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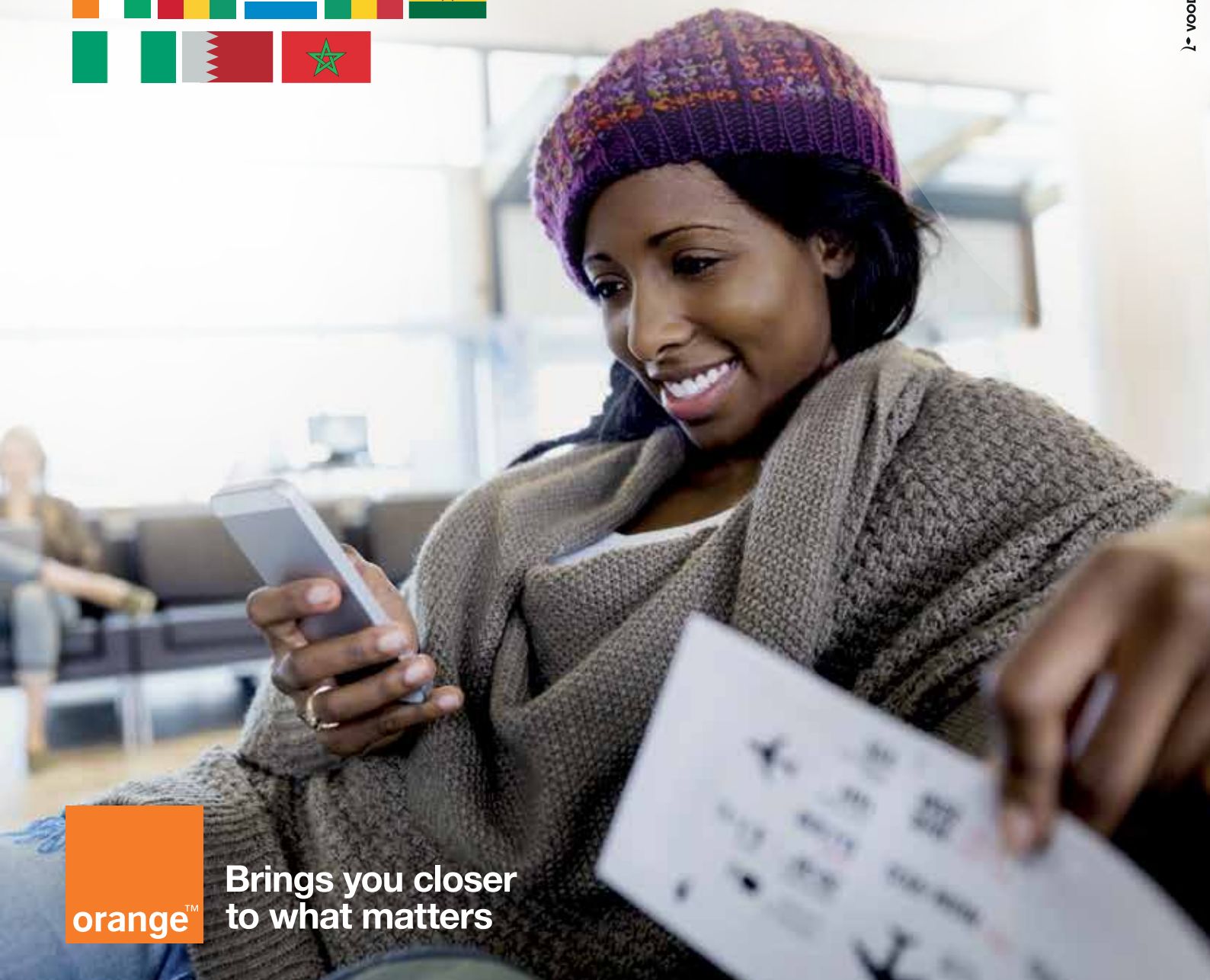
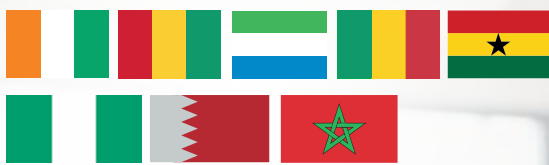


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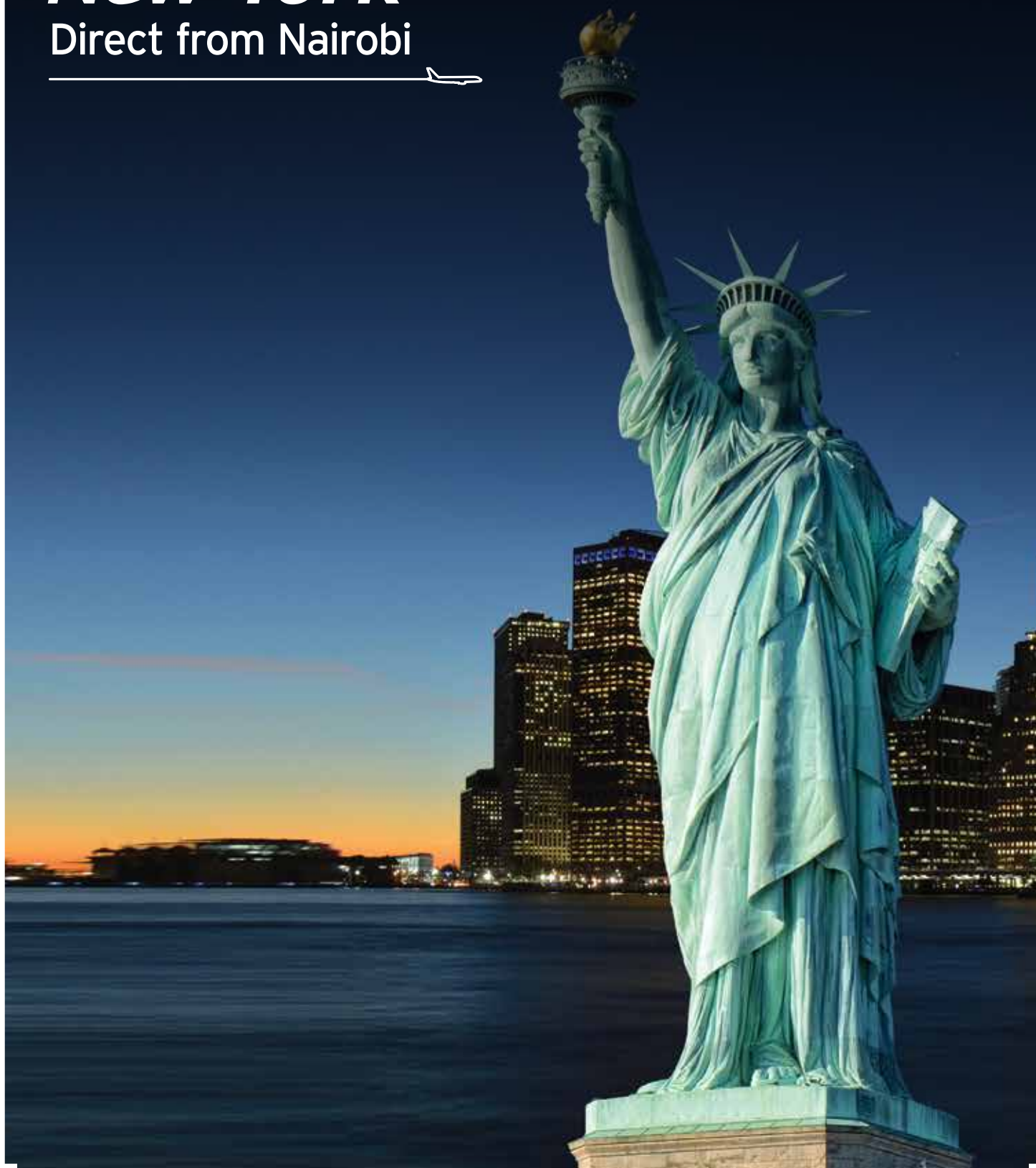
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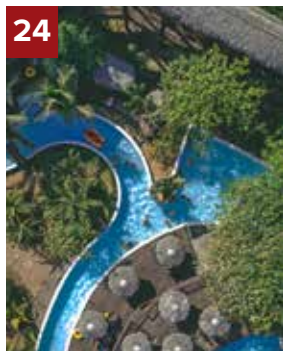
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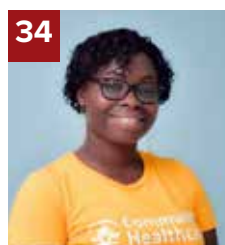
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Tourism- The Real Deal for Impactful Economic Growth

In today's world, tourism is expected to contribute 10% of the global GDP and is directly or indirectly responsible for the creation of 1 in 10 employments across the globe.

Tourism is defined broadly as the travel and stay of people who spend less than a year in areas different than their usual surroundings for leisure, business, health, or other purposes.

Because of the lucrative nature of the travel and tourism sector, many nations are motivated to make investments in policies and programs that pave the way for the sector's further growth. It is estimated that travel and tourism contributed around \$5.8 billion directly to the global GDP in the year 2021. Despite its difficulties, it has shown to be a robust sector, with the number of visitors from other countries increasing by more than 4% per year since 2009.

The field of international tourism is a multifaceted industry that incorporates both business and pleasure travel and maintains several one-way and two-way linkages to a wide range of other economic subfields. For example, international tourism is mostly concerned with the buying and selling of various services outside of the traveler's home country. Thus, it can be said that one form of international trade is international tourism.

In a lot of smaller and developing countries, including Liberia, tourism is showing a lot of promise for economic growth. This is because, the tourism industry is a labor-intensive industry, while also being one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the global economy.

Thus, in recent years, the tourism industry has emerged as an important engine of socio-economic development because it encourages the expansion and investment of small and medium-sized businesses. Tourism can be used as an economic engine for growth in other nations, and it has the potential to provide comprehensive support for efforts to reduce poverty.

The country of Liberia is blessed with a wealth of tourism advantages, including but not limited to: rainforests, diverse wildlife, including endemic species, some of the best surfing in Africa, and a cultural history unlike any other.

Currently, the large number of expatriates working with international development partners and private companies based in the country will be beneficial to the Liberian tourism industry in terms of market potential.

It is noteworthy to mention that for a very long time, Liberia has placed a profitable emphasis on developing its extractive industry. However, with tourism, Liberia's economy has the potential to become more diversified and achieve quick and sustainable growth if the country invests more in the industry.

Thus, as part of the continuous efforts of the Liberian government to diversify the country's economy and capitalize on the country's main tourist resources, the Liberian government produced the National Tourism Export Strategy in 2016.

The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICAT) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), with the aid of the Information and Communications Technology Commission (ITC), were in charge of developing the plan. Liberia is thus on a definitive path to developing a strong tourist sector, which will assist the government in diversifying its portfolio of productive economic sectors while offering a socioeconomic dividend to all Liberians.

The benefits of tourism for economic growth are enormous, as tourism has the ability to provide a very large number of jobs around the country for low skilled individuals. This is possibly the most effective long-term strategy for Liberia to combat poverty.

Because tourism has the potential to create so many jobs across the country for workers with limited skills, accelerating growth in the tourism sector should be a crucial component of Liberia's drive to overcome the income disparities of the past, significantly reduce poverty, and provide greater economic opportunities for all Liberians.

It is believed that the industry will provide a significant number of jobs for disadvantaged members of the labor market, such as young people and women. As a result, the expansion of the tourism industry has the potential to directly contribute to the inclusiveness of growth.

Also, many households in Liberia, particularly in rural areas, have limited access to jobs, education, health care, energy, sanitation, and clean water. While the problems that need to be solved in order to alleviate poverty in rural areas are enormous, it can be said that rural poverty is inextricably tied to the issue of land rights and land tenure reform. This is partially because people who live in rural areas typically only have access to one sort of economic wealth: land. Thus, making normal use of community land (for example, as an investment in tourism) might be a crucial component in the process of wealth building in rural communities.

Additionally, the tourism industry has demonstrated a tremendous amount of resiliency. Since 2009, the number of international tourists that visit a country has increased by approximately 4% on average each year; this is despite the current slow expansion of the global economy and the geopolitical tension that exists in some parts of the world.

Prior to the pandemic, travel and tourism (including its direct, indirect, and induced effects) accounted for one-fourth of all new jobs produced globally, 10.3% of total jobs (333 million), and 10.3% of global GDP (US\$9.6 trillion). Meanwhile, overseas visitor expenditure in 2019 was US\$1.8 trillion (6.8% of total exports).

At the moment, tourism accounts for seven percent of the entire value of global exports, and the significance of tourism for international trade is only expected to increase.

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Managing Director & CEO

Profile

ON JOS TRAVEL & TOURS INC.

Dear travelers, visitors, readers, and friends, it is my pleasure on behalf of my family, me, and the entire Jos Travel & Tours team to give you an inviting welcome to the 4th (fourth) edition of our Prestigious Liberia Exhibit Magazines.

In this edition, we uncovered the touristic trinkets that are in the county of Margibi. Culturally influenced by the neighboring counties of Montserrado, Bong and Grand Bassa, it is a melting pot of diverse ethnicities, beliefs, and traditions.

Cognizant that Liberia is a relatively untapped destination, Jos is striving to attract tourists to experience the exceptional beauty our Mama Liberia possesses. On this journey of dissecting the roots and the inner fabric Liberia, it is our pleasure to take you along on this unique expedition.

We hope you have a good time digesting the wonderful subjects our magazine offers. We are always here to render our services; help and serve you joyfully so please feel free to reach out to us anytime!



It gives rise to rapid infrastructure and super-structure developments alike.

At Jos, we always adhere to the truth and deliver on our promise of providing great services at the lowest rates. We will remain as a customer and market-driven Travel Agency, providing value added services in Liberia. The Travel industry is one that is rapidly changing with more players and competitors than ever before. We pride ourselves on an exceptional reputation that results from dedication and hard work of our employees and incomparable services.

As I take reflect on what has transpired over the years, I am extremely proud of our achievements since 2011. The future looks even more promising, with plans for diversified growth fully underway. We have successfully transitioned from a one branch operation to become a respected company garnering business nationwide and globally whilst earning our clients trust and respect. We have resolved to provide our clients extraordinary levels of customer service to ensure retaining them for a lifetime. For nearly a decade we have given all our customers reason to consider Jos Travel & Tours as their only choice in travel. Customer satisfaction is the hallmark by which we measure our performance, and we hold ourselves, as do our clients, to the highest standards of quality. It is satisfying to know that we are able to help our clients and enable them to connect to the world affordably and comfortably. We are also committed to offering significant savings on worldwide travel and we do so by delivering access to all corners of the world in peerless comfort and style, with value and expertise. Amongst our

most important assets is the extensive knowledge base, deep-rooted professionalism and unwavering commitment of our highly-qualified, diverse staff. Our team of travel specialists share a passion for creating the most inspiring experiences for every client. This requires a rare blend of innovation, professionalism, knowledge, patience, and understanding. The Jos team is committed to providing unparalleled service to our customers domestically and internationally. To achieve this, our mission remains to build successful and rewarding relationships with all of our valued customers. We are committed to the fundamental principle that the customer is not only important, but the reason for our business, and everyone at Jos genuinely works to earn and keep much-valued client trust. In this continually changing market, our clients are more informed than ever about their options. Even so, they continue to select Jos as their partner of choice because of our experience, commitment to quality and integrity. As Jos Travel & Tours continue to grow, each new day offers a chance for us to work together, pursue new opportunities and improve upon the past. In-depth client relationships are being built on a daily basis. Our business revolves around the needs of our clients, in doing so we are always at the forefront of innovation, change and where value is always been given. We invite you to take advantage of our insider travel expertise and to embark on a journey full of endless possibilities with us. As you indulge in the deep richness of our in-house travel and tourism magazine, we say "Welcome to Liberia" if you are here, and "We Hope to See You Soon" if you are not!

Jos began operations in Liberia December of 2011 and provides numerous travel services, including but not limited to ticketing, tour packages, and transport services to people in Liberia, specifically in Monrovia and its surrounding cities. In order to become a viable and quality service provider, she has established affiliations with some of West Africa's top travel agencies in the sub-region. With this collaboration, Jos is highly regarded among all other travel agencies operating in Liberia. With capabilities of issuing all of the frequently flown airlines in the world, she is unique. Jos is the most functional agent in Liberia and serves as consolidator for many Travel Agencies in Liberia. Headed by Managing Director & CEO Mr. Joseph N. Wamah Sr., the majority shareholder in Jos which is 100% Liberian owned. Mr. Wamah Sr. with his vast aviation edification and experiences has placed JOS as the number one travel agent in Liberia. Jos now serves as a local and regional travel consolidator and Mr. Wamah has to his credit over 34 (thirty-four) years of working experience in the aviation industry. At Jos, we strongly believe that the potentially vibrant tourism industry of Liberia has the prospect of being a productive, impactful and lucrative one. The tourism industry remains the fastest growing and the largest generator of jobs. It brings in the most foreign exchange only second to petroleum. It serves as the principal export for many developing countries in Africa.

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PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY IN LIBERIA

USAID Impactful Preservation Project



In today's world, the loss of biological diversity is one of the major challenges facing humanity. As is true globally, an unprecedented rate of loss of marine and terrestrial animal and plant species is threatening Liberia's biological resource base. The situation is rapidly escalating, and immediate, effective measures are needed to avert a full-blown disaster.

Liberia is home to 42 percent of the last remaining Upper Guinean Forest in West Africa, which is part of a humid coastal rainforest belt that also includes the countries of Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The country is also a global Biodiversity Hotspot. This makes Liberia a top conservation priority in the region.

There are currently more than 225 wood tree species, 2000 flowering plant species, 140 animal species, 600 bird species, 75 amphibian and reptile species, and over 1000 species of recognized insects in Liberia's forest ecosystems, all of which need to be protected, used fairly, and managed sustainably. Liberia's resource-rich

and diverse ecosystems is also home to innumerable unknown animals, plants, and other species that have yet to be discovered by scientists.

However, most of Liberia's noteworthy ecosystems have been severely degraded by poorly managed human activities in the previous two decades, leading to a loss of biodiversity that is unprecedented in the country's history.

Addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss across ecosystems is an essential first step in establishing responsible and credible governance and ensuring the sustainable management and use of Liberia's crucial natural resource base.

Thus, with the help of co-investment funding from the USAID-funded West Africa Trade & Investment Hub (Trade Hub), two Eco lodges -the Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve in the East Nimba Nature Reserve, and the Libassa Ecolodge in the Warkolor Forest- were built to safeguard Liberia's forests and wildlife.

The West Africa Trade & Investment Hub (Trade Hub)

is an initiative supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that stimulates economic growth by co-investing with the private sector to attract new investment, produce new jobs, and raise the value of regional and international exports in West Africa.

The Trade Hub awarded a \$262,124 co-investment grant to Libassa Ecolodge, which will help conserve 1,844 hectares of forest. Libassa Ecolodge is also contributing \$370,700 towards the project for a total investment of \$632,824.

The Trade Hub also awarded a \$335,349 co-investment grant to Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve, which will preserve approximately 11,553 hectares of forest.

Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve will contribute \$468,841 to support the project, for a total initial investment of \$804,190.



The Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve in the East Nimba Nature Reserve

It's no exaggeration to say that East Nimba Nature Reserve is in a category all its own when it comes to imperiled forest ecosystems around the globe. The western chimpanzee, the nearly extinct Nimba otter shrew, a toad found only in Liberia, and the world's largest butterfly, the enormous African swallowtail, all call this 11,553-hectare park home.

Although the Liberian government recognizes the importance of wildlife and environmental protection, financing is severely inadequate. The Trade Hub's creative strategy to resolving this issue is to co-invest in the ecolodges, the first two of which are located in Liberia.

Thus, the Libassa Ecolodge and the Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve have partnered with the Trade Hub to create environmentally friendly infrastructure and sustainable tourist activities for the local community.

"This project aligns with our mission because the new infrastructure will generate revenue and lead to sustainable jobs for the surrounding communities while simultaneously being a de facto protection for the forest and its unique wildlife," says Rudolph Antoune, Proprietor and Project Director of the Libassa Ecolodge.

After opening in December of 2023, the ecolodge will begin making a steady profit. One hundred and seventy-five employment roles will be made available during the lodge's construction and operation, and locals will receive training from Libassa Ecolodge in a variety of fields, such as carpentry, masonry, and environmental conservation.

The ecolodge's plan to preserve wildlife includes the installation of lockable gates at unattended entry points and the development of a single, well-marked entrance to the reserve, both of which will aid

The Libassa Ecolodge in the Warkolor Forest

The total area covered by the Warkolor Forest is 1,844 hectares. The last western chimpanzees and Diana monkeys in the forest are in grave danger because of threats to their habitat. There is also a danger to forest buffalos. Additional threatened species include the African python, manatee, and crocodile population of neighboring Lake Piso.

to safeguard the ecolodge's most precious faunal residents. "Our goal is to build an eco-conscious tourism facility and safeguard plant and animal species, which will stimulate the local economy through job creation and economic activities," says Joseph Wamah Sr., Chairman of the Board of Directors of Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve.

By February 2024, the Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve expects to attract short- and long-term visitors and overnight guests. Its construction and operations will also lead to the employment of 85 people.

Both Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve and Libassa Ecolodge have signed MoUs with the government of Liberia through the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) to promote ecotourism in the East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) and the Warkolor Forest.

The agreements will make sure that effective methods for law enforcement and biodiversity conservation are taken into consideration throughout the start-up phase of ecotourism businesses. Furthermore, there will be a continuous focus on community engagements that are beneficial to all stakeholders, and efforts will be made to enhance and preserve both natural and man-built infrastructures.





CURSORY REVIEW OF MARGIBI COUNTY

The Liberian county of Margibi is located on the country's northern and central coast. With a total population of 199,689 as of the 2008 Census, it ranked as the sixth most populous county in Liberia. The county is bounded to the west by Montserrado, to the east by Grand Bassa, and to the north by Bong, while Margibi's south coast faces the Atlantic.

Outside of the coastal plain, the topography gradually rises to the high Bong Range to the northwest and Gibi Mountain to the north, both of which are on the county's northern boundary with Grand Bassa.

Well-known for its abundance of rubber plantations, particularly the Firestone and Salala farms. Thousands of people in the county's surrounding area have been helped by the schools, hospitals, and other organizations that call this place home.

As much as 118,000 acres of the total 2866.67 square miles of land in the County are devoted to rubber plantations in the concession regions of Firestone and Salala. The County also has a number of prestigious educational facilities, such as the world-renowned Booker T. Washington Institute (BWI) and the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute (KRTTI).

Driving time from Monrovia to Margibi County is only about 45 minutes. In 1984, two areas, Marshall and Gibi, were split off from Montserrado County and combined to form Margibi, making it the 13th county in the country. The two components, "Mar" for Marshall Territory and "Gibi" for the Gibi District, combine to form the name.

The Flag of the County features green and red, the County's two primary colors. The lush greenery of the County's forested areas inspired this



choice of color. The county's contribution to the conflict that ultimately resulted in the intervention of the military and the transition of power in the country from the military to the civilian government is symbolized by the red.

The flag features a rubber tree and tapper in its center to represent the hundreds of people who find work in the County's many rubber plantations.

The Farmington, which separates Margibi County from Grand Bassa County, and the Du River, which separates Margibi County from Montserrado County, are two of the county's most significant rivers. Hydropower generation from both rivers is a possibility.

The county's soil is also very fertile, making it a great place to raise crops. Upper Margibi's soil is typical of highland soils, whereas the lower part's soil is primarily sandy clay loam rich in nutrients.

The county of Margibi is rich in diamonds, water, timber, and iron ore, among other valuable resources. Pit sawing and diamond activities, in particular, are extracted on a relatively limited scale, thus they do not yet contribute significantly to the economy.





THE FARMINGTON HOTEL

A Welcome Emblem To Liberia



The Farmington Hotel is a magnificent hotel conveniently located outside of Monrovia, making it ideal for leisure, business, and convention travelers alike.

The hotel opened in 2017, and its location beside the river Farmington in Harbel is perfect and gives an amazing view. Furthermore, the hotel boasts 164 guest rooms and suites, including three Presidential Suites, making it the largest hotel in Liberia.

Every room at this hotel is air conditioned and has a flat-screen TV. Some rooms have a seating area for your convenience. Certain units feature views of the river or garden. The rooms include everything a guest may need, and the furnishings and linens are of a high standard.

The hotel's conference center can host up to 600 attendees in its ballroom, 25 in its boardroom, and 50 in each of its two theater-style meeting rooms. Additionally, Campbell Gray Hotels, a prestigious UK-based chain of luxury hotels, is in charge of running the Farmington Hotel. It manages illustrious hotels all over the world, including Malta's The Phoenicia, London's One Aldwych, Lebanon's Le Gray, and many more.

Due to the fact that it is conveniently located just across from Roberts International Airport, the hotel caters mostly to business travelers and airline staff for whom convenience to the airport is a top priority. For example, the crew of Brussels Airlines currently stays at the Farmington Hotel in order to rest up before and after their flights.

Its location being so close to the airport has made the Farmington Hotel a popular choice for travelers arriving or departing from Liberia, as guests can rest comfortably the night before their flight without having to worry about making the long drive from Monrovia. This is crucial because of the terrible traffic in and around Monrovia, the lack of street lighting on the highway to the

airport, coupled with the late arrival and departure times of some planes.

The hotel's riverbank location enables for the construction of a small marina from which the hotel will provide river cruises and boat trips, this is in addition to the three outdoor swimming pools, gym, and spa already available to guests.

Guests of the sun decks can rent boats to enjoy water sports on the river and experience the natural beauty of Liberia, and sports enthusiasts can play beach volleyball, soccer,

typical fruits and products that are typically unfamiliar to tourists.

Hotel visitors can also relax on the sun terrace and work out in the fitness center after refueling at the hotel's restaurant or bar. In addition to a free shuttle service and car rental services, guests may enjoy the property's outdoor pool and children's playground.

The hotel also gives it fair share in charitable contributions. In 2021, The Farmington Hotel donated ten



tennis, and basketball on the resort's conveniently located artificial beach.

Freebies at this hotel include Wi-Fi, wedding services, and a helpful concierge. The region shuttle also makes it easy to see local attractions, and guests staying at The Farmington Hotel will be close to CeCe Beach and a golf facility.

Because the hotel is also a tourism destination, it offers land trips to several attractive areas and collaborates with other service providers to promote Liberia tourism. The wide grounds feature a botanical garden showcasing the variety of Liberia's natural environment by showcasing

metro high-speed ceiling fans to the Karwahs' Memorial Healthcare Center and the Unification City Health Center to improve ventilation. The price tag for the fans were put at \$4,200 USD.

Guests of the Farmington Hotel can be rest assured of an excellent level of service and a pleasant stay that will meet their expectations in terms of cleanliness, maintenance and hospitality as they sit back and relax in absolute comfort at Liberia's premier hotel location.



Zomming In

On The Future of Firestone

For nearly a century, Firestone Liberia has been a prominent investor in Liberia for the purpose of harvesting and processing natural rubber. It is said that the farm owned by Firestone is one of the largest continuous rubber plantations on the entire planet, since it spans an area of 119,000 acres.

Firestone Liberia, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bridgestone Corporation -the world's largest tire and Rubber Company- is a main figure in Liberia's economy. In the 1920s, Firestone made its initial appearance in Liberia. After two years of discussions, the government of Liberia agreed to let Firestone lease up to one million acres of land at a price of six cents per acre for a period of ninety-nine years.

Since the end of the Liberian Civil Wars, the business has replanted around 60,000 acres of fresh rubber, which is equivalent to more than 11 million

trees. The overall current concession area of Firestone accounts for 4% of Liberia's territory and nearly 10% of the country's arable land.

The Firestone factory which is located in Harbel is responsible for the production of Ribbed Smoked Sheet (RSS), which is then shipped to the United States to be used in the manufacturing of tires. The complex that the factory occupies is also home to tens of thousands of people who live on and around the grounds.

In addition, the company's investment in the natural rubber business in Liberia in 2021 led in the purchase of around 58 million pounds of rubber, which resulted in over \$27 million in revenue for the local farmers.

Today, Firestone Liberia is responsible for the employment of 4,300 people, 98 percent of whom are Liberians. Employees receive benefits such as free family housing, free family health-care, and free education for their dependents. Additionally, the company donates \$150,000 (USD) annually to fund educational scholarships to universities, trade schools, and other institutions of higher learning.



The healthcare facility of the company is also integral in its community as it runs a well acclaimed referral hospital. This facility sees more than 3,000 patients per month and delivers more than 500 newborns every year, with almost half of these babies being born to mothers who are not from Firestone.

In addition, since 2010, Firestone has worked in collaboration with Children's Surgery International (CSI) to offer over one thousand free procedures to the people of Liberia, many of which have the potential to alter or even save patients' lives. Because of the cooperation between the corporation and CSI, the Liberian healthcare community has access to critical medical training that would not be available otherwise.

In 2021, in the midst of a global pandemic, Firestone Liberia implemented a mobile vaccine program to take vaccines into remote areas of the concession and fence-line communities. As of right now, the total number of individuals who have been vaccinated on the concession is over 13,000, and the number of individuals who have been vaccinated in the surrounding communities is over 6,000.

In more recent times, the company has also made a move toward investing in more sustainable operations in Liberia. Most recently, the company on-lined a brand new, state-of-the-art wastewater treatment system that enables the use of recycled water in its processing operations. This move enables the company to use recycled water in its processing operations.

The corporation also places a significant emphasis on education; it runs 24 schools that range from kindergarten all the way through the 12th grade,

and it has a total student body of over 7,000 pupils. Throughout the course of the West Africa Examination Council's testing, pupils attending schools in the Firestone Liberia school system have routinely placed among the highest scorers overall. In addition, Firestone Liberia invests in the provision of free higher education scholarships, which are open to students not only from the Firestone Liberia school system but also from students located throughout the country.

The company's success has not been without challenges, as it has been cited for labor violations on multiple occasions, and it has been criticized for its failure to construct a plant in Liberia that can churn out final product from the rubber sap that it harvests. In response to these criticisms, the company stated, "we have offered unequalled investment in the country and people of Liberia; sadly, Firestone Liberia does not have plans to grow into the finished goods market at this time."

Furthermore, in July 2019, the company's Rubberwood division decided to halt operations due to continuous and unsustainable losses and an inability to compete with low-cost producers in the worldwide Rubberwood market, owing in part to excessive overhead costs.

Despite the challenges, it cannot be denied that Firestone has been a mainstay in Liberia's economy. Speaking to the Liberian insight on its future, Firestone said "As a company we continue to invest in our Liberian business in the effort to return the company to pre-civil war levels of productivity".



THE FARMINGTON *River*

The Farmington River in Margibi County is a popular river in Liberia. It has its source in the Bong Range and travels south-southwest for 75 miles until reaching the Atlantic coast in Marshall. Here, the Gbage and Junk rivers meet up with it at its estuary. The river is navigable for 10 km below Harbel

In 1926, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company developed the beginnings of what would become a massive rubber plantation enterprise centered around Harbel. The liquid latex and crepe rubber that are destined for export are transported from the company's river port to Monrovia, which is located 52 kilometers to the west.

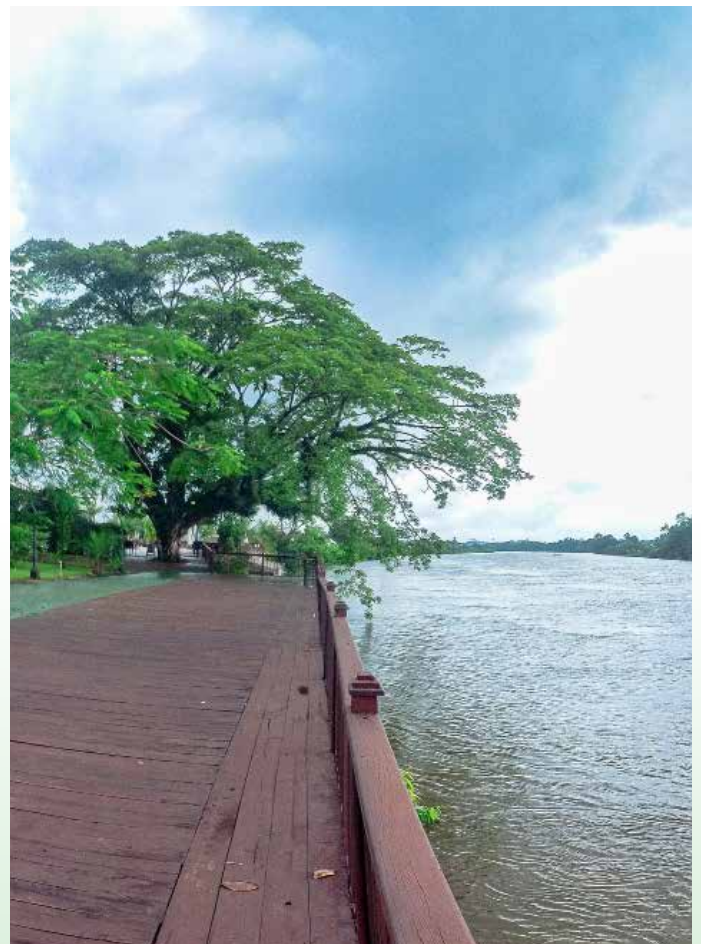
In addition, the Farmington River generates electricity through the Firestone hydroelectric power station, which was finally finished in 1942, in order to supply both the plantation and the accompanying industries with electricity. However, in more recent times, Firestone has been charged with contaminating the river.

The river's social and cultural importance might be inferred from the myriad of activities that can be performed with its resources. The mangrove that grows on the river banks offer the residents with firewood and materials for fence against the area's Large Cane Rat invasions. Sand is also gathered from the river for the purpose of rehabilitating houses and roads.

The Farmington River is also a transport route and water source. People from Monrovia frequently make the trip up to Marshall on holidays and Sundays to go boat riding. It is common to observe children taking a swim in the river. Fishing is another popular pastime, and within the mangrove swamps,

locals look for clams, snails, and various other crustaceans to use as ingredients in their daily meals.

Lastly, Marshall, like many of Liberia's other coastal wetland areas, is frequented by a large variety of migratory bird species. The Society for the Conservation of Nature in Liberia, which serves as the focal point for Birdlife International, believes that the area around the river is also an excellent place to go bird watching.





BLOH KON DALOR

blending fashion with culture

As the fashion industry becomes more global, West Africa is positioning itself as not just a source of textiles, but also as a potential location to become the next fashion destination. Amidst the region's blooming fashion ecosystem is Liberian Fashion house Bloh Kon Dalor.

The name - Bloh Kon Dahlor - which come from the Kru language loosely translates to a woman who loves lappa, which is indicative of her sense of style or love for fashion. And despite its fairly recent 2020 entry in the Liberian fashion scene, the Bloh Kon Dahlor brand has already established itself as a mainstay.

The fashion house has established a distinct style with its incorporation of different African textiles like mudcloth and traditional Liberian hand-woven fabric known as country cloth into its designs. From its popular #NEO unisex mudcloth jacket to its unique BAETU skirt, Bloh Kon Dahlor's unique blend of culture and fashion has captivated audiences worldwide. The Liberian exhibit sat down with its founder Lakshmi Moore to discuss the current journey of the fashion house.

How did Bloh Kon Dahlor start?

Bloh Kon Dahlor started as a creative passion project seeking to blend my love for fashion and my growing interest and appreciation for Liberian traditional hand-woven fabric. I have always been interested in fashion more as a hobby and worked with local tailors often to churn out style but didn't consider it as a formal brand until COVID-19 lockdown when faced with time and existentialist crisis of the pandemic.

How would you describe the style of Bloh Kon Dahlor?

I would describe it as a celebration of our culture, heritage, art and artistry linked to Liberian and African traditional hand-woven fabric. With BKD we seek to continue storytelling which is woven into the materials we use, tapping into ways we can not only add value to what we come to appreciate as Liberian Fashion but also possibilities of what it could be. Whether is by reinterpreting traditional silhouettes and/or using traditional materials to recreate current modern trends, and/or finding new ways to showcase traditional fabrics into today's fashion trends.

What influenced your last collection (JULIE)?

My mother influenced it. It was an ode to where my love and interest in fashion came from. The first collection was named liberty, since it represented the freedom of releasing BKD as a brand but we played in a bit safe and muted. With "Julie" we wanted to tap into colors, textures, designs and techniques a bit more to also explore what the brand could do and try to learn and understand what works for us and our customers.

From the use of country cloth, to the designs in the BAETU skirt, the immersion of culture is seen, what influences this blend of fashion and culture? And to what level do you think fashion can push culture?

Clothes have always had different meaning and usage especially in Liberia, and sadly, at times a strong divide on what seen as acceptable linked to our complicated history. Yet, it has also always had a clear sentiment about style - whether it is how women tied and or layered their wax print lappas; the weaving techniques and color schemes used in the traditional hand-woven fabrics



Sometimes those items carried and invoke meanings that feared, stigmatized and or revered, and at BKD, we are revisiting that, to reinterpret that in new ways. For instance, BAE-TU taps into the traditional mask dancer (Gbetu) with the raffia fringe skirt, but now, we have something whimsical, flirty and colorful for a red carpet presence.

What stands BKD apart from other designers or the fashion culture?

Our brand story is etched into our designs and products. While we certainly are not the first to tap into Liberian hand-woven traditional fabric, we have invested in defining our core DNA and being very strategic about what we put out. We are certainly a work in progress focused on building our brand through community of supporters who have been loyal, consistent, passionate and have helped to keep us running and connecting the brand to new spaces and clients.

What are the challenges that BKD faces? What challenges did you face before and you were able to solve, and what challenges still remain?

Like many small businesses we face the same challenges of access to funding including credit/financing, high cost of running a business, especially lacking constant electricity to support; also while we do have talented craftsmanship in Liberia, technical skills can sometimes be limited; often Liberian tailors are apprentices so skills such as pattern making, quality assurance on production and supplies - poor quality supplies for even



basics - zippers, threads, etc.

In addition, at BKD we face some particular challenges relating to the cost of production due to the primary materials we use. We often have to pre-finance so we can get quantity and quality we want and or import materials from the US which adds to our cost.

There's also the challenge with the market as there is a small number of folks in the economy with the purchasing power combined with a dominant bespoke fashion interest.

To address these challenges, we've had to navigate by incorporating wax prints and providing some styles that are customizable while trying to create and maintain a strong brand presence.

To address the technical skills, we try to put out designs that we've spent a significant amount of time testing and practicing so the tailors can be able to reproduce consistently; and we try to as much as possible to invest in customer loyalty to help support visibility.

Do you think Liberian fashion brands could benefit from the investor backing, or do you feel it's better they maintain their independence?

It depends on the brand's ambitions. Some brands may be interested in scaling up and export; some are not and may just need access to funding to support brand's needs - from purchasing machines, necessary equipment; training, tech, etc.

It's also sad to see that often especially the current attention on African Fashion, Liberian fashion keeps missing out on our invita-

tion to conversation happening and the opportunities. Without prejudice, it seems like even with as much attention on African fashion, only few countries are at the table and much of that can be linked to the investment they've received. There are many talented and creative brands in Liberia pushing every day to bring attention to the fashion scene and just need support

How much potential do you think the fashion industry has as regards to LIBERIA'S economic growth?

There is a lot of potential especially with our traditional hand-woven fabric and even our tie dye. As in many ways Liberians have shown to be resilient and resourceful, we've seen how much our traditional fabric has evolved over the years as artists find new ways to keep the history and technique going while tapping into materials that can support faster, colorful and more versatile materials varying in weight, texture, etc.

Currently, we have young people using crochet yarn and recycled yarn from imported used sweaters to women collectives using cotton and sequin threads. And all of this has happened over the last decade with increased investment in training and support. Investment in equipment, supplies, funding, exchange programs, and or sponsorships including supporting Liberian brands to participate in spaces where conversation and attention on African fashion is happening; etc can go a long way.

What is your advice to upcoming fashion designers?

My advice will be; have a strong sense of style and definition of who you are as it helps to stand out and also know the field is still big enough for everyone. We've reached to the place now as a brand where we are very clear about who we are, what we can and cannot do.

Nowadays, we are willing to not take in custom requests that are not aligned to our brand story, and trust me, this is hard especially in an economy where you do need the funds to keep the workshop open.

Invest in your staff as building a good, reliable, and supportive team very important to consistency as a brand and especially proving a good working environment for your staff.

Also, Invest in research - something folks don't realize is important. Before we put out products, we spend some time researching our mood board and designs so we understand how, what and where to place items, designs, etc. It also helps to understand what's out there and where your collection is landing, what's on trend and or not and what you want to say with your brand.

What do we expect from BKD going forward?

Slow but sure growth with focused on quality and more creativity. We started out safe and now we want to push the boundaries a bit on what we could do with the materials we work with. We are heavily invested in promoting more made in Liberia resources and those sourced from region (i.e., mud cloth, aso oke, Ivorian baule, etc.)



A Community waiting to take you in.....



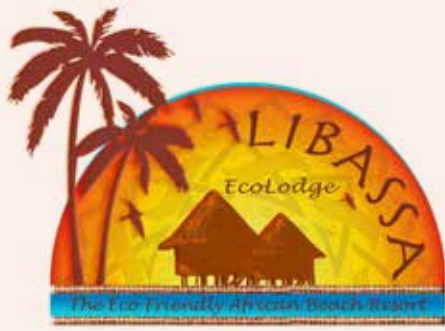
- **Company's Name:** Nexus Global Enterprises, LLC
- **Founding Date:** May 6, 2021
- **Name of CEO:** Michael A. Padmore
- **Name of Deputy CEO & Chief Operating Officer** — COO: Peter Omascar Sanders
- **Office Location:** Tubman Blvd, Paynesville, Liberia

Summary note:

Nexus Global Enterprises, LLC is a Liberian owned business. The corporation is a conglomerate of several businesses. We are an agro industrial organization with access to more than 1,500 acres of land for avocado, cocoa and

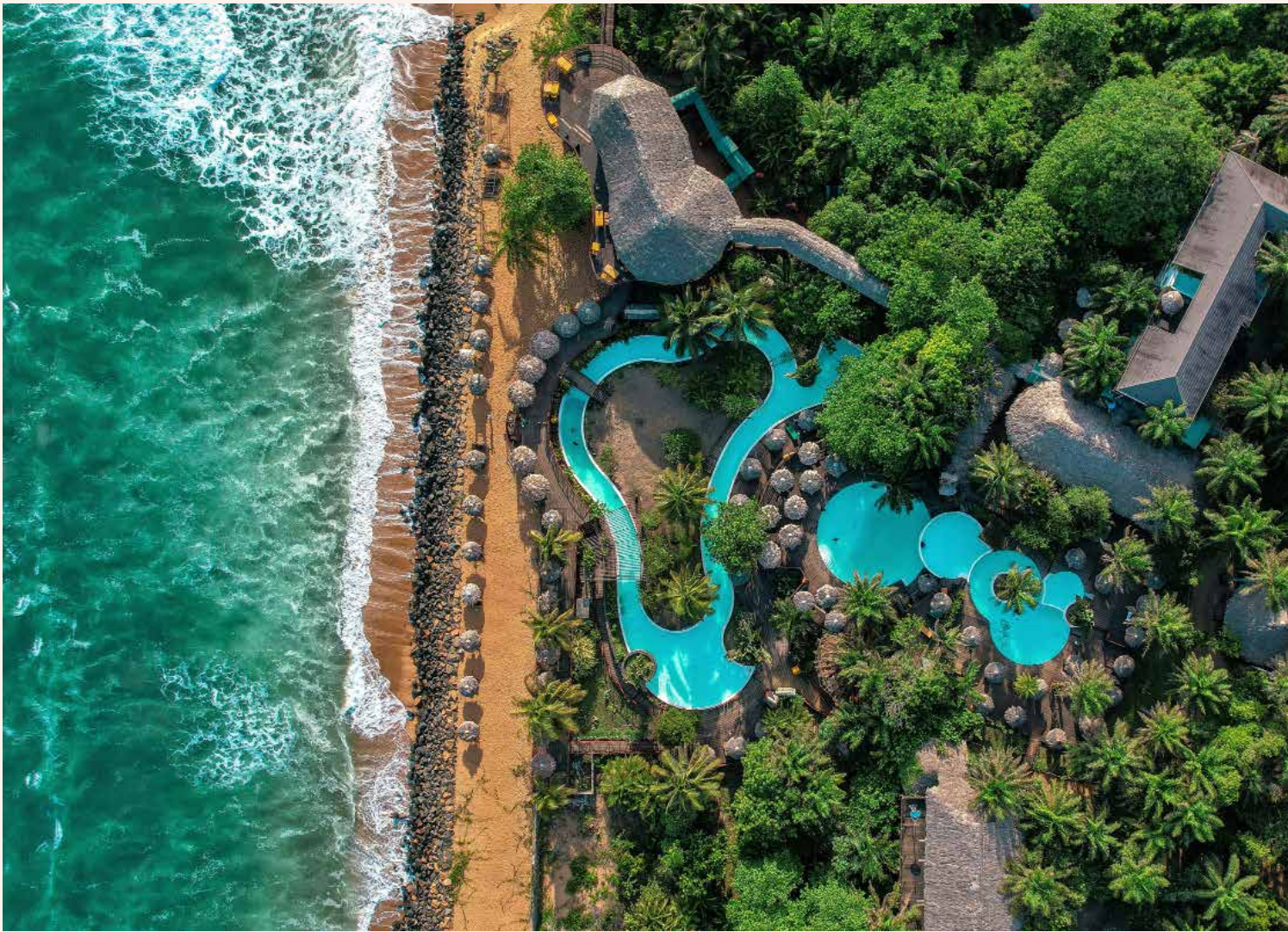


vegetables farming — a process which is at its preliminary stage of implementation. Nexus also engages into the following: small & medium sized loan business, transport business, home healthcare, parking lot service, professional staffing, and real estate. As a new corporation, we're faced with numerous challenges in fully growing the various businesses we have started. However, we are hopeful that in the soonest time, we will overcome the challenges we faced as new entrant in the Liberian business industry by upgrading our businesses to fully meet the needs of customers.



Libassa Ecolodge

The Serene Nature Oasis



Only 30 minutes from Roberts International Airport and the capital city of Monrovia, the eco-friendly resort of Libassa is nestled inside an original tropical forest at the intersection of a virgin lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean.

The idea for Libassa Ecolodge, came from a desire to experience Liberia's untamed and breathtaking nature in a responsible manner. Thus, Libassa Ecolodge was founded on the tenets of conservationism, and its mission is to promote environmental sustainability, environmental education, and environmental mindfulness among its guests.

The resort as a whole was designed to minimize its impact on the surrounding

ecosystem by striking a balance between manmade structures and the beauty of nature's own design. Because of this, the resort was built with an emphasis on minimizing impacts on the surrounding ecosystem. So, at least one tree was planted for every tree that went into making the shelters, and none of the native palm trees were harmed in the process of constructing the resort.

Those staying the night will enjoy a very special ecotourism adventure in lodges handcrafted from native materials. The resort's twenty guest rooms and suites reflect the natural surroundings by making use of sustainable, regional materials.

As the sun rises, the lagoon laps at its

mangrove forest, creating a tranquil setting. Visitors wake up in the morning and make their way from the huts' porches to the breakfast area, which has a serene view and delicious food. As early afternoon approaches, the tranquil oasis transforms into a water park as families arrive to enjoy the lazy river and let the current jets do the swimming for them.

The lodges take their architectural cues from the native architectural styles that have been in use for generations. Even during the hottest parts of the day, the thatched roofs and lodge arrangement within the forest help to maintain a comfortable temperature.

A variety of solar-powered huts are avail-



able, from the modest Palaver Hut (a traditional Liberian home with a double bed and balcony built with local materials) to the luxurious Mangrove Lodge (with a queen-sized bed, a private pool, and a balcony hovering over the lagoon). The resort hopes to convert to renewable energy sources like solar and wind for all of its power needs.

The resort features both standard rooms and themed accommodations, such as the Love Bird Nest, which overlooks the ocean and lagoon, the Palm Tree Suite, which boasts a spacious living area and a balcony, the Floating Lagoon Lodge, which features a balcony, sunbed, and direct access to the lagoon, and the Mangrove

Lodge Superior Suite, which features a private pool.

Each room has a hot shower; a fan (ceiling and/or floor), and power which is utilized in an eco-friendly manner through the use of certified low-energy lamps and appliances. Also, paper and plastic used are recycled.

Mini golf, badminton, beach volleyball, ping pong, kayaking, horseback riding, and archery are just some of the low-impact sports available on-site. Canoeing, snorkeling, and a trip to Chimpanzee Island are just a few of the activities available farther afield.

The resort also houses the first mixed

wildlife refuge in Liberia, with the intention of releasing most protected animals meant for bush meat. It also trains and employs many members of the local community in various capacities.

The restaurant at Libassa Ecolodge serves West African and other cuisines; guests may also attend African and Latin dancing classes. Guests can also relax with a stroll through a well-kept botanical garden.

Whether you are passing by or staying the night, Libassa provides a one-of-a-kind opportunity to be in close proximity to nature through Libassa's forests, beach, lagoon, pools, botanical gardens, and wildlife. All which can be enjoyed with minimal influence on the local ecosystem.

The LunchBox

— the healthy food startup —



DELICIOUS CHEKE



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Lunchbox began in May 2019 with a vision to contribute to global health and wellness through nutritious meals and wellness content after the founder identified a need for clean, nutritious, and tasty lunch packs for professionals working in Central Monrovia.

Since that time, the company has expanded, and now in addition to preparing, packaging, and selling/delivering meals, the Lunchbox also provides catering for events like weddings and business meetings.

According to Christollie Ade Suah, the organization's founder, "I was inspired by how dramatically my life changed when I began to eat better, exercise more, and practice healthier behaviors."

With the passage of time, the business has established a reputation for being the place to go for genuine, reasonably priced, and nutritionally sound meals that creatively combine traditional and continental cuisines in a way that is both healthy and innovative.

The company has also experienced its fair share of difficulties; when it first launched in August of 2019, the orders were flooding in, but by the end of October the transformer in the community where the company is located blew out, making storage impossible. That was a significant challenge for a food company.

The Covid pandemic, which caused the markets to crash and lockdown to begin, also had a significant negative impact on the startup. The owner was infected as well, thus, the company was forced to close for several months. Limited funding is also an issue.

On the other hand, things are currently looking up for the company as it recently secured a partnership with Smart Liberia. Because of the partnership, the lunch box now has a restaurant location from which it can conduct its business.

A grant was also awarded to The Lunchbox at the conclusion of the UNDP Growth Accelerator Challenge in late 2021. This grant will be used to standardize the restaurant management system, build a mobile meal planning and ordering app, and invest in production and packaging equipment for a variety of products, including lunch packs, spice condiments, and juice.



The education system in Liberia is fraught with problems, not the least of which is a teacher workforce that is unequally distributed and poorly qualified. In addition, the distribution of competent teachers in Liberia is unequal, with economically better developed regions receiving more and more highly prepared teachers. To solve this problem, the government established the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute (KRTTI).

The Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute (KRTTI) is a teacher training institute that features residential accommodations in Margibi County. These amenities are available to both trainers and trainees at the KRTTI. As an incentive for trainees to become teachers in rural areas, they are not required to pay tuition and are provided with housing and three meals each day.

The Institute, also known as the KRTTI, is Liberia's second largest teacher training institute, with space for up to 400 students. KRTTI was initially constructed in 1962 with the assistance of a grant from the World Bank. It remained under the management and direct supervision of USAID for a period of ten years before

the United States of America formally transferred ownership of the institution to the Government of Liberia in 1972. To this day, KRTTI maintains its position as a market leader in the production of educators for Liberia's public schools.

Theoretically, in order to become a teacher in Liberia, you need to have attended one of the educational institutions, such as the University of Liberia, the Cuttington University College, the Kakata Rural Teachers Training Institute (KRTTI), or the Zorzor Rural Teacher's Training Institute (ZRTTI).

Teachers with a "C" certificate from any of the teaching institutes can teach in the elementary division, while teachers with a "B" certificate can teach in the Junior High School Division, and teachers with a "B.Sc." can teach in the Senior High Division.

A two-year curriculum leading to a Grade "B" Teaching Certificate for Senior High School Graduates was introduced by the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute (KRTTI) in the year 1976. By 1980, the two Rural Teacher Training Institutes (ZRTTI and KRTTI) had implemented a two-

year program leading to the "C" Teaching Certificate for only high school graduates. At the moment, KRTTI provides instruction for both the 'B' and the 'C' certificates simultaneously.

KRTTI is also confronted with a number of significant difficulties, such as a lack of functional vehicles to transport administrators and deliver school materials, the provision of student handouts, a lack of a science laboratory to capacitate trainers and trainees in conducting scientific experimentation, and the revamping of structures at the institution's farm, to name just a few of these difficulties.

Despite the difficulties, both the government and the institute are attempting to find solutions to these difficulties. In 2017, The Institute (KRTTI) successfully completed the first B-Certificate pilot program it had offered in almost 15 years, graduating 91 teachers. Since the end of the second phase of Liberia's civil war in 2003, this is the first B-certificate teachers' training program to be implemented in the country.

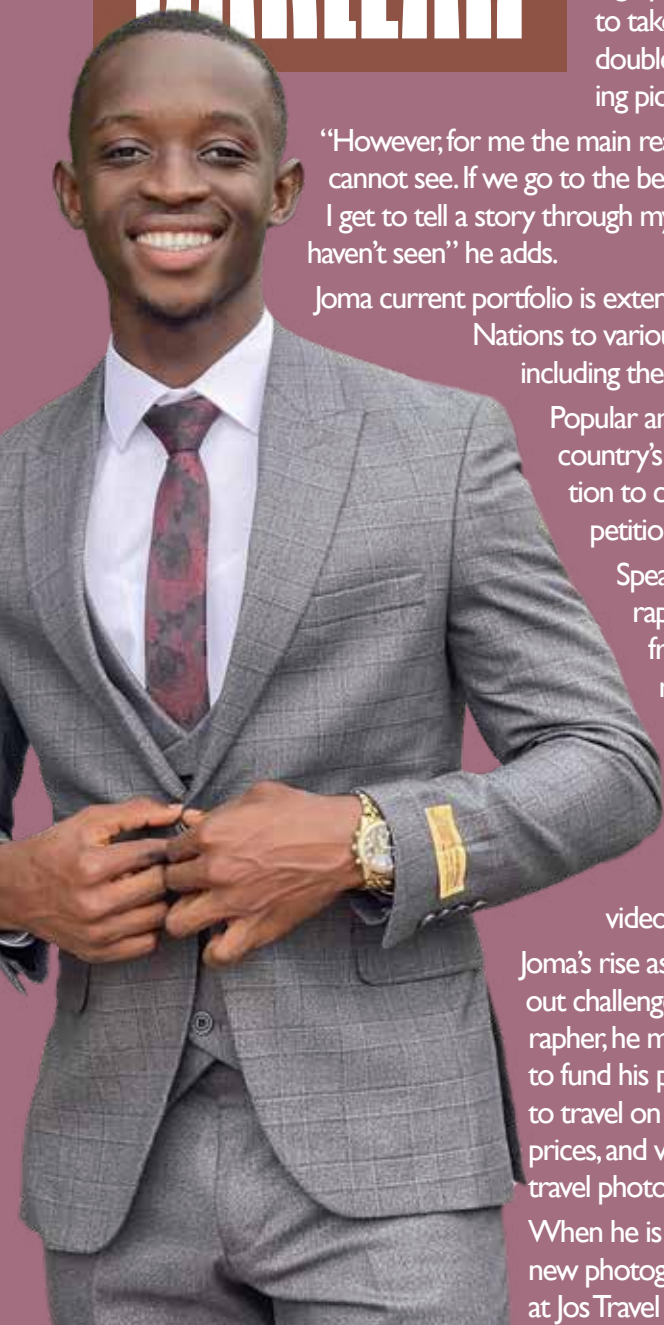
In addition, in the year 2020, the Ministry of Education engaged three external training service



providers to collaborate with the Ministry's three Rural Teachers Training Institutes (RTTIs) on the design and implementation of an expedited in-service teacher and principal training program. The program graduated its inaugural batch in 2021.



JOMA BARLEAH



In Liberia photography circles, the name Jomaglobal is very popular for amazing shots, for people not in photography circles, while they might not know his name, they know his works as his works have covered everywhere from billboards at the country's only international airport to its most popular hotels. Behind the camera of Jomaglobal is Joma Barleah, a young and self-taught photographer who specializes in landscape and travel photography.

For Joma, his love for photography started at a young age due to his affinity for cameras and pictures. Speaking on his foray into photography, he says "Growing up as a kid, I always wanted to be with cameras, I wanted to be the one to take pictures in my friend group. Over time I noticed I was good at it, so I doubled down and started doing more research and taking more pictures. Taking pictures make me feel good, and fast forward to now I still take pictures"

"However, for me the main reason I chose photography is because it allows me to see what everyone cannot see. If we go to the beach and we both see a sunset, I will see it differently. With photography, I get to tell a story through my photographs, I get to capture and show parts of Africa that people haven't seen" he adds.

Joma current portfolio is extensive, and his client list contains the crème de la crème, from the United Nations to various local and international organizations, and various private business including the two biggest telecommunications companies in Liberia.

Popular among his works is his drone shots. In 2020, Lonestar Cell MTN -the country's biggest telecommunications company- launched the #MyLIB competition to celebrate the beauty of Liberia through pictures. At the end of the competition, a drone shot by Joma emerged as winner, beating many others

Speaking on his drone photography, Joma said "years ago portrait photography was everywhere, but it is just one kind of view. I like views, my view from the airplane is quite different from the view you get down here. In my type of photography- travel and landscape-, I started using the drone more because it became an essential instrument to capture more"

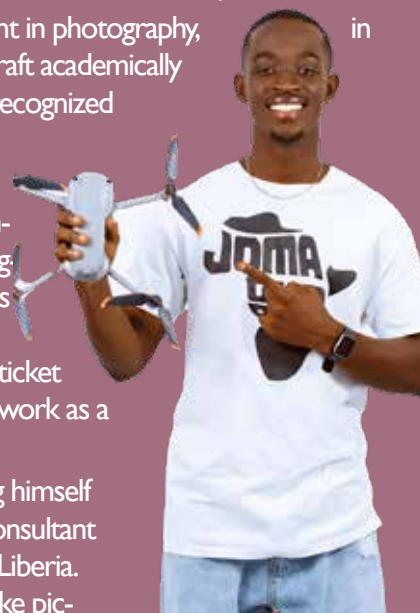
Even though he is largely self-taught in photography, in 2021 Joma decided to study his craft academically as well, earning an internationally recognized certificate in photography and video production.

Joma's rise as a photographer has not been without challenges. As a self-sponsored travel photographer, he must rely on profits from his business to fund his photography. Additionally, challenges to travel on the continent – conflict, expensive ticket prices, and visa requirements- have affected his work as a travel photographer:

When he is not taking photographs or teaching himself new photography concepts, Joma works as a consultant at Jos Travel & Tours, a premier travel agency in Liberia. With the passion to travel the continent and take pictures, the world should certainly look forward to seeing

more of Jomaglobal.

In his words "people should expect more from me. I plan to visit every African country and showcase the beauty of culture and the continent. I know it will be difficult and challenges will occur, but I trust the process, I will do it, just watch me"



 @JOMAGLOBAL
 @JOMABARLEAH
 @GIOBOYJOMA
 @JOMAGLOBAL

The Marshall Estuary

A CANOEING PARADISE





RIA ROAD EXPANSION PROJECT

A Recipe For Economic Vastitude

In 2020, President George Manneh Weah, broke grounds for the expansion and pavement of the RIA Highway into a modern four-lane highway of international standard. The four-lane road, which was expected to be completed and dedicated in 2023, is expected to also reduce accidents and improve the movement of people, goods, and services to and from six of the fifteen counties, namely: Margibi, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Sinoe, Grand Kru, and Maryland.

For travelers between Monrovia -the nation's capital-, and the country's single international airport, the RIA highway is the most direct and time-efficient option. Currently, the highway also links the corridor with the southeast, which is home to three major seaports and offers access to significant cash crop concessions like the Firestone Natural Rubber Company and the Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) Oil Palm Plantation.

The expansion of the RIA road is a project that is long overdue, largely because of the safety hazards presented by its narrowness and darkness. In a 2020 press release, President Weah said the expansion of the RIA Highway was a

great moment for his government and the Liberian people. He also referred to the project as one of tremendous national significance and said that "in addition to the new airport terminal, the RIA road presents the first impressions of our country to those traveling to Liberia through the airport."

"Secondly, this is a project that is long overdue because of the safety hazards presented by its narrowness and darkness. The RIA Highway has been a death-trap since it was built in the 1940's, during World War Two. In the 70 years of its existence, it has claimed the lives of thousands of unfortunate passengers, both Liberians and foreigners alike," he added.

The total anticipated cost of the 45km long project is \$94.5 million, which is split between the actual construction (civil works) at \$80 million, the design and supervision cost at \$7 million, and the management and resettlement action plan at \$7.5 million.

The highway is divided into sections due to the design taking into account several elements such as population density, social activities, and topography. The blueprint also asks for the work to be carried

out in three distinct phases: 1) from Roberts International Airport to Junk River Bridge, 2) from Junk River Bridge to ELWA junction, and 3) the construction of the Junk River Bridge and the renovation of the existing bridge.

The road is to have a road station in Marshall which is to include parking lots, green space, rest-rooms, a vehicle service facility, gas stations, a food court, and convenience stores. The Marshall Junction Road station, might also toll drivers to cross the Junk River Bridge.

However, presently, the safety of travelers on the road have been jeopardized as the route has become more difficult to maneuver as a result of the presence of stalled construction materials and operations which is due to a delay in construction on the highway.

Vehicles using the route are at a greater danger of falling into abandoned ditches that litter the road since development has halted; this risk is exacerbated by the absence of streetlights and the failure of police to regularly monitor drivers' speeds.

However, in her statement towards the issue, Liberia's Minister of Public Works Ruth Coker Collins has told local media that the delay on the pavement of the Roberts international Airport highway is due to climate change characterized by heavy downpours, thus making it difficult for engineers to work. However, she promised that the work is expected to speed up during the dry season.



TIPME LIBERIA

- THE GAME CHANGER -

With the aim of moving toward a cashless society, financial institutions in Liberia have expanded their electronic payment options in response to rising consumer demand. Although telecommunications firms have held a sizable lead in the mobile money market, TipMe Liberia shifted the dynamics of the industry when they entered the market in September 2020.

TipMe Liberia, a franchise of the TipMe Global brand, is the country's first app-based mobile wallet. Customers can easily and quickly transfer and receive funds in either US Dollars or Liberian Dollars using the app-based platform on their mobile devices.

With a primary goal of creating and expanding the cashless eco-system so that businesses and individuals no longer have to deal with the persistent liquidity problems that plague the nation, TipMe Liberia has been serving a steadily expanding customer base with a wide variety of electronic financial solutions since its launch.

The company's entry into Liberia's financial services market coincides with the region's general trend toward cashless economies and the improvement of its e-commerce infrastructure. As it stands, TipMe users can make cashless purchases with hundreds of merchants, including restaurants, hotels, and supermarkets, and pay a variety of bills, such as those for power, airtime, and internet service. TipMe also provides digital tickets for event management and payroll services for businesses. Furthermore, the organization has Agents across four counties who can help users make mobile wallet deposits and withdrawals. Customers can add funds to their TipMe wallet with any major credit card, and bike agents are available to make cash deliveries and pickups.

While TipMe's cashless ecosystem is still under development, the company has seen rapid expansion in the short period since it was introduced. The company is currently active in four counties (Monterrado, Margibi, Bong & Nimba), and is on its way to become the most user- and

merchant-friendly payment option in Liberia.

Major partnerships have been signed by the company so far. Shortly after its launch, TipMe entered an agency arrangement with Winners Betting which allows its customers to make deposits and withdrawals at all Winners locations. TipMe has also integrated with BNB Transfers, another fintech start-up and customers who receive funds through Western Union, MoneyGram, Ria and several other international remittance partners can now deposit those funds directly to their TipMe wallet through the BNB app. Furthermore, TipMe has launched its bank-to-wallet interface with GTBank enabling customers to seamlessly move funds between their TipMe wallets and bank accounts.

In June 2022, TipMe Liberia won the Emerging Fintech Award at the 2022 Reputable Banks & Fintech Awards (RBFA) held in the United Kingdom, as the company was selected amongst the top 50 most reputable Bank & Fintech institutions in Africa. The company isn't stopping anytime soon as it has plans to further expand its services throughout the country. According to TipMe Liberia's CEO Laureine Guilao in an interview, she said "International remittances and bill payments are two key areas of focus for us. As we expand, we hope to explore other areas such as lending. There are so many opportunities in fintech, and we plan to gradually tap into more fintech developments".



Naomi Tulay Solanke

THE CHI STORY

In 2014, as Ebola raged on in Liberia, Mrs. Naomi Tulay-Solanke was inspired by the horrifying Ebola outbreak and its effects on the Liberian health, justice, and education system to do something. After seeing that all types of violence against women were amplified as a result of the Ebola epidemic, particularly the inability of low-income women and children to access healthcare she started Community Healthcare Initiative, also known as CHI.

Through Community Healthcare Initiative, Mrs. Tulay-Solanke who is a health care professional, and humanitarian has been leading a group of passionate young people who work in marginalized neighborhoods, slums, and marketplaces to improve access to healthcare, social services, women's rights, children's rights, the rights of critical groups, and the rights of persons with disabilities.

In the words of Naomi Solanke "CHI would not be CHI if a handful of passionate, daring, and knowledgeable young people did not volunteer to change Liberia's pressing socio-economic challenges during the Ebola crisis."

"At CHI's early stage during the Ebola crisis, five young people risked their lives and left their families every morning to impact hundreds of lives through the Mobile Clinic. This team hawked the streets of Monro-

via, selling tea and sometimes washing cars to raise funds to fuel what is now one of the biggest CSOs in Liberia, CHI." She adds

As evidence of their work, CHI has established Mother Support Groups in 20 different areas – these groups' help moms engage in crucial nutrition initiatives and access counseling at a Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Clinic.

The organization has also set up Women's forums and girls' health clubs in 30 localities and 25 schools, empowering women and girls to advocate for their rights and respond to situations of violence by using the legal system.

Speaking to the Liberian Exhibit on her work with vulnerable population, she said "CHI works with vulnerable populations because we believe that their rights are often violated. They are most underserved and highly discriminated against in terms of distribution of resources and participation in decision-making processes."

"We are on a mission to improve socio-economic development in communities by working with and strengthening the capacity of communities while also implementing health and protection interventions through a participatory approach to



socio-economic development.” She adds

Since its inception, Community Healthcare Initiative has helped over 50,000 people, the majority of whom are women, children and also members of sexual minorities and other at-risk populations. There are also around 2,000 girls and young women who have benefited from the direct involvement with/from the organization.

Through CHI’s work, families of Ebola and COVID-19 victims have received aid, while 46 women’s forums and girl’s health clubs have received endowment monies to help speed up the processing of sexual and gender-based violence cases at the local level.

Prime among CHI’s numerous initiatives however is its work around menstruation. In Liberia, adolescent girls and women are disempowered by menstruation as affordable and hygienic-sanitary protection is not available to girls in many parts of the country. As a result, they use unhygienic rags and clothes, putting them at risk of infection.

To help address this, the organization launched a book on menstrual hygiene management called Kolu’s Moon. The book promotes conversations about menstruation among parents, students, boys, and girls in the classroom, home, and community.

The book -Kolu’s Moon- is based on the life experience of a little girl from one of CHI’s project com-

munities. The child in question was bullied because she had period stains on her dress. Like this little girl, many others have been bullied simply because they bled through their clothes, held a pad, or spoke about menstruation openly.

“Kolu’s Moon was written for adolescents in Liberia to understand that the changes girls experience during puberty should not keep them away from school, achieving their dreams and that menstruation is a normal biological process” Tulay-Solanke says.

Community Healthcare Initiative also runs a PAD4G-girls training program. Thus far, the program has made significant strides towards its aim of ensuring female retention in school during menstruation, especially for girls who cannot afford sanitary pads during menstruation and it has provided a space where women and girls can freely discuss menstrual health and empowerment issues.

Through the program, CHI has trained women and girls on menstrual hygiene management, the production of sanitary pads, and the basics of business management in eight (8) of the fifteen Counties in Liberia. And as a result of their projects, women and girls in rural project communities can now continue to go to school while menstruating by using our self-made reusable sanitary pad to promote girls’ retention in school

The importance of CHI’s work in over 8 counties, 30+ communities, and 25+ schools cannot be overemphasized. Their work has affected women, girls, sexual minorities, and community structures through different levels of training and livelihood programs. Women and girls are now supported in claiming their rights and reporting violence cases in our project communities.

Their Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR) training in schools and districts empowers girls and young women with adequate information that helps them make rational decisions about their bodies, and because of their SRHR training, girls and young women are teaching others about contraceptives in their communities, therefore helping to reduce the increase in unwanted and teenage pregnancies.





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Anitram *The Songbird singing her way home*

In September, Anitram took the stage at the MTN yello star competition. But this was not just any other guest performance for Anitram, she had prepared a little extra for this. For Anitram, the performance signified her comeback after a major absence from making music due to schoolwork.

While on stage, Anitram belted out notes with ease, showing her versatility as she transitioned from her trap influenced track “sorry”, to premiering a new RnB tune. With all the conviction and belief she says “Music is my home. I am back home, I am back for good”

Music has always been close to home for Anitram. Born to a musically inclined family, Anitram grew up around music, but it was at the church where her musical talent first blossomed “I grew up singing in church. I still remember the first song I learnt to sing, it is called -just like Hannah- by Kanvee Adams. I was in the choir as well, at a point in time, they used to take me to various churches to sing” she says.

With her background in singing in the choir, Anitram would go on to start her professional music career in 2016 when she signed to ALM records. At the

time, she was 16 years of age and was still in high school. The label was her first introduction to music as a profession and it provided her access to stars like late Liberian legend Quincy B who was her label mate.

After an inconsistent spell due to demands of academic life, she left the label. In 2018, she finished high school and resumed her music career, switching the label for a management service. At the time, she recorded “sorry” which garnered her traction. In 2019 she signed with Adonis Records, putting out tracks that gained traction but after a while she left again due to academic work.

However, since her graduation from university in May of this year, Anitram is back with a renewed vigor and a higher desire for music. “I am back! My journey so far has only made me better. Challenges or not, I will make music, I am in this music thing fully”

Anitram’s “off/on” relationship with music has largely been as a result of challenges she has faced in her music journey, with the major challenge being lack of adequate finance for the music and the fact that she had to divide her time between her music and her academics as she pursued a degree.

Anitram describes her sound as Afro-RnB, a sound that merges two genres as it blends afro-beats melodies to the voice texture and sonic technicalities of an RnB singer. Despite the fact that her base sound is Afro-RnB, Anitram can, and has on many occasion shown the capability to make song in other genres including pop, trap, soul and dancehall.

Speaking on her return, she said “I have a talent I believe the world needs to see it, my fans should expect more of Anitram, more music and more visuals. I am back.....



Liberian Snacks

Liberian food is an important element of West African cuisine history because the country has the longest tradition of baking and producing pastries and cakes. Particularly mouthwatering are the many kinds of freshly baked bread that are available for purchase in the morning. Some breads are more like cornbread, while others are more like banana bread or rice bread.



LIBERIAN *Corn Bread*


Cornbread from Liberia is a warm, buttery, and tender type of bread that can be eaten for breakfast, dessert, or as a snack all on its own. In order to prepare cornbread, one must combine corn meal, milk, flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder in a mixing bowl using a whisk. After the ingredients for the batter have been combined, it is poured into a pan that has been oiled, then placed in an oven that has been preheated and baked for twenty-five minutes, or until it is golden brown. Put a toothpick through the center of your cornbread to see whether it's done. It is ready when the toothpick comes out without any residue. Sweet cornbread is a traditional dessert in Liberia, and it is traditionally consumed as a snack or desert.

LIBERIAN *Rice Bread*

Rice bread, which is traditionally made in Liberia, is a popular choice for a snack across the country. Liberian rice bread is similar to banana bread in that it is a rice-based banana bread with a moist, dense texture that tastes like ripe fruit.

Rice flour or rice cereal is a common ingredient in the bread's various iterations. However, if you do not have rice flour or rice cereal, you can prepare the rice for baking by pounding it in a mortar with a pestle, and then sifting it to remove the larger pieces of rice. The rice must be finely milled until it has a powdery consistency. The rice flour, ripe plantains that have been mashed, butter, eggs, baking soda, sugar, salt, and water are combined with grated ginger to form a combination that will be baked into a snack that is simple and quick to make.



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KONOLA ACADEMY

The Wiah's Story

Konola Academy is a private residential high school that was founded in 1935 by international missionaries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Located in Cinta Township, the heart of Margibi, the school has produced outstanding leaders in line with its mission, which is to nurture the next generation of principled, compassionate, and intellectually curious leaders.

Originally built as a boarding school for only boys, it has since expanded to include students of both sexes and all walks of life from across the country. And while Konola Academy gained a reputation as a top institution for educating future Liberian leaders, in recent years, the school has been faced with numerous challenges, however, a couple -Dr Peter Wiah(Phd) and Dr Nuwo Wiah (MD)- are working to return the school to its former glory.

The couple who studied and lived in Canada and the United states are Liberians who decided to move back home to volunteer and make a difference through helping the educational system. Dr Peter Wiah (PhD) currently serves in the role as principal of the school, while his wife Dr Nowo Wiah (MD) runs the healthcare center and helps in the administration.

Since resuming his position as principal in 2019, the school has made significant strides through his leadership. Thus far, the school has improved its curriculum, increased enrollment from 35 students in 2019 to 150 students in 2021 and has undertaken a project to build a science lab.

The school has also built a clinic, which is the third largest healthcare center in the county, and established a work-school program to enable low earning student earn an education. The Liberia Exhibit sat down with the couple to talk about their journey thus far

What influenced you to come back?

I came back because we must give back to the country. I am a Liberian raised by missionaries overseas, it's not enough to just sit and criticize from abroad. I have to ask myself what I have done to fix things. When I speak on Liberia, I don't want to talk about just the problems, I want to talk about the solutions and what I have done. In years to come I want my name to live on through the work I have done

What are the challenges you faced running a mission school in Margibi?

There are many challenges; societal attitude towards paying fees is a challenge, parents also struggle to pay school fees. This is coupled with issues as regards funding to run the school.

We are also far from the city, thus we get less access to students. When I came, there was no science lab. I want to be able to teach biology and the student should know what amoeba is, they should be able to see it through the microscope. We can't keep doing education in a vacuum, the theory is good but practical knowledge is missing. That is why I am currently focused on building a science lab. The curriculum that also doesn't demarcate between art and science students, thus it is a struggle for students as they are required to do all the courses.

How do you deal with students from poorer backgrounds?

We have a work-study program for students whose parents can't afford to pay their fees. In the program, you come to school with your parents, we sign an agreement for you to work for 2 hours every day to cover your fees. Your parents only buy your uniform and books.

Tell me about the clinic

When I first arrived, she (Dr Nuwo) asked me about the school clinic, I told her the school didn't have a clinic as at then. Prior to the healthcare center, I had to take students that are sick all the way to Kakata to the hospital there. So she moved down and we built the clinic. The clinic is currently the third largest health center in the county and it is for the community.

Who runs the clinic and provides medicine

She runs the clinic, she is the Medical Doctor, and I am just a Ph.D. holder. We got a donor to help us with the building of the clinic, but the school is responsible for the medicine

What is your dream?

My dream is a university, this is a big area, and we have 87 acres of land. Our alumni in high places. Konola Academy is supposed to be better. If we have a university students can stay right here and go from high school straight to university.



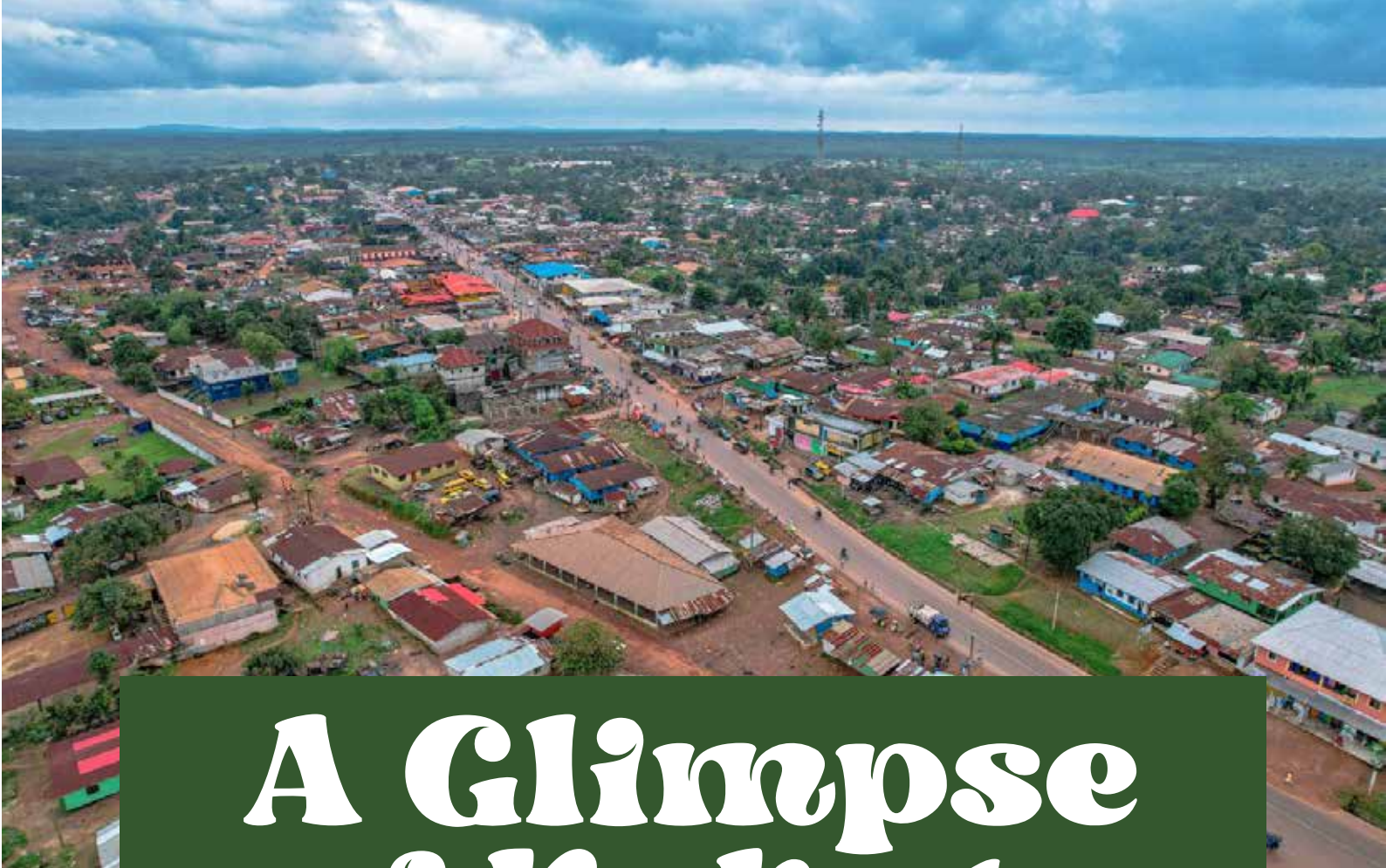


Gibi Mountain

- PICTURESQUE OF NATURE -



Gibi Mountain is a mountain that can be found in Margibi County and can be reached by car in about two hours from the nation's capital city of Monrovia. The highest point on it is situated at an altitude of 320 meters above mean sea level. The people who live in the area around the mountain hold the belief that it is a sacred place. Thus, to a large degree it is not utilized for agricultural purposes by the community. In addition, the Gibi Fault Prospect may be found in the Gibi Mountain region. It is yet another one of Liberia's numerous gold opportunities, and it also has the potential to be a source of diamonds and base metals.



A Glimpse of Kakata

The city of Kakata serves as the capital of Margibi County in Liberia. It is accessible by the Du River Bridge. It is also a transit point located in the center of Liberia's historically significant natural rubber cultivation zone. The city is sometimes referred to by its nickname, "Kak City."

Because of its centralized location, Kakata serves as a crossroads between the nation's capital and more remote farming communities in the countryside. It is estimated that rubber plantations cover more than one hundred thousand acres of land around the city. The primary economic activities in Kakata include the mining of rubber and diamonds as well as the cultivation of rice for subsistence.

There are several elementary and high schools in Kakata. The Booker Washington Institute (BWI), which was Liberia's first vocational and agricultural school, is one of the most prominent institutions. In addition, it is the location of the Kakata Rural Teacher Training Institute (KRTTI), which prepares Liberian teachers for elementary, and junior high levels of education.

Many of the people who live in Kakata either travel to Monrovia to bring products back to sell in Kakata or travel to the rural areas to bring product back to Kakata sell.

To many, Kakata serves as a connecting point between the urban and rural areas of Liberia. While the Kpelle and the Bassa are the most prominent groups, Kakata is comprised of individuals from all of Liberia's diverse ethnic and cultural groupings.

The city is connected to Monrovia by a paved highway; it is also connected to the Firestone Natural Rubber Company in the south by a dirt dusty road called the 26th Gate Road; and it is connected to Careysburg by a paved road called the 15th Gate Plantation Road.

Kakata is also connected to the Gibi Mountain and Gibi District in the east by the dusty Borlorla route, and at long last, the paved road from Monrovia continues northeast to Salala and Gbarnga.

DONNE MUSIC

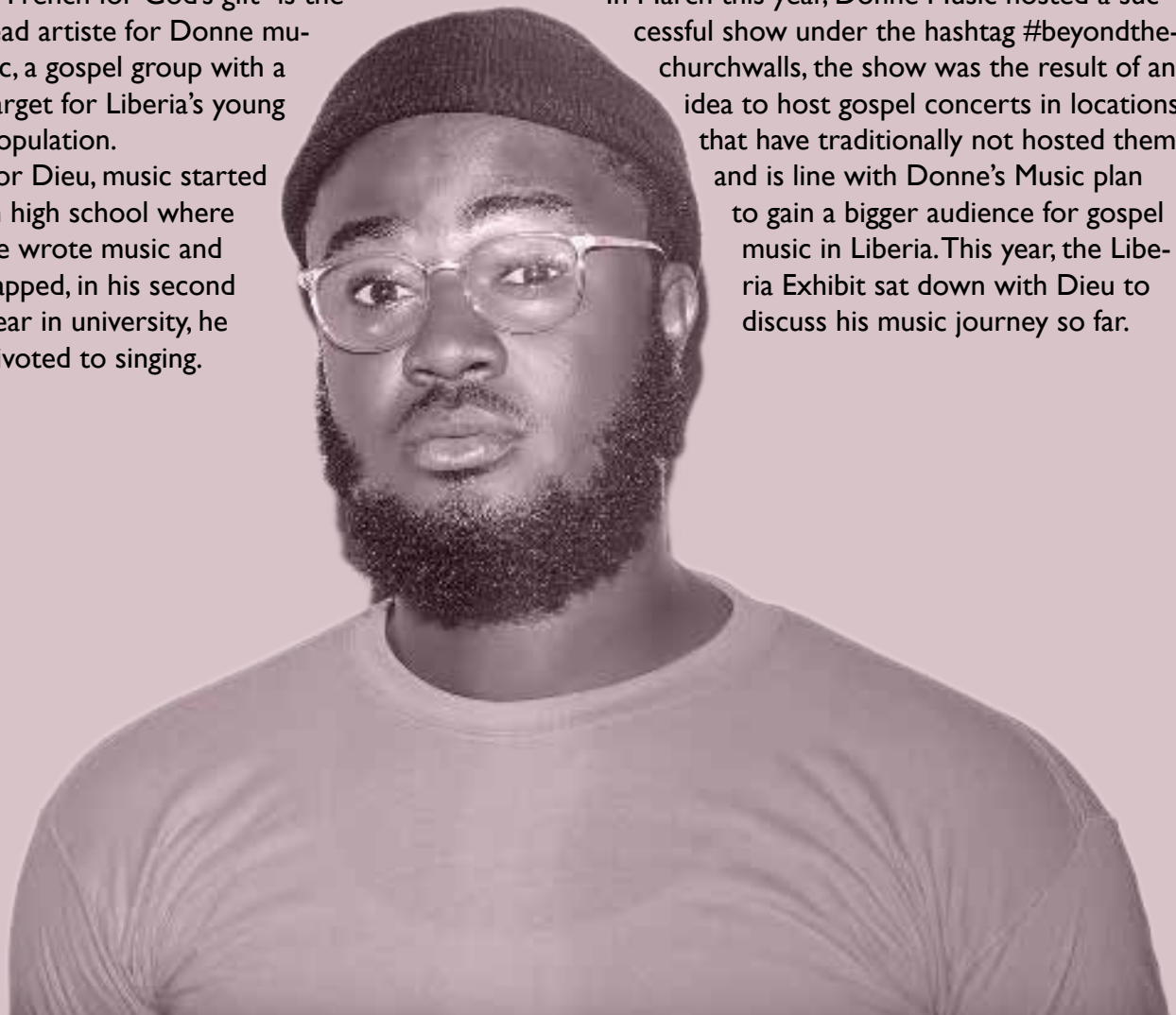
THE STARTUP LEADER PUSHING HIS FAITH THROUGH GOSPEL MUSIC

For many, Dieudonne Perry is the young man that leads SMART Liberia, a social venture that enables and connects young leaders and youth organizations to drive social change by empowering them with experiential skills, capacity building, access to funding, and relevant tools. However, for many others, Dieudonne -which is French for God's gift- is the lead artiste for Donne music, a gospel group with a target for Liberia's young population.

For Dieu, music started in high school where he wrote music and rapped, in his second year in university, he pivoted to singing.

However Dieu cites, giving his life to Christ in 2013 and a word of affirmation by his friend in 2017 as his inspiration to dive into gospel music. With time, he has developed into a gifted instrumentalist, amazing vocalist and a popular music director in Liberia's budding gospel music scene.

In March this year, Donne Music hosted a successful show under the hashtag #beyondthechurchwalls, the show was the result of an idea to host gospel concerts in locations that have traditionally not hosted them, and is line with Donne's Music plan to gain a bigger audience for gospel music in Liberia. This year, the Liberia Exhibit sat down with Dieu to discuss his music journey so far.



What is Donne Music?

Donne Music is a Christian based music ministry that spreads the gospel of Jesus Christ through amazing melodies. Donne Music is also the music arm of 3M Gospel, a ministry that aims to raise a generation of young Christian believers who are bold, transparent and intentional about cultivating an authentic relationship with Christ

At what moment did you decide to go on this journey of music?

I've always been crazy about music. I started writing songs when I was in high school up to university when I started singing. In 2013, I got saved and started my relationship with Jesus Christ and everything changed.

In 2017, I had an encounter that gave me this moment that you've asked about; prior to that moment, I was juggling "trying to be saved" and "trying to be cool" as defined by my young exuberant friends and it was quite the struggle of identity.

One day in 2017, I was hanging out with some friends, and one of my friends who was drunk walked to me and said "Dieu, your faith and your

dedication to it inspires me. I'm not like you yet but please don't stop being you." It was at this moment that I decided that I was going to dedicate myself to my faith and I decided I was going to use my gift of music to tell others of my relationship with Jesus and I have been doing that ever since.

What does music mean to you?

Music means more than I can put into words. It helps me express my innermost feelings, fears, beliefs. I can sing what I can't say. Most times, music is my escape from all the cares of the world, in fact, music conjures up my emotions in a way that many other things can't. Most importantly, music is my favorite way of communicating with and about my faith

What inspires your music?

My music is primarily inspired by the Holy Spirit. Other times, my music is inspired by real life happenings and interactions. There are also times that I get insights from studying the word of God. I also play the piano, so I just get on it and play with the keys and watch them catch the music.



Why the hashtag #beyondthechurch walls Society has stereotyped the church and fellowship to an extent that people are staying away and I believe it's about time we changed the narrative and extend our fellowship and invitation beyond the physical walls of the church.

I also believe that there is so much more that can be done once we step outside the walls of "the physical church." Beyond the church walls allows us to reach more people. It allows us to spread the gospel extensively without any limitations to the four walls of a "church building." I also believe that there are more souls to be won outside the church than in it

How do you balance profitability and ministration in the music?

I have an amazing team who works on the business side of things. They make sure that we build plans and strategies to monetize the content we create as much as possible. Some of our income avenues are streams from music, merchandising, bookings, song-writing, content creations and advertising. As the 3M Gospel ministry unfolds, multiple income streams

will be developed but my part is to stay connected to God, write amazing songs and continue to paint the picture clear for my team to see. They see it, build a business engine and run with it.

How would you define success in your music journey?

This is very direct for me. When someone says "Your music brought me to know Jesus Christ" or "Your music inspired me to build a strong relationship with Jesus Christ", I have succeeded.

What's next for Donne Music?

So much is coming, I am currently working on my EP and the songs are amazing - I can't overemphasize that. The goal is to produce professionally, release strategically, gain traction and do what we have been called to do; make amazing music and inspire people. Given the markets we're in though, we want to understand distribution, licensing and all the technical nuances of the music industry before our major releases, so my music team is taking courses with the Music Business Academy for Africa to prepare us for the business side of the music. But watch out for us, more is coming.



Booker Washington Institute

The Booker T. Washington Institute (BWI) is located in Margibi, and it is a world-class institution that provides education, training, professional development, and consultancy solutions in technical, management, and leadership areas to the public and private sectors.

The Institute (BWI) which was established in 1929 is a dream of late Liberian President Charles D. B. King who established it with the overarching goal of establishing an institution centered on the training of young middle level technicians and professionals to contribute to Liberia's construction and development endeavors.

The Institute, named after the late African American Economic Right Leader, Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), is one of Liberia's most prestigious and premier vocational high school and technical institution.

The Booker Washington Institute (BWI) currently owns and is located on 1,086 acres of land donated to President King by the tribal chiefs of the Kakata locale for the establishment of the Institute's campus facilities. In 1929, the school opened after its construction was funded by the Firestone Natural Rubber Company and the Phelps Stokes Fund.

Throughout history, BWI has been a significant part of the solution to the national shortage of trained middle level technicians, aspiring engineers, architects, agriculturists, businessmen and businesswomen, and national leaders.

Prior to 1980, the school was one of several in the country to take part in the Army Student Training Program. At the time, the program was

used to train officers for the Liberian Armed Forces, and the institution's board of trustees was run by Americans until the Liberian government took control in 1953.

Furthermore, with around 1,500 students, the school was the largest secondary school in the country for a portion of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In addition, after the University of Liberia was attacked by Charles Taylor's forces in 2003, it was the only college open in the country.

The school currently offers two programs, namely; the Regular Vocational and Technical Program and the Accelerated Vocational Training Program. Agriculture, Automotive, Electricity, Electronics, Building Trade (Carpentry, Drafting, Masonry, and Plumbing), Business (Secretarial Science, Accounting), and Domestic Science courses are available in these programs.

Over time, BWI has made enormous contributions to Liberia's human resource development over its eighty-five-year history and is widely regarded as one of the country's model centers of excellence in education. The institution is now working toward transitioning from a Vocational Institute to a full-fledged Technical College, with the overarching goal of becoming a national reference point for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as well as a regional and global hub for TVET known for its Integrity, Excellence, Discipline, Honesty, and Professional Development.





ROBERTS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

“ its challenges and the threat facing Liberia’s
access to international Aviation “

Liberia’s only international airport, Roberts International Airport (RIA), is located about 35 miles (56 kilometers) outside of Monrovia, the country’s capital. The airport, which was named after Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the first president of Liberia, is also referred to as Robertsfeld.

The airport is the busiest and most important aviation facility in the country. Spriggs Payne Airport, the country’s secondary airport and the closest to Monrovia’s downtown, has the only other paved runway in the country but has been without regular commercial service since 2014.

During World War II, the United States Government constructed what is now RIA as a military installation. In 1941, the Liberian government reached an agreement with Pan American Airways (PAN AM) to turn RIA into a civil and commercial airport. When PAN AM gave up airport management in 1984, the Liberian government took over operations. Since then, the airport has been under governance.

Damage to RIA was extensive during the civil con-

flict in Liberia. Bombs destroyed the runway and severely damaged the airport’s main terminal. Because of problems with both the runway and the terminal, the airport had to be closed. After a brief hiatus, the airport reopened for business in 1997 after transforming a freight building into a passenger terminal.

As a part of the airport’s improvement and extension plan, a brand new passenger terminal opened in December 2017. The new terminal is a 5,000 square meter, two-story structure and it can handle about 320,000 passengers per year.

Despite the airport’s relatively new terminal, it’s been struggling with a number of issues as of late. During the month of September, Brussels Airlines (SN) cancelled all flights to and from Monrovia Roberts International Airport (ROB). However, just a day after its cancellation, the airline said that it is restarting flights from Europe to Liberia after assurances from Liberian officials that any difficulties had been resolved. According to an earlier statement from SN Brussels, it was compelled to cancel



its flights between Brussels and Monrovia because the Roberts International Airport had certain safety issues.

Unfortunately, the safety issues are not exclusive to the Brussels airline. In February 2022, a Royal Air Maroc aircraft scheduled to land at Roberts International Airport (RIA) was forced to abort the landing due to a dark runway at the RIA. The runway lights had gone out just as the jet was landing, so it had to make an emergency return.

SN Brussels likewise had to cancel an April landing at RIA due to the presence of a dark runway. After getting close enough to the ground to touch down, the pilot abruptly decided not to land at Roberts International Airport owing to a lack of electricity at the airport and on the runway, prompting the plane to reroute to Freetown, Sierra Leone. And as of March 2022, Air France no longer flies to Liberia.

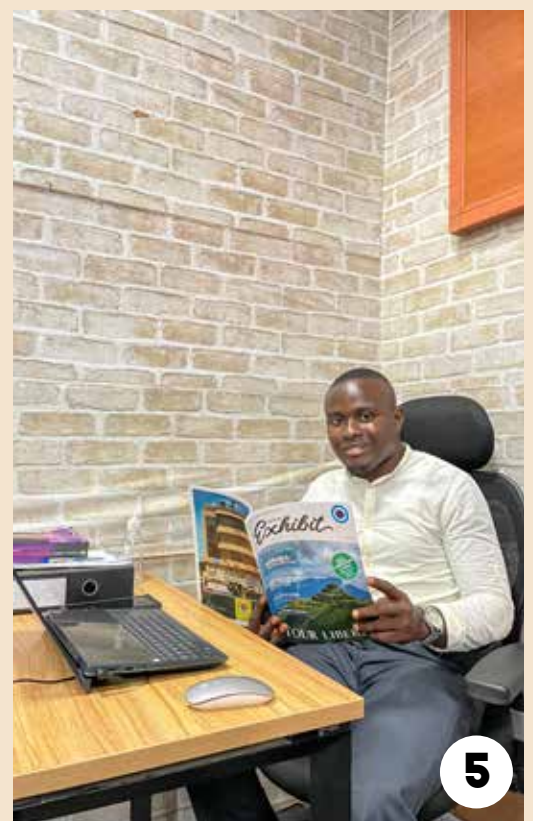
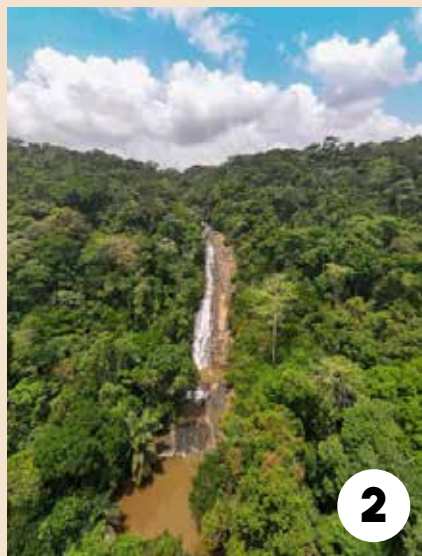
To save Roberts International Airport (RIA), an ad hoc committee of the Senate was formed to investigate issues harming the airport's operations. In their

report, the ad hoc committee has proposed both outsourcing airport management and holding a public hearing with experts to decide the best course of action necessary to address concerns affecting airport management.

To address the airport's electrical needs, the committee has also proposed building a solar field that conforms to international regulations. However, not a single recommendation has been put into action.

In recent times, the Airport problems were re-emphasized by RIA's acting managing director, Mr. Martin Hayes. According to him, around 800 gallons of diesel are burned every day to run the airport on generators, making this a significant burden for his administration. Despite the challenges, it is established that the country will need to resolve its challenges to the airport if it is to maintain its access to international aviation services.

TOUR LIBERIA



1. Coconut coastline in Harper, Maryland County

2. Birthtaking waterfall in Gbarpolu County

3. Fishermen returns home from fishing

4. Harvesting Country rice in Foya, Lofa County

5. EXHIBIT PHOTO OF THE YEAR

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