

## How are Liberia's children?

**Liberia has ratified (pledged to follow) the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means that Liberia must respect the rights of the child and listen to what children have to say. Are the rights of the child respected in Liberia? You and other children in Liberia are the experts. The facts below are from the United Nations.**

### **2 million children**

More than 4.1 million people live in Liberia. More than 2 million are children, and 700,000 of the children are under five years old.

### **Name and nationality**

From the day you are born you have the right to have a name and to be registered as a citizen in your country. 157,000 children are born every year in Liberia. Most of them are never registered. There is no documented proof that they exist!

### **Survive and grow**

You have the right to life. Liberia must do all it can to allow children to survive and develop. 1 of 12 children in Liberia (12,000 every year) dies before the age of 5, usually due to causes that could have been prevented. The number of children who die has decreased, but is still high.

### **Health and health care**

You have the right to food, clean water and medical care. You have the right to privacy when consulting an adult about any health problem. Almost 7 out of 10 children in Liberia have water from improved water sources. Less than 2 out of 10 children have access to adequate sanitation facilities. 5,000 children live with HIV/AIDS. 33,000 are AIDS orphans.

### **A home, clothing, food and security**

You have the right to a home, food, clothing, education, health care and security. More than 8 out of 10 children in Liberia live in extreme poverty with less than 1.25 US-dollar (100 Liberian Dollars) a day to live on.

### **Protection against violence**

You have the right to protection against all forms of violence, including neglect, maltreatment and abuse. Only 34 countries have forbidden all forms of corporal punishment for children. Many still allow caning in schools. Liberia has not forbidden corporal punishment.

### **Hazardous child labour**

You have the right to be protected against both economic exploitation and work that is hazardous to your health or which prevents you from going to school. All work is prohibited for children under 12. Some children are forced into the worst forms of child labour, such as being debt slaves, child soldiers or used for commercial sexual exploitation. An estimated 200,000 children (2 out of 10 of the children aged 5-14) in Liberia have to work.

### **School and education**

You have the right to go to school. Primary and secondary schools should be free for everyone. Many children in Liberia get almost no education at all.

### **YOUR VOICE MUST BE HEARD!**

You have the right to say what you think about any issue that affects you. The adults should listen to the child's opinion before they make decisions, which must always be made in the best interest of the child!

*Sources: Unicef 2013. Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children 2013.*