

Youth Alliance for Rural Development in Liberia (YARD-LIBERIA), Inc.

In Collaboration with BudgIT

Covid-19 Transparency & Accountability Project (Ctap)

Research Data Findings Report On Us \$1 Million Stimulus Package for Private Schools Teachers

Margibi County

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April 27, 2021

ABSTRACT

To fight COVID-19 in Liberia, there have been many donations ranging from financial aids to health materials. The government of Liberia recognized the challenges many private schools faced in paying their teachers and faculties due to hardship on parents to pay tuitions since everyone has to stop working and still home. Parents, guardians, and self-sponsored students have attributed their inability to pay balance tuitions which significantly led to a reduction in economic activities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. To intervene in this situation, the government of Liberia instructed the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to provide U.S \$1 million out of the FY19/20 surplus to pay as an honorarium to private school teachers who have not been paid for over six (6) months.

To obtain an accountable and transparent distributions of the US \$1 million to private school teachers, and faculties, YARD-Liberia, Inc. has joined into a partnership with BudgIT-Liberia in the COVID-19 Transparency & Accountability Project (CTAP) in Liberia, to do a county level (Margibi) tracking on the **COVID-19 HONORIUM STIMULUS PACKAGE FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS** to find out if all private school teachers have collected their shares of the US \$1 million and the amount. The project is to work around proper accountability and transparency of the \$1 million to help fight against COVID-19 challenges in private schools.

INTRODUCTION

Countries cannot ignore corruption during the COVID-19 response. According to OECD estimates, up to US \$ 2 trillion of procurement costs could be lost to corruption in the health sector. The government of Liberia through the president office fulfillment of the US \$1 million honorarium stimulus package to private school teachers across the country directed through the ministry of education started the distributions from February 11, 2021. Over 4,395 teachers and faculties earmarked to benefit (Daily News, Dec. 24, 2020). The CTAP research is an importance aspect that is committed to publish how the \$1 million is spent and shared among private school teachers. This will establish mechanisms for reporting the amount distributed and how the distributions process is satisfactory to the said beneficiaries. Moreover, for proper accountability and transparency there is a need for credibility of the

oversight role played by Ministry of Education. Also Civil society organizations need to play a crucial role, by supporting actors as well as monitoring and information sharing bodies about public funds. This research process creates a room for open, transparent, and accountable governance. YARD-Liberia is celebrating with Budgiti to have this research done so that government and other situations can have a clear understand about the \$1 million distributions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During the research, YARD-Liberia, Inc. worked with printed questionnaires that were divided into two parts, the biographical information and the research questionnaire. All the questions were printed on a single sheet of paper. The organization used quantitative data collections by visiting Private Schools in Margibi County. Our executive directed visited the Ministry of education local office in Margibi County to share the agenda of the project and to have the MoE informed about their data collection in district 3 & 4. Six (6) teachers were selected by the authority from each school and they also by consent by themselves to participate. All participants were openly informed about the research agenda which was placed for consent before participation. No names, contacts or schools name of participants were collected. Each participant was given a questionnaire sheet to be answered in the best comfortable position or experience with the distributions process. We have **18 schools** participating from district 1, 2, 3, & 4. There were **106** participants who consented to partake within the research. YARD-Liberia has volunteer enumerators who were trained for 4 hours on how to proceed in collecting the data from private school teachers. Some schools collected the questionnaire sheets for a day and later submitted it to us through whatsapp.

RESULTS

During the quantitative data collections, we have **32%** of the participants who were females while **68%** were all males. The number of participants in our research is 106 from 17 secondary and primary schools in Margibi County. Our major findings showed that only 15% of teachers in the private schools have received their shares of the \$1 million dollar. While 85% of the participants said they have not received their shares of the \$1 million dollar which was passed as a budget for them to benefit. The 15% said they received amount is equivalent to 1 month salary (US \$ 45). 83% of the participants responded that there has Diploma/certificate, while 13% has College Degree (B.Sc or Masters). 1% has Senior School diploma and 3% said other education. The age range of the participants is from 20years to 50 years above. 21% range from 20-25 years, 24% are range from 26-31 years, 25% range from 32-37 years, 38-42 years is 11%, 6% is from 44-49 years and 50 years above is 10%. 56% of our participants said they have been teaching for 0-5 years, and 22% also said they have been teaching for 6-10 years. While 22% said they have been teaching for 10 years above. The private schools teachers who said they have not been identified by any institution during the hot of COVID-19 makeup 65%, while 22% said they have received or been identified by organizations in the fight again COVID-19. Awareness about the US \$1 million was one major concern, which we wanted to know how well the communication reached among private school teachers. Our findings showed that 7% of the respondents said they have not hear about the money, while 92% said they have heard about the money and 1% responded that they were sure if they have this information. The media for news gathering were School administration(36%), 60% radio news, online media, while 2% said they got the news from friends/ family and 2% also said they got the news from government. The participants orally expressed their dissatisfactions about the procedures associated with getting the money. Some said the process is too difficult while others said they cannot even understand the process. Therefore, 60% said the process is not satisfactory, 28% responded as poor process, while 6% graded the process as fair, 5% said it is good process and 1% are satisfied with the process.

LIMITATIONS

As a grassroots CSO, we have major challenges with training our volunteers with fall capacities and adequate knowledge about data collection. We have only few volunteers who were willing to travel to

rural places in other districts, therefore, we have only few volunteers doing the data collection in communities they could not easily relate to local schools. We did not have enough funding to work with youth or local groupings in every district. Some teachers did not consent to the project after we met and tell them about the project objectives. Our initiate plan was to meet 4 schools in each of the 5 political district but unfortunately we have only 3 schools in district #5 which we did not meet to have them participating in the research. However, we have more schools from the participated four (4) political districts. Transporting volunteers with limited resources, was one of our main challenges, however, we have other people coming in to support the project. Our research was only limited to findings that has to do with if private school teachers received the share of the U.S \$1 million but we did not capture to know why they did not receive, but some expressed it orally. We did not also capture by which medium they received the money.

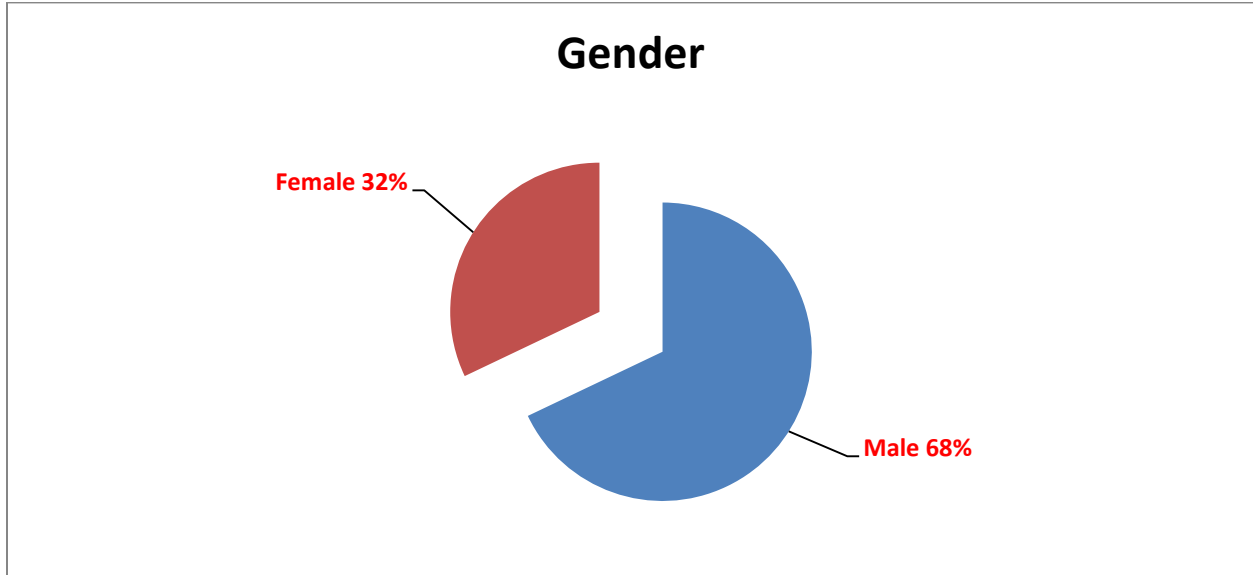
CONCLUSION

During the data collection, we have our participants expressing in comments about their dissatisfactions with the process and requirements before getting the money. Some said, the process and criteria of getting the national ID has been difficult for them, so government should reduce the process so they can get their shares. There were also request for government to help private schools with salaries and materials. While some participants said, they need transparency and accountability in the process. Some participants said it will be good for the government to work through independent institutions or school administrations which could help everyone get their shares. The process began with owners of private schools requested to submit their last updated payrolls to the task force through the MoE for validation before payment. The payrolls should include payment details (Account numbers, mobile money numbers and national biometric identification numbers). Other processes include School valid operational permit, School must scan and submit the signed copies of its January, February and March

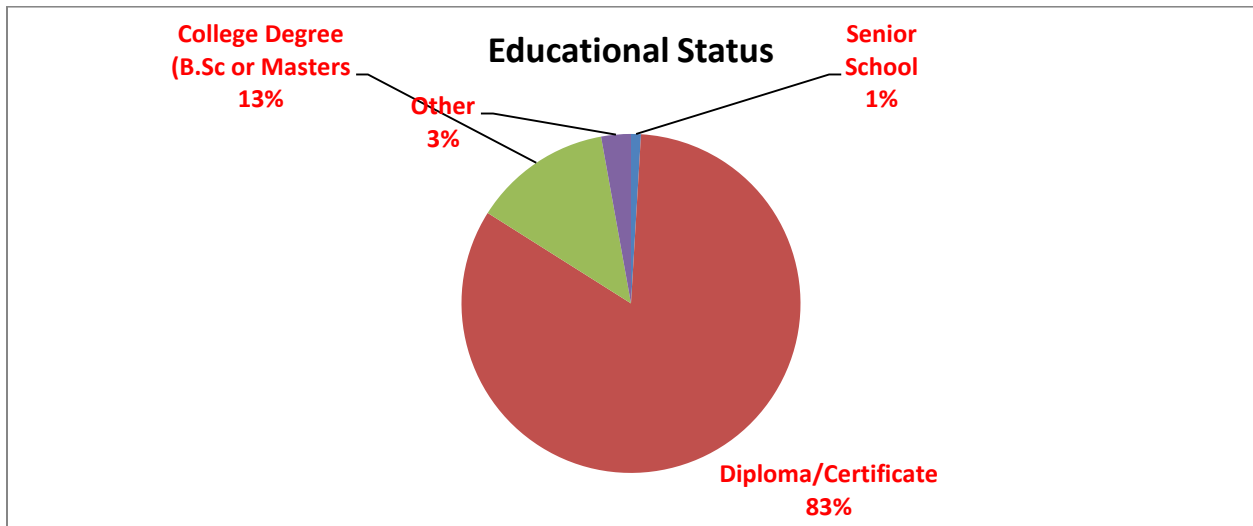
2020 payrolls by email, School must submit the full names, genders, position, subject teaching, teacher level, national identification number for each teacher, Telephone, and available bank accounts. The email that is use for receiving documents is stimuluspackage@moe.gov.

Putted on the Ministry of education website on February 02, 2021), they said there were approximately 5000 verified private school teachers which showed that many schools submitted incomplete information. Accounting to MoE, each teacher was paid \$45.00. The cut-off date was April 12, 2021. Our findings show that there are less receivers of the money and there is a high number of teachers who have not yet received. There is high dissatisfaction among private school teachers toward the process of the money distributions.

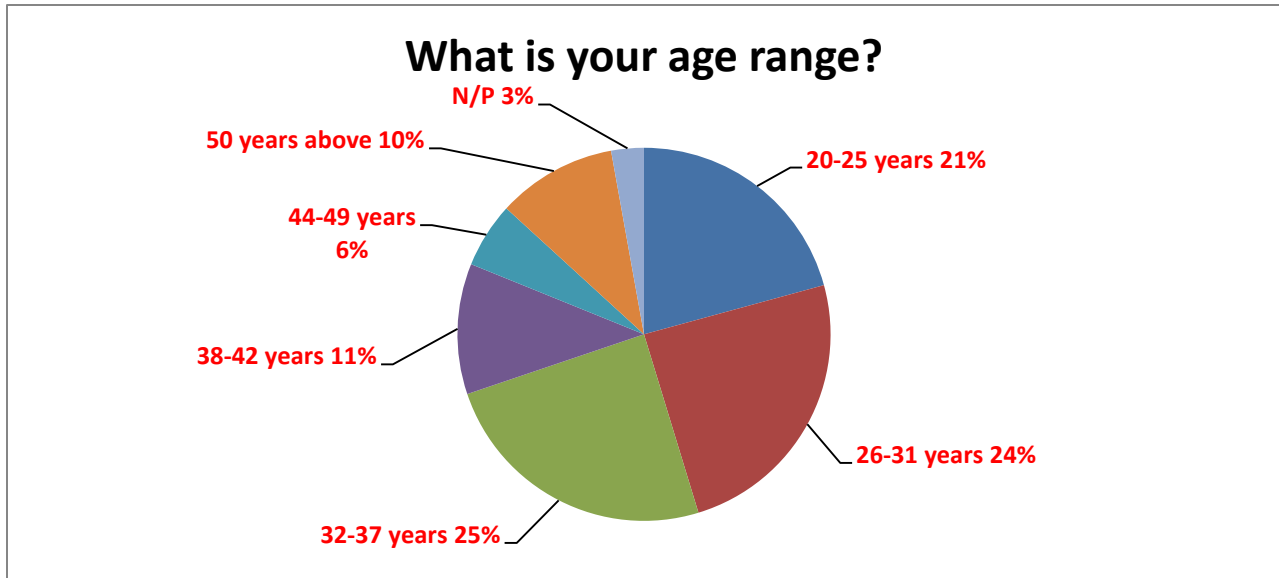
DATA ANALYSIS



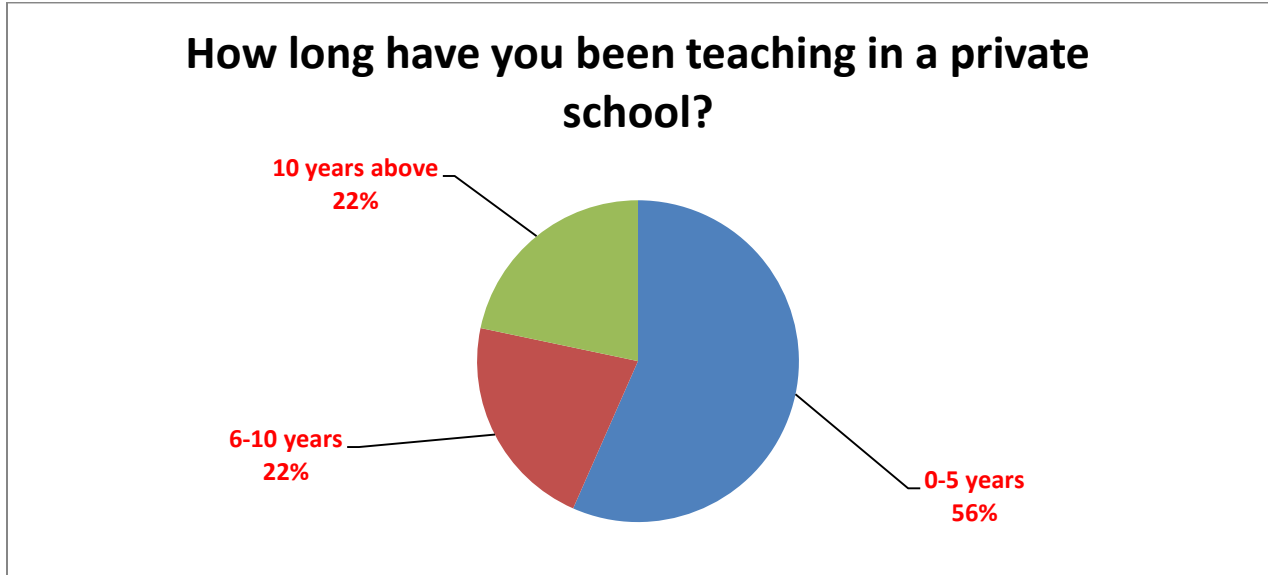
There were 106 participants who consented to response to our questionnaires. During the quantitative data collections, we have 32% of the participants who were female while 68% were all male. The



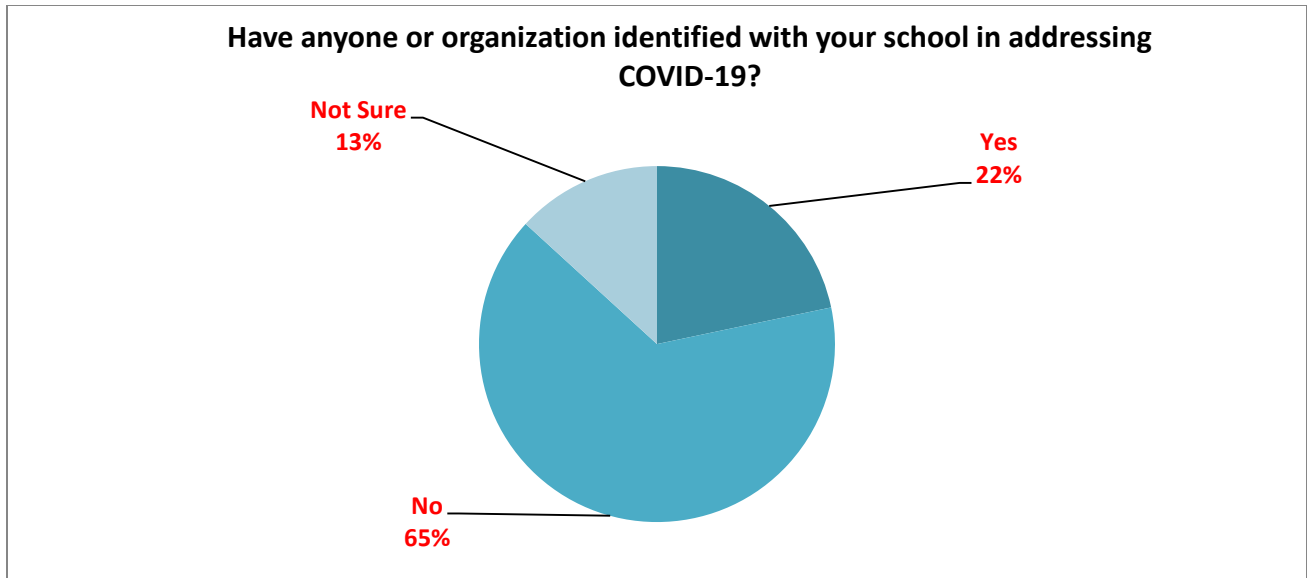
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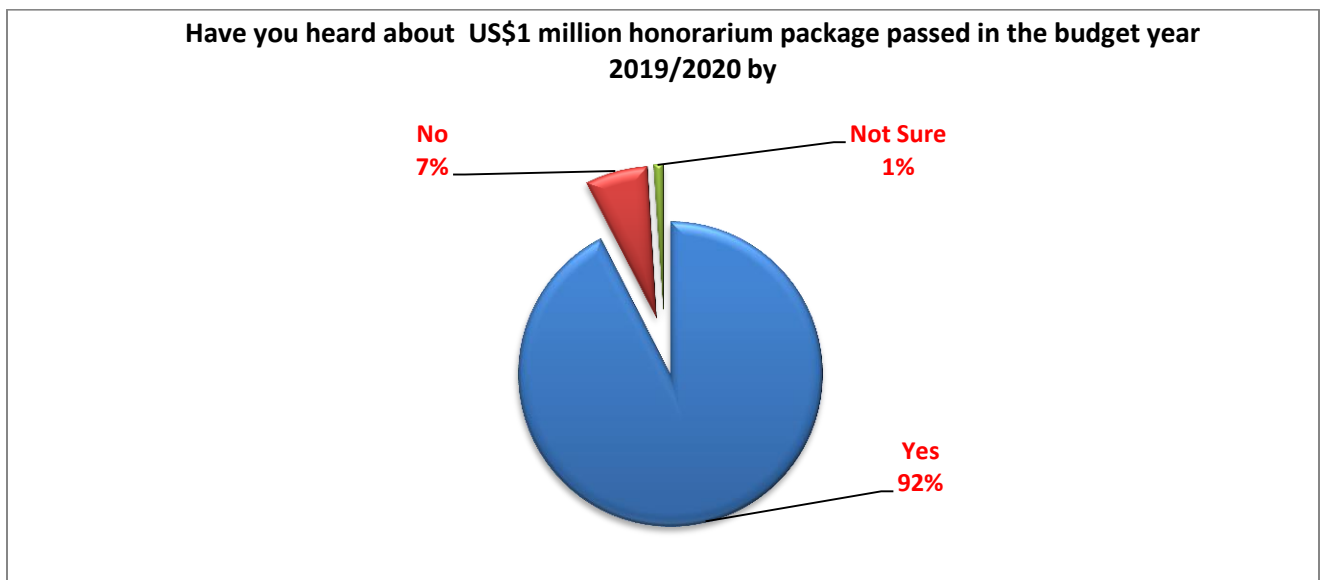
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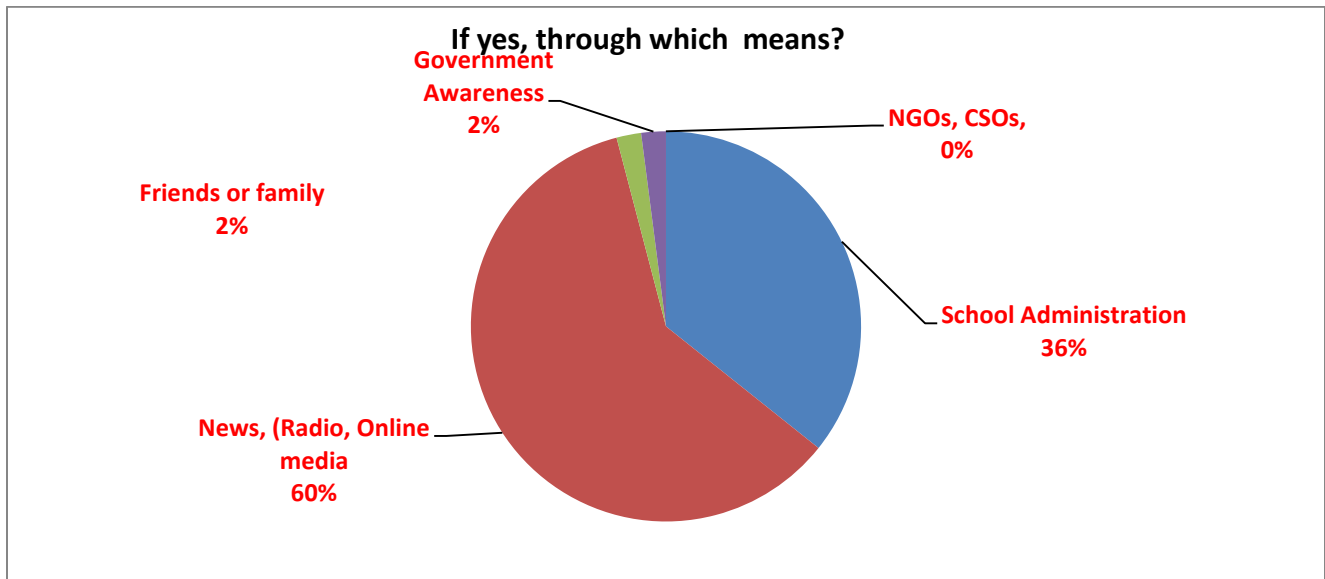
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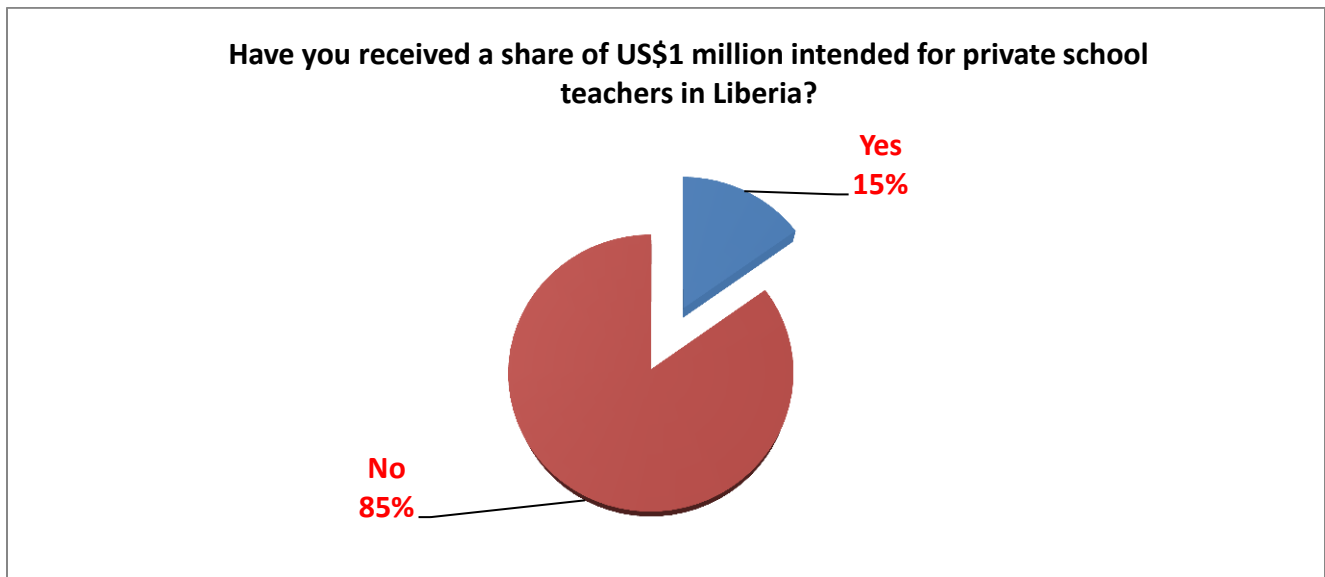
The private schools teachers who said they have not been identified by any institution during the hot of COVID-19 makeup 65%, while 22% said they have received or been identified by organizations in the fight again COVID-19.



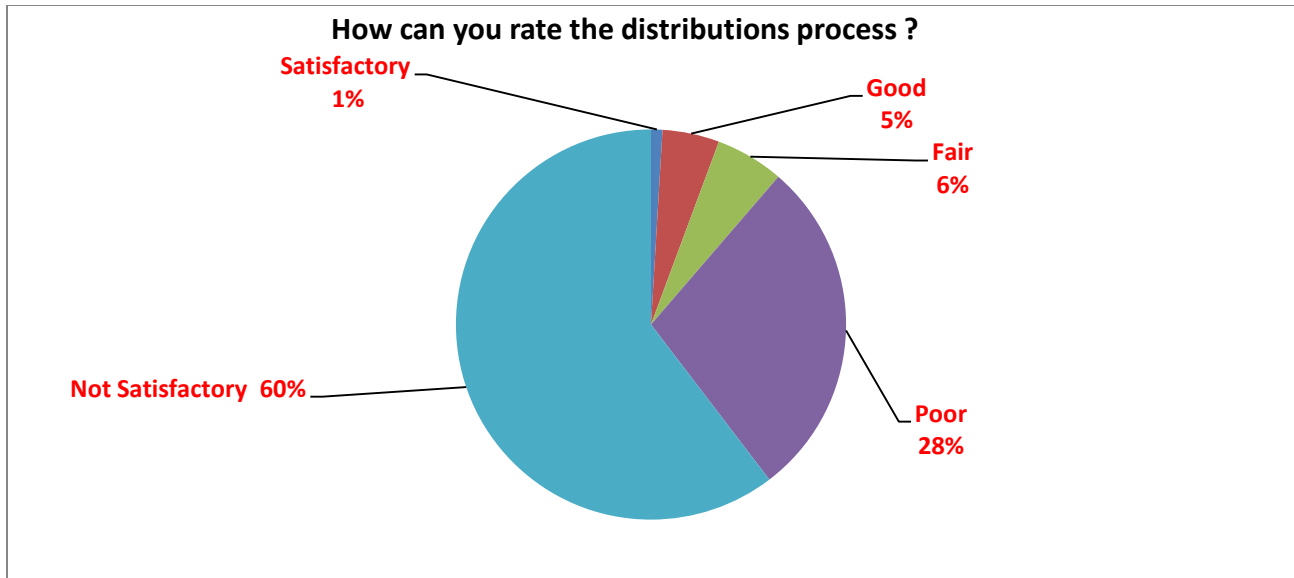
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BUDGET SUMMARY

Items/activities	Amount (LD)
Office operation	7,000
Transportation	25,000
Media	1500
Materials/printing	5,000
Feeding of Volunteers daily	7,500
Volunteers Stipends	10,000
other	2500
TOTAL COST	58,500