



TOGETHER LIBERIA

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Click image to [view project documentary](#) by Newhouse graduate student Chris Giamo.

Introduction

Please note, this document is intended to be viewed as a PDF

Together Liberia is a pilot media development project intended to empower local communicators to share their own stories through training, equipment donations and relationship building.

Together Liberia is comprised of professors and students from 5 US universities with the SI Newhouse School of Public Communications serving as the anchor institution. Other institutions included Duke University, University of North Carolina, University of Oregon and the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Together Liberia created teams to train Liberian students and professionals in storytelling, photography, media ethics, multimedia and web design. Over the course of nearly three months the US team leadership tested different approaches to training, making adjustments throughout the summer, building a knowledge base of “best practices” for future projects while benefiting current participants and trainers.

“What really got me interested is that you get to meet a lot of people, feel the experiences of a lot of people, to listen to their stories and to tell them to the rest of the world.”

– [Clarence Nah](#), Liberian Participant

Participants were trained and produced stories that were published in the local and international media.

Together Liberia is the brainchild of Newhouse School Asst. Professor Ken Harper and Center for Peace, Democracy & Development Executive Director Michael Keating.



A group photo from the training conducted in rural [Rivercess County](#), Liberia.

10,000 Foot View

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

- SI Newhouse School of Public Communications, *Syracuse University*
- Center for Democracy and Development, *University of Massachusetts Boston*
- Robertson Scholars Program, *Duke University*
- School of Journalism and Communication, *University of Oregon*
- School of Journalism and Mass Communication, *University of North Carolina*
- Mass Communication Department, *University of Liberia*
- Liberia Media Initiative For Peace Democracy and Development, *Liberia*
- New Democrat Newspaper, Liberia | [View Site](#)
- FrontPage Africa, Liberia | [View Site](#)
- iLab Liberia, Liberia | [View Site](#)
- Ushahidi | [View Site](#)

METRICS

- 5 US based academic institutions | [See team bios](#)
- 5 Liberian academic/media institutions
- 5 US student participants | See team bios
- 21 "StoryCorps" style stories produced | [Hear conversations](#)
- 19 participant stories produced | [View web stories](#)
- 24 participants trained
- 11,000+ website visits
- \$20,000 new/used communication equipment donated
- \$51,000 total shared project expenses
- 4 Liberian publication partners
- 2 international publication partners, aljazeera.com and CNN International | [View One](#) [View Two](#)
- 1 project documentary created | [View](#)
- 1 Nasseman documentary created | [View](#)
- Bonkey & Down in Africa music videos | [View One](#) [View Two](#)
- 15 video "shorts" created | [View](#)
- 5 Websites created | [View](#)
- 2 Facebook pages created | [Visit One](#) [View Two](#)
- 2 newsroom digital image workflows created
- 1 Twitter page Created | [View](#)



Newhouse School Associate Professor Bruce Strong works with [award-winning](#) investigative journalist Nat Bayjay.

Training Overview

- 21 “StoryCorps”-style stories produced | [Hear conversations](#)
- 19 participant stories produced | [View web stories](#)
- 24 participants trained
- Workshop and embedded “real-world” based training

Training was conducted in four blocks with participants from professional and academic institutions. Participants were trained in one or several areas of communication including storytelling, photography, audio editing and web design. Each participant produced either a multimedia package, a still photo package or increased their web design skill set.

Training was conducted in two primary environments. The first being a traditional workshop setting and the other a “real-world” environment, embedded inside newsrooms.

Choosing participants and trainers can be a tricky matter. Operating in a post-conflict area can be overly stressful for all



Click image to view the video on [Kindness Nehwon](#).

concerned and choosing those with the proper the skill set, patience and understanding is critical. Partners were chosen from several years of working within media and academic institutions in Liberia. Trainers were chosen based on past professional and personal experiences. Trainings were conducted in small groups with 1:1 or 1:2 participant trainer ratio.



[View the story](#) on New Democrat reporter and participant Peter Toby by Newhouse School graduate student Bob Miller.

Personal guidance offered participants and trainers a more tailored experience both professionally and personally. Each trainer was given an exit interview and questionnaire before departing Liberia. The trainings were considered highly successful by all involved, and every respondent indicated an interest in being involved in the project in the future. From the feedback, additional thinking should be done around budgeting and organization, but if the approach of the project is changed from external workshops (requiring catering, possible transport etc) to embedding trainers in newsrooms; renting a group house rather than a hotel, and hiring one person to plan the project up to a year in advance (this could be a graduate research assistant) many of these challenges could be avoided.

TRAINERS – STORIES/POSTS PRODUCED

- [Steve Davis](#), Chair and Associate Professor,
SI Newhouse School of Public Communications
- [Bruce Strong](#), Associate Professor,
SI Newhouse School of Public Communications
- [Bob Miller](#), Graduate Student,
SI Newhouse School of Public Communications
- [Andrew Hida](#) Graduate Student,
SI Newhouse School of Public Communications
- [Chad Stevens](#), Assistant Professor,
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- [Sung Park](#), Instructor of Photojournalism and Multimedia,
University of Oregon
- [Cameron Zohoori](#), Robertson Fellow, *Duke University*
- [Ken Harper](#), Assistant Professor,
SI Newhouse School of Public Communications
- Emily Simon, Graduate Student,
SI Newhouse School of Public Communications
- [David Trotman-Wilkins](#), Graduate Student,
SI Newhouse School of Public Communications
- [Luisa Ryan](#), Rotary Peace Fellow,
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- [Chris Giamo](#), Graduate Student,
SI Newhouse School of Public Communications

PARTICIPANTS – WEB BASED STORIES PRODUCED

- Ansu Kromah – Takun J, The Struggle to Make It | [View](#)
- Peter Toby – Forging Peace | [View](#)
- Solomon Kerkula – Laughing in Liberia, Quincy T | [View](#)
- Beyan Howard – Education Delayed | [View](#)
- Stefan Dunbar – His Dream: To be a Doctor | [View](#)
- Clarence Nah – Pursuing Education | [View](#)
- Kindness Nehwon – Access Denied | [View](#)



A small group of like-minded web journalists meet each week to share knowledge in a local internet cafe that they co-own.

Web Training Overview

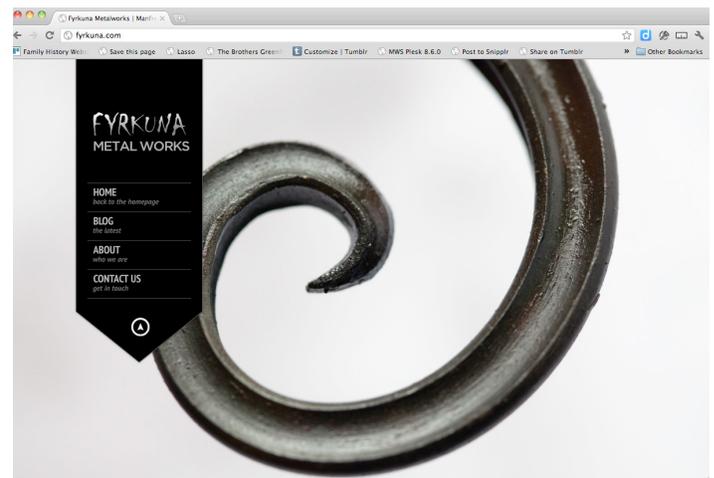
- 9 participants trained
- 5 websites created
- 1 server space donated
- 5 Web development books donated

The *West African Submarine Cable System* is due to go online in early 2013 in Liberia. For the first time in the nation's history, business and able citizens will have access to true broadband.

To help prepare web designers and developers I trained a small group of dedicated Liberian web journalists in a small internet café. Together we studied modern web design and development including google open source technologies.

Each participant now has access to *iLab Liberia*, a trusted project partner for further training and internet access at no charge.

In addition we developed four websites for local artists and trained them to maintain their own sites.



Click to view "art from weapons" site fyrkuna.com

WEBSITES CREATED

fyrkuna.com

nasseman.com

takunj.com

liberiamediainitiative.org

togetherliberia.org



\$20,000 in donations from individuals and generous support from the Alexia Foundation and the Newhouse School are now in use.

Donation Overview

It is said teaching a man to fish is the key to self-empowerment, however if you take away the fishing pole it serves no one. To answer that need, Together Liberia conducted a communication equipment drive.

Through cornerstone support from the [*Alexia Foundation for World Peace and Cultural Understanding*](#) and the [*SI Newhouse School for Public Communications*](#) we were able to donate over \$20,000 worth of new and used digital communication gear. The equipment is now being distributed through a check-out format managed by [*iLab Liberia*](#), a leading hub for digital training. Project participants are able to checkout equipment for up to two weeks at a time and the equipment is available to us for future trainings.

One central concern of donated equipment is security. It is common for donated equipment be sold after the donors leave the country, often benefiting a single person. iLab Liberia proved to be the ideal recipient of the donated communications gear.



Liberia participants Kindness Nehwon and Clarence Nah work with University of Oregon trainer Prof. [*Sung Park*](#).

iLab Liberia is the leading institution for digital training and offers Liberian professionals a free location to access the internet. This allows our project partners to check-out the donated communication equipment and then an ideal setting to upload their content for no charge. We developed memorandum of understanding that allows us exclusive access to the equipment upon request for future trainings thus reducing the need for future purchases and transport of training equipment.



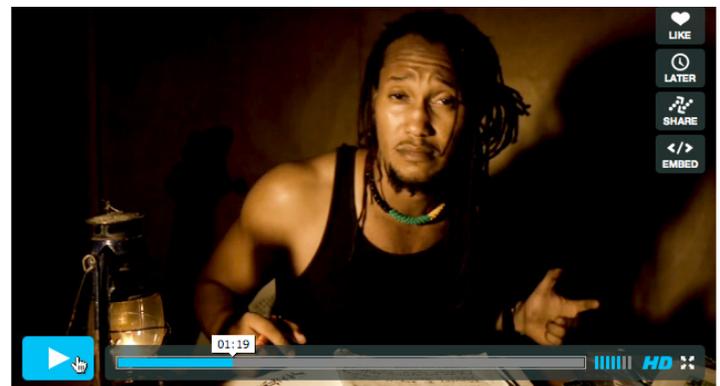
Click image to [view the documentary](#) by Newhouse graduate student Chris Giamo

Documentary/Video Overview

- 1 project documentary | [View](#)
- 1 Nasseman Documentary | [View \(pw=tenure\)](#)
- 2 music videos created | [View One](#) [View Two](#)
- 16 video “shorts” | [View](#)
- 1 Liberian music facebook page | [View](#)

One long-form documentary along with several “shorts” and a music video were produced during the project by Newhouse School graduate student Chris Giamo.

The importance of documenting the project was first priority for Chris but the central concept behind Together Liberia has always been to empower people to speak for themselves. When the opportunity to work with local music artists arrived Chris and Duke student Cameron Zohoori met the challenge. One music video was produced for Liberian reggae star Rabbie Nass or “Nasseman.” Several other short documentaries are currently in production.



Click image to view the music video “[Bonkey](#)” produced by Newhouse graduate student [Chris Giamo](#).



Project director Ken Harper is interviewed by a Ministry of Information TV crew. Together Liberia trainers and participants appeared across several media outlets including nationwide [UNMIL Radio](#) and on the website [Aljazeera English](#) and [CNN](#).

In The Press Overview

- Rivercess Broadcasting Service
- United Nations Mission in Liberia Radio | [Listen](#)
- Truth FM | [Listen](#)
- Ministry of Information TV
- Al Jazeera English | [View](#)
- CNN | [View](#)

Project director [Ken Harper](#), trainers, graduate students and participants appeared in national and local broadcasts. Speaking on the project, its intended outcomes and carrying the good names of our supporting organizations we have established ourselves as leaders in media development in Liberia.



Newhouse professors Steve Davis, Bruce Strong and project director Ken Harper appeared on nationwide [UNMIL Radio](#).



Project director Ken Harper was a guest lecturer at four AEJMC accredited schools including the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism.

Lecture Tour

- Arizona State University, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism
- UNC Chapel Hill, School of Journalism and Mass Communication
- Western Kentucky University, WKU Photojournalism
- Northern Arizona University, School of Communication
- University of Arizona, School of Journalism
- Liberian Studies Association, Cornell University
- Digital Witness Symposium, Syracuse Univ & Univ. of Rochester
- Santa Fe University of Art and Design

To support the Together Liberia project Newhouse School Asst. Professor Ken Harper lectured to over 300 students and faculty at seven leading U.S. academic intuitions.



Project director Ken Harper speaking at Northern Arizona University, School of Communication.



Newhouse graduate student [Andrew Hida](#) and New Democrat reporter Peter Toby share a joke after a long day of work in Monrovia.

A Way Forward

- Continue graduate level internships
- Continue building up local web designers
- Continue “shared” model of training with other Universities
- Seek new outside grants
- Expand relationships with the Mass Communication Department at the University of Liberia

I propose to develop a short 3 week internship program with Liberian media institutions that focuses on working in “real world” environments. These internship opportunities would be filled by graduate level multimedia/journalism students with an interest in working outside of the United States.

I have witnessed the lack of impact of traditional media trainings in Liberia, I’ve even led a few myself. They have two main defaults; one, they are often inadequate to speak to the specific, unique needs of individual journalists in a post-conflict nation; and two, they provide an inflexible environment to work in.



View the story “[A Lesson in Patience and Reverence](#)” by Newhouse graduate student [Andrew Hida](#) on workign with award winning New Democrat photographer Abbas Dulleh.

One of our goals was to establish a better understanding of what makes a productive media training and develop in-depth professional and personal relationships within the Liberian media and universities for future, long-term trainings. I feel that we now have firm footing on the ground a have establish a respect from our project partners that we can build on.



TOGETHERLIBERIA.ORG

Links Used In This Document

- **Project documentary** : <http://tinyurl.com/together-documentary>
- **Clarence Nah**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-clarence>
- **Rivercess County**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-rivercess>
- **New Democrat**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-democrat>
- **FrontPage Africa**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-frontpage>
- **Team bios**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-team>
- **iLab**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-ilab>
- **Ushahidi**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-ushahidi>
- **Hear conversations**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-hear>
- **Web Stories**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-webstories>
- **aljazeera.com**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-aljazeera>
- **CNN**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-cnn>
- **Bonkey music video**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-bonkey>
- **Down In Africa music video**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-downafrica>
- **1 Nasseman doc. created (pw=tenure)**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-nassemandoc>
- **15 video vignettes created**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-vignettes>
- **5 Websites created**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-websites>
- **Together Liberia Facebook page**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-facebook>
- **Libeat Facebook Page**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-facebookLIBeat>
- **Together Liberia Twitter page**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-twitter>
- **FrontPage Africa award winning**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-awardwinning>
- **Kindness Nehwon**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-kindness>
- **New Democrat's Peter Toby**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-petertoby>
- **Steve Davis**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-steve>
- **Bruce Strong**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-bruce>
- **Bob Miller**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-bob>
- **Andrew Hida**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-andrew>
- **Chad Stevens**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-chad>
- **Sung Park**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-sung>
- **Cameron Zohoori**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-cameron>
- **Ken Harper**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-ken>
- **David Trotman Wilkins**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-david>
- **Luisa Ryan**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-lu>
- **Chris Giamo**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-chris>
- **Ansu Kromah**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-ansu>
- **Solomon Kerkula** : <http://tinyurl.com/together-solomon>
- **Stefan Dunbar**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-stefan>
- **Kindness Nehwon, Education Denied**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-education>
- **Peter Toby, Forging Peace**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-peterforging>
- **Beyan Howard**, <http://tinyurl.com/together-beyan>
- **Clarence Nah, Pursuing Education**, <http://tinyurl.com/together-clarencepursing>
- **West African Submarine Cable**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-cable>
- **Alexia Foundation**: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/together-alexia>
- **Newhouse School**: <http://tinyurl.com/together-newhouse>
- **United Nations Mission in Liberia Radio**, <http://tinyurl.com/together-unmil>
- **Lesson in Patience**, <http://tinyurl.com/together-lessons>