



Evaluation Summaries

Poverty Reduction through Decent Employment Creation in Liberia (PREDEC)

Quick Facts

Country: Liberia

Final Evaluation: 16 -30 April 2010

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Local Economic Development,
Job Creation and Enterprise Development

Evaluation Management: ILO Office for
Anglophone West Africa in Abuja

Evaluation Team: Prof. Oladele O. Arowolo

Project Start: 01 January 2007

Project End: 30 April 2010

Project Code: LIR/06/50/NET

Donor: The Netherlands (US\$ 5,353,130)

Keywords: employment creation; local economic
development; capacity building

Background & Context

This project was jointly formulated by the ILO and the Government of Liberia as an initial response of the ILO to Government's request for assistance to boost job creation and give a hand to Government for recovery and effective functioning of public institutions, including the Ministry of Labor and the other ILO constituents following the prolonged civil war.

There are three main components to PREDEC, the first two aimed primarily at immediate job creation and local economic development, while the third is focused on capacity building.

PREDEC has three interrelated components: (i) Employment Generation Programme through Labor Intensive Road Works (ii) Waste Management in Monrovia, Entrepreneurship and Skills Development and (iii) Strengthening the Role of Tripartite constituents. Taken together, the

immediate objectives of the project components address both the immediate post-war emergency needs of the Government in the area of labor and employment creation, as well as the long-term requirements for strong and viable institutional machinery to address these issues at all levels of governance in the country.

The PREDEC project was initially designed to cover a two-year period (2007-2008). The impressive performance of the project, coupled with the enormous post-war employment challenges of the country encouraged the ILO and the Dutch to consider a further extension at the request of the Government of Liberia to 2009 and further till April 2010. The project has been funded by The Netherlands, initially for US\$4.2million but at end a total of US\$5.3 million.

Project execution has been through collaboration of ILO with implementers and overall coordinating body. The project implementing partners are relevant Government ministries, led by the Ministry of Labor; and the collaborating partners are also selected Government ministries and interested donor agencies. Overall national coordination is vested in the newly created National Tripartite Committee comprising the Liberia Labor Congress (LLC); Chamber of Commerce and Government (MoL), representing employers, workers and Government respectively. Project monitoring has been done through the prescribed ILO reporting systems for finance and activities; quarterly & annual reports; mission reports; MTR and final project evaluation.

Project beneficiaries are women and men of Liberia with decent employment and clean environment; Government institutions directly involved; the constituents – Trade Union and Employers associations. The risks/assumptions made for the successful implementation of the

project are clustered: continued peace and stability, Government commitment and support, sufficient Government absorptive capacity and, ILO technical support – all of which were quite justified. Overall, the project design is good, but a few of the outputs appear ambitious with a multiplicity of overlapping actors.

Present situation of project

The project closed at the end of April 2010.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the Dutch-funded PREDEC programme in Liberia and provide recommendations on the future strategy for implementation of similar projects. The final evaluation of PREDEC project covers the period from 01 January 2007 to 30 April 2010. Given its integrated nature, the evaluation also focuses on the links between the 3 different components and analyzes performance made as a whole. In terms of subject coverage, the evaluation addresses issues of programme design, implementation, lessons learnt, replicability and recommendations for the future of the programme and for employment-related work by the government and the UN system under the leadership of the Ministry of Labor.

The clients of the evaluation are (i) the project management (ILO office in Liberia and ILO/Abuja); (ii) the project partners, namely the MOL, the MPW, the MCC, and the constituents; (iii) the ILO staff involved in the programme, namely ILO/Abuja, ILO/Addis, ILO field technical specialists and ILO technical units in Headquarters who supported the programme throughout the period, (iv) the donor (the Dutch).

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation methodology combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. The evaluator collected hard data from desk review and verified them with soft data from field visits, interviews and a debriefing workshop attended by stakeholders. The approach adopted assured the participation of ILO tripartite constituents and both internal and external key stakeholders during all phases of the evaluation process.

The major limitation of the evaluation was limited time, particularly for field visits and interviews; but the documents provided responded to the major issues adequately.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Main findings

The programme design encouraged partnerships with other institutions and programmes and envisaged collaboration in the programme's implementation strategy. The programme has actively collaborated with other UN bodies on the ground such as UNOPS (road programme to be funded by UN peace building fund), UNHCR, UNIFEM (gender programme), UNMIL (materials on road construction), UNICEF (youth), FAO (joint study on agriculture) and UNDP (on the national employment policy, national youth policy and LEEP/LEAP) as well as some donors like the World Bank, GTZ and USAID. UNCT Joint.

The ILO has established itself as a key player in the area of employment and has participated in UNCT meetings, retreats, the UNDAF preparation (even chairing the Early recovery cluster and the employment theme group). The programme has also been flexible in developing partnerships with additional relevant institutions in the course of programme implementation, such as the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY), Liberian Association of Contractors and Liberian Market Association.

Both the implementing agencies and collaborating partners made important contributions to drafting of the Decent Work Bill; Civil Service Law Reform; National Employment Policy; Solid Waste Policy; Technical/Vocational Education Policy. Keeping the partners working together will be a major factor in the successful implementations of these critical policies aimed at creation of decent employment, poverty reduction and improved social dialogue among the ILO constituents in Liberia.

The following significant achievements also owe much to the technical interventions of the ILO: draft Decent Work labor law produced; LEAP Secretariat restructured; draft national employment policy (developed) and a National Employment Bureau (NBE) established with costed action plans (including employment caravans); Labor Market Information project started, with initial training conducted and the first Labor Force survey in the country being planned; the MOL's library equipped.

The HIV/AIDS preparation mission in June 2009 led to the design of a \$.25 million project

document for OPEC funding in less than two months and the mobilizing of a coalition of likeminded tripartite partners including the MOL and LIBCAA of the LCC and LLC, to serve as implementing partners under the ILO's leadership. The project started early in 2010.

At the end of 2009, before the project was extended for the last time, implementation rate was 100%. The balance of 14% yet to be expended reflects the situation in 2010 in which, either full account has not been taken or expenditure is yet to be incurred on specific budget lines. The lowest implementation rate is on Study Tours (BL 031); but 76.4% of budget for study tours was allocated in 2010.

In the labor-based road works component, communities were trained in aspects of road construction and for future maintenance of the road. Roads are already being maintained by community labor, and labor-based maintenance regimes have been successfully demonstrated and adopted. MPW staff, including 24 Technicians/Engineers, has also been trained to construct and maintain roads using labor based methods. Domestic private contractors (11) received initial training for labor-based road works. Project impact and lessons have been captured and through knowledge sharing, the ILO LB method has been adopted by MPW for the rehabilitation of feeder roads with support from EU/WB, AfDB and SIDA. Already, agreement has been signed with AfDB to replicate labor-based maintenance method over 600km; also, the European Union and the World Bank have agreed to work together and are funding 100km of feeder roads rehabilitation using LB methods in 3 counties. In addition, AfDB has requested the ILO to study 100km of feeder roads in the south east for a rice project; project document has been developed and this project is expected to commence in 2010.

Also in order to assure sustainability of project activities, an effective monitoring and reporting system has been established by the project for subsequent use in other projects. Business opportunities and cooperatives have been identified in the project area and the capacities of the SMEs developed to exploit the opportunities.

Capacity building was also key to realizing the objectives of component 2, which is to improve environmental conditions and the creation of

sustainable jobs for poor youth, women and men by involving and engaging communities in solid waste management. In this component as well, ILO deployed considerable technical support for training of all categories of project workers and implementers. Community based organizations, microenterprises and city officials were trained in business management and technical skills for solid waste management, including recycling and composting. At least 50 persons from 14 CBOs/micro enterprises received training in business and technical skills in solid waste management. In addition, one official of the MCC received training in Turin in sustainable enterprise development. Although re-cycling was not done because of market constraints, the project prepared the community for that; 30 persons from 10 CBEs were provided skills in marketing of recyclable materials and simple book-keeping.

Critical to sustainable maintenance of the environment is awareness; the project mounted a series of awareness campaigns at all levels and this has led to (i) changed and improved behaviour and attitudes towards solid waste management and; (ii) increased number of residents subscribing and willing to pay for waste collection services provided by the CBEs. Although coverage for primary collection remains low at about 15 percent of households in the target areas, illegal waste disposal practices by residents has reduced considerably. The future of waste disposal management rests upon indigenous associations as the project has succeeded in forming one association of waste management service providers involving the 10 community-based waste management enterprises. In addition, a revolving fund has been established and functioning, and 6 SMEs have received loans to expand their businesses.

Project impact and lessons have been captured for knowledge sharing, up-scaling and/or replication. A concept paper for project up-scaling has been developed for possible funding by the World Bank, and discussions are ongoing with the World Bank on the up-scaling waste disposal and management particularly at the primary stage.

The ILO PREDEC programme has contributed significantly to the establishment of the current National Tripartite Committee (NTC); the consolidation of employer representation into a unified Liberia Chamber of Commerce (LCC); the consolidation of worker representation into a unified Liberia Labor Congress (LLC); and the

drafting of the new labor law, the first in the world that will be known as the *Decent Work Act*.

A major milestone for social dialogue in Liberia was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by the tripartite partners in June 2007. Facilitated by the ILO, it represented a concrete first step toward the institutionalization of effective social dialogue to assist in recovering from conflict. The MoU committed the parties to establish a Secretariat for the NTC, to hold a National Labor Conference to review the labor code, and to implement a reform agenda for both employer and trade union organizations.

In order to assure sustainability, the ILO provided a range of support to the NTC and its members, including training, supply of equipment and renovation work. It developed a capacity-building programme during 2008 to strengthen the negotiation skills of the committee members. Several NTC members participated in an ECOWAS regional workshop on institutionalization of social dialogue in Dakar in April 2008. An ILO consultant worked with the NTC in July 2009 to develop a strategic plan for the NTC, and a training plan for its members.

Conclusions

The PREDEC programme has achieved almost all its stated immediate objectives; by the end of 2009, financial implementation rate was 100%, and the extension till 30 April 2010 was evidence of the commendable performance of the programme which was openly acknowledged by Government and the other constituents during the evaluation. Three years since the start of the programme's implementation, there is no doubt that it continues to be relevant and aspects of the outputs, demand up-scaling and/or replication.

In order to foster collaboration, an ILO programme manager was recruited to service the joint UNCT programme on Employment and Empowerment of Youth (2009-2011) – a major contribution to the UN Delivering as “One” initiative. Collaborating partners for the implementation of the Youth programme are ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WB, UNDP, UNESCO and UN Mission; while the Government partners include MYS, MoL, MGD, and MoP.

Both the implementing agencies and collaborating partners made important

contributions to drafting of the Decent Work Bill; Civil Service Law Reform; National Employment Policy; Solid Waste Policy; Technical/Vocational Education Policy. Keeping the partners working together will be a major factor in the successful implementations of these critical policies aimed at creation of decent employment, poverty reduction and improved social dialogue among the ILO constituents in Liberia.

Concerning gender, it was expected that gender issues would be mainstreamed into all aspects of the programme; and to this end, all the three coordinators were given gender training at various venues by the ILO. Apart from the direct gender-related activities carried out in each of the programme components, a National Gender Network of Liberia was established and is operational. Follow-up activities were carried out which publicized the National Gender Network, finance outreach activities and advocacy training and sensitization.

As the programme stands now, three categories of activities have emerged: a) ongoing activities which must continue; b) those that need to be revitalized and; c) others already absorbed into post-project initiatives recently started with the support of other donor organizations, particularly World Bank and African Development Bank.

The first category of PREDEC activities are those which have a cycle that goes beyond end of April 2010. This is particularly true of the Labor Market Information (LMI) project, which is designed to run from 2008-2011. The second category of the PREDEC programme activities that need to be revitalized include waste recycling and re-use, originally built into component 2 but which remains to be explored. In addition, all the policies formulated under this programme that are still at draft stage and awaiting official endorsement should be seen through the administrative processes and support provided to Government initial efforts to implement them.

The third category are initiatives that have been developed through concept notes under components 1 and 2 of PREDEC, and which have been developed as projects with the

support of other donors. For continuing road maintenance and replication both AfDB and WB have formulated and started projects for road maintenance and replication of the labor-based work programme (2010-2012), using the already developed capacity. Regarding component 2, discussions have been held with the World Bank on up-scaling and redesigning of the MCC component and its financing. There is also the AfDB funded ASRP due to commence in July 2010. These project offshoots of PREDEC serve to confirm the relevance of the programme in the first place and the sustainability of its major outputs in addressing decent work and reducing poverty in post-war Liberia.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Component 1:

- Local economic development along the new road is still in progress; a number of associations have been formed, but local institution is required to manage the funds provided by ILO;
- Towards establishment of effective monitoring system, baseline study was conducted; but another survey will be needed after 3 years (beyond the life of project);
- For continuing road maintenance and replication both AfDB and WB have formulated projects, and have started, using the already developed capacity (2010-2012).
- Proper documentation of lessons learnt and best practices should follow project closure.

Component 2:

- MCC should take ownership of waste management project and provide the necessary enabling environment for the smooth operation of SME associations involved in primary waste collection.
- Waste re-use through recycling should open up a new strategy for employment creation and poverty reduction in the communities.
- Formulation of phase 2 of the project should enjoy inclusive participation of MCC management, SME waste associations and those operating at secondary level.
- Programme on continuous public

education should be an integral part of the new project on waste management.

Component 3:

- It is important to build capacity of NTC, [including establishment of a permanent secretariat, human capacity strengthening & implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Constituents], to play active role in policy formulation, social dialogue and programme implementation;
- MoL needs support for review labor legislation and design and implementation of capacity building plan;
- Liberia needs to establish and sustain the effective functioning of a comprehensive Labor Market Information (LMI) system; current LMI project is designed to run from 2008-2011, including conduct of the 1st labor survey in Liberia, data analysis and LMI management;
- The decent Work Bill should be seen through to the Act stage, and support provided to its initial implementation strategies.

Overall:

- The ILO constituents acknowledge that PREDEC programme has been well executed; implementers were up to the task; and records of achievement very encouraging. For the future:
- Most activities under each output marked a fundamental start and expectations are high for continuation.
- A few activities critical to the project have a life span that goes beyond April 2010 (viz. LMI), and must be completed.
- Activities involving policy formulation have made some progress in getting to the draft and/or Cabinet submission stage (Decent Work Bill; Civil Service Law Reform; National Employment Policy; Solid Waste Policy; Tech/Voc Education Policy) and should be supported further to Cabinet approval and to the initial stages of implementation.
- Given the high level of project performance, ILO may wish to consider fielding a 'Case Study' to document the best practices for possible adoption and replication in and beyond Liberia. A number of 'Concept Notes' could be developed as a resource mobilization strategy for attracting other potential donors in order to facilitate continuity and

eventual sustainability of programme activities.

Important lessons learned

- ILO's swift and strategic response to Liberia's request for decent job creation and poverty reduction has proved very effective and contributed to the successful implementation of PREDEC;
- Support to capacity building of the other constituents has laid a strong foundation for industrial harmony, peace and employment creation in Liberia. With the support of the ILO through numerous expert missions, the LCC and LLC together with the MOL/NTC were actively involved in the design and delivery of capacity building frameworks, including the gender action plan, the labor law reform, the employment policy development, the decentralization of the NTC and design of a social dialogue program.
- By integrating capacity building into the work plan of the component projects, sustainability of project activities has been assured: the roads are being maintained through trained community workers; local waste management associations/enterprises were the main implementers of the waste management project; and the NTC has become the focal point for national dialogue on employment issues.