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Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs

UNOPS-LIBERIA



***LIR1961002-MICRO
PROJECTS SUPPORT
FOR RESETTLEMENT
AND REINTEGRATION***

INTERNAL REVIEW

JUNE 2001

UNDPIUNOPS - LIBERIA
LIR/96/002 - MICRO PROJECT SUPPORT FOR
RESETTLEMENT AND REINTEGRATION
INTERNAL REVIEW

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ACRONYMS

ARDU CBO CCF CRTs CTA EU GDP IDP IFIs ILO LNTG LRRRC MIA

MPEA MTP NDDC NGO NRC NRP ODA OFDA POC QIP RC
ReinCom UNDESA UNDP UNESCO UNHACO UNICEF UNOPS USAID

Area Reintegration and Development Unit
Community Based Organization
Country Cooperation Framework
Community Reconstruction Teams
Chief Technical Advisor European
Union
Gross Domestic Product Internally
Displaced Person International Financial
Institutions International Labor Organization
Liberian National Transition Government
Liberia Refuge Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
Medium Term Plan
National Disarmament and Demobilization Commission
Non-Governmental Organization National Readjustment
Commission National Reconstruction Programme Official
Development Assistance Office of Foreign Development
Assistance Programme Operation Center Quick Impact
Projects
Resident Coordinator Reintegration
Steering Committee
United Nations Development for Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Nations Humanitarian Affairs Office United Nations
Children's Fund
United Nations Office for Project Services
United States Agency for International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As is now well documented, Liberia's seven-year civil war devastated the economy and aggravated and accelerated the socio-economic decline that had already begun in the 1980s. With the war's end and the efforts to put in place a new government, it was clear that Liberia was emerging from an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that was still causing widespread hunger, malnutrition, disease, and severe socio-economic hardships for

the majority of the population.

Within the reintegration framework, the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) proposed a course of action emphasizing two areas of activities. One of these was the consolidation of peace through resettlement, reintegration and reconstruction of communities and the re-start of the economy. The project under review was designed to contribute to this course of action.

UNDP designed LIR/96/002 to assist Liberia in its restoration of basic social service infrastructure that would benefit in a non-discriminatory manner a target of 44,000 resettlers including IDPs, refugees, and ex-combatants in eight of the thirteen counties. Also targeted was the improvement 'of social infrastructure and the delivery of improved services in education, health, water and sanitation in the designated communities. The project was costshared by UNDP, USAID, UNHACO, and the Dutch Government. The total budget was put at US\$10.7 million.

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) was chosen to implement the Project. As originally designed, the project was to be implemented through eight Programme Operations Centers (POCs) in seven counties -- Lofa, Bong, Bomi, Margibi, Grand Bassa, Rivercess and Montserrado - and supported from a central office in Monrovia. The main implementing partners were non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). Since 2000, resources to support the project had been dwindling. As a result, some of the project offices in the rural areas have now been closed.

The main findings of the internal review that was carried out are that the Project has been generally successful in meeting the main project objectives, but that it suffered from some setbacks due largely to the under-estimation of the difficulties and constraints of working in post-conflict Liberia, consisting of a combination of logistical, socio-economic and political hurdles. The Project has been further constrained as funding commitments from donors have declined due to the unfavorable socio-economic and political environment.

Other conclusions and observations of the Review Team are as follows:

- The average unit cost of a micro project in 1997 was initially very high, at which only 4 micro projects were completed. Average input (materials) cost per project was approximately US\$109,507 (including premises). By 1999, 133 projects were completed at an average unit cost per project of less than US\$4,700. By this measure, the unit cost per micro-project was reduced by 538%.

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- The Project has made tremendous impact in meeting the humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the country. The Project had been

able to restore schooling facilities for 83,000 students, increased access to health services for 90,000 persons, undertook economic empowerment and humanitarian (non-food) assistance, which benefited 111,9000 persons.

- The Project through technical training and other support has also developed and enhanced the capacities of several national NGOs and CBOs in identifying community needs and in formulating micro-project proposals while serving as implementing partners
- Social reintegration of communities, especially rehabilitation of ex-combatants and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, was a key element in the peace process and stabilization of rural societies.
- The micro project approach adopted by the Project, which produces multiple interventions over a wide geographic area, is a practical way of dealing with emergencies of war-affected populations in a post-conflict environment.
- Overall, the Project impacted significantly on the lives of the population through the micro project approach. The rehabilitated facilities are the only social infrastructure in the beneficiary communities. The project also contributed to the consolidation of peace, restoration of confidence, and accelerated the resettlement and reintegration process.

Some of the difficulties encountered by the Project are as follows.

- Failure to operationalize the Reintegration Steering Committee (Reincom) as well as the establishment of the Project's Specific Screening Committee weakened coordination and the flow of information.
- Information sharing with line ministries on project activities was poor. Efforts should be made to improve this situation.
- Delivery of social services to a population devastated by war can be achieved in collaborative manner working with communities, CBOs and NGOs , even with limited government involvement. The involvement of private contractors enhanced delivery, but community empowerment through remuneration was lost.

The main recommendations of the Review Team include:

- Given the huge residual humanitarian and rehabilitation needs of the country, the Team hereby recommends the extension of the project to conform to the UNDP CCF for Liberia, the National Reconstruction Programme (NRP) and the Liberia's five-year Medium Term Plan (MTP) for Reconstruction and Development; and, most importantly, the recommendations of beneficiaries of the micro projects.

- The project should establish linkages with other UNDP's funded projects (including micro grant, micro credit, the environment, gender) so as to ensure sustainability and increase project impact. The extended project should diversity its activities into other areas of sustainable livelihood such as agriculture and food security.
- Government should allocate funds in its national budget for counterpart contribution to donor funded projects. UNDP is urged to hold frequent discussions and follow-ups with on donors and forged partnership. Also security is very crucial for project implementation. Accordingly, the Government should create an enabling and stable environment to ensure that development projects are implemented.
- A Project Desk as proposed by the MPEA, should be established to facilitate information dissemination and monitoring of project activities. The POCs should be closed; the project should use the government administrative structure on the ground.
- Efforts should be made by government to engage donors constructively, as a strategy to mobilizing funds for national reconstruction and recovery. The inclusion of private contractors in the implementation of micro-projects is essential for fast delivery, but it should not be at the expense of community participation.
- Stable funding from donors, timely delivery of project inputs and a conducive environment are essential elements for improving not only confidence building but also ensuring the smooth implementation of the project. Government counterpart contribution is necessary as a show of commitment to improving the welfare of its people

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Micro-Project Support for Resettlement and Reintegration has been one of UNDP's largest projects since the end of the civil war in 1996. The Project, which started in July 1997 with initial cost sharing from UNDP, USAID, and the Dutch Government, supports the reintegration and resettlement of displaced people and the receiving communities in rural towns and villages, primarily through the restoration of basic social services and community infrastructure in a non-discriminatory manner.

Since 2000, resources to support the project had been dwindling, resulting in the need for a re-examination of the scope and direction of the project for its remaining duration.

The objective of the internal review of the Project is to assess the accomplishment of its planned objectives and activities for the last four years so as to determine lessons for the future. As indicated in the TOR (see Annex), the review process took a three-phase approach: literature review, interviews/meetings and field visit by the Review Team.

Socio-Economic Context

The underlying rationale for this Project is obviously tied to the terrible consequences of the civil war which devastated Liberia from 1989 to 1996. This tragedy was compounded by an earlier decade of repressive military/civilian rule and economic mismanagement in the 1980s. The civil war led to total collapse of all democratic and socio-economic institutions in Liberia, and caused the deaths of approximately 200,000 people and the displacement of over a million persons internally and externally. The war gave rise to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis causing widespread hunger, malnutrition and disease; and destruction of economic and social infrastructure. Loss of productive economic and commercial activities led to further deterioration of the human development situation in the country. Approximately two out of every three Liberians were forced to flee their homes as a result of armed conflict or the fear of violence. The bulk of the displaced population came from the rural areas who fled to urban areas within Liberia or to neighboring countries.

With the intervention of the international community, much of the humanitarian crisis was contained. However, over two-thirds (76.2%) of the Liberian people are still living below the international poverty level of less than US\$1.00 per day. The unemployment level is estimated at 85%; access to water supply has reduced to 26%, sanitation, 11%; health services, 25%; education, 70%; and housing, 20%. HIV/AIDS prevalence has increased to 8.2%. The reduction in access to social services and the deterioration in the overall socioeconomic condition is attributed to the widespread destruction of the social infrastructure (education, health, roads and bridges) as well as farms and other sources of livelihood. The war caused a major disruption of the productive economic and commercial activities and the loss of livelihood for over 90% of the population, majority of whom live in the rural areas.

The Liberian economy is presently operating at less than 50% of its pre-war level. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$480 million (2000) is still less than half of the pre-war (1988) GDP of over US\$1 billion. The national budget of US\$100 million (2000) is only one-third of its pre-war 1988 budget of US\$340 million. The country's huge external

debt arrears of US\$2.5 billion is about 562.5% of GDP and 5,368.6% of export earnings (2000), which has made Liberia ineligible to tap new financial resources especially from the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to jump-start the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economy and reduce poverty.

The combination of Liberia's long-term social and economic decline and the adverse effect of the war on both the physical infrastructure and social services have aggravated the already unfavorable human development situation, which has resulted in Liberia's low ranking of 173 out of a total 174 countries, with a human development index of 0.276.

Following the devastated civil war, the Government's ability to address the basic needs of its population was hampered by the breakdown of law and order, and the lack of effective jurisdiction over the entire country at the time, coupled with budgetary constraints and diminished human resource capacity.

Political Context

Further rationale for the Project emerged from the political events and discussions with the international community which characterized the immediate post-civil war period. With assistance from ECOWAS and the international donor community, a peace agreement was brokered in 1996 among the warring factions, which ushered in a Transitional Government followed by elections in 1997.

Based on consultations with the donor community, the Liberia National Transitional Government (LNTG) put forward the following objectives for international support:

- i. Facilitate disarmament;
- ii. Facilitate the return of displaced persons, refugees and ex-combatants, and
- iii. Create condition for the conduct of free and fair elections.

Within the reintegration framework, the LNTG proposed a course of action emphasizing two areas of activities:

- i. Essential activities for the attainment of peace, i.e. creation of a secure and enabling environment through the re-deployment of civil administration, holding of national elections, and mitigating the effects of the civil war on Liberians; and
- ii. Consolidation of the peace process through resettlement and

reconstruction of communities and the restart of the economy.

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UNDPIUNOPS Prior and Ongoing Assistance

During the crisis and the transitional period, UNDP -- in collaboration with UNOPS and other donors -- undertook a series of humanitarian activities for Liberia. Among these, UNDP executed LIR/91/001 - Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Assistance and LIR/94/003 - Emergency Programme Logistical Support Projects, which provided substantial support to humanitarian activities as well as demobilization and integration of ex-combatants. This project was co-financed by USAID, ODA (now DFID) and UNDP.

UNDP's Reintegration Management and Poverty Alleviation Program (LIR/95/004) provided support to the national coordination mechanism for the transition and the local voluntary sector to rebuild and expand their capacities. The Vocational Training for Employment and Self- Employment project (LIR/95/005), which was executed by ILO, assisted in building capacity for the design and implementation of short cycle skills training through community based organizations.

The overall strategy for resettlement and reintegration assistance for Liberia was developed with inputs from all aid donors in Liberia at the time: USAID, ODA, EU and UN agencies, among others.

In general, UNDP played an important role in the coordination of humanitarian assistance and provided effective support for the peace building efforts and the electoral process, which ushered in the current government. UNDP also provided direct and indirect support to resettlement and reintegration of displaced people and ex-combatants through humanitarian assistance, community infrastructure rehabilitation and creation of sustainable livelihood opportunities, especially for the poor. It further provided assistance for capacity building in some of the key government institutions and NGOs as well as for post-war reconstruction planning, and government's resource mobilization efforts.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Rationale

As noted above, the Project under review was conceived in an environment of massive destruction and displacement of people, caused by the civil crisis which began in 1989. At the local level, the flow of goods and services and the movement of people were hampered by a general state of insecurity. At the national level, government operations were dysfunctional. The government's capacity to contribute

to such efforts in the short run was seriously hampered, at the same time that external resources were limited. Approximately 60% of the population were displaced internally and externally, and were surviving on relief; basic economic and social infrastructure were severely damaged. Local industries, roads and bridges, schools, market facilities, clinics and hospitals, water and sanitation facilities were in the state of disrepair. Nearly 100% of rural roads, clinics, and markets suffered from some

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form of damage; and local mobility was severely restricted due to damaged roads, culverts and bridges.

Project Objectives

The stated development objectives of the Project are to provide support to the process of resettlement and reintegration of conflict affected Liberians, and to initiate rehabilitation and reconstruction activities over a continuum leading to the resumption of national sustainable human development.

At a more specific level, the Project has sought to provide support on a non-discriminatory basis to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returning refugees, and to facilitate social reintegration and resettlement of people in their villages of origin. This was to be done through restoration of basic social service infrastructure that would benefit in a nondiscriminatory manner IDPs, resettlers, returnees, and existing community residents. The project targeted 444,000 resettlers (refugees, IDPs and ex-combatants) in eight counties, through the delivery of improved services in education, health, water and sanitation, etc., within designated communities. Initially, the project was to establish Programme Operation Centers (POCs) and/or Area Reintegration and Development Units (ARDUs) to assist in managing the project resettlement and reintegration process and other assistance. The Project initially expected to reconstruct 340 facilities, including rural schools, clinics and medical facilities, local access projects and economic infrastructure/agricultural support based projects (swamp cultivation, co-operative warehousing, food processing, etc); 16 micro-projects were to be completed to assist with supervision activities of local government. Another 10 essential logistical support micro-projects aimed at relieving bottlenecks to resettlement, reconstruction and rehabilitation were to be completed. (See Table I on the next page.)

Project Approaches/Implementation Arrangements

During the inception of the project, there was no effective government administration in most parts of the country. In this connection, the project sought to deliver micro-projects by means of Area-based units or centers funded and supported by the international donor community. However, the absence of adequate security

made it impossible to have put into place the Area Unit scheme prior to the national elections. The main approaches were as follows:

- The project was planned to be demand driven, meaning target beneficiaries comprising resettlers and the remaining population in the project catchment areas would identify and participate in the implementation of their micro-projects.
- The project in the first instance delivered micro-projects through the network of local and international NGOs and CBOs involved with the resettlement process and the reintegration of IDPs, ex-fighters, and returnees within the surrounding project area.
- Resources were deployed at the local level to meet locally defined needs without
discrimination.

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- The major tool for implementing the project strategy was almost exclusively through micro-projects. These were formulated in consultation with NGOs, CBOs and community residents.
- A participatory approach was adopted in formulating/selecting micro-projects. These proposals were further elaborated by project staff to a stage suitable for consideration.
- Participating partners were responsible for other food and non-food items and longterm sustainability (especially education and health projects).
- The specialized LNTG commissions collaborated with the project.
- Logistical base of operations were established at the county level which worked with LRRRC, NRC, resettlers and community residents, and enhanced the restoration of local governance.
- The POCs facilitated programme operations until functional government administrative structures were put in place.

Table 1

Immediate Objectives and Expected Outputs of Project LIR/96/002

Immediate Objective	Expected Outputs

<p>1. To contribute to the revival of communities for resettlement and reintegration through the restoration of basic social delivery (in education, health, water and sanitation) and the start of local productive activities.</p>	<p>1.1a. A network of 8 Programme Operation Centers (POCs) established to assist with management of the project by August 1997.</p> <p>1.1b. Four POCs expanded and upgraded to Area Reintegration and Development Units (ARDUs) by September 1997.</p> <p>1.2.a. Approximately 340 schools, clinics/medical facilities, local access projects and economic infrastructure/ agricultural support based projects completed by 31 December 1998.</p> <p>1.2b. Sixteen (16) micro-projects to assist the supervision activities of local authorities completed.</p> <p>1.2c. Ten essential logistic support micro-projects aimed at relieving bottlenecks in the reintegration process completed.</p>
<p>2. To provide logistic support for emergency relief for special cases.</p>	<p>2.1. Emergency relief needs of the beneficiaries and war affected population met.</p> <p>2.2. Adequate logistic support provided to the UN Resident Coordinator and UN agencies to attend to national relief, resettlement and reintegration needs.</p>

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With regard to implementation, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) serves as the Executing Agency of the project, and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MPEA) is the Implementing Agency.

Given the nature of the micro-projects, several ministries and agencies were operating partners. They were the Ministries of Planning and Economic Affairs, (charged with overall coordination), Internal Affairs, Public Works, Rural Development, Education, and Health and Social Welfare. Three Government Commissions were involved: the National Disarmament and Demobilization Commission (NDDC), the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and the Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) and National Readjustment Commission (NRC). These ministries and agencies were identified as major stakeholders in the project from which a National Reintegration Steering Committee (ReinCom) was organized.

Project Constraints

Following the first year of project implementation, the constraints highlighted by the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) in his Annual Project Report in June 1998 were as follows:

- Abrupt reduction of resources by UNDP of US\$1 million from its initial 1997

contribution of US\$3 million to 1999, at a time when USAID contribution of US\$2.8m had not been received and was not forthcoming before mid-June 1998. This transfer resulted to a decrease in the 1998 project budget, which consequently reduced the number of planned micro projects activities for 1998.

- Commitments made by donors had been slow to materialize which caused a lapse in the project schedule, increased overhead and operational costs as compared to the actual cost for the micro-projects. Accordingly, the project faced a financial risk due to incomplete funding from the third party cost-sharing component. This factor seriously affected the project in that many proposals emanating from the communities to the project staff/management could not be honored.
- The international bulk procurement of building materials was terminated due to the lack of funds. As a result, the project became entirely dependent on the local market for logistics and building materials which increased the input cost.
- At the national level, the lack of communication and coordination between the project and Government affected the implementation of the project as well.
- Much of the basic social infrastructure, including roads, bridges, primary schools, health facilities, etc. were seriously damaged, looted or destroyed during the war. Most of these facilities suffered from years of neglect and the lack of maintenance, placing many of the intended recipients in inaccessible areas. It should be noted that the level of accessibility affects not only interventions to assist the population but also the community's coping **mechanisms** such as access to markets, and the availability and affordability of food and consumer goods.

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- During the inception of the project, the security situation in the country was still fragile. This complicated the delivery of project activities in rural areas.

3. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT REVIEW

According to the project document, the Project was supposed to have had a mid-term evaluation and review; this was not carried out. Instead, an in-depth evaluation was held at the end of the first phase of the project (18 months), followed by this review after a period of 29 months. In light of the long time frame under review, the Team examined a number of areas surrounding the Project's activities and management. These include donors' financial commitment as well as the project accomplishments against intended objectives. The review has also taken into consideration, linkages and partnership, coordination mechanisms, contributions to reintegration and resettlement, humanitarian assistance and long-term development, and project monitoring and

reporting.

Donors' Commitments

The initial project budget amounted to US\$4.75 million financed from UNDP core resources and through cost-sharing with the Government of the Netherlands. Additional resources were provided by USAID and UNHACO to augment the project budget, such that by December 2000, the total project budget amounted to US\$10.71 million. Donors' cost-sharing contributions were as follows:

USAID	US\$4.065 million
UNDP	US\$3.621 million
The Netherlands	US\$1.925 million
UNHACO	US\$1.1 million

Total	US\$10.71 million

Based on the internal review of the project, the Team recognized that funding commitments from donors has been declining as reflected below:

In 1997, the funding commitment was \$4,750 million In 1998, the funding commitment was \$4,152 million In 1999, the funding commitment was \$ N/A In 2000, the funding commitment was \$1,808 million

The decline in donors' funding is attributed mainly to the unfavorable socio-economic and political environment, and the precipitated poor relations with donors as a result of the crisis of September 1998 in Monrovia, which caused donors' apathy.

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Project Outputs

Establishment of

POCs

A network of 8 POCs was established, though later than the scheduled date. The planned transformation from POCs to ARDUs did not occur. By the time of this review, six POCs had been closed. This was attributed to reduction in donor funding in 1999 -2000 as well as the current situation in Lofa, which prompted the abrupt closure of two POCs in that County (see Table 4 for places where POCs were established).

Micro-project Delivery and Cost Implications

Initially, the project was to have completed 340 micro-projects in 18 months. However, it was only in September 2000 that the target was achieved. It took the project 36 months to meet the target set for 18 months; thus confirming the poor design of the project. As at May 2001, the project had completed 367 micro projects (see Table 2 below)

Table 2
Completed Projects as of May 2001

Year	Projects completed
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August-December 1997	4
January-December 1998	163
January-December 1999	133
January-December 2000	54
January-December 2000	13
January-April 2001 Total	367

Source: LIR/6/002 -Progress report

The low performance of project delivery during the inception of the project was attributed to lapses in project management, the lack of experience working in a post-conflict environment, identification/selection of micro-projects without adequate screening of NGOs/CBOs' capacity to implement them and slow delivery of project inputs (materials). In order to correct situation, the project management canceled the "bulk purchasing system", improved on its monitoring system, and introduced private sector participation in project implementation through competitive bidding in July 1998.

With regard to cost implications, the average unit cost for producing a micro-project in 1997 was very high. The number of micro-projects completed in 1997 was only four. Average project inputs (materials) per project were approximately US\$109,507 (including premises).

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Average personnel and an administrative cost for the execution of one micro-project was US\$316,905 (including training).

In 1998, 163 micro projects were completed in which the average unit cost per project was US\$17,168.22 (excluding premises). Average personnel and administrative cost for the execution of one micro-project was US\$46,510.08.

During 1999, 133 projects were completed. Average unit cost per project was US\$4,678.03. Average personnel and administrative cost for the execution of one micro-project was US\$12,321.88 (see Table 3). In the year 2000, only 54 projects were completed.

During the second year of operations, 1999, the unit cost per micro project was reduced by 538% and the rate of project completion also increased by 3,975%.

Table 3
Micro-project Cost Analysis
(in US\$)

	1997	1998	1999
Av. Project Unit Cost	109,507	17,168	4,678
Av. Personnel & Adm. Cost for Administering a Micro Project	316,953	46,510	12,321

Source: LIR/96/002 - Project financial Records

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Assessment of Project Objectives

Immediate Objective I: To contribute to the revival of communities for resettlement and reintegration through the restoration of basic social service delivery.

Table 4
Immediate Objective I

<i>Expected Output</i>	<i>Accomplishment</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1. la Network of 8 POCs established by August, 1997	8 POCs established later than the scheduled date. The POCs were located in Binjama, Zorznr, Gbarnga, Tubmanburg, Kakata. Buchanan, Cestos City and Monrovia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to the time of this review, POCs were closed. This according to management was due to resource constraints.
1. ib Four POCs transformed to ARDU	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The transformation of POCs ARDUs did not occur. to
1.2a Approx. 340 schools, clinics/medical facilities, local access roads... to be completed by 31 Dec. 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 443 micro-projects completed as at 31 May 2001. However, 367 of these were from the project LIR/96/002, while the balance 76 micro-projects were from other projects. See Annex Table 9). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of these projects were completed later than December 1998.
1.2b. 16 micro-projects to support supervisory activities of local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 443 micro-projects completed comprising the following: 185 educational facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the project life was extended, targets for micro projects were not revised

1.2e. 10 essential logistical support micro-projects to relieve bottlenecks in the reintegration process.	50 clinics/health facilities 77 agriculture support projects 39 water & sanitation projects 13 economic infrastructure 42 local access 8 Government building/ furniture 18 Training 6 non-food 5 logistics support	upwards. • It would seem that the project has exceeded target by 21%
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In addition to the information in table 4 above, the Team was given the impression by project management that it had achieved beyond the target by 21%. However, the Team observed that projects targets were not revised in consonance with the extension of the project life by an additional 36 months. Project life was extended without an increase in resource commitment from donors.

Immediate Objective 2: to provide logistic support for emergency relief for special cases.

- The Project provided support for 16,000 families (80,000 beneficiaries) to resettle: through the provision of 252 community kits and 16,000 family kits were provided. These activities were funded by UNDP and implemented by UNOPS in collaboration with the Red Cross and LRRRC as implementing partners during the first phase of the Project.
- Adequate logistical support was provided to the UN Resident Coordinator and UN Agencies to attend to national relief, resettlement and reintegration. Transportation was

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provided to IDPs to return to their counties; transport was also provided for the destruction of arms captured from the various warring factions of the Liberian civil war, and for the conduct of the national polio eradication campaign, among others.

Table 4
Immediate Project Objective 2

<i>Expected Output</i>	<i>Accomplishment</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
2.1 Emergency relief needs of beneficiaries and war affected Population met.	16,000 families (80,000 beneficiaries) resettled. 252 community kits and 16,000 family kits provided.	These activities were funded by UNDP and implemented by UNOPS in collaboration with the Red Cross and LRRRC as implementing partners during the first phase of the project. These were part of the 443 micro projects completed (see Table 4, Immediate Objective 1.)
2.2 Adequate logistical support provided to the RC/UN Agencies to attend to national relief resettlement and reintegration needs	The most noted achievements were the provision of transportation for the destruction of arms/ammunition captured surrendered by the various warring factions, and the resettlement of IDPs from Monrovia to their counties, as well as for the national Polio Campaign nationwide.	

Linkages and Partnership

The project had linkages with other projects, such as LIR/94/003, UNHACO project and Community Reconstruction Teams (CRT) within the reintegration framework. The project complemented programme activities of other UN Agencies such as UNICEF and UNHCR. A few micro-projects benefited from the

Educational, Health, and Water and Sanitation programmes of UNICEF, and the food-for-work programme of UNHCR through informal arrangements pursued by the beneficiary communities.

Linkages were also forged with sister implementing partners such as the UNDP funded projects, e.g. UNDESA managed Reintegration Programme Management and Poverty Alleviation, and the ILO executed Vocational Training for Employment and self-employment projects. These projects participated in the implementation of micro-projects in Education, Health and Water and Sanitation.

In terms of implementation, linkages were forged with Government, local NGOs and CBOs based on the projects non-discriminatory and demand driven philosophy, communities identified and sanctioned their own micro projects through their local leadership. Communities also provided storage facilities, security and workforce for the implementation of projects. Linkages with CBOs were intended to enhance local ownership.



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The inclusion of private sector participation in project implementation was forged with the view of accelerating project delivery.

Coordination Mechanisms and Project Monitoring

Even though the Evaluation Mission recommended in December 1998 that a Project Specific Steering Committee be established to handle policy issues in respect of the project, this has not been done. Instead, UNDP/UNOPS established in 2001 a micro-project screening committee, comprising related micro-projects: micro-credit,

rural housing, and gender projects. In October 2000, the meeting of the project's second tripartite review recommended that MPEA participates in the micro project selection process. Again, this was not followed. The overall coordination was weak due to the absence of a Project Specific Steering Committee, and the disconnect caused by the lack of continuity attributed to the high turnover of ministers at the MPEA, the coordinating arm of government.

Furthermore, the Team was informed by Project Management that it is exploring the possibility of establishing a project desk within the MPEA for monitoring of project activities and sharing of information.

Currently, the project submits its reports and information to the office of the Humanitarian *Officer* in the Office of the Resident Coordinator. The project does not have a direct link with the Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs (MPEA) as yet. Information on the project is provided to Government through UNDP.

However, the Team noted that at the county level, information on project activities is well circulated among government agencies concerned; it is at the central level that information sharing is weak. This conforms to the findings of the Evaluation Mission of December 1998.

With respect to project monitoring, the first tripartite review of the project was held as scheduled; within the first 12 months in keeping with the project document.

The Team was informed by Management that the Project's progress reports with financial summaries for submission to MPEA, UNDP and UNOPS were prepared, but were not submitted to MPEA. The justification given by the Project Management was that it is not clothed with the authority to report to the MPEA directly.

Comprehensive monthly reports summarizing salient points on the progress of each microproject, an analysis of all micro projects by geographic areas and sector of support, were prepared but not circulated.

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Project Contributions

Reintegration and Resettlement

The presence of POCs in the communities served as a pull factor for IDPs and returnees into their communities. This facilitated resettlement and reintegration of IDPs and returnees. The POCs' comparative advantages were as follows:

- Facilitated the QIPs approach;

- Built confidence in the communities to return home;
- Sensitized and accelerated the process of project identification, approval and implementation;
- Coordinated project activities at the county level with other donors, including UNICEF, which enhanced effective project delivery and relief activities;
- Provided information about the security situation in their areas of operations, which facilitated the activities of monitors, and
- Gathered information on the movement of IDPs and refugees as well as receiving towns and villages.

Humanitarian Assistance

The project successfully provided humanitarian assistance to the country through the Resident Coordinator's Office. The most noted activities were the transport of displaced people from Monrovia to their villages of origin, as well as the provision of family and community kits in the form of seeds, tools, and other agricultural inputs. The humanitarian support under this project complemented project LIR/94/003 - Emergency Logistical Support for Humanitarian Activities and Demobilization of Combatants. Transportation was also provided for the National Polio Campaign and the destruction of arms/ammunition captured/surrendered by former warring factions.

Long-Term Development

The project was designed to contribute to emergencies, resettlement and reintegration through QIP activities. Indirectly, working with government and local authorities, the rehabilitated facilities could form the basis for long-term development. Also, the project has diversified its activities to include income generating and rural housing reconstruction which have implications for long-term development.

The continuous investment in essential public infrastructure rehabilitated under the project is necessary for the revival of the economy.

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4. TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT OUTCOMES

The overall viability of the Project has been reviewed in respect of its impact, sustainability and development of capacity keeping in mind, the many constraints encountered during the implementation of the project. On the whole, the Team is of the view that the project has succeeded in contributing to the Development

objectives of the project.

Project Impact

The project has made tremendous impact in meeting felt humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the country. The project has been able to rehabilitate 443 projects, in the areas of education, agriculture, health, water and sanitation, roads and bridges, public infrastructure, humanitarian support and training. The project has been able to restore schooling opportunities for 83,000 students, and increased access to health services for about 90,000 persons, as well as undertook economic empowerment and humanitarian (non-food) assistance which benefits 111,900 persons.

The project, through technical training and other support, has developed and enhanced the capacities of several CBOs and NGOs, which serve as implementing partners in identifying community needs and in formulating micro-project proposals.

The increased access to farm and markets is a vital component of the project, which improved economic activities and strengthened the coping mechanism of the war-affected population returning to the rural area.

The project clearly shows the socio-economic dimension and benefits of UNDP's transitional support to the resettlement and reintegration of IDPs and ex-combatants, which considerably contributed to national peace building efforts and the reconciliation process.

Sustainability

Local authorities of the Ministries of Education and Health, in collaboration with UNICEF, identified most of the educational and health facilities rehabilitated by the project. The government committed itself to provide the needed inputs to make the facilities functional, in terms of staffing (teachers and health workers), while UNICEF provided instructional materials, drugs and other clinical equipment for the rehabilitated facilities.

Communities were encouraged to identify their priority micro-projects and participated in their implementation; and upon completion of micro-project activities the communities received tools as a strategy for sustainability. The communities were expected to take ownership of the rehabilitated facilities, as the project was not intended to create dependency.

In light of widespread poverty, coupled with government's financial constraints, the sustainability of micro-project activities beyond project funding is difficult to ascertain.

Nevertheless, to improve sustainability, donors' investment in the social services should be complemented by government's efforts to improve the quality of services provided. Furthermore, government should allocate more financial and material resources for the social services sector (health, education, etc.).

Capacity Building

The project has built the capacities of communities, CBOs/NGOs and local authorities in project identification, formulation, and implementation such that the beneficiaries now have the ability to address development needs. Many NGOs now have the capacity to pre-finance some micro-projects.

The project has engendered the use of participatory approach in priority needs identification and problem solving, with the view of guaranteeing ownership and sustainability.

The project built capacities at the central level through logistical assistance, which made Government institutions functional. The project also provided training opportunities for 4,500 community members through 18 micro-projects for the maintenance of socio-infrastructure rehabilitated by the project.

On the whole, through development assistance in the social sector, the project has contributed to the Long-term development of the country.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General Conclusions

The Internal Review Team has derived the following conclusions based on its findings.

- On the whole the Project has achieved set objectives and expected outputs. Immediate objectives II and I were accomplished within an extended timeframe.
- The Team observed the high average personnel and administration cost for delivery of micro-projects at the inception of the Project, which was attributed to poor project design and lapses in project management, including the limited of experience working in a post conflict environment. However, the Team also observed reduction in the cost during the succeeding years of the project operation.

- The project impacted significantly on the lives of the population through micro-project activities in various social sectors. The project has contributed to reviving the wellbeing of the population, strengthened coping mechanisms, built capacity and developed a framework for sustainability and ownership, within the context of participatory approach.

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- In spite of the constraints encountered during implementation, the Project is still relevant in the reconstruction and development of the country. The project management has gained valuable experience over the past four years in terms of micro-project identification and management as well as in working with government, and NGOs/CBOs. This could accelerate project delivery in a more cost-effective manner in the future.
- The response of donors in terms of their financial commitment to the project could have been better if the overall political climate had improved during the life of the project. The government is urged to make concerted effort to improve its relations with major donors such as the USA, UK and the Netherlands, who funded the project.
- The importance of stimulating the role of private sector participation in social sector activities needs to be encouraged, but not at expense of community involvement in these activities.
- Poor awareness about project activities in government institution could have been reduced, had the requisite coordination mechanism been put in place. Both the government and UNDP/Project management are requested to work together more closely in sharing information on project activities so as to ensure ownership and sustainability of the rehabilitated micro-projects.
- The delivery of social services to a population devastated by war can be achieved in a collaborative manner working with communities, CBOs and NGOs, even with limited government involvement.
- Stable funding commitment from donors, timely delivery of project inputs, and a conducive environment are essential elements for improving not only confidence building but also ensuring the smooth implementation of the project.
- A coordination vacuum was created during the implementation of the project due to the failure to operationalize the Reintegration Commission (ReinCom) at the national level, which was attributed to the high turnover of Ministers and staff at MPEA. As such, policy decisions to provide guidance to the project were not taken. Furthermore, project-monitoring reports from the field were neither discussed nor circulated. This weakened the overall coordination of the project, hence the poor results in the first year.

- While the government's financial constraints are acknowledged, government's counterpart contribution to the project is necessary to ensure national ownership and to send a positive signal to donors of the government's commitment to improving the standard of living of its population.
- The recruitment of project managers for projects of this nature should take into consideration prior experience working in a post-conflict environment. The initial, limited experience of staff led to overly ambitious planning, poor timing and delivery.

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- The change in implementation modalities for CBOs/NGOs as implementers to private contractors did indeed improve project delivery; however, the empowerment of the communities through remuneration for community project was lost.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are also respectfully submitted.

Extension of the Project

Despite the country's high poverty level and the large residual humanitarian and rehabilitation needs of the country, the provision of social services to rural Liberia will be limited in the short run due to continuing national resource constraints. It is therefore recommended that this project be extended to conform to UNDP's CCF for Liberia, the National Reconstruction Program (NRP) and the Liberia's Five year Medium Term Plan for Reconstruction and Development (MTP), which is in progress. The Team recommends that the extended project diversify its activities into income generation (micro financing for sustainable livelihood), agriculture and food security, and the environment. This will ensure long-term sustainability and impact. The Team recommendation is also based on the findings of the field visit (see Annex for Report on the field visit).

Strengthen Coordination and Capacity Building.

The extended project should work with government authorities both at the central and local levels. The coordination mechanism with Government, UNDP and the project should be strengthened. Information on project activities should be shared regularly with MPEA and the line ministries. The Project Specific Steering Committee, as recommended by the Evaluation Mission of December 1998, should be established, drawing membership from Government, UNDP and UNOPS and relevant sister agencies/projects. The Project Desk, as proposed by the MPEA, should be established to facilitate information dissemination and monitoring of project activities in the field. The capacity of MPEA, MIA, and the line ministries

should be built through training and logistical support so as to enable them to participate fully in the project and related activities.

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Micro-project Implementation Strategy

Community participation in the entire project cycle should be encouraged and supported to ensure ownership and sustainability. Private contractors should be involved for complex rehabilitation works when the required technical capacity does not exist in the communities. The use of POCs should be abolished, as they are no longer cost effective. The project should work with line ministries and existing local administrative structures in project identification and implementation. The recruitment of project manager should take into consideration prior experience working in a post-conflict environment.

UNDP Supportive Role

In order to avoid budgetary constraints during project implementation, UNDP is urged to follow-up discussions with funding partners to ensure fulfillment of their commitments. For the future, UNDP should explore the possibility of pre-financing commitments of reliable donors to guarantee the smooth continuation of the project within the prescribed time frame.

Partnership Building

The project should establish linkages with other UNDP's funded projects such as micro-grant, micro-credit, the environment, and gender; and with other UN agencies, including UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO and UNHabitat. This will improve complementarity of project activities and increase the impact of the respective agencies' projects.

Government's Commitment

The Government of Liberia is urged to allocate funds in its national budget for counterpart contribution to projects. It should contribute financial and material resources to the project. In the future, major micro-projects should ensure full commitment from central government for staffing and maintenance of rehabilitated facilities as well as socio-economic programmes.

Creating the Enabling Environment

Finally, the internal security factor remains very crucial for the Project's implementation as well as all others. Accordingly, government is strongly encouraged to take the necessary steps to create an enabling and stable environment to ensure that development projects can be implemented.