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Education for Sustainable Development: A Solution to Reduce Food Insecurities in Liberia

Krubah Sisuse

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how Education for Sustainable Development integrated into the current curriculum can reduce food insecurity among college and university students in Liberia.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, food insecurity, curriculum

Food security should be a reality for everyone globally, regardless of socioeconomic status. However, research shows that millions in Liberia live with food insecurity. Although there is food insecurity in developed countries, including the United States, federal programs are available to address the problem. Even though these programs are supplementary, they alleviate some of the burdens of food insecurity. However, based on research, Liberia does not have programs like the United States, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (United States Department of Agriculture, 2019). In addition, food insecurity causes substantial health issues because, in most cases, households must decide whether to purchase food, healthcare, medicine, pay rent, education, bills, or transportation.

Therefore, these challenges lead to insufficient funds for nutrient-dense food for good health and well-being. Moreover, food insecurity creates learning and developmental challenges for children. Despite the progress made globally, recent studies indicate that the number of people impacted by food insecurity has significantly increased from 112 million to almost 3.1 billion worldwide (FAO, 2022 & WFP, 2020). Liberia, a developing country, has had its share of challenges from a 14-year civil war that ended in 2003, an Ebola outbreak that concluded in 2016, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which has destroyed the economic infrastructure and social services.

As a result of these challenges, eighty-three percent of the Liberian population live on less than U.S. \$1.25 per day, 2.4 million people are facing hunger daily, and 30 percent of children are famished (FAO, 2022 & UNICEF, 2022). In addition to this, Liberia was a low-income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) below \$700 per capita in 2002, a purchasing power equivalence with extreme poverty, which has led to food insecurity, poor health, a lack of education, and reduced productivity (Mshoro, 2010). According to the World Bank, the annual percentage growth rate of GDP for 2021 was five percent (5%), recovering from a decline of 3.0% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2021). Liberia faces many challenges, from food insecurity, climate change, political polarization, COVID-19, criminal injustices, and socioeconomic inequality (Appiah et al., 2022). Though the United Nations, through the Food Agriculture Organization, the international community, and its leaders have worked assiduously to address these issues to improve citizens' lives, health, and well-being, food insecurity persists and impacts overall health. Moreover, food, a fundamental human rights issue, has yet to be resolved (OHCHR, 2010; Raponi, 2017). Therefore, this study aims to explore how Education for Sustainable Development integrated into the current curriculum can reduce food insecurity among college and university students in Liberia.

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