



## Trip Report: Pathways for Ensuring Access to Assets

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**Liberia: March 9-21, 2009**

**Traveler: Cheryl Doss**

**Purpose:** The key goals of the visit were to identify the students who would attend Makerere University in the fall, to review the results of the community visits, and to finalize the individual/household survey questions for the Liberian context.

### **Itinerary and Report**

Monday, March 9, 2009

Arrived in Monrovia at 3:45 pm.

Travelled to Governance Commission (GC) Office. Met with members of the project team, Jeanette Carter and Kuluboh Jensen to plan the meetings for the two weeks.

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Met at the GC offices.

One of the tasks for this trip is to determine the students who will go to Makerere for an MA degree through the project. We read through the applications and decided who to interview.

Visited the University to see the new offices for the Research Institute and arranged a time to meet with the new University President.

Wednesday, March 11, 2009 National Holiday, all offices closed.

Jeanette Carter and I met and discussed the findings from the community surveys.

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Jeanette Carter and I met with staff from ARD regarding their projects on land tenure in Nimba and Sinoe Counties. They have just completed detailed community profiles in four communities. Thus, we compared notes and insights regarding land tenure issues.

Friday, March 13, 2009

Cheryl Doss, Jeanette Carter and Kuluboh Jensen met with staff at LIBTRALO to discuss translation of key terms for the surveys into local Liberian languages and Liberian English. We will ask them to come up with a glossary of terms in Liberian English and a number of the local languages on land issues. The glossary can describe both the terms and the meanings.

Met with a member of the Governance Commission and former Minister of Agriculture to discuss the overall research project and to find ways to channel our research results to the policy process.

Cheryl Doss, Jeanette Carter, and Kuluboh Jenson spent the afternoon with the survey questionnaire, to adapt it to Liberia.

Saturday, March 14, 2009

am. Met with staff at the Liberian Institute of Statistics and GIS (LISGIS) to discuss collaboration on sampling and to obtain the census questionnaires and maps. We will return later in the week to see what is available.

Paid our respects to the new President of the University, Emmett Dennis. Will schedule a meeting later in the week.

Met with faculty at the Business School at the University of Liberia. We discussed the current situation at the University and the various opportunities for further study for UL students.

Sunday:

Met with Jeanette Carter to discuss budgets and scheduling.

Monday, March 15, 2009

Travelled with Jeanette Carter, Kuluboh Jensen and Othello Brandy to two communities along the St. Paul River. In Harrisburg, we met briefly with the clerk for the Commissioner. We discussed some of the basic characteristics the community (size, facilities, etc.) and set a time to return for a focus group. In White Plains, a larger town, we met with the town clerk. We presented our project and arranged to return to meet with a group of women from that community. The women that we met played an important role in the community and many spoke English relatively well. Othello Brandy provided some history of the area, including the agricultural history, as we travelled.

Tuesday, March 16, 2009

Travelled with Jeanette Carter and Kuluboh Jensen to Warhn, a community behind Salala Rubber Plantation. It is about an hour and a half off the main road, on very poor dirt roads. We met with the DC for that District and his clerk. He told us about various land conflicts that the communities are having with outsiders encroaching on their land. All of the land is held in customary tenure, other than the rubber plantation.

Back in Monrovia, we went to LISGIS to obtain maps and information about enumeration areas. The information for sampling will be available and maps listing the towns and the census enumeration areas can be made available.

Wednesday, March 17, 2009

Jeanette Carter, Othello Brandy and I interviewed five applicants who are interested in going to Makerere University to study. We selected two, with one alternate. Both of the selected students will study Forestry. Two potential students were interested in studying agricultural economics, but had a background in agriculture and insufficient economics.

We met with Dan Whyner, at USAID, for lunch to discuss the progress on the project and the types of outputs that would be useful to him.

Finally, we met with the Minister of Agriculture. He will provide us with some additional documents and other contacts of those who have been involved in the agricultural surveys. We were particularly interested in how the Ministry of Agriculture asks about various plots or farms within the household. In addition, we discussed a variety of programs that may be appropriate for people working in the Ministry of Agriculture who wish further training. They are expecting to have some funding to provide training at other universities in Africa.

Thursday, March 18, 2009

Worked in GC office in the morning and sorted through documents obtained earlier on the trip and determined what we still needed. We are trying to collect a range of questionnaires that have been used in Liberia in order to ensure that our questionnaire is appropriate for the Liberian context and that we can compare some of our results with data collected by others. These include the census questionnaire, the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey, the Demographic and Health Survey, and agricultural censuses, as well as specialized surveys by individual researchers.

Friday, March 19, 2009

Met with the President of the University of Liberia, Emmet Dennis. We discussed the project overall, the students who will be sent to Makerere University and other potential training partnerships and opportunities.

Went to LISGIS and obtained county maps of the six counties we are working in and the census questionnaire.

Met with staff at the World Food Program office. They administer the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey. We had a copy of their questionnaire, but were especially interested in whether they felt that it had been successful and whether they were making any changes to the questions before implementing the next round.

Met with staff at the UNDP office. They are initiating a Millenium Village project in Cocoya District of Bong County.

Saturday, March 20, 2009

Lunch with Jeanette Carter and Othello Brandy. Departed for Ghana and then the US.