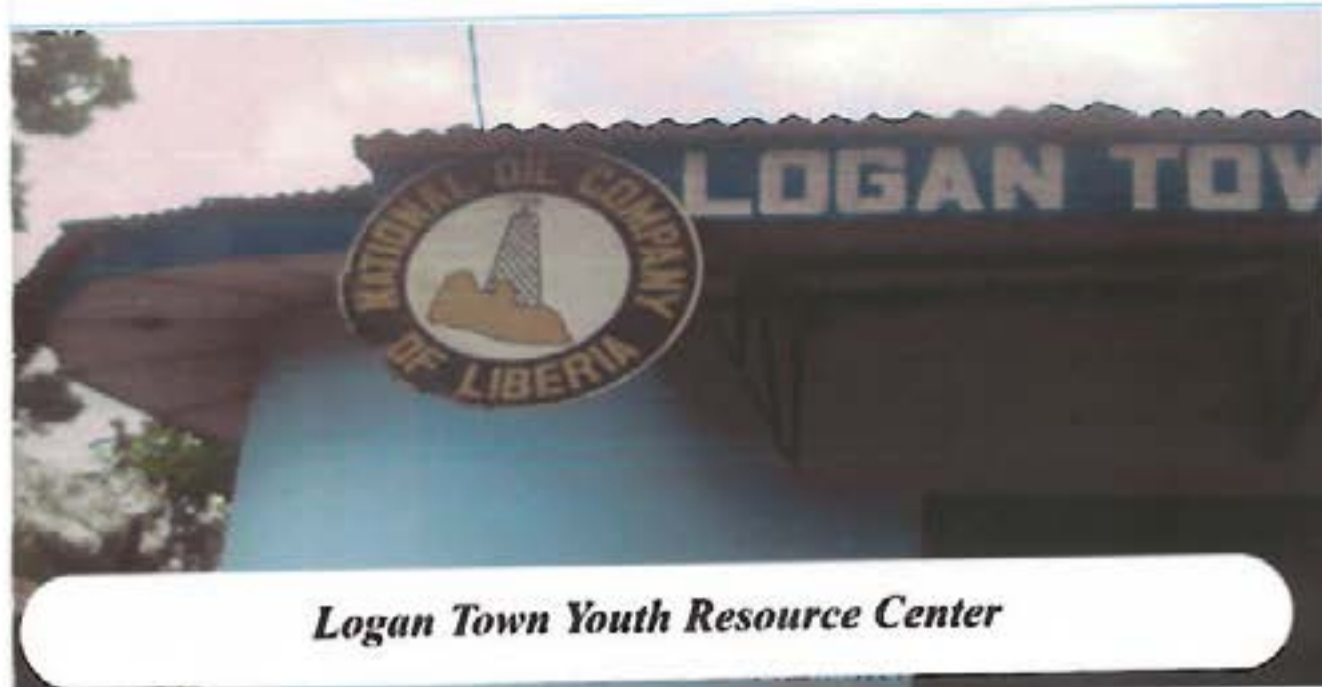
Liberian citizens using revenue collected from oil companies. To this end, RHRAP as a Civil Society Organization, seeks to authenticate the existence of programs as well as monitor how the needs of services were originated and how they are being implemented. According to NOCAL, the below Corporate Social Responsibilities have been implemented. During the period July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012, \$14,071,894 USD was collected from the oil sector of Liberia (Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives -LEITI). Follow-up are currently under way with NOCAL and LEITI.

Oil Exploration Companies in Liberia

The African Petroleum Corporation is based in Australia, and is an independent oil and gas exploration company operating ten licenses in five countries offshore of West Africa including Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Senegal, The Gambia and Sierra Leone. In Liberia, African Petroleum Corporation is doing its exploration on Oil Blocks 8 & 9. The company was licensed in 2010.

Chevron is one of the world's leading integrated energy companies; and it is an American company based in the United States. Chevron is carrying out its exploration on Oil Block 11, 12, & 14 in Liberia. Chevron Liberia Limited is exploring for energy

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Logan Town Youth Resource Center



Chevron Park

Liberia Project (Grand Bassa, Lofa County)

Johnsonville Latrine and water well project

The Johnsonville latrine and water well project, as proclaimed by NOCAL is not a realistic one. During our visitation on the 23 of November 2014, residents of this community including the Township Commissioner denied the existence of any project of such. Johnsonville Township is one of the oldest townships in Montserrado, but has been abandoned in terms of government service delivery placing the township in a very deplorable condition amongst other townships in the county.

Logan Town Youth Project

According to NOCAL, the young people of the Logan Town community dreamed of developing a small multipurpose Youth Resource Center and a proposal was written to NOCAL, through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) division, in collaborating with the young people of Logan Town to provide a resource center with a well equipped cyber café with computers and a cable TV network facility. The project was constructed and completed in 2012. Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf officially dedicated the center in July of 2012.

During the visit to the project site in Logan Town-Monrovia, the team was informed that the project is not meeting its objective, as the youth of Logan Town have no access to the youth center. According to some concern youth, during the dedication program, the Resource Center key was given to Amos Tweah, youth chairman of the National ruling Unity Party and Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs. According to the youth, since the dedication of the center, the youth of this community (Logan Town) have no access to the center; and that all of the computers and internet materials at the center have been taken away. Some individuals of the National Ruling Unity Party are commercializing the center for wedding purposes instead of youth development activities. However, RHRAP Team saw the building in a much debilitated condition. The computers, Internet services, generator have been taken away by caretakers. RHRAP is now working with the youth so as to engage the various actors involved starting with NOCAL and the Ruling Unity Party for accountability.

Affordable Housing Project in Rural Liberia

In March of 2011, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the National Housing

Authority (NHA) and NOCAL for the construction of 10 Low Cost Housing Units in each of the three counties. These housing units are located in three counties of Liberia which are: Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties respectively. In line with its policy document, the aim of the project is to provide decent and affordable housing facility for rural inhabitants. NOCAL provided NHA with the funds for the construction of these units. Currently, the units in Lofa and Grand Bassa are completed; and the Sanniquellie Estate project in Nimba County is yet to be completed. RHRAP team will visit the Sanniquellie project during this quarter of the project to authenticate.

Ownership process

To own any of the units, 50% payment of 14,000.00 United States Dollars (USD), which is 7,000.00 USD, must be paid at the bank while the balance will be paid in ten (10) years time. Upon the completion of payment, certificate of ownership will be issued follow by presentation of Land Deed. However, application process including eligibility is yet to be established. On two occasions, RHRAP attempted to discuss with the National Housing Authority and the National Oil Company of Liberia, but did not succeed due to the unavailability of NHA and NOCAL. Communication to this effect has been written to the proper authorities all of which will also inform our stakeholder's forums/meetings.

Buchanan, Grand Bassa County

RHRAP paid a field visit to Buchanan project site and conducted one-on-one interviews with community residents and occupants of the estate. Ten housing units were completed and ready for use, but the issue of maintenance is a serious threat to the lasting of the estate. The occupants are complaining that the units that are not occupied need urgent maintenance work or else, they will soon get damage.

The team was informed that four of the ten units have been given out to three persons, namely Albert Gbalu Boe Samuel (one unit), Joshua Freeman (two units) and George Korweh (one unit). One person has completed full payment of one of the units and the three units are in the process of completion. RHRAP is also in the process of gathering information on reason why one person is purchasing two units instead of

one.

The issue of rural community resident's participation in the identification and implementation of project remains a serious issue to tackle. Rural community residents themselves rather than being imposed must drive development within the context of rural community residents' needs. Additionally, the amount of \$14, 000.00 United States Dollars is very huge for rural inhabitants especially the grassroots. So this means that the affordable housing units as it is termed are only for middle and high income generating people and not for the low-income people (poor people). The purpose of constructing these estates is to provide housing for rural poor in line with policy documents that established the program. These are some of the salient points of RHRAP accountability advocac program.

Voinjama, Lofa County

This estate was constructed in 2011 and has ten (10) units houses. Four of the units are bearing two apartments each while the other six with three apartments each all with inside bathrooms & toilets. Upon completion, the estate had one power/energy house to provide electricity for occupants, but was later taken away. According to reliable sources (focus group discussions & individual interviews), the generator was taken away on grounds that the power engine was very big for the estate. It was later replaced with solar system for every unit but only two were seen with one in good condition producing light while the other is not



Affordable Housing in Lofa County



Affordable Housing in Buchanan Grand Bassa County

Oil Exploration

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Chevron is one of the world's leading integrated energy companies; and it is an American company based in the United States. Chevron is carrying out its exploration on Oil Block 11, 12, & 14 in Liberia. Chevron Liberia Limited is exploring for energy resources in deepwater concessions off the coast of Liberia. Chevron is drilling one of the first deepwater wells in Liberia and it was the first oil and gas offshore blocks in the country. In 2010, the Government of Liberia granted the company approval to acquire a 70% interest and operatorship in three deepwater blocks.

Anardak In July 2009, Liberia signed a US\$ 154 million agreement with Anardako. Anardako is an American company based in Texas USA and is operating 4 oil blocks which include block 10, 15, 16 & 17

Broadway Consolidated, which is a United Kingdom based company, obtained its operation contract from the Government of Liberia in 2005 for oil block 13; and after few years, the company sold its assets to Pepper-coast which was again sold to a Canadian Company. This oil block was later taken away by the Government of Liberia due to contract condition failure and finally landed in the hands of ExxonMobil. The House of Representatives passed ExxonMobil controversy contract during the high

hit era of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in September 2014.

Exxon Mobil Corporation is an American multinational oil and gas corporation with headquartered in the Texas, United States. According to history, it is a direct descendent of John D. Rockefeller Standard Oil Company; and was formed on November 30, 1999. It is the world 5th largest company by revenue. The company is also known as the second largest publicly traded company by market capitalization. The company was ranked No. 6 globally in Forbes Global 2000 list in 2014. Over the last 125 years, ExxonMobil has evolved from a regional marketer of kerosene in the U.S. to the largest publicly traded petroleum and petrochemical enterprise in the world. Exxon Mobil is operating oil block 13 on the offshore of Liberia.

Oranto Petroleum, which is a Nigerian oil company, was the first to purchase the following oil blocks 11, 12 & 14 from the Government of Liberia and later sold 70% to Chevron. There have been serious controversies over these oil blocks including allegation of corrupt practices in the passage of the agreement. In 2010, Chevron bought 70% of those blocks. Though Chevron apparently did not know Oranto in 2007, by the time it bought its share in the Oranto blocks, Liberia's auditor general had already determined Oranto's payment to the lawmakers to be bribery.

According to Law 360, Chevron Corporation bought a majority share in Liberian offshore oil blocks that Nigerian oil company Oranto Petroleum Ltd. secured by bribing Liberia's legislature, (Global Witness). Chevron bought

a 70% share in three oil blocks that Oranto obtained less than four years earlier by funneling as much as \$26,000 to the Liberian House of Representatives, Global Witness said. (Law 360, New York (September 26, 2011, 8:52 PM ET). In 2007, the report also accused Oranto Petroleum, a Nigerian oil company of authorizing payments to the Liberian lawmakers to ratify contracts to develop two offshore blocks, an act which was considered bribery under Liberian law.

According to Initial plan, Chevron should hold 70% of three licenses. Other partners are Oranto Petroleum with a 20% interest and the National Oil Company of Liberia with 10%. The acreage to be explored is about 2.5 million acres. As for Chevron's partner, Oranto Petroleum-RHRAP has to do more digging to figure out who they are. Chevron has maintained that its engagement with the Liberian government in relation to oil blocks under exploration has been made in accordance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, but said that for competitive and commercial reasons, Chevron could not release specific financial details at the time.

project locations mentioned above and documented various findings excerpt of which are provided in this newsletter for public consumption.

NOCAL's CSR project implementation

- Johnsonville Latrine and water well project
- Chevron Park
- Logan Town Youth Project
- Affordable Housing in Rural

NOCAL Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Projects

Johnsonville Latrine and water well project, Chevron Park in Vai Town, and the Logan Town Youth Project. Others include: Affordable Housing in Rural Liberia specifically in Grand Bassa, Nimba and Lofa Counties, Vocational Trainings and Capacity Building which include the provisions of scholarships for secondary education, undergraduate, and graduate studies, and supports

Program was provided through The Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) which is promoting Liberian women-owned businesses. Other programs provided include but not limited to the following: Support to the healthcare delivery system, Entrepreneur development program implemented by Mercy Corps. However, during this program, RHRAP

Promoting Accountability in the Extractive Sector



A program being implemented by the
Rural Human Rights Activists
Programme (RHRAP)
and sponsored by the National
Endowment for Democracy (NED)



National Endowment
for Democracy
Supporting freedom around the world

NOCAL Corporate Social

producing light.

The units/ buildings of this estate are now on sale. Six (6) of these shelters have already been sold for \$14,000 USD. The below organizations are occupying three of the units; but RHRAP is yet to ascertain if the below organizations are amongst those who purchased the four units.

Occupant organizations

1. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
2. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
3. Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)

From RHRAP findings, indicate that there is no maintenance of the estate. The three securities newly assigned at the estate told our team that they took over the place in October, 2014 with clear information that their salaries were going to be \$60.00USD per person. However, only on November 2014, they received \$50.00USD each of them; and since then, they are yet to receive salaries.

According to information gathered, the late President William R. Tolbert of Liberia family headed by one Thomas Tolbert residing in Monrovia owns the land on which the estate occupied. It was also revealed that community residents did not participate in the identification of the estate land and the construction of the estate. According to NOCAL the housing estate is intended for rural poor, but the occupation of the above Government Ministry and Agencies is a contravention to the purpose of the project. Besides, the amount of 14,000.00 United States Dollars is very huge for rural community residents who are not employed. From the discussions and interviews, the residents did not approve of this project and are not amongst the urgent needs of community residents.

we get USD in this bush where we only depend on rice, cassava and small cash crops for survivals including school fees payment for our children? The people just came to fool us, they build the houses for themselves yah..." says one of the participants during discussions. All of these findings will be presented and discussed in the coming stakeholders meetings. And the stakeholder meetings will also inform RHRAP Advocacy campaign tactics including the production of RHRAP News letter.

NOCAL's Capacity Building Programs

According to NOCAL, approximately US \$1.22 million has already been spent to support capacity building goals and has budgeted additional US \$1.44 million. In total, NOCAL's capacity building program has provided US \$2.66 million to support 1,284 students. Additionally, about 1.8 million USD has been spent for graduate and undergraduate scholarships. These students attended different universities in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States of America. After successfully completing their scholarships, a number of graduate students are giving back by working for NOCAL while Liberian public and private sectors employed many others (NOCAL's website).

To authentic this information provided by NOCAL, during next quarter (February – April 2014), RHRAP will hold series of meetings with NOCAL and beneficiaries to the above services provided as it is being done with other projects implemented by NOCAL. All of this will also contribute to the management of realistic and the unrealistic thinking or expectations of Liberians concerning the Liberian oil sector thus reducing tensions/conflicts.

to their children who cannot even perform academically? Ma man, the scholarships are just for the rich people rather than the poor children whose parents cannot even read nor write like me..." says an old woman in Voinjama City.

RHRAP program support transparency and accountability efforts by citizens and other likeminded Civil Society Organizations to:

- Seek accountability form stakeholders in the oil sector including government, and exploration companies
- Hold companies and government accountable for respecting the rights of community residents
- Monitor the usage of oil revenues of national and local government (county authority) to ensure that their development priorities for oil revenue are accurately reflected in implementation
- Support development goals for communities, and be accountable to communities
- Support the full participation of rural community residents in the planning and implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility
- Manage the realistic and on unrealistic expectations of citizens about the oil sector of Liberia to avoid violent conflict.

"My Son, looking at us here, how many of us can afford this plenty money especially USD? How do

"Mr. Human Rights, what are you people doing when the big people are taking the scholarships

RHRAP works to achieve social justice with a focus on human rights promotion and protection; accountability and transparency within the extractive sector of Liberia. We hope that you have enjoyed this issue of the "Activists" Newsletter.

We welcome your comments and suggestions, please email to: rhraplberia@yahoo.com, lorma@rhraplberia.org. We value your privacy and will not share your details with others.