

A woman wearing a vibrant, multi-colored headwrap (pink, yellow, and green) and a black sleeveless top with a white butterfly design is working in a small, cluttered shop. She is looking towards the left side of the frame. The shop has shelves stocked with various goods, including bottles of beer and packaged snacks. In the foreground, there are large jars of snacks, one labeled 'Blue Plate Heavy Duty MAYONNAISE'. A notebook and a red object are on the counter in front of her. The ceiling is white with some staining and a string of lights is visible.

# The International Rescue Committee

# Why Girls in Liberia?

- Out of the world's 130 million out-of-school youth, 70 percent are girls
- 30% of all 15-24 females in Liberia have experienced physical violence
- Literacy rates for women continue to fall behind young men even in urban areas— 63% versus 85% (1/3 of women outside Monrovia cannot read)
- 2 in 5 girls in Liberia are married before they turn 18
- When women and girls earn income, they reinvest 90% of it into their families, as compared to only 30 to 40 percent for a man

# EPAG Round 1 & Round 2

- 2,491 girls benefited from the EPAG program (30 % Job Training & 70% Business Development Support)
- IRC/EDUCARE/CAP provided BDS part of project
  - 6 months business and life skills training
  - 6 months follow up
- Project components
  - Bank account and stipends
  - Training groups
  - Mentors
  - Market Fairs
  - Day care
  - Business plan competitions
  - Completion bonuses for girls

# EPAG Life Skills

- Mixed financial literacy & life skills curricula (6 months, 11 Units)
- Mixed methods – talk and chalk, group work, field trips, guest speakers, learning while doing
- Ongoing mentoring with women in the community (both focused on business but also personal issues)
- Training group support



# EPAG Round 3 – Being Implemented Now

- 1,000 Beneficiaries – 815 BDS & 185 Job Skills
- IRC/EDUCARE/Nael
  - Moving into Grand Bassa
  - 4 months training 5 months follow up
- Project components
  - Savings match
  - Strict age targets
  - Lower literacy targets
  - Research on program for boys
  - Research on program for agriculture



# EPAG Lessons Learned

- Adjustments made for “low – no literacy” girls still need improvements
- Challenges in capturing soft skills changes in the impact evaluation
- More emphasis on workplace behaviors, job readiness needed
- More emphasis on the building blocks to making good decisions about health, safety etc.
- More layered approach— build knowledge, apply knowledge, process knowledge

# IRC Life Skills Programming & Research

- Isolating mentoring effectiveness and targeting younger girls with SOS program
- Testing a package of support including cash grants with Girl Empower
- Non-cognitive measure research in Burundi
- Further infuse social emotion learning and competency development - push the definition of life skills
- Research around the effect of economic interventions on well being

