



# Strategies for Innovation and Change: Transformational Leadership in Liberian Educational School Systems

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## Abstract

Educational leadership plays a critical role in fostering innovation, improving institutional effectiveness, and promoting sustainable change within school systems. In Liberia, the education sector continues to face significant challenges, including limited educational resources, inadequate teacher training, weak administrative capacity, and insufficient infrastructure. These challenges hinder schools' ability to provide high-quality education and adapt to the evolving demands of the global knowledge economy. Transformational leadership has emerged as a strategic approach capable of addressing these issues by encouraging innovation, motivating teachers, and creating collaborative learning environments within schools. This study examines the role of transformational leadership in promoting innovation and facilitating organizational change within Liberian school systems. Specifically, the study explores how school leaders can apply transformational leadership strategies—such as developing a shared vision, fostering professional development, empowering teachers, and promoting collaborative decision-making—to improve educational outcomes. Using a qualitative research approach, the study draws on existing literature, policy documents, and scholarly research related to educational leadership and school reform. Through thematic analysis, the study identifies key leadership practices that support

innovation and institutional improvement in educational settings. The findings suggest that transformational leadership significantly contributes to teacher motivation, improved instructional practices, and enhanced school performance. Furthermore, transformational leadership fosters a culture of continuous improvement, creativity, and collective responsibility among educators and administrators. The study concludes that adopting transformational leadership strategies can strengthen the capacity of Liberian school systems to respond effectively to educational challenges and drive meaningful reform. Recommendations emphasize leadership training, supportive educational policies, and institutional collaboration to promote sustainable innovation and change within Liberia's education sector.

## Keywords

Transformational Leadership, Educational Innovation, School Leadership, Educational Change, Liberian Education System



## Introduction

Education systems across the world are undergoing rapid transformation as societies respond to globalization, technological advancement, and increasing demands for quality learning outcomes. In this context, leadership plays a crucial role in shaping how educational institutions adapt to change and implement innovative practices. Within many developing countries, including Liberia, the effectiveness of school leadership is a determining factor in the success of educational reforms and institutional transformation. The concept of Transformational Leadership has therefore gained significant attention as a strategy for driving innovation and sustainable change within educational systems. The education sector in Liberia has faced numerous challenges over the past decades. Historical events such as the First Liberian Civil War and the Second Liberian Civil War severely disrupted the nation's social and institutional structures, including its education system. Schools were destroyed, teaching resources were depleted, and many qualified educators left the profession or the country. Even after the post-war reconstruction period, the education system continues to face challenges, including limited infrastructure, inadequate teacher training, insufficient learning materials, and weak administrative leadership. These challenges have made it difficult for schools to achieve consistent academic performance and quality education for students.

In response to these challenges, there is growing recognition that innovative leadership approaches are necessary to transform Liberia's educational landscape. Traditional leadership models that rely heavily on hierarchical authority and administrative control are often insufficient to address the complex and dynamic problems faced by modern educational institutions. Instead, transformational leadership offers a framework that encourages vision, collaboration, and empowerment among teachers, students, and other stakeholders.

Transformational leadership emphasizes inspiring and motivating individuals to work toward a shared vision while fostering creativity, professional growth, and collective responsibility. Leaders who adopt this approach seek to build strong organizational cultures where teachers are encouraged to innovate in their instructional practices and participate actively in school decision-making processes. Through intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation, transformational leaders can create an environment that supports continuous improvement and educational innovation.

Within the Liberian educational school system, the adoption of transformational leadership strategies has the potential to address several systemic challenges. School leaders who embrace transformational practices can foster teacher commitment, encourage collaborative problem-solving, and promote the effective implementation of educational reforms. Furthermore, transformational leadership can support the development of professional learning communities in which educators share knowledge, experiment with new teaching methods, and collectively work to improve student outcomes. Innovation in education is not limited to the introduction of new technologies or curricula; it also involves changes in leadership styles, organizational culture, and institutional practices. Transformational leadership provides a strategic pathway for managing these changes by encouraging adaptability and resilience within schools. By empowering teachers and engaging communities, school leaders can develop innovative solutions that are contextually relevant to the needs of Liberian learners. Moreover, effective transformational leadership can strengthen accountability and transparency within school management. Leaders who model ethical behavior, clear communication, and collaborative governance help build trust among teachers, students, parents, and policymakers. This trust is essential for implementing long-term reforms and sustaining positive change within the educational system. Therefore, exploring strategies for innovation and change through transformational leadership is particularly relevant to the Liberian educational context. Understanding how transformational leadership practices influence school performance, teacher motivation, and institutional development can provide valuable insights for policymakers, educational administrators, and researchers. By examining these leadership strategies, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to strengthen Liberia's education system and promote sustainable school transformation.



This study examines how transformational leadership strategies can promote innovation and change in Liberian educational school systems. By exploring leadership practices and their impact on school performance, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on educational reform and leadership effectiveness in Liberia.

## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the role of transformational leadership in promoting innovation and change within Liberian educational school systems. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth examination of leadership practices, experiences, and perceptions within educational institutions. The research primarily relies on secondary data collected from academic journals, books, policy reports, and previous research studies related to transformational leadership and educational innovation. These sources provide valuable insights into leadership strategies and their impact on school performance. A systematic review of the literature was conducted to identify key themes related to transformational leadership, innovation, and educational change. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying patterns and recurring ideas within the literature. This methodological approach enables the study to synthesize existing knowledge and provide recommendations for improving leadership practices within Liberian schools.

## Literature Review

Transformational leadership has been widely studied in the field of educational management and organizational development. Scholars emphasize that transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend their individual interests for the benefit of the organization. One of the earliest proponents of transformational leadership argued that leaders who inspire and motivate followers can achieve higher levels of organizational performance and commitment. Later research expanded this concept by identifying key components of transformational leadership, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In educational contexts, transformational leadership has been linked to improved teacher motivation, enhanced collaboration, and increased innovation in teaching and learning practices. School leaders who practice transformational leadership encourage teachers to experiment with new instructional methods and participate actively in decision-making processes. Several studies indicate that transformational leadership positively influences teacher job satisfaction, professional growth, and organizational commitment. When teachers feel supported and valued by their leaders, they are more likely to adopt innovative teaching strategies and contribute to school improvement efforts. In developing countries, including Liberia, transformational leadership is particularly important due to the need for educational reform and capacity building. Effective school leaders must be able to inspire teachers, manage limited resources, and create environments that support innovation and change. However, implementing transformational leadership in educational institutions can also present challenges. Factors such as limited training opportunities for school administrators, resistance to change, and inadequate institutional support can hinder the successful adoption of transformational leadership practices. Despite these challenges, research suggests that transformational leadership remains one of the most effective approaches for promoting innovation and improving educational outcomes.

## Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that focuses on inspiring, motivating, and empowering followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes while simultaneously developing their own leadership potential. The concept was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and later expanded by Bernard M. Bass in 1985. Burns described transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Bass further developed the theory by explaining how transformational leaders influence followers to exceed expectations by transforming their attitudes, beliefs, and values toward a shared vision. Transformational leadership is widely applied in various sectors, including



education, business, healthcare, and public administration. In educational institutions, transformational leadership is particularly important because it promotes school improvement, teacher development, and student achievement. School leaders who practice transformational leadership encourage innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning within their organizations.

## **Core Components of Transformational Leadership**

Bass identified four major components of transformational leadership, commonly referred to as the “**Four I’s**.”

### **1. Idealized Influence**

Idealized influence refers to the leader’s ability to act as a role model for followers. Transformational leaders demonstrate high ethical standards, integrity, and commitment to the organization’s mission and vision. Because of these qualities, followers admire, respect, and trust their leaders. In the context of education, school principals who demonstrate idealized influence create a culture of professionalism and accountability among teachers and staff. Teachers are more likely to emulate the behavior of leaders who demonstrate fairness, dedication, and ethical decision-making.

### **Inspirational Motivation**

Inspirational motivation involves the leader’s ability to articulate a clear and compelling vision that inspires followers to work toward common goals. Transformational leaders communicate optimism and enthusiasm, which motivates employees to commit to the organization’s objectives. In schools, inspirational leaders encourage teachers and students to strive for excellence and believe in the possibility of positive change. Through effective communication and encouragement, they foster a sense of purpose and shared responsibility within the institution.

### **Intellectual Stimulation**

Intellectual stimulation refers to the leader’s ability to encourage creativity and critical thinking among followers. Transformational leaders challenge existing assumptions and support innovative problem-solving approaches. In educational settings, this means encouraging teachers to experiment with new teaching strategies, integrate technology into the classroom, and develop creative solutions to educational challenges. By fostering intellectual stimulation, school leaders create an environment where innovation and professional growth are valued.

### **Individualized Consideration**

Individualized consideration involves recognizing the unique needs, abilities, and aspirations of each follower. Transformational leaders provide mentorship, coaching, and support to help individuals develop their skills and achieve their full potential. In schools, this component is reflected in leaders who invest in teacher professional development, provide constructive feedback, and support teachers in their career growth. By valuing each member of the organization, transformational leaders strengthen relationships and increase job satisfaction.

## **Importance of Transformational Leadership in Education**

Transformational leadership has become increasingly relevant in modern education systems due to the growing need for innovation, adaptability, and collaboration. Educational institutions are constantly facing new challenges such as technological advancements, curriculum reforms, and diverse student needs. Transformational leaders help schools navigate these challenges by creating a culture that embraces change and continuous improvement. Research shows that transformational leadership positively influences teacher motivation, organizational commitment, and school performance. When school leaders adopt transformational



practices, teachers feel more empowered and motivated to contribute to the success of the institution. This, in turn, leads to improved teaching practices and better student outcomes. In developing countries such as Liberia, transformational leadership is particularly important for addressing systemic educational challenges. School leaders who embrace transformational approaches can mobilize teachers, students, parents, and community members to work together toward improving educational quality. Through collaboration and shared vision, transformational leaders can drive sustainable reforms and institutional development within the education sector.

### **Transformational Leadership and Organizational Change**

Transformational leadership is closely linked to organizational change and innovation. Leaders who adopt this approach encourage employees to move beyond traditional practices and embrace new ideas that improve performance. In educational institutions, this may involve introducing innovative teaching methods, strengthening professional learning communities, and improving school management practices. Transformational leaders also play a critical role in building a positive organizational culture. By promoting trust, respect, and open communication, they create an environment where individuals feel valued and motivated to contribute their best efforts. This type of culture is essential for successful change management and long-term institutional development.

### **Conclusion**

Transformational leadership provides a powerful framework for leading change and innovation within organizations, particularly in educational institutions<sup>1</sup>. By focusing on inspiration, empowerment, intellectual growth, and individualized support, transformational leaders create environments that encourage collaboration, creativity, and continuous improvement. In the context of Liberia's educational system, adopting transformational leadership strategies can contribute significantly to school development, teacher motivation, and improved student learning outcomes.

### **Educational Innovation**

Educational innovation refers to the introduction and implementation of new ideas, methods, technologies, or organizational practices aimed at improving teaching, learning, and educational management. It involves transforming traditional educational approaches to better meet the evolving needs of students, teachers, and society. Educational innovation focuses not only on technological advancement but also on new pedagogical strategies, leadership practices, curriculum reforms, and learning environments that enhance educational outcomes. In the rapidly changing global environment, education systems must continuously adapt to technological developments, social changes, and economic demands. Educational innovation, therefore, plays a crucial role in improving the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education. Innovative practices in education help institutions respond effectively to challenges such as limited resources, diverse student needs, and changing labor market requirements.

### **Concept and Meaning of Educational Innovation**

Educational innovation involves purposeful change designed to improve educational processes and outcomes. According to scholars in the field of Education, innovation in education may include new teaching methods, curriculum development, integration of digital technologies, improved school management systems, and collaborative learning strategies. Innovation differs from simple change because it focuses on improvements that bring meaningful benefits to the learning process. While change can occur naturally or unintentionally,

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<sup>1</sup> Transformational Leadership: How To Inspire Innovation at Work January 16, 2025 | Last Visited April 7, 2026

<https://graduate.northeastern.edu/knowledge-hub/transformational-leadership/>



innovation involves deliberate planning, experimentation, and evaluation to ensure that new practices lead to better educational performance. Educational innovations are intentional, sustainable changes in teaching and learning practices, including technology integration and pedagogical shifts, designed to improve student outcomes and access. Key innovations include AI-personalized learning, virtual/augmented reality, blended learning, and student-centered approaches like project-based learning.

### **How to Adopt Innovation with EdTech Platforms**

Adopting innovation through EdTech platforms requires a strategic approach that combines technology with pedagogical goals, focusing on personalized learning, data-driven insights, and teacher empowerment. Successful adoption involves shifting from simply having devices to using them thoughtfully to improve learning outcomes.

Strategic planning and implementation establish clear goals and define what you want to achieve, such as improving student engagement, providing personalized learning paths, or streamlining administrative tasks. Streamline tools help to avoid overloading educators with too many platforms. Create a focused set of tools that work together, using single sign-on (SSO) to simplify access. Invest in training that provides ongoing professional development to help teachers build confidence in using new digital tools and blended learning methods.

### **Key innovation techniques to adopt**

AI-powered learning utilizes Generative AI and adaptive platforms to create personalized learning paths, tailor content to individual students' needs, and provide real-time feedback. Immersive learning (AR/VR) implements augmented and virtual reality tools to enhance experimental learning in subjects like machine learning, engineering, and science. Fostering a culture of innovation by encouraging experimentation that will create sandboxes or flexible spaces where educators can safely test new EdTech Solutions and refine approaches before full-scale implementation

### **Top Educational Innovations:**

**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI systems provide personalized learning paths, automated assessment, and individualized feedback for students. **Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR):** Immersive technologies create hands-on, virtual experiences that make complex, abstract concepts tangible. **Gamification:** Integrating game design elements into the curriculum to increase student motivation, engagement, and focus. **Blended Learning & Flipped Classrooms:** Combining traditional classroom instruction with online, flexible, and often self-paced learning, such as watching lectures at home and doing homework in class. **Project-Based Learning (PBL):** A student-centered approach focusing on solving real-world problems, fostering critical thinking, and collaboration. **EdTech & Digital Tools:** Platforms like Blackboard and Moodle manage, deliver, and track educational content. **Inclusive Education Technologies:** Tools like Jade Autism offer specialized, gamified learning for cognitive development, improving accessibility for special needs students<sup>2</sup>

### **Types of Educational Innovation**

Educational innovation can occur in several forms within educational institutions. The most common types include pedagogical, technological, curriculum, and organizational innovation.

### **Pedagogical Innovation**

Pedagogical innovation refers to the introduction of new teaching and learning strategies that enhance student engagement and understanding. Traditional teacher-centered methods are gradually being replaced by student-

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<sup>2</sup> 7 Innovative Educational Technology Examples to Use in the Classroom March 25, 2025 | Last Visited May 3, 2026

<https://www.hmhco.com/blog/innovative-educational-technology-examples-to-use-in-the-classroom>



centered approaches such as collaborative learning, problem-based learning, and inquiry-based instruction. These methods encourage students to actively participate in the learning process rather than passively receiving information. For example, innovative teaching methods may involve group discussions, project-based assignments, interactive activities, and experiential learning opportunities. These strategies help students develop critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem-solving skills that are essential in modern society.

### **Technological Innovation**

Technological innovation in education involves integrating digital tools and platforms to enhance teaching and learning. Advances in technology have significantly transformed educational practices across the world. Digital technologies such as online learning platforms, educational software, and virtual classrooms provide new opportunities for students and teachers to access information and collaborate more effectively. Mobile learning, blended learning, and e-learning are examples of technological innovations that allow students to learn beyond traditional classroom settings. Technology also supports personalized learning by enabling teachers to adapt instructional materials to meet individual student needs.

### **Curriculum Innovation**

Curriculum innovation focuses on updating and improving the content and structure of educational programs to reflect contemporary knowledge and skills. Modern curricula emphasize critical thinking, digital literacy, creativity, and global awareness. Curriculum reforms often involve revising subject content, introducing interdisciplinary studies, and incorporating practical learning experiences. Curriculum innovation ensures that education remains relevant to societal and economic needs. It prepares students with the competencies required to succeed in the workforce and contribute meaningfully to national development.

### **Impact of Organizational Innovation**

Organizational innovation refers to improvements in the management and leadership structures of educational institutions. This type of innovation focuses on enhancing administrative processes, decision-making practices, and institutional culture. Effective leadership approaches, such as Transformational Leadership, play a key role in promoting organizational innovation within schools. School leaders who encourage collaboration, shared decision-making, and professional development create an environment that supports innovation and continuous improvement. Organizational innovation also involves strengthening partnerships between schools, communities, and government agencies.

### **Importance of Educational Innovation**

Educational innovation is essential for improving the quality and effectiveness of education systems. It enhances teaching methods, increases student engagement, and improves learning outcomes. Innovative educational practices also promote creativity and adaptability, which are critical skills for students in the modern world. In developing countries such as Liberia, educational innovation is particularly important for addressing systemic challenges such as limited educational resources, inadequate infrastructure, and shortages of qualified teachers. By adopting innovative teaching strategies, leadership practices, and technological tools, schools can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system. Furthermore, educational innovation supports inclusive education by creating learning opportunities for diverse groups of students, including those with special educational needs and those living in remote areas. Technology-based innovations, for example, can help expand access to education in underserved communities.



## Challenges to Educational Innovation

Despite its benefits, implementing educational innovation often faces several challenges. These challenges may include resistance to change, lack of funding, limited technological infrastructure, and insufficient teacher training. Teachers and school administrators may sometimes be hesitant to adopt new practices due to unfamiliarity or fear of failure. Successful implementation of educational innovation, therefore, requires strong leadership, continuous professional development, and supportive policies from educational authorities. Collaboration among teachers, school leaders, policymakers, and communities is essential to ensure that innovative practices are effectively integrated into the education system.

## Conclusion

Educational innovation is a critical component of modern educational development. By introducing new teaching methods, technologies, curricula, and leadership practices, educational institutions can improve learning experiences and outcomes for students. Innovation enables schools to adapt to changing societal needs while fostering creativity, collaboration, and lifelong learning. In education systems facing significant challenges, such as those in Liberia, educational innovation combined with effective leadership can drive meaningful transformation. Through strategic planning, supportive leadership, and collaborative efforts, educational institutions can successfully implement innovative practices that enhance the overall quality of education.

## School Leadership in Liberia

### Introduction

School leadership plays a central role in shaping the effectiveness of educational systems, particularly in developing countries such as Liberia. In Liberia, school leadership has attracted growing attention for its direct influence on educational quality, governance, and learning outcomes. Effective leadership is now widely recognized as a key driver of reform, especially in post-conflict education systems. Recent policy discussions emphasize that “effective school leadership is the cornerstone of a functional, inclusive, and high-performing education system.”

### Structure of School Leadership in Liberia

School leadership in Liberia is centralized under the Ministry of Education (MOE), which sets policies for all school levels. The structure consists of national, county-level, and school-level administration, often involving partnerships with parents and community leaders to enhance management, particularly in post-crisis rebuilding efforts. Key components of Liberia's school leadership structure include: **Ministry of Education (MOE)**: The primary authority leading policy, curriculum development, and public service delivery for education nationwide. **National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE)**: Acts as a buffer agency for higher education, managing relationships between the government and tertiary institutions. **County Education Officers (CEOs)** and **District Education Officers (DEOs)**: Regional officials responsible for enforcing policy and supervising school administration on the local level. **School Principals/Administrators**: Responsible for the daily operation of schools, fostering a collaborative culture, and partnering with parents and communities to meet student needs. **Community-Based Management**: A key feature where parents and community members play a role in school oversight and management. Current efforts, such as the work of the Rural Teacher Training Institutes (RTTIs), aim to improve school management and teacher quality. Challenges such as limited resources and the need for stronger instructional leadership from principals are being addressed through ongoing reforms and professional development.



## Role of School Principals

According to the national framework, the school principal serves as the senior administrator responsible for the overall management of the school. This role encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including the supervision of teachers, implementation of the curriculum, maintenance of student discipline, and general school administration. In addition, principals are tasked with conducting teacher performance evaluations to ensure accountability and effectiveness. Beyond these administrative duties, they also play a critical role in instructional leadership by monitoring the quality of teaching and learning processes and facilitating professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and improve educational outcomes.

## Governance and Administrative Framework

School leadership in Liberia operates within a centralized education system under the guidance of the Ministry of Education. Within this framework, several governance structures play important roles, including county and district education officers, school boards and management committees, as well as Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). Despite the presence of these supporting bodies, school leaders often have limited autonomy in key decision-making areas, particularly with regard to hiring or dismissing teachers and making curriculum-related decisions. This high level of centralization significantly influences leadership effectiveness, as it restricts the ability of school leaders to respond flexibly to local needs and implement context-specific improvements.

## Leadership Practices in Liberian Schools

Research on school leadership in Liberia highlights several common supervisory practices that principals regularly employ to maintain school effectiveness. These include monitoring lesson plans, conducting classroom observations, organizing in-service teacher training programs, and ensuring punctuality and discipline among both staff and students. Such practices demonstrate that school leadership in Liberia is primarily focused on administrative control and supervision. As a result, leadership tends to be more managerial in nature rather than transformational or instructional, with limited emphasis on innovation, vision-building, or enhancing teaching and learning processes at a deeper level.

## Key Challenges Facing School Leadership

**Limited Resources:** One of the most critical challenges facing school leadership in Liberia is the lack of adequate educational resources. Schools often struggle with insufficient teaching materials, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified staff, all of which create significant barriers to effective teaching and learning. These limitations not only hinder the day-to-day functioning of schools but also restrict the capacity of school leaders to implement improvements and achieve desired educational outcomes. Consequently, the overall performance and quality of education are adversely affected.

## Shortage of Qualified Teachers

Studies conducted in Liberia reveal several critical human resource challenges within the education system. These include the presence of unqualified teachers in classrooms, which directly affects the quality of instruction delivered to students. At the same time, there is often underutilization of trained and qualified teachers, leading to inefficiencies in workforce deployment. Additionally, poor remuneration and low levels of motivation among teachers further contribute to reduced commitment and performance. Collectively, these issues significantly weaken the capacity of school leadership, making it difficult for principals to ensure effective teaching, maintain academic standards, and improve overall instructional quality within schools<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>School Leadership for Learning | OECD | Last Visited April 25, 2026



## **Weak Policy Implementation**

Leadership challenges in Liberia are closely linked to broader systemic issues within the education sector. In many cases, educational policies are formulated based on assumptions rather than reliable data, which limits their effectiveness and relevance to actual school conditions. Additionally, weak monitoring and evaluation systems make it difficult to track progress, assess performance, and identify areas requiring improvement. As a result, reforms are often poorly implemented and fail to achieve their intended outcomes. These limitations also contribute to weak accountability mechanisms, reducing the ability of school leaders and authorities to ensure transparency, responsibility, and sustained improvement in educational quality.

## **Centralized Decision-Making**

The lack of autonomy within the education system in Liberia significantly constrains the effectiveness of school leadership. School leaders are often unable to innovate or introduce new ideas that could enhance teaching and learning. Their capacity to respond to local needs is also limited, as decisions are largely controlled at higher administrative levels. Furthermore, restricted authority in making strategic decisions prevents principals from addressing school-specific challenges. As a result, leadership becomes less responsive and less effective in improving overall school performance and educational outcomes.

## **Public–Private School Divide**

A growing public–private school divide is evident in Liberia, where significant inequalities exist between well-resourced private schools and underfunded public institutions. Private schools often have better infrastructure, teaching materials, and qualified staff, while public schools struggle with limited resources and overcrowded classrooms. This disparity reflects broader leadership and policy challenges, particularly in the areas of resource allocation and strategic planning. Ineffective distribution of funds and lack of long-term planning contribute to unequal educational opportunities, ultimately affecting the quality of education and widening the gap in student outcomes across the system.

## **Teacher Attitudes and Professionalism**

Teachers play an important role in shaping students' knowledge, character, and future. Their attitudes and professionalism greatly influence the learning environment and students' success. A positive teacher attitude includes kindness, patience, fairness, and enthusiasm for teaching. Teachers who respect and encourage students help build confidence and motivation in the classroom. They should also be open-minded, understanding individual differences among learners, and supporting them equally. Professionalism in teaching refers to maintaining high standards of behavior, ethics, and competence. A professional teacher is punctual, responsible, and well-prepared for class. They possess strong subject knowledge and use effective teaching methods to improve learning. Professional teachers also maintain good communication with students, parents, and colleagues. They follow ethical values such as honesty, discipline, and respect. Continuous learning is another important aspect of professionalism. Teachers should update their knowledge and skills through training, workshops, and modern technology. Their conduct and appearance should reflect dignity and responsibility. In conclusion, teacher attitudes and professionalism are essential for creating a positive educational environment. A teacher with the right attitude and professional behavior inspires students, promotes discipline, and contributes to the overall development of society.

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[https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/school-leadership-for-learning\\_9789264258341-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/school-leadership-for-learning_9789264258341-en.html)



## Emerging Reforms and Leadership Development

Emerging reforms in education focus on improving teaching methods, student learning, and school management. These reforms include the use of technology, skill-based education, inclusive learning, and continuous assessment. Modern education encourages creativity, critical thinking, and practical knowledge instead of rote learning. Teachers and schools are also adopting digital tools and innovative teaching strategies to meet the needs of a changing society. Leadership development is an important part of these reforms. It helps teachers, principals, and students develop decision-making, communication, and problem-solving skills. Effective leadership promotes teamwork, motivation, and positive change in educational institutions. Training programs, workshops, and collaborative activities help individuals become confident and responsible leaders. Overall, emerging reforms and leadership development contribute to better educational quality and national progress.

## Educational Change in Liberia

The **Ministry of Education (MoE)** is the national government body responsible for policy, administration, and oversight of Liberia's entire education system. It directs programs from early childhood to higher education and vocational training, working to expand access, improve quality, and strengthen teacher and institutional capacity nationwide.

### Mandate and Structure

The MoE formulates national education policy, manages curriculum and teacher standards, and coordinates with county education offices in all 15 Liberian counties. Its mandate covers early childhood education, primary and secondary schooling, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), adult literacy, and tertiary oversight. The ministry operates under Liberia's Constitution and the 2011 Education Act, emphasizing education as a human right and a driver of social and economic development.

### Strategic Programs

Flagship initiatives include the Excellence in Learning in Liberia (**EXCEL**) Project, a US \$88.7 million national investment co-financed by the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education to improve foundational literacy and numeracy for roughly 350,000 learners. Other major programs address school feeding expansion, teacher payroll reform, and digital learning through Liberia eLearn.

### Vision and Philosophy

The ministry's mission is to provide quality education for all Liberians and cultivate leaders capable of national development. Its guiding philosophy centers on equity, accountability, and moral integrity, ensuring that education remains inclusive regardless of gender, disability, or socioeconomic background.

### Partnerships and Global Engagement

The MoE collaborates with international partners such as the World Food Programme, Save the Children, and bilateral donors from China, Israel, and the European Union. These partnerships support reforms in teacher training, infrastructure, and data-driven planning through initiatives like the Education Management Information System (EMIS) peer review<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Liberia: Education Country Brief International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa | Last Visited May 3, 2026

<https://www.iicba.unesco.org/en/liberia>



Liberia is aggressively transforming its educational system to recover from civil war and the Ebola epidemic, focusing on infrastructure, teacher training, and digitalization. Key initiatives include building 100 new schools with solar-powered computer labs by 2027, the Partnership Schools for Liberia (PSL) program, managing public schools via private partners, and improving teacher quality. Post-war efforts focus on constructing schools with libraries and modern facilities to create conducive learning environments. The government partnered with eight private operators to manage 93 primary schools, aiming to improve education quality by providing extra funding (\$100 per pupil vs. \$50) and more teacher resources. Reforms aim to fix a system described as a “mess,” focusing on making education compulsory and tackling low primary net enrollment. The new plan aims to connect classrooms to the internet and add 2,00 teachers to increase enrollment.

### **Impact of educational change in Liberia**

Educational change in Liberia has improved access to education and learning opportunities, especially after years of civil war and health crises. Reforms such as free primary education, teacher training, and curriculum improvement have helped increase school enrollment and improve teaching quality. The use of modern teaching methods and educational technology has also supported better learning outcomes. Educational change has contributed to national development by reducing illiteracy and preparing young people with skills for employment and responsible citizenship. It has also promoted peace and social unity. However, challenges such as a lack of resources, trained teachers, and poor school infrastructure still affect the education system. Overall, educational reforms have had a positive impact on Liberia’s development.

### **Significance of educational change**

Educational change is important because it helps improve the quality of education and meets the changing needs of society. It introduces modern teaching methods, updated curricula, and new technologies that make learning more effective and interesting. Educational change encourages creativity, critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills among students. It also helps teachers improve their professional skills through training and innovative teaching practices. Educational reforms promote equal opportunities and inclusive education for learners from different backgrounds and abilities. In addition, educational change prepares students for employment, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning in a rapidly changing world.

Educational change contributes to national development by reducing illiteracy, improving human resources, and supporting economic and social progress. Although challenges may occur during implementation, educational change remains essential for the growth of individuals, schools, and society as a whole.

### **Liberian Educational System**

The Liberian education system is a 6-3-3 structure (primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary) currently undergoing major restructuring to recover from civil war, Ebola, and COVID-19, which caused high teacher absenteeism, poor infrastructure, and low literacy rates. The system, serving roughly 922,000 pupils, faces significant challenges, including high dropout rates, limited rural school access, and a reliance on private schools. Recent reforms include public-private partnerships like the Partnership School for Liberia PSL, a focus on Early Childhood Education ECCE, and plans to boost digital learning with solar-powered computer labs.

### **Structure of the Liberian Education System**

Liberia follows a 3–9–3–4 educational structure, which includes: Early Childhood Education (ECE) – 3 years, Basic Education – 9 years, 6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary education

Liberia’s educational system begins with Early Childhood Education (ECE), which lasts for (3) three years and prepares young children for formal schooling through basic learning and social development. This is followed



by (9) nine years of Basic Education, consisting of (6) six years of primary education and (3) three years of junior secondary education. The primary level focuses on foundational subjects such as literacy, mathematics, and science, while junior secondary education expands students' academic knowledge and practical skills. This structure was formalized under the Education Reform Act of 2011.

### **Early Childhood Education (ECE)**

ECE in Liberia covers children approximately between the ages of 3 and 5 years and includes kindergarten levels KG1–KG3. The purpose is to prepare children for formal schooling through foundational literacy, numeracy, and social development. The government and international partners have increasingly emphasized early childhood learning because many children enter primary school coverage or without basic preparation.

### **Basic Education**

#### **Primary Education**

Primary education in Liberia consists of Grades 1–6 and usually begins at the age of six. At this level, students are introduced to foundational subjects that support their academic and personal development. The curriculum includes English Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Civics, and Health Education, which together help learners develop literacy, numeracy, social awareness, and healthy living practices. Students take the Liberia Primary School Certificate Examination at the end of primary school.

#### **Junior Secondary Education**

Junior secondary education covers Grades 7–9. At this level, students receive broader academic instruction and introductory vocational subjects. At the end of Grade 9, students sit for the Liberia Junior High School Certificate Examination, administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). Basic education is officially declared free and compulsory under Liberian law, although implementation challenges remain due to poverty, inadequate facilities, and shortages of trained teachers.

#### **Senior Secondary Education**

Senior secondary education in Liberia covers Grades 10–12 and is divided into two main pathways: academic education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The academic pathway prepares students for higher education by focusing on subjects such as science, arts, and commerce, while the TVET pathway equips learners with practical and technical skills needed for employment and workforce development. Students study specialized subjects in science, arts, commerce, and technical fields. Completion leads to the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), which qualifies students for tertiary education. TVET programs are designed to provide employable skills in areas such as: Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs in Liberia provide students with practical skills and career-oriented knowledge in various fields. These programs include areas such as agriculture, construction, information technology, mechanics, and business studies, helping learners develop competencies that prepare them for employment, entrepreneurship, and national development. The Liberian government considers TVET essential for workforce development and national economic growth.

#### **Tertiary Education**

Higher education in Liberia consists of universities, colleges, teacher training institutes, and professional and vocational institutions. These institutions provide advanced education and specialized training in various academic, technical, and professional fields, helping students develop the knowledge and skills needed for careers, leadership, and national development.



Major institutions include:

- University of Liberia
- Cuttington University
- William V. S. Tubman University
- African Methodist Episcopal University

Programs offered include diplomas, undergraduate, and postgraduate degrees. However, tertiary education faces serious challenges, including overcrowding, limited infrastructure, insufficient funding, and weak academic preparation among incoming students. A widely discussed example occurred in 2013 when entrance examination results at the University of Liberia revealed extremely poor student performance<sup>5</sup>

### **Components of the Liberian Education System**

**Structure:** The academic year runs from September to June. It includes 6 years of primary, 3 years of lower secondary, and 3 years of upper secondary education.

**Challenges:** The system has faced severe disruption due to 14 years of civil war and health crises, leaving many schools without electricity, water, or proper facilities.

**Quality and Access;** as of 2015, the illiteracy rate was estimated at 53%, with approximately 48% of youth (15-24) not completing primary education.

**Teacher Shortage and Quality:** There is a shortage of qualified teachers, and many teachers are absent or are “ghost teachers.” Unverified names on payroll.

**Reforms and Partnerships:** To address these issues, the government has initiated partnerships with private organizations (e.g., Bridge International Academies, Rising Academies) to manage some public schools.

### **Conclusion**

The Liberian educational school system continues to face numerous challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, weak leadership structures, insufficient funding, poor learning outcomes, and limited access to modern educational resources. Despite these obstacles, transformational leadership presents a powerful strategy for innovation and sustainable change within the education sector. Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring, motivating, and empowering teachers, students, and stakeholders to work collectively toward educational improvement and national development.

School leaders who adopt transformational leadership practices are better positioned to create positive school cultures, encourage teacher commitment, improve student performance, and promote innovation in teaching and learning. Through vision, collaboration, accountability, and continuous professional development, transformational leaders can help schools adapt to changing educational demands and societal needs. In Liberia, where the education sector is still recovering from the effects of civil conflict, economic hardship, and public health crises, transformational leadership is essential for rebuilding confidence, strengthening institutions, and improving educational quality.

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<sup>5</sup> Liberia Education Systems & Structure | Last Visited May 19, 2026

<https://www.insightliberia.com/copy-of-liberia-agriculture>



Furthermore, innovation and change in Liberian schools require active participation from government agencies, local communities, international partners, teachers, parents, and students. Effective educational transformation cannot be achieved through policy alone; it demands committed leadership, strategic planning, adequate funding, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. If transformational leadership is effectively implemented across school systems, Liberia can build a more inclusive, resilient, and high-quality education system capable of supporting national growth and sustainable development.

### **Suggestions**

**Strengthen Leadership Training Programs:** School principals, administrators, and educational officers should receive regular leadership and management training focused on transformational leadership skills, strategic planning, communication, and innovation.

**Promote Teacher Motivation and Professional Development:** Teachers should be provided with continuous professional training, fair salaries, incentives, and opportunities for career advancement to improve performance and commitment.

**Encourage Stakeholder Participation:** Parents, communities, religious organizations, and civil society groups should actively participate in school management and educational decision-making processes.

**Integrate Technology into Education:** Schools should adopt modern educational technologies such as digital learning platforms, computers, internet access, and smart classrooms to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

**Improve Educational Infrastructure:** Government and development partners should prioritize the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sanitation facilities, especially in rural areas.

**Promote Innovation in Teaching Methods:** Teachers should be encouraged to use learner-centered and problem-solving teaching approaches that enhance creativity, critical thinking, and student participation.

**Strengthen Monitoring and Accountability Systems:** Educational authorities should establish effective systems for monitoring school performance, teacher attendance, student achievement, and resource management.

**Support Inclusive Education Policies.** Policies should ensure equal educational opportunities for girls, children with disabilities, and disadvantaged groups across Liberia.

### **Recommendations**

The Ministry of Education should institutionalize transformational leadership practices in all public and private schools through national leadership frameworks and policies.

The government should increase budgetary allocation to education to support infrastructure development, teacher training, technological advancement, and curriculum improvement.

Teacher training institutions should incorporate transformational leadership and innovation management into their educational programs to prepare future school leaders effectively.

International organizations and development partners should continue supporting educational reforms through funding, technical assistance, and capacity-building initiatives.

School leaders should foster collaborative school environments where teachers and students are encouraged to share ideas, participate in decision-making, and contribute to school improvement.



Regular evaluation and assessment mechanisms should be established to measure the effectiveness of leadership practices and educational reforms across schools.

Policies promoting rural education development should be strengthened to reduce disparities between urban and rural schools in terms of resources, staffing, and educational opportunities.

Research on educational leadership and innovation in Liberia should be expanded to provide evidence-based strategies for future reforms and sustainable educational transformation.

Schools should establish partnerships with private sector organizations and communities to mobilize additional resources and promote practical learning opportunities for students.

Transformational leadership principles should be embedded into national educational reform agendas to ensure long-term innovation, institutional effectiveness, and improved student achievement throughout Liberia.

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