

Liberia : Women Building a Path to Prosperity

After 14 years of conflict, Liberia is on the road to recovery. The ILO has joined forces with the government and the private sector to help kick start the economy with a road building programme, where nearly half the workers are women.

Script:

Women building a path to prosperity. In this road construction project outside Liberia's capital, Monrovia, nearly half the workers are women. And many of them are in positions of responsibility.

Olive W Lawn, Construction Supervisor

We are setting a drain. We have to take measurements and make sure that these are accurate, because if it is not accurate, we have problems with the water.

Olive has been on a three week training course run by the ILO where she learnt technical and management skills – part of a Dutch funded project to stimulate Liberia's economy shattered after the 14 year conflict.

Three quarters of the population live on less than a dollar a day and jobs are a crucial building block for the country's recovery.

Last year Liberia's President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf – Africa's first elected female head of state - visited another ILO road project in Mt Barclay.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President Liberia

The road will enable farmers to get their crops to market, they are talking about helping small businesses along the way so that in itself will enable people to have an income, so to me it will make a big contribution to poverty reduction.

Today the road is built and used as a main thoroughfare to the local market. Furthermore, for every job created on the road, five jobs have been created off the road.

That's the plan for Bensonville too, where the road will link a local village with an agricultural training school. The project has not only created jobs for local people but also instilled a sense of pride.

Olive

We learnt how to respect each other, whether young or old, male or female so we believe we are all mature, all responsible people so if we are given a task (everyone respects the opposition and)if I give a task you do what you are told to do.

It is a team spirit that will serve Liberians well as they work together after years of conflict to rebuild their nation.