

**“From Trash to Treasure-reducing plastic waste by adding value to plastic project,
LIBERIA**

**Progress Report on
Communities Engagement Activities**



Support from: UNDP-GEF
Implemented by: Champions for Nature Conservation Liberia (CNCL)
Implementing Partner: iCAMPUS and Unipod, University of Liberia

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INTRODUCTION

Plastic pollution is not just a global crisis—it is a Liberian crisis. From the clogged drains of Monrovia to the plastic-choked wetlands of SKD Boulevard, the evidence is clear: our environment is under siege. The consequences are dire—polluted water sources, degraded ecosystems, and increased vulnerability to climate change. But there is hope. And that hope lies in collective action.¹

In Monrovia alone, plastic waste accounts for 14% of all waste, with over 1.3 million kilograms generated daily. Shockingly, 84% of this waste is not properly managed. Our wetlands—from Lake Piso to Mesurado—are choking under the weight of plastic debris. These ecosystems are not just beautiful; they are vital for flood control, water purification, and biodiversity. Against this background, this project offers a high-impact pathway to environmental conservation and an inclusive economic solution. Through this project, the JV (CNCL and ICAMPUS) seeks to reduce environmental pollution, stimulate youth-led green entrepreneurship, and establish a replicable model of sustainable plastic waste management in Liberia. The solution aligns with both national environmental policies and global sustainable development goals, particularly those related to climate action, decent work, and responsible consumption and production. By combining youth capacity building, advanced technology, and circular economy growth.

As part of the waste management project, Champions for Nature Conservation Liberia (CNCL), in collaboration with iCAMPUS and Unipod, and with support from UNDP Liberia, conducted an in-person community engagement initiative across eight communities in Paynesville. This engagement brought together community leaders, local women, men, youth groups, and ordinary residents, strengthening local participation in environmental sustainability with a particular focus on plastic waste management. The activities aimed to mobilize residents, build leadership capacity, raise awareness, recruit Eco-Champions in each community, provide essential materials, and identify sites for waste collection infrastructure. All these efforts were geared toward promoting proper plastic waste management practices and enhancing community involvement in environmental sanitation initiatives.

During the engagement in the eight communities—Police Academy, ELWA, Duport Road, AB Tolbert Road, VOA, Fendell, Jacob Town, and GSA Road—the project introduced a financial incentive for plastic collection and Community members are now receiving \$0.35 USD or its equivalent of \$65 LD for every kilogram of plastic gathered and delivered to the hubs constructed in AB Tolbert Road and Duport Communities. This financial strategy has encouraged community members to participate in the project and helps promote a cleaner environment.

¹ <https://www.undp.org/liberia/blog/ending-plastic-pollution-liberias-call-action-world-environment-day-2025>

COMMUNITIES ENGAGEMENT, AWARENESS, RECRUITMENT, AND DISTRIBUTION APPROACH



Meeting with Duport Road Community Elders Council

1. Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM)

Over the period time the project team focus on behavior change via direct, community-level engagement rather than simple media campaigns. We have provided explanation through the various town hall meetings on how personal contact and practical tools can alter waste habits. What where the key concepts: by Identifying barriers, benefits, prompts, norms, we provided incentives for small holder plastic waste collectors thereby removing any and all structural obstacles.

The exercise kicks off from February to May 2026 in each of the selected communities. A total of sixty-four (64) individuals, including 24 Eco-champions, participated in the initiative. These Eco-champions are working closely with CNCL on the project with support from community leaders. As part of the program, the 24 Eco-champions receive a monthly stipend throughout the project's first phase period. Additionally, the team conducted an in-person awareness campaign and distributed essential tools across the project's eight (8) communities in Paynesville to foster the project activities.

The table below depicts the categories of EC0-CHAMPIONS within the communities by set.

N o	Community	Eco-champion			Items distributed to Eco-champions and the communities	
	Description	Male	Femal e	Total	Eco-champion	Community
1	VOA Community	1	2	3	In the eight communities, the following items were given to each eco-champion (T-shirt, Jacket, Hand glove, Nose mask, Headcap, Rain coat, & boot)	The following items were given: (Wheelbarrow, Shovel, Cutlass, Bucket, Moveable & Stationed wire bins, Rake, and large plastic bags to segregate waste)
2	ELWA Community		3	3		
3	Duport Road Community	1	2	3		
4	GSA Road		3	3		
5	Fendell Community	1	2	3		
6	AB. Tolbert Road Community	2	1	3		
7	Police Academy	1	2	3		
8	Jacob Town	1	2	3		
	Total			24		



The activities have strengthened community dialogue through meetings and consultations with community leaders, providing support to the project in their communities.



Pictorial: Fendell and Police Academy Communities

To operationalize the grassroots intervention, the project team recruited three (3) Eco-champions from each of the eight targeted communities to spearhead localized environmental initiatives. Backed by the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), these individuals served as central agents of change within their respective jurisdictions.

Grassroots Mobilization and Demographic Outreach

Eco-champions executed a systematic, door-to-door environmental sensitization campaign across all eight communities. The outreach universally engaged key demographic cohorts, including youth, women, men, and students. Core Objectives: The campaigns addressed Liberia's critical plastic pollution crisis by fostering environmental literacy and shifting local ecological norms. Champions delivered evidence-based insights on plastic waste mitigation techniques to various community members. Our training prioritized source-separated waste collection to optimize recycling pipelines. The educational focus linked individual household sorting habits directly to Paynesville city municipal sanitation and environmental preservation goals. The team deployed targeted informational graphics, including educational posters and brochures. Spatial Placement: Materials were strategically installed in high-density, high-visibility public spaces to reinforce behavioral prompts.



A few photos from the awareness campaign in communities and public spaces

During the community engagement implementation period, working tools were distributed in the project's eight communities to support effective operations and ensure the practical implementation of project activities.

Picture: Working tools for project 8 communities

Meanwhile, the working tools were distributed to the community elders, who took full responsibility for them and ensured that they were used for their intended purpose.



CNCL, Executive Director, turning over tools to the VOA community Eco-Champions in the VOA community

ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Community Meetings:** Held in all 8 communities, fostering collaboration and shared responsibility.
- **Eco-Champion Recruitment:** 24 eco-champions (3 per community) were selected to spearhead environmental initiatives.
- **Tool Distribution:** Working tools were provided to each community, enabling eco-champions to carry out activities effectively
- **Awareness campaign:** Conducted environmental awareness and sensitization activities in all 8 communities, focusing on plastic waste management.

OUTCOMES

- **Enhanced Participation:** Meetings increased awareness and collective ownership of environmental issues.
- **Leadership Development:** Eco-champions emerged as role models, inspiring others to take part in sustainability efforts.
- **Capacity Building:** Distribution of tools ensured that communities had the resources to act, not just the knowledge
- **Visibility:** Flyers and Posters placed in strategic area to sensitize individuals

CHALLENGES

- Need for continuous training and mentorship for eco-champions.
- Ensuring long-term sustainability of activities without external support.



CONCLUSION

From February – May 2026, the reporting period was productive, with significant advancements in community engagement, raising awareness, distributing tools, and identifying suitable locations for waste collection infrastructure. These activities have played a crucial role in furthering the goals of the Plastic Waste Management Project and fostering cleaner, healthier communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Community dwellers recommended the following:

- Scale up engagement to additional communities.
- Provide ongoing training for eco-champions to strengthen leadership skills.
- Develop sustainability plans to ensure activities continue beyond project timelines.

Pictorial: CNCL, PDM presenting working Tools to the GSA Road chairperson. Women leaders in Fendell received working tools.

CNCL Community Mobilizer presenting tools in the ELWA Community