

LIBERIA
IMPACT STUDY
(LIS)

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (IPA)

669-0122 / 68

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ICN- 32927

Grant: \$3,025,000

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Monrovia
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project

In 1965 the Special Committee on Government Operations (SCOGO) recommended

"The establishment of a center for Liberian staff development, appropriately housed and equipped, for assisting government departments in management, supervision and clerical skills; providing assistance and advice to agencies facing agency-specific training problems and performing other coordinating and central service functions."

In May 1969 the Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) was created by an Act of Legislature. The subsequent year, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs was charged with the formulation and design of an institutional development project in order to solicit and secure foreign assistance in support of the newly-created Institute. As a parallel undertaking in support of overall civil service reform from a system based on patronage and nepotism to one based on merit, the Civil Service Agency (CSA) was to be revamped so that improved performance by civil servants would be reflected in proper recognition, leading to promotions and salary increases as part of a structured career development pattern.

The shortage of effectively operating and adequately motivated public servants had been singled out as a major constraint upon greater and more rapid socio-economic development in Liberia. It was found that the public service was operating poorly because of inadequately trained personnel and as a result, Ministries and Agencies of Government were unable to provide adequate services, development projects were implemented at sub-optimal levels, and the impact of public sector investment in high-priority programs and projects was greatly reduced, resulting in waste of scarce resources.

The Institute of Public Administration project was jointly sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Government of Liberia. During the life of project (1972-1978) AID provided over \$3 million in grant funds while the GOL provided counterpart funding out of current revenues of more than \$2 million. The project aimed at the development and effective operations of the LIPA by means of staff development fellowships, short term practical training, advisory services, and commodity support. These were to be provided by AID. The GOL for its part was to provide facilities and utilities, counterpart personnel and institutional support staff, equipment and supplies, other commodities, and international travel costs for participant training.

Planning the Institute's broad functional responsibilities, as well as for the implementation of this institutional development project took place at three locations: the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MPEA -- where the project was initially located), USAID, and the LIPA Board of Directors. Even though the target group consisted of the approximately 2,000 mid-level civil servants in the then 18,000 person public service, this group was apparently not consulted about programs being designed for their benefit, nor were representative members of this group brought into the planning process. In essence, the reform and performance improvement programs were prepared for them rather than with them.

The grant agreement between USAID and GOL called initially for a host country contract; USAID and GOL jointly selected a professional contractor whose work in project implementation was overseen by LIPA, its Director-General and its Board of Directors, and more generally by MPEA. In April 1973 a contract between GOL and the Institute of Public Administration of New York (IPA/NY) was signed. It outlined the various means by which the objectives of the project -- to provide the LIPA with the requisite technical knowhow and organizational structure -- were to be achieved. The contract also specified GOL responsibilities. Over time the host-country contracting mode proved to be unsatisfactory from the contractor's and USAID's point of view, and the contract was changed to a USAID contract in early 1976.

The project became operational at a time when Congress evolved the New Directions Policy in its foreign assistance programming, which directed AID's mandate to helping "the poorest of the poor." Even though the ultimate beneficiaries were to be the large masses of impoverished Liberians who would receive better quality government services and would benefit from better designed and implemented development projects, the immediate beneficiaries were the professional staff at LIPA and the mid-level civil servants. And even though the USAID mission in Liberia was well along in its planning and design for a three-year extension of the project, pressures on and within AID/Washington caused the project to be prematurely terminated by AID in 1978. The Liberians interpreted this as a vote of no-confidence in the LIPA on the part of the U.S. government and this unilateral action greatly undermined the viability of the Institute. Eighty percent of the U.S.-trained professional staff had departed LIPA by 1980.

During the life of project, contractor performance was found to have been only of "average" quality, while USAID monitoring and oversight was judged to have been "marginal-to-poor". USAID claims to have followed the Project Management Handbook-Technical Assistance to the letter. On the Liberian side, the project suffered from lack of political support at the top, lack of a

supportive civil service training policy, poor quality leadership of the Institute, and a largely self-inflicted institutional "credibility" problem.

An Institute of Public Administration was established, staffed, equipped and made operational. Twenty-eight Liberians received masters degrees in the U.S. and Nigeria under this project. Two hundred and fifty man-months of advisory services and consultants were provided. In all, about 600 mid-level public servants, staff of public corporations and members of the security services participated in various levels of programs and courses at LIPA during the period under review. Participant follow-up surveys conducted by LIPA indicate that in the aggregate, participants felt they had benefitted from their LIPA training and felt it had equipped them better to carry out their various functions. However, the Liberian civil service proved to be very resistant to change and improvement in the quality of services provided. As a result, participants in general were not in a position to effect meaningful changes in the way things were done. The system did not allow this.

General Impact

- o What was learned at LIPA wasn't always pertinent to the problems at hand, given conditions and attitudes in the Liberian public service.
- o LIPA itself didn't practice what it preached; this added to a "credibility" problem.
- o Training at LIPA took -- and continues to take -- place in a policy vacuum; successfully completed civil service training is not taken into consideration for career advancement or salary increments.
- o The experience of the LIPA project may to some extent have served to discredit the notion that in Liberia public service training can help improve the capability of the service.

Political and Policy Impact

- o The realization by the Tubman administration that there is a direct linkage between better trained and motivated civil servants and the improved quantity and quality of services provided, and to create LIPA, was an important political as well as a policy event.
- o The events leading up to the creation of LIPA (and the subsequent reorganization of the Civil Service Agency) and the

implied rejection of the patronage system, were also seen as a political victory for reform-oriented Liberians.

- o The commitment of sizeable budgetary allocations and the assignment of well-trained scarce manpower to LIPA are significant indicators of political commitment. While the political actions creating LIPA must be recognized as an important victory for those Liberians who recognized the constraints to development of the then existing system. Yet, in retrospect, it was a hollow victory, as these very same constraints under a different guise still exist.
- o Once created, LIPA itself became a forum for advocacy of further reform, as well as a pressure group for policy implementation. Its limited success should not detract from the fact that an official voice was added to the public service reform movement.
- o Some observers note that the Institute's continued existence to date in itself signals a significant achievement.
- o The LIPA project also created some unintended political side effects;
 - its first Director-General used it as an operational base and as a political spring-board for elective office;
 - it has subsequently been used as a backwater to which to "retire" flawed leaders who hadn't yet reached retirement age;
 - because of the ethnic affiliation of three successive Directors - General, two Chairmen of Board of Directors and mid-level personnel at the Institute, it is perceived as a "Vai institute" -- a tribal preserve.

Economic Impact

- o It is difficult to assess the economic impact of this project on the target group, i.e. the estimated 2,000 - 3,000 mid-level administrators/managers in the public service. If one looks at such indicators as increased incomes and savings as a result of greater productivity, it hardly applicable to the Liberian public service as it exists. Improvement in performance and increased productivity should be important variables in increasing incomes and savings, but this linkage does not exist in the Liberian civil service. Rather, promotions and increased incomes continue to be based on who you know, not what you know.

- o The economic impact on the professional staff at LIPA, trained as part of this project, is easier to assess. Most of them doubled their salaries upon completion of the training and their return to LIPA. Members of this group of people have also turned out to be in great demand elsewhere in Liberia. Once they started leaving LIPA out of frustration, they were quickly hired for positions of increased responsibility and higher income. In fact, they realized their fuller economic potential after they had resigned from LIPA.

Social Impact

- o Most mid-level civil servants who participated in LIPA training programs derived considerable social benefits through interactions and interchange with colleagues from other Ministries/Agencies. For those who attended, this was the first time they had ever been exposed to job-oriented, on-the-job training.
- o Participants had frequent opportunities to vent their frustrations in a constructive atmosphere of confidentiality and were encouraged to generate solutions to common basic problems; most eagerly availed themselves of these opportunities.
- o There was considerable enthusiasm generated (even though it turned out to be short-lived) in individuals and groups to experiment with innovation. Follow-up surveys show that about 33 percent of past participants actually tried to reform certain practices after attending LIPA courses. Most had little success.
- o The learning experience itself was beneficial as participants were exposed to new ideas, concepts and methods; they were encouraged to apply these in simulations and exercises, generally with positive results.
- o LIPA participants gained a greater degree of self-confidence, based on a better understanding of the public service system in which they worked.

Technology Transfer

Skills transfer in training-related technology was considerable and largely successful with LIPA professional staff. However no research skills and only limited consulting skills were transferred.

- o As for the transfer of technology from LIPA's professional staff to the beneficiaries, this was more limited. The lack of receptivity within "the system" is partly to blame.

Impact on Women

- o The impact on women -- both as LIPA professionals and as course participants -- of this project was comparatively greater than their numbers in the public service would warrant.

∞ Liberia
Impact Study

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1. Background

In a 1964 report entitled Projections of Liberia's Public Administration Assistance Needs, prepared by the (joint US - Liberian) Special Committee on Government Operations (SCOGO) noted under the heading of Personnel Management that:

"Without question, the absence of a well-trained and highly - motivated body of civil servants is a critical deficiency in the Government of Liberia -- more lawyers than technicians, engineers, economists and accountants; low priority given to vocational training; a prevailing attitude that a position in government is considered a gift or reward, rather than an obligation or opportunity to serve; overstaffing; absenteeism; using government positions to further personal interests; and spending government time to conduct private business...."

These were found to be chronic problems in administering the governmental affairs of the country. It was noted that such practices were being further encouraged by the unfortunate combination of low government salaries and the rising cost of living. The Commission recommended that some of these deficiencies could be corrected through both technical and managerial training. Changing attitudes toward work in the public service was felt to be primarily an educational process to be implemented through a specialized form of training. SCOGO put forth these recommendations with the assumption that officials of government would be receptive to correcting these administrative ills.

Another SCOGO document, entitled Manpower Training for the Public Service of Liberia, produced in 1965, spelled out a number of more specific recommendations on the subject. It suggested inter alia:

- The establishment of a center for Liberian staff development, appropriately housed and equipped for assisting government departments in management, supervision and clerical skills training. (Note: this report coincided in time with the establishment of institutes of public administration and staff development centers in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Zaïre and other countries in Africa);
- Providing assistance and advice to agencies facing agency-specific training problems and performing other coordinating and central service functions.

These findings and recommendations culminated in May 1969 with the "creation" of a Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) by an Act of the Legislature. Under the terms of the Act, the Institute was (1) to be provided with a Board of

Directors, responsible for the formulation of policies for the Institute's overall development, its management and operations, as well as its general supervision, subject to general policies of the Government of Liberia; (2) to be headed by a Superintendent who would be responsible for the overall, day-to-day management of the Institute, assisted by an Assistant Superintendent and such other officers and personnel as the Board would determine necessary for the efficient operation of the Institute; and (3) to have the following responsibilities in its efforts to improve the administrative performance and professional capabilities in the public service for maximum utilization of public sector manpower resources: (a) training of personnel; (b) applied and problem-oriented research on various aspects of public administration in Liberia; and (c) the provision of consulting services to ministries and agencies of government to help resolve problems and make administration and management more efficient.

Within the year immediately following the promulgation of the legal instrument paving the way for the actual creation of the LIPA, two national conferences were organized on the topic of Liberia's development objectives and strategies. One of the aims of these conferences was to define and clarify the role of public administration in the development process and to assess the capability of Liberia's public service in the light of developmental needs. The participants concluded that "the rates and direction of social and economic development are fundamentally dependent on substantially improved administrative capability and commitment" of Liberia's public service. The findings were subsequently put into operational terms, designed to determine the scope and direction of the Institute of Public Administration.

The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs was charged with the formulation and design of an institutional development "project" in order to solicit and secure foreign assistance in support of the Institute. In this connection, a public sector training needs survey was conducted in early 1971 (Yaidoo et al.) in order to help identify specific training requirements and priorities as part of a public service personnel development and training program. Survey results were then incorporated into the project document which was subsequently submitted to various donor organizations for consideration. In mid-1971 the US Government (through its USAID/Liberia Mission) committed itself to support an institutional development effort at LIPA by means of technical assistance, staff training and commodities, for the period 1972-1979. Prior to project start-up USAID sent three young Liberian college graduates for masters degree level training in public administration to the US. Upon their return they were to form the operational core of the Institute once it became physically established.

A Board of Directors was duly appointed and constituted by the President of Liberia in November, 1971 in Executive Order No. 6. On November 30th of that same year the Board convened in its first meeting under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education, whose function carried the chairmanship of the Board. Dr. Augustus F. Caine, a former Secretary of Education, was appointed,

in absentia, as the first Director-General of LIPA (not "Superintendent" as called for by the Act of the Legislature); he arrived in mid-1972 to take up his new assignment. One of the initial tasks proposed by the Director-General was a further analysis of the 1971 Training Needs Survey results, to form the basis for the design and development of appropriate programs at LIPA to meet identified priority needs to upgrade the capability of Liberia's public service.

2. The Project

A. Rationale

The shortage of effectively operating and adequately motivated public servants, singled out as a major constraint upon greater and more rapid socio-economic development of Liberia, prompted the US government to provide grant funding totaling over \$3 million to the Government of Liberia in support of a national institute of public administration. The rationale was that if the public service was operating poorly because of inadequately trained personnel, ministries and agencies of government would be unable to provide adequate social and economic services; development projects would operate at sub-optimal levels; and the impact of public sector investment and high-priority programs and projects would be greatly reduced, resulting in waste of scarce resources all around.

The LIPA was designed to become the central training, research, consulting and information facility for the public service and was expected to assume the leadership role in the civil service administrative reform effort. The Institute was to accomplish this multifaceted task by: a) conducting problem - oriented research in public management functions; b) carry out process consultancies in ministries and agencies of government in order to identify sets of common problems, constraints and bottlenecks which could then be treated by c) in-service training programs, followed-up by agency-specific, on-the-job consultation to reinforce methods and concepts learned in the classroom. The target population were to be the mid-level administrators, managers and supervisors in government and state corporations. More senior and top-level personnel were to be involved in executive seminars, conferences and workshops in order to sensitize them to the training and consulting efforts targeted on their immediate subordinates, and to generate the necessary "moral support" at the top to enable mid-level improvement to succeed, by creating a positive and supportive institutional working environment. A perfectly logical approach, but a tall order.

As a parallel undertaking, in support of overall civil service reform from a system steeped in patronage to one based on merit, the Civil Service Agency (CSA) was to be revamped so that improved performance by civil servants would be reflected in proper recognition, leading to promotions and salary increases as part of a structured career development pattern.

The Institute of Public Administration project (669-0122) was jointly sponsored by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Liberia (GOL). The project consisted of a grant-in-aid from USAID for the development of a Liberian Institute of Public Administration by means of:

- staff development (academic) fellowships
- short term (practical) staff training
- advisory assistance (including short-term consultants)
- commodity support to establish a library and information service, an audio-visual department, reproduction services, and project vehicles.

The GOL for its part would provide:

- facilities and utilities
- institutional staff and salaries
- equipment and supplies (also including some vehicles, office machines and expendables)
- international travel funds for staff development
- operational support, including gasoline and maintenance for vehicles and equipment

This was a joint "institutional development" project which was aimed at leaving behind a viable, fully-functioning, fully-staffed organization able to carry out its mandate, upon termination of the technical assistance.

B. Planning the Project

The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, where the LIPA was first physically located upon its becoming operational, prepared an Institutional Development Plan (IDP) in 1972. The basic working assumptions were that (1) developing trained middle-level administrative/managerial manpower by improving methods and by advising and assisting these trained persons to cope with the changing needs of the public service (from static maintenance of law and order, to a catalytic function in socio-economic development), would lead to improved performance; while (2) a public service based on merit would provide the necessary incentives and motivation for sustained work improvement. The IDP reflected these assumptions; LIPA was to:

- create and improve the capability of public personnel needed for administering economic and social development programs;
- emphasize career development by encouraging in-service training, the use of management interns (cadets), and organizing executive development programs;

- provide leadership and guidance to the agencies of government in developing more and better in-house, on-the-job training programs;
- serve as a research center to study particular government organizational and management problem areas, thereby providing systematic and detailed information on critical areas of government for the purpose of improving public sector planning and administration.

Planning the Institute's broad functional responsibilities as well as planning for specific program elements took place at three high-level places: the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, USAID, and the LIPA Board of Directors; these initially interacted but gradually drifted apart in their conceptualization, implementation and oversight. And even though the target group constituted the roughly 2,000 mid-level public servants (in the then 18,000-person public service), this group was not consulted about the programs being prepared for their benefit, nor were their representative members brought into the planning process. In essence, the reform and performance improvement programs were prepared for them rather than with them.

The IDP also spelled out the design and development of an institutional administrative structure which could effectively coordinate and implement LIPA's programs (research, consultancy, information services, general management training programs, "special request programs" tailored to individual agency requirements, executive development programs, conferences, workshops, and rural development seminars in the counties). This internal administrative system would require the following subsystems to successfully meet the needs of LIPA's increasing complexity of programs and expanding professional staff over time:

- a flexible organizational structure designed to accommodate increasing numbers of professional staff and permit their effective utilization in the training, research, consultancy and library/information functions;
- a staffing plan based on job descriptions, and qualification and performance standards compatible with a progressive and equitable scheme of service;
- an internal communication system which provided efficient and effective transmission of information, and maintenance of an accurate institutional memory;
- a planning system which integrated program objectives with budgets and effective management;
- standardized procedures for all administrative/logistic support functions; and
- a system of accounts, disbursement and audit procedures in accordance with accepted accounting practice.

Other, more detailed plans dealt with professional staff development, training-of-trainers, library and equipment acquisitions, and technical assistance team advisory services.

Comparatively more planning went into the LIPA project than any other project jointly undertaken by USAID and GOL during the same period. Most observers noted that with this level of detailed planning, and given the enthusiasm and dedication of those responsible for establishing LIPA, the Institute had the requisite foundation and potential to become one of the most efficient and capable institutes of public administration on the African continent.

C. Project Implementation

The grant agreement between USAID and GOL called initially for a host-country contract; USAID and GOL were to jointly select a professional contractor organization whose work and project implementation would then be overseen by GOL -- specifically by the LIPA, its Director-General and its Board of Directors; and more generally by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs. In April 1973 a contract between GOL and the Institute of Public Administration of New York (IPA/NY) was signed. It set forth the following:

"The objectives of this project are to provide the LIPA with requisite technical know-how and organizational structure, training programs and research facilities, thereby enabling the LIPA to:

- establish itself as a viable organization, contributing to social and economic development of Liberia by increasing government's administrative and managerial capabilities, and by promoting greater individual and organizational productivity in the public sector;
- develop and implement integrated programs of training, research, consulting, evaluating, and prepare a documentation and publication series which will generally increase government administrative and managerial skills;
- specifically, the LIPA shall:
 - (a) provide pre-entry and in-service training for government personnel;
 - (b) develop managerial and supervisory skills at senior and middle management levels;
 - (c) provide training in problem analysis and decision-making;
 - (d) relate the programs and activities of the LIPA to the manpower and development needs of the GOL;
 - (e) train and develop a corps of competent Liberian staff to carry out training, research and related programs by:

GOL contributions

1973	\$ 151,336
1974	177,671
1975	245,084
1976*	129,803
1976/77	357,237
1977/78	428,783
1978/79	<u>565,832</u>
GOL Counterpart total	\$2,055,746

The U.S. government, therefore, contributed 60 percent of project total and GOL contributed 40 percent (or 15 percent more than the minimum counterpart contribution required under the U.S Foreign Assistance Act.) GOL had committed itself to increase funding for the LIPA at an annual rate of 25 percent. Over the period 1973-1979 GOL in fact increased funding for the Institute by 25.1 percent per annum (adjusted for annual fluctuations).

As a result of political pressures on AID/Washington, based on the Congressional "New Directions Policy", which focussed US foreign assistance on the "poorest of the poor", the project was forced to terminate prematurely in 1978 as it was thought that the project directly benefitted "Liberians already better off" (i.e. LIPA professional staff who were all college graduates). This premature termination of the project by AID/Washington in late 1978 was interpreted in Liberia as a "vote of no confidence" in the Institute by the Americans and contributed to the professional staff's subsequent deterioration in morale, which culminated in the ultimate departure of more than 80 percent of these professionals by the end of 1980.

3. Achievements and Failures

The realization of a direct link between the capabilities and the performance quality of the civil service, and the implementation of public sector development projects (and therefore the recognition of the need for an institute of public administration by a government steeped in patronage and nepotism) was a significant achievement preceding the establishment of the LIPA. LIPA's ability to become operational after only three years of technical assistance was another major achievement. Its continued existence ten years later is a further significant achievement.

The Institute's initial focus was primarily on training. During the course of project assistance, 1973-1978, the following middle management course materials were developed for:

- 1) General Management
- 2) Supervision
- 3) Program Management

- 4) Rural Development Workshops, Phase I
- 5) Rural Development Workshops, Phase II
- 6) Special Request Programs
- 7) Various Conferences

The General Management course materials were essentially designed by the technical assistance team. Little attempt was made to Africanize or Liberianize these materials, so that American-trained LIPA professionals, assisted by American contract team members, taught essentially American management and public administration concepts, which although valid and essential, did not always have relevance to the systemic environment in which these mid-level civil servants were expected to implement the newly acquired techniques and concepts. The same can essentially be said of the Supervision course materials, even though the Liberian staff participated more fully in the selection and presentation of the materials.

The Program Management course materials (an 8-week simulation exercise of the planning for and implementation of a hypothetical measles eradication program), on the other hand were locally developed by a design group headed by a Liberian and composed of Liberian LIPA professionals and only one contract team member. These materials were more relevant and more closely tailored to Liberian situations and program/project management problem. The Rural Development Workshops materials were also locally prepared, in consultation with the Rural Development Division of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, and were to a large extent tailored to the peculiar needs and characteristics of each individual county.

Materials prepared for "special request programs", seminars, workshops and conferences in Monrovia usually presented a mixture of "Western" management concepts and techniques as applied to Liberian problems. By themselves they were generally of good quality but they weren't particularly relevant to a unique non-"Western" and underdeveloped situation.

Attempts by the contracting team to motivate the Liberian staff to prepare management and public administration case studies, based on Liberian situations and problems, were not successful. This was largely so because, with the almost complete focus on "training", the research and consultancy functions of the Institute were given correspondingly less priority, with the result that the research function never did get off the ground, while consultancies undertaken were too few to give the Liberian professional staff enough feel for and comparative view of service-wide problem areas. They were therefore unable to construct case materials based on solid and successful experience in "the real world" of the Liberian public service.

In addition, two more training needs surveys were conducted by LIPA, one in 1974 and another one in 1978, designed to fine-tune existing training programs and plan for the development of future training programs, modules and approaches.

In all, about 600 mid-level public servants and staff of public corporations and the security services participated in training programs at LIPA during the period under review. This includes the rural development workshop series, conducted by LIPA staff, augmented by members of the MPEA, in the administrative headquarters of all counties (except Montserrado, which for some reason apparently didn't consider itself sufficiently "rural").

Participant follow-up surveys conducted by LIPA indicate that in the aggregate, participants felt that they had benefitted from their LIPA training and felt it had equipped them to better carry out their various functions. Comments obtained from their supervisors tend to support this.

However, the participants who came to attend programs were not always the key mid-level individuals who should have attended. This situation arose primarily from a growing credibility gap between the Institute and its clientele.

It started with LIPA's leadership; from its very beginning the Institute had to cope with less than satisfactory top level leadership. The first Director-General politicized the Institute; reportedly undermined staff morale by playing favorites with a few Liberians to the detriment of the rest; treated the contract team as a political whipping boy to bolster his own image as an ardent nationalist; and used the Institute as a springboard for a political career (he successfully ran for the Senate). After a six months interregnum a new Director-General was appointed whose previous career had been hallmarked by a long string of failures and dismissals -- his most recent as Minister of Education. He did not have the interests of the Institute at heart but rather used it as a base of operations for his private interests. He was dismissed after the coup and was replaced by an elderly man who lacked dynamic leadership qualities.

All this gradually undermined staff morale and institutional credibility, which was further aggravated by the professional staff being perceived as "young and bright Liberians" who "knew plenty book" but who were short on experience within the public service and the Liberian government system. How were these to train the older and more seasoned civil servants? The bottom line of it was that the Institute came to be held in a lower repute than it perhaps merited and that key mid-level personnel were not sent there for training. (Instead, second and third-string persons were sent in their stead, while the former were kept in the ministries and agencies to carry on the work.)

Documentary evidence from participant followup surveys shows that it was always difficult for LIPA staff to get the required numbers of participants registered for the various programs in order to make the experience worthwhile. This in turn led to frequent postponements of scheduled courses while professional staff were sent around the various ministries to "beat the bushes" for additional participants. Once programs got underway, absenteeism by participants distracted from the learning experience.

The continued lack of a national public sector training policy is also partially to blame for LIPA's gradual decline. Participants received only Certificates of Attendance rather than documentary proof of achievement. Completion of training courses was not reflected in a regular pattern of salary increments, promotion, or career development. Therefore, training at LIPA largely took place in a vacuum and it is not surprising that a sizeable segment of the target group never participated.

Attendance by Assistant and Deputy Ministers at Executive Development Seminars was even worse. With this group there was mixture of credibility on the part of some in the Institute's abilities to provide training for them (at their exalted level), and a degree of unease on the part of others that their positions could potentially be threatened by their immediate subordinates' newly acquired knowledge and skills.

An additional element, which further contributed to the Institute's general lack of credibility with its target group, was that LIPA never practiced what it taught in terms of good administrative and advisory practices. Decentralization and delegation reportedly were non-existent and intra-agency communications were said to be mostly through rumor and gossip. (This view is shared by those staff members who departed from LIPA as well as those few who still remain.) There was no reward system for quality performance, while poor performance was neither penalized nor remedied. There was no system for professional staff appraisal except where it was tied to training course evaluations by participants (but this feedback was then not subsequently fed into the salary, increment and promotion decision-making).

Another problem said to have contributed significantly to the poor perception which the target group had of the Institute, was that the professional staff were often stymied in their tasks by the incompetence and inefficiency of the Institute's administrative and logistical support personnel. This cadre reportedly continuously withheld vital support needed to carry out the professional program by means of misallocations of funds, gas coupons, vehicles and secretarial personnel. Financial irregularities were termed as "rampant", while the attitudes of the successive Directors-General -- who seemed to care little about the LIPA as an institution or about its mission, beyond mere lip-service -- hindered the effective performance by the professional staff.

Financial support of the Institute by the Government of Liberia during the time of the project was more than adequate. However, the impression gained during the interviews for the impact study, was that many people believed that GOL did not provide adequate funds and that this was an important reason for the project's ultimate lack of success. The budget and expenditure figures do not bear this out.

There was, however, a noticeable lack of support at the topmost levels of government for the importance and role of the LIPA, beyond the mere acknowledgement of its existence. The collective writings of former President William R. Tolbert (speeches, messages, discourses, etc.) during the first two years of his second term of office, mentioned the LIPA only once, and that only in passing and in a paragraph praising the work of the Civil Service Agency. These collective writings frequently mention all other ministries and agencies of government and many pages are devoted to individual ones.

LIPA deserves less mention than missionaries, the Red Cross, postage stamps, the indigent children's home in Bentol, and the Baptist Convention. That lack of top-level support, more than anything else is deemed to have contributed to the ultimate lack of credibility (and ultimately of achievement and success) of the Institute of Public Administration.

4. Impact

A. General

The overall impact of the LIPA project was generally found to have been marginal. The root causes for this situation are threefold:

- (1) Poor leadership;
- (2) Lack of political support at the top;
- (3) Public sector training continues to take place in a vacuum; and
- (4) Premature termination of the project assistance.

Even though many Liberian civil servants received various kinds and various levels of training, it wasn't a well-integrated effort. Most participants only completed the first segment (General Management) of the three-segment cycle. Disillusionment with what they could achieve with their newly-gained knowledge in a system resistant to change, was part of the problem; the growing credibility gap created by LIPA itself was another part.

The operational dimensions of the "marginal impact" were found to be the following:

(a) What was learned at LIPA wasn't always pertinent to the problems at hand, given conditions and attitudes in the Liberian "system" generally and in public administration in particular. Program content in the first two segments of the three course cycle turned out to be essentially a rehash of American Management Association's Handbook concepts, without much of an attempt to tailor these to LCD, and particularly Liberian, circumstances. The contractor must squarely shoulder the responsibility for this cultural blind spot; their assumptions proved to be largely invalid. Furthermore, the contractor's emphasis on "training" at the expense of research and consultancy, proved to be short-sighted and appears to have been based on a curiously paternalistic notion that Liberians could only learn to do one thing at a time. As a result, research and consultancy experience which should have fed directly into curriculum design and course content, was treated as an adjunct and after-thought to bolster the Liberian staff's "self confidence", rather than as a co-equal, it not a primary, function.

(b) Informants also generally blame USAID for the quality of its project monitoring. If this monitoring had been better and if the USAID Mission and the contractor had developed a more open working relationship, such problems could have been detected and rectified. USAID counters this allegation, stating that its working relationship with the contractor was about the same as in other projects. These relationships are spelled out for USAID in detail in the Project Management Handbook - Technical Assistance. USAID claims that the Handbook was followed to the letter.

(c) Those who should have been the primary beneficiaries of the Institute's programs -- the movers and shakers at the middle levels of the public service -- did not attend/were not allowed to attend in sufficient numbers. Part of this problem was created by LIPA itself (by the credibility gap). Young, bright professionals, short on experience, were not perceived as being able to impart meaningful, problem-solving types of training. Besides, LIPA as an agency of government and with its generally poor quality leadership, did not practice what it preached; this was not lost on its target population. Moreover, the lack of political support at the top only reinforced the hand of the supervisors of these middle-level managers, in that they did not feel to be under much pressure to ensure that their key subordinates attended the programs; nor were those who did attend allowed to make meaningful changes in the way things were done in organizations. "This is the Liberian way" became the knee-jerk defense mechanism in a public service which resisted change in the quality of services it provided.

(d) Training at LIPA took (and continues to take) place in a policy vacuum. Drafts of national public service training policies were forwarded to the President and to the Legislature in 1976 and again in 1978. They were neither acknowledged nor acted upon. Clearly, they constituted a threat to the established order and to those who benefitted from maintaining the status quo. A third attempt (after a post-coup national conference on public administration in 1980) to get a public service training policy promulgated and implemented as part of a merit system of promotion and career development, equally came to naught.

(e) The LIPA project was what in USAID parlance is called an "institution - building" project; one starts with a notion that a certain non-existing institution can meet a set of needs, and one then creates such an institution and makes it operational and oriented toward filling the need. Since this usually involves longer-term staff development (and attrition), the acquisition of a physical location, the putting into place of internal administrative frameworks and logistical support functions, in addition to gaining the necessary credibility and beginning to carry out the various task which in the aggregate are to fill the identified need, these institution - building projects take a long time.

A rule of thumb of institution - building in Africa is that "if you're not prepared to give it at least ten years, don't get involved". This ten year commitment is said to provide sufficient latitude for at least two leadership changes, one false start, and the loss of two thirds of the professional staff and its replacement. AID/Washington committed itself to support LIPA for seven years (1972-1979); a contract was signed for six years (1973-1979); and AID withdrew its contract support after only five years (1973-1978). At that time plans were well advanced at USAID/Liberia for a three year extension. The project was started about the same time that the US congress announced its new congressional mandate to AID in its New Directions Policy, focussing on the "poorest of the poor." With the LIPA project it was hard to show a direct link to the poor. USAID fought hard against having it cut, but political pressures in Washington were such that it got cut anyway.

The institution - building process had not been completed and the Institute was not given a chance to "shake down" properly. The sudden, premature withdrawal of support was widely interpreted as a vote of no-confidence, which further adversely affected an already low morale and the Institute's credibility gap.

(f) The experience of the LIPA project may to some extent have served to discredit the notion that public service training can help improve the motivation and capabilities of civil servants in Liberia. Operational problems and constraints identified by SCOGO in the early and mid - 1960's continue in the Liberian public service today. Given the general reduction in quality and quantity of government services after the coup, they may in fact be worse. Without a will and a conscious effort to improve the capabilities of the service, no amount of training by itself is likely to make a difference. The benefits of such an effort must be understood, and must be actively and fully supported by the country's political leadership; lip-service and financial support have proven to be inadequate.

B. Policy/Political Impact

Key informants overwhelmingly agree that the creation of LIPA (and the creation of the Civil Service Agency) involved a number of important policy decisions. In LIPA's case, the realization by the Tubman administration that there was a direct linkage between better trained and motivated public servants and the improved quantity and quality of

government services provided and of development projects implemented, plus the decision to do something to increase this capability, was an important political as well as policy event. This was the more important because under Tubman, patronage had become an entrenched hallmark of the civil service. (Similarly, the notion had been officially passed down that if you had a government position and you didn't use it to your personal advantage you were a fool).

Therefore, the events leading up to the creation of the LIPA and CSA, and the implied rejection of the patronage system, were also seen as a political victory of those outside interest working hand-in-glove with similar-minded, reform-oriented Liberians (i.e. the Americans). Of course, the question raised as to the wholeheartedness of this "conversion" may go some way to explain the subsequent lack of political support for the Institute and its objectives by the successor Tolbert administration. In other words: who ultimately proclaimed victory? The status quo elements or the "reform" group?

Yet, the commitment of sizeable budgetary allocations, the assignment of well-trained, scarce manpower, and the institutional support given to the overall reform effort (LIPA and CSA must be considered together, since they are both essential elements of this process), are significant indicators. The political actions creating these institutions by Acts of the Legislature must be recognized as important victories for those Liberians who recognized the constraints to development of the then existing system.

Once created, LIPA itself became a forum for advocacy of further reform and a pressure group for policy implementation. Its limited success should not detract from the fact that a voice was added to the reform movement.

Some observers note the fact that the Institute's continued to existence to-date, in itself signals a significant achievement. However, these persons perhaps tend to discount the fact that during the past two years three separate efforts have been made to put the Institute out of existence. One movement was spearheaded by an individual with Ministerial ambitions who went a considerable way--through PRC "connections" -- to have the LIPA and CSA combined into a Civil Service Ministry with himself as Minister. Another University of Liberia - based movement has been afoot to have the Institute be made a part of the University, in a reported effort to "capture" the remaining staff and its library resources. While a more recent call was made by the Minister of Planning to attach the Institute to the University for financial/budgetary considerations and because the Institute had "failed to carry out its mandate". These developments place the continued existence of LIPA in its present incarnation in serious question.

The lack of a public service training policy has been a serious problem for LIPA, as well as for the CSA. It proved to be difficult to get participants to go for training programs when this training was not recognized for purposes of career development, nor was it linked to on-going institutional reform efforts in the ministries and agencies. As such, it took place in a vacuum and had little lasting effect.

The LIPA project also generated some unintended political side-effects which further damaged the Institute's reputation:

- It's first Director-General used it as an operational base and political spring-board for elective office;
- It was subsequently used as a backwater to which to "retire" flawed leaders who hadn't yet reached retirement age;
- Because of the ethnic affiliation of all of its Directors General thus far, it is perceived by some as a "Vai institution". (This latter view has become more widespread since the coup, when ethnic affiliation considerations became more pronounced.)

C. Economic Impact

It is difficult to assess the economic impact of this project on the target population, i.e. the estimated 2,000 - 3,000 middle-level administrators/managers in the public service. Only about 600 participated in LIPA programs during the project period (1973-1978), while some 300 additional ones have attended programs since then. If one looks at such indicators as increased incomes and savings, greater productivity, and improved access to the job market (as a result of target group members having received training at LIPA) it is hardly applicable to the Liberian public service as it exists. Improvement in performance and increased productivity should be important variables in increasing incomes (and savings), but this linkage does not yet exist in the Liberian civil service. Rather, increased incomes and promotions continue to be based on connections (and more recently, ethnic affiliation), on academic and paper qualifications, and on "visibility" within the system--not necessarily related to productivity.

It is easier to assess the economic impact on the direct beneficiaries of the project, i.e. the professional staff members of the Institute, trained and developed as part of this project. Without exception, these were recent university graduates, who, if they had any government working experience at all, had done so for one year or less. These 28 persons were enabled to pursue Masters Degree studies at universities in the U.S. and Nigeria. As first-degree-holders, few earned salaries of more than \$3,000 per annum before they were selected for training. Upon their return, with post graduate degrees their salaries increased by 40 percent. (In 1975 professional staff salaries started at \$4,200 per annum; in 1978/79 the lowest professional salary rate paid at LIPA was \$7,500.) By 1978/79 when USAID support for the project terminated, the sixteen professionals' salaries of \$158,933 constituted 41 percent of total institute salaries (or more than 50 percent if one removes the "ghosts" from the payroll). Given a high multiplier of the salary dollar in consumption-oriented Monrovia, increased stimulus created by the effect of Liberian staff salaries alone (for the project period 1973 through 1978/79) totalled \$5.5 million.

The 28 professionals trained under this project turned out to be a group of young people in great demand by other organizations once they started leaving LIPA in frustration. They were immediately hired

by other ministries and agencies, placed into positions of considerably increased responsibilities (Director of Personnel, Commissioner of Customs, Deputy Commissioner of Maritime Affairs, Deputy General Manager of a major state corporation, Chairman of the Board of the National Ports Authority, Member of the National Investment Commission, Member of the National Constitution Commission, etc.) All those who have found alternative employment increased their incomes. Others have returned to various overseas universities for doctoral programs.

The above tends to indicate that those persons selected for staff development of LIPA were bright and industrious young people who were only able to realize their fuller potential in terms of productivity, after they had resigned from the Institute. Their access to the job market had improved significantly as a result of their association with the LIPA project. However, since they were virtually all trained in public administration and public management, only two found positions in Liberia's private sector.

D. Social Impact

According to all key informants, the project had considerable beneficial social impact on those 600-plus members of the target group who attended one or more LIPA programs. These benefits can be summarized as follows:

- (1) For those who attended, this was the first time that they had ever been exposed to work-oriented, on-the-job training;
- (2) Most benefitted considerably from the interaction and interchange with colleagues in other branches of government; it improved their understanding of each others' operational environment and its constraints;
- (3) Participants had frequent opportunities to vent their frustrations in a constructive atmosphere of confidentiality and were encouraged to generate solutions to common, basic problems; most participants eagerly availed themselves of these opportunities;
- (4) There was considerable enthusiasm (even though short-lived once they returned to the workplace) generated in individuals and groups, to experiment with innovation. Follow-up studies show that about one third actually tried to innovate and reform certain practices after attending LIPA courses;
- (5) The learning experience itself was beneficial, in that participants were exposed to new concepts, ideas and methods; they were encouraged to apply these in simulations and exercises, with generally good response;

- (6) Participants gained a greater degree of self-confidence, based on a better understanding of the public service system;
- (7) The social impact in rural areas of the Rural Development Workshops was even greater than the response to courses in Monrovia. These people had rarely ever been contacted by a central government, Monrovia-based organization in a positive and helpful manner until LIPA carried its workshops to the county-level administrators and chiefs. People gladly suffered through long sessions, subjected to oppressive heat in makeshift "classrooms". The dedication of LIPA staff under these circumstances was found to be commendable, and as a result an easy camaraderie developed between trainers and trainees.

E. Technological Impact

In terms of technological impact or transfer of technology, we must once again look at two transfer effects:

- (a) The transfer of technology to the Liberian professionals (academic training, special skills-development programs, working attachments, short courses, skills transfer by the contractor team, etc.); and
- (b) the transfer of technology from LIPA to the target groups.

In terms of skill-transfer to the LIPA professional staff, this was found to be successful, even though it only involved academic tools-of-the-trade, largely limited to just the "training" functions at LIPA. No research skills were transferred, while consulting skills-transfer was minimal. (A contract team member who reportedly was specifically recruited to stimulate LIPA's research and consulting functions, was ordered by the IPA/NY chief of party to concentrate on "training", about which he admittedly knew little.) Where training skills transfer failed to "take" was in the use of VTR equipment and to a lesser extent in the knowledge of and operating familiarity with standard audio-visual equipment (film projectors, opaque and overhead projectors, sound systems, slide projectors, etc.)

With regard to the impact of transfer of technology from LIPA's professional staff to the beneficiaries, the responses of key informants varied. Some LIPA participants were said to have gone right back into their routine jobs without applying new methods or approaches learned at LIPA. Others, however, expressed their willingness and ability to change and practice new new ways of work planning, work control and supervision, but their supervisors did not provide them with opportunities to do so, while the system itself was not supportive. As a result they were prevented from accomplishing what they set out to do and ended up frustrated. Some of the participants, by means of their positions in the government structure, were able to effect some changes, resulting in the improvement of their own performance (and eventual promotions) Participant follow-up surveys conducted by LIPA on hundreds of past participants, show that only about 5 percent of those trained LIPA attributed their rise in status to the additional knowledge and

skills learned from the professional staff at the Institute.

F. Impact on Women

Of LIPA's 28 professional staff members trained at the Masters Degree level, 32 percent were women. This percentage is extremely favorable, as the male-female distribution in the public service as a whole is 79 percent male and 21 percent female. LIPA staff women benefitted therefore disproportionately from this project. In terms of target group beneficiaries, women participants in LIPA programs constituted 31 percent. However, LIPA staff members explain that this percentage includes a large number of John F. Kennedy Hospital nurses and a disproportionately large number of secretaries and clerks (who shouldn't have been there in the first place) from the Ministry of Justice.

Overall, therefore, the impact of this project on women was larger than that on men (even though one can quibble about the term "impact")

5. Lessons Learned

A. Design Lessons

(1) This was an institution - building project. Institution - building is a long term process; it takes even longer in Liberia. USAID made only a seven-year commitment whereas it should have made at least a ten-year commitment.

(2) Typically, this project was overloaded with too many objectives to be accomplished within too short a time frame. In addition, it presupposed a rejuvenated Civil Service Agency, supportive of the work of LIPA; this support subsequently turned out to be non-existent.

(3) A congenial policy framework regarding public sector training and staff development was lacking; it remains lacking to date. The assumption that this framework would evolve over time, was misplaced.

(4) The LIPA project was designed for mid-level civil servants rather than with them. It therefore contained certain mis-perceptions which could have been avoided had the target group been better consulted and had its representatives been part of the design effort.

B. Implementation Lessons

(5) If political support at the top is lacking, you're fighting a long up-hill battle; lip-service should not be confused with support.

(6) The bitter personality and professional conflicts between the first LIPA Director - General and the the CSA Director seriously undermined the civil service reform effort. The President was aware of it, but was content to let it fester; a further indication that he was not committed to the quality aspects of the reform. His subsequent appointment of the successor Director-General of LIPA in 1978 further confirms this.

(7) The host-country contracting mode was something for which the Government of Liberia wasn't ready in 1972; it isn't yet ready for it in 1982. Host-country contractors tend to become convenient whipping boys for "hidden agendas" within GOL ministries and agencies.

(8) USAID monitoring was perceived as "poor to marginal"; the quality of the contractor services was perceived as "average" This indicates a quality-control problem on the U.S. side.

(9) USAID never protested the poor quality of LIPA leadership, although it must have realized that this damaged the project; instead it meekly accepted those who rode roughshod over the project on the Liberian side.

Methodology

The preceding impact study was carried out based on a review of whatever project documentation of a non-classified nature that has remained at the USAID/Liberia office; project documents available at LIPA, MPEA and at the National Archives in Monrovia; various participant follow-up survey results; and loosely structured in-dept interviews with 29 "key-informants". Key informants are persons who, as a result of close association with the project, or intimate familiarity with and knowledge of the project, can provide insight into various aspects of it, including project design, project planning and project implementation, as well as the various sub-elements of the project. Key informants included high level GOL officials, present and former LIPA professionals, past participants in LIPA training programs, and USAID officials.

The research was carried out by two professional members of COKASCO Consultancy, Inc. both of whom have completed many years of GOL government service each. One has a Masters Degree in Public Administration from USC in the U.S.; the other has a Masters Degree in Public Administration from the University of Ife in Nigeria.