

Enabling Social Innovation in Liberia

Country Snapshot



POWERED BY 1Family Foundation

Social innovation: "the processes and outcomes of developing novel approaches to address societal challenges facing people and planet." ¹

This snapshot represents a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key highlights from Liberia's social innovation ecosystem.

Direct focus on social innovation Connected but indirect focus on social innovation No focus on social innovation

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Official Definition of Social Innovation



There is **no legal or formal working definition of social innovation in Liberia**. Government documents and public actors occasionally reference *innovation, community-driven development, and inclusive growth*, but without a consistent definition or policy framing

Government Body for Social Innovation



No dedicated ministry, agency, or taskforce for social innovation. Relevant functions are dispersed across ministries and agencies, including:

- Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MSME development, entrepreneurship).
- Ministry of Youth and Sports (youth entrepreneurship and skills).
- Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (community and social programmes).

Government Strategy for Social Innovation



No standalone strategy. **Social-innovation-relevant elements appear within:**

- National Development Plan (2018–2023; 2024–2029): decentralization, service delivery, youth employment, digitalization.
- Agenda 2030 implementation and SDG-aligned programming across ministries.

Policies, Laws & Regulations



- **Decentralization Policy (2012)**: enables community-led service delivery and local experimentation.
- **Associations Law (revised 2014)**: provides legal basis for NGOs, cooperatives, and community organisations.
- **Public Financial Management Act (amended 2019)**: enables donor-funded social and community programmes.
- **National ICT Policy (2019–2024)**: supports digital inclusion and innovation infrastructure.

No legal category or status for social enterprises.

Official Statistics



No official statistics collected on social innovation or social enterprises. Administrative data exist for NGOs and cooperatives through registration bodies, but without analytical aggregation.

Government Programs

No programmes explicitly labelled as “social innovation.” Relevant adjacent programmes include:

- Youth and MSME entrepreneurship support (training, grants, incubation).
- Community-Driven Development and decentralised service delivery initiatives.
- Digital ID and mobile-money-enabled service delivery programmes.

ECOSYSTEM

Stakeholders

Key actors include international NGOs, UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF), donor-funded innovation hubs, and local civil-society organisations. Notable examples: iCampus Liberia, Accountability Lab Liberia, and youth entrepreneurship NGOs.

Networks

No formal national social-innovation network. Loose, donor-driven networks exist around youth entrepreneurship, governance innovation, cooperatives, and digital skills.

Support Organisations (Non-financial)

Main types include innovation hubs, accelerators, civil-society organisations, international NGOs, and UN agencies providing training, mentoring, and convening support.

Support Initiatives

Common initiatives: entrepreneurship bootcamps, civic-innovation labs, digital-skills training, community problem-solving programmes. Most are donor-funded and concentrated in Monrovia.

Collaboration

Multi-stakeholder partnerships (government–NGO–donor) are common, particularly in youth employment, health, education, and governance innovation. No dedicated national social-innovation events or awards identified.

FINANCE

Financing Schemes

No consolidated national estimate of funding dedicated to social innovation. **Financing is fragmented and largely donor-driven.**

Key Types of Financing

- **Public:** limited government grants for MSMEs and youth programmes.
- **International:** bilateral and multilateral donors (UN, World Bank, EU, USAID).
- **Finance sector:** microfinance institutions and savings groups.
- **Philanthropy/NGOs:** foundation and INGO grants.
- **Instruments:** grants, concessional loans, microcredit, seed funding.



Inclusiveness of Financing

Many programmes target women, youth, and rural populations. However, access remains uneven, short-term, and largely dependent on donor priorities. Limited evidence of targeted financing for people with disabilities or minority groups.

SOCIETY



Public Awareness ✓

The term “social innovation” is rarely used in public discourse. Media and policy discussions focus instead on entrepreneurship, youth employment, community development, and digital skills.



Research ✓ 🔗

No established academic field focused on social innovation. Research is mainly practitioner-led and produced by international organisations, donors, and NGOs.



Education & Human Capital ✓ 🔗

No formal degree programmes focused specifically on social innovation. Elements of innovation and entrepreneurship appear in university business, ICT, and NGO-led training programmes. No national estimates of graduates with relevant credentials.

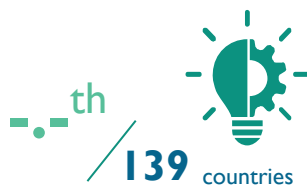


Entrepreneurship



EIU Business Environment:

Liberia ranks in the lowest global tier



Global Innovation Index:

Liberia scores very low on innovation inputs and outputs



GEM: Entrepreneurship activity exists but social entrepreneurship is not systematically measured.



Social & Environmental Consciousness



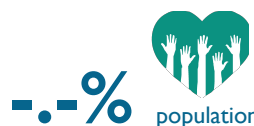
Solidarity

High levels of informal solidarity and helping behaviour.



Political Participation:

Low to moderate, improving since post-conflict stabilization.



Volunteering

Relatively strong in helping strangers and community support.



Sustainability

Low Environmental Performance Index ranking; limited institutional capacity for climate governance.