

Liberia
Impact Study

Government Reorganization and Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the absence of well-defined objectives and strategies for administrative reorganization for efficiency and economy in developing countries generally, most of their efforts have resulted in partial and isolated solutions to administrative problems confronting systematic development. It is interesting to note that many of the "reforms" have resulted in either across-the-board pay increases, or unjustifiable increases in public employment on the pretext of governments' obligation to provide full employment for the welfare state.

Some experts in development administration have assumed that it is impossible to have a high rate of national economic growth without a well-developed administrative system in government. This has been the rationale for accelerated expansion of bureaucratic structures in most developing countries in the 1950's and 1960's. The experience of Liberia, at least until the mid 1960's indicates that a very high rate of economic growth (GDP) was possible in spite of not having a well-developed government administration. But the criticism that the Liberian development experience until then, with a high rate of growth, has not enabled the masses at large to benefit from this development, indicates also the cruciality of a developed administrative system -- not only for achieving a high rate of growth but also for ensuring that the benefits of this growth trickled down in a more equitable distribution of incomes, social services and physical infrastructure.

The appointment of the Special Commission on Government Operations (SCOGO), supported by the USAID-assisted Government Reorganization and Management project in 1961 was the first organized effort towards administrative reorganization for efficiency and effectiveness in government in Liberia. The full history of administrative development efforts in Liberia still needs to be written. Nevertheless, the developments which affected the Liberian administrative structure during President William V. S. Tubman's term in office need special mention. In December 1950, an agreement for technical assistance between the U.S. Government and the Government of Liberia was signed, establishing a joint U.S.-Liberian Commission for Economic Development, which was catalytic in stimulating a process of economic and social development. This gave rise to the first consideration of preparing a Five Year Development Plan (1951-1955) which involved expenditures of \$32.6 million.

Implementation of even this modest program of development created many problems of absorption of development funds due to an absence of a well developed planning and implementation machinery at the national and local level. It became increasingly recognizable that if Liberia was to achieve growth with development, it required the transportation of institutions and people capable of administering and operating not only the machinery of state but also of its public investment programs and of coordination with the private sector; for effective administration is considered to be a pre-condition for equitable development. Elliot Berg had found that "for more than

100 years the Liberian Government operated like a kind of private club -- without budgets, records, accounts, filing systems and without much of an apparatus of administration or system and procedures for making public decisions and executing them once made ... That things worked well this way didn't matter before the 1960's since government had only a few million dollars to spend anyway, most of it for salaries."

The terms of reference of the SCOGO Commission were wide. In addition to conducting studies and presentations of findings and recommendations to government, it was also entrusted with surveillance over the implementation and reform measures. This was partly done because of the absence of a civil service agency or department of administration well-equipped and staffed to process the implementation; and partly to ensure that the time and effort put in by all did not result in non-action on recommendations.

The whole pattern of steering the entire reform effort through the technical assistance experts of the contractor (Public Administration Service (PAS) of Chicago) was similar to attempts by AID to induce administrative reform in Latin America. The rationale for empowering a temporary commission with the responsibility for sustained reform work was based on the assumption that the civil service in a developing country would be primarily responsible for change, as the first link in the executive branch. In addition, costs are incurred when establishing and maintaining a permanent body for government reorganization (see for example Ghana's experience with the Office of Government Machinery - OGM). The Liberian membership of the Commission reflected the emphasis placed on financial administration and the curbing of irregularities in government expenditures.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (then the International Cooperation Agency - ICA) entered into a contract with PAS on May 2, 1961, to provide technical assistance to the government of Liberia (GOL) in public administration improvement. In its overall support to assist with the multifaceted exercise in government reorganization and improvement of public management, the USG agreed to include assistance to SCOGO. This commission then became the focal point. Initially a staff of seven American technicians was authorized for two years. The first arrived in Monrovia in early 1961. Within the general context of SCOGO mandate, the project was conceived and viewed as: (1) evaluating government organization and administration; (2) after GOL acceptance of the proposals, assisting with putting recommendations into effect. Three broad areas were initially identified as critical for effecting improvement: general administration, fiscal management and revenue administration. In 1963 the area of personnel management was added, while in late 1965 the procurement and supply functions were added as a complement to the modernization of the fiscal system.

The PAS contract was amended and extended several time, and with the departure of the last remaining technician in November 1968, PAS had provided advisors and consultants for a total of 40 man-years.

The following were identified as major accomplishments of the project:

1. A process of administrative change was induced in Liberia through the appointment of SCOGO and related AID-funded activities. The various activities of the Commission resulted in a first-ever comprehensive inquiry into the nature and functioning of Executive Branch of Government and its personnel.
2. Significant structural changes in several departments of the government to provide a framework for better delivery of services to the public. Nineteen reorganization Acts were passed by the GOL Legislature, realigning and streamlining the government organization.
3. A management improvement program for the Public Works Department. (later assisted by AID)
4. Improvement of a general procurement and supply management for economy, efficiency and better services.
5. Rigorous enforcement of tax laws and improvement of tax collection, the system was meant to enhance the predictability of revenue collections.
6. Improved fiscal controls and standards in the department of Treasury.
7. Development of standards relating to official housing, fuel purchases, official compensation, government scholarships, etc., standards were expected to improve the public image of the bureaucracy.
8. Administrative and procedure manuals for departments in the Executive Branch.
9. Proposals on Personnel Classification and Pay Plan.

In addition to making specific recommendations on each agency, the committee propounded the following main concepts governing the reorganization tasks:

1. Government programmes and activities should be grouped on the basis of functional similarity.

2. The number of primary organizational units should be held to a minimum.

(This recommendation was based on the inevitable need to reduce span of control for President.)

3. Autonomous agencies should be created only when there is a compelling need. (Existence of autonomous units outside the regular departmental structure destroys organizational unity.)
4. Boards and commissions should be used sparingly and where created, should not be given executive functions.
5. The government corporation is a useful organizational device for commercial type of activities and should be reserved for such work only.

Most of the above recommendations were ignored by subsequent administrations. The irony is that they were ignored by former SCOGO members who later rose to ministerial and other high positions in government.

Some of the recommendations which were implemented and which benefit Liberia today were:

The creations of an office of Personnel to undertake vital Governmentwide personnel functions; a National Planning Council charged with overall planning for the country; to do away with the then prevailing distinction between coastal counties and hinterland provinces; strengthening of the Department of Interior by bringing under it all functions relating to urban and rural Local Government, tribal affairs, national police and public information; separation of the then existing functions of police services, prosecution and prison administration in the single department of Justice; transfer of the secondary school system from the University of Liberia to the Ministry of Education; creation of a new department of Commerce and Industry bringing together all Government programmes concerned with the encouragement and supervision of commercial and industrial activity.

The informants felt that a basic government philosophy on reorganization was an essential pre-requisite for sustained future programming of reform efforts. In this light, they lauded the efforts of SCOGO for continued reorganization.

The major problems that retarded the optimal success of the project in its evolutionary, implementation and follow-up stages are as follows:

1. Absence on the Commission of representatives of development-oriented sectors (health, education, agriculture).
2. Paucity of trained personnel and financial resources of the country.
3. Overinvolvement of the Commission and its technical wing in ad-hoc projects and routine government operations.
4. Preoccupation of its technical staff in training operative personnel.
5. The inability of GOL to provide sustained support to technical efforts.
6. Lack of broadly-based interest in and support for administrative reform.
7. Lack of sympathy with the objectives of the government re-organization and management efforts which unanated from a feeling of unwarranted intrusion into the affairs of the departments under scrutiny.
8. Resistance to change by a bureaucracy which protected the vested interests of the elites who ran it.

General Impact

1. A national consciousness was created on the need for the traditional objectives of economy, simplicity and efficiency in government operations.
2. The creation of a national inventory on organization and operations of each executive branch department.
3. The preparation of detailed reorganization plans, relationships and procedures for each department.
4. Enactment of Legislative Acts for the reorganization of 19 Departments.

Policy and Political Impact

5. The legislative establishment of SCOGO and the Legislative Acts affecting 19 Departments marked a major shift in policy direction in the functioning of government.
6. The dramatic change in Liberia's political philosophy toward a better administrative system was strengthened by President Tubman's close and continued interest in all aspects of government organization and management efforts.
7. A lack of continuous, broadly-based political support and lack of institutionalization did damage to the implementation phase of the work.
8. Under the reorganization plan, the objective of economy was sought through the abolition of unnecessary departments and functions.
9. Fiscal benefits resulted from cost-savings, increased productivity of personnel and increased revenue intakes.
10. A national budgeting system was developed.
11. The project was instrumental in the establishment of a National Planning Agency, the forerunner of the current Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs.

Social Impact

12. Training opportunities for key Liberians; the participants list is a veritable who is who of the past two administrations.

13. Enhancement of social services, increased access to services by the people.

Impact on Women NIL

14. The project gave rise to a number of further downstream technology transfer projects, most of which received USG support of one kind or another:

669-0122 Liberia Institute of Public Administration project
669-0124 Civil Service Development project
669-0068 Support to the National Planning Agency project
669-0026 Communications Media project
669-0027 Public Safety project
669-0096 Regional Area Development project
669-0060 Public Health Administration project
669-0126 Health Management and Planning project
669-0050 Educ. Administration and Training project
669-0111 Telecommunications project
669-0071 Geological Survey project
669-0077 Public Works Administration and Training
669-0078 Fiscal and Supply Management project
669-0080 Local Government Administration project
669-0103 Customs Administration project
669-0132 Increased Revenues for Development project
669-0123 Agricultural Program Development project
669-0137 Agricultural Analysis and Planning project

Lessons Learned

1. The project had too many objectives for the short time it was designed
2. The objectives were more regulatory than developmental
3. Little consideration was given to the absorptive capacity of the public service.
4. No integrated performance-improvement plan was laid out.
5. Continued preoccupation with day-to-day problems affected the effective implementation of major innovations.
6. Not enough attention was given to the cultural and psychological needs of a tradition - oriented civil service.

1. BACKGROUND

The need for reorganization in the administrative and management system of governments can best be summed up in the words of Clarence L. Blau "If everything else is done and public administration fails, all fails".

The above quotation is hardly an exaggeration. The experience of third world countries as a whole, in its war against poverty, disease, hunger and illiteracy indicates clearly that a country without a proper and effective system of administration can scarcely achieve its economic, political or social objectives. In fact, the arguments used against the third world as a whole rest on the premise that third world countries can neither be helped nor can they even help themselves as long as their administrative and political systems remain unsatisfactory.

In the absence of well-defined objectives and strategies for administrative reorganization for efficiency and economy in developing countries, most of their efforts have resulted in partial and isolated solutions to the administrative problems confronting systematic development. It is interesting to note that many of the reforms have resulted in either pay increases across the board or unjustifiable increases in public employment on the pretext of government's obligation to provide full employment for a welfare state.

However, efforts have been made to appraise administrative structures in developing countries in light of western models of bureaucracy, i.e. Max Weber's model of rational bureaucracy. Although this approach has been helpful in understanding the administrative behavior in developing countries, it has not been very helpful to the governments in these countries in terms of introducing specific, viable administrative reforms to ensure successful implementation and control of development plans. As a result, plan implementation in most developing countries has lagged behind schedule and expectation.

Furthermore, evaluation studies have often indicated gaps and shortcomings in administration as one of the most important causes of shortfall, instead of inadequacies in financial resources. Yet, no systematic effort has been made to relate government reorganization measures to the needs and requirements of planning and implementation.

Thus, the divorce between the planning machinery and the government administration has forced governments in developing countries to be more skewed towards a traditional administration for law and order. Planning provides the major philosophy and backing for future social change which has to be strengthened and reinforced

by the administrative capability. Administrative reform by itself often does not have political appeal but, at the same time, it is a continuous process and needs constant support. Since planning in general takes place in most of the developing countries irrespective of changes in political regimes, it can provide that continuous framework and support to the process of administrative reform. It is also needless to stress here that the functioning of the administrative machinery needs to be monitored for possible malfunctions. A specialized institution for this purpose which will identify bottlenecks, recommend improvements and monitor the implementation of the proposals for improvements, must be created.

Whatever plans, reforms or policies governments may introduce, are unlikely to succeed if the executive capacity is lacking. Executive capacity is of course vested in the human resources, and managers of public enterprises should be professionally qualified, experienced and committed to their work; the latter quality being a function of motivation. Therefore, governments in developing countries should institute policies which will accord due recognition to qualities in public servants that contribute to development; these qualities being demonstrated through technical competence, professional expertise, dedication, innovation and adaptation. The public service system must adequately reward those who produce, innovate, adapt and multiply, and must punish those who shirk responsibility and stagnate.

From the above perspective, plan implementation assumes a pre-dominant role as a tool towards effective development administration. The other executive and operative elements of administration collectively contribute immensely to the realization of plan objectives and expectation. It is therefore essential that efforts should be made to dovetail the process of government management and reforms to the requirements of national planning for development. Piecemeal, intuitive, inward-looking, option-based administrative appraisal, and consequent reorganizations affect the continuous effectiveness of development administration.

Does the foregoing analysis hold good for Liberia in all respects? Are there any interesting contrasts between Liberia and other developing countries in the area of development administration?

Politically, Liberia succeeded in developing a separate independent nation state at a time when there was a scramble for land and colonies in Africa. The form of government was American-styled, i.e. skewed toward centralism. Economically, Liberia is dependent on the export of iron ore and rubber, and to a lesser extent, tropical hardwoods, coffee, cocoa and palm products, and operates a free enterprise system. While Liberia enjoyed a very high rate

of economic growth which in the 60s was equalled only by a country like Japan, and a massive infusion of foreign aid, there was never equitable development and a self-reliant economy. In essence, Liberia became a classic example of "growth without development."

Some experts in development administration have assumed that it is impossible to achieve a high rate of economic growth without a well-developed administrative system in government. This has been the rationale for accelerated expansion of bureaucratic structures in most developing countries in the 50s and 60s. The experience of Liberia, at least until the 60s, indicates that a very high rate of economic growth (GDP) was possible in spite of not having a well-developed civil service based on merit. But the criticism that the Liberian development strategy, with a high rate of growth, has not enabled the masses at large to benefit from the development, indicates also the cruciality of a developed administrative system-not only for achieving a high rate of growth but also for ensuring percolation of benefits of development to the periphery. There is no justification needed to establish that the ability of the government to realize the stated goals of its policies and programs depends to a large extent on the ability of the administrative setup to understand, and interpret these policy goals, and to ensure their effective and efficient implementation.

The government of Liberia, from time to time, under various regimes, including the present government, have attempted to rationalize the administrative setup with a view of making its administration development-oriented. But these efforts were fragmented and with a piecemeal approach to administrative reforms and needs of development administration. The appointment of the Special Commission On Government Operations (SCOGO) in 1961, was the first organized effort towards administrative reorganization for efficiency and effectiveness in government in Liberia.

2. THE PROJECT

A. RATIONALE

The Liberian economy largely depends on the production of agricultural commodities and iron ore for export, principally by foreign firms which are the chief sources of export earnings and wage employment in the organized sector, and which also contribute substantially to the government revenue. Traditional farming has been isolated from the monetized economy and sustains the vast majority of the population at very low levels of income and productivity. Activities in this sector revolve around the production of rice, cassava, vegetables, palm produce and sugar cane. Trade, transport and communication constitute other large sectors in terms of output and employment. Most of the domestic income is generated from modern sectors of the economy and nearly half of Gross Domestic Product of the modern economy is accounted for by the concession activities in mineral and agricultural production.

The State intervention in the economy has in the past been minimal, as planning was not considered as an effective strategy until 1962 when the first development plan was drafted; prior to that, the entire process of economic development was pursued without much pattern or guidance. The 1962 plan was a major step towards economic development, even though it was not inclusive with regard to all sectors of the economy.

Another issue of concern was the continuous adherence to traditional modes of procedures and organizations. As A. Dalton and W.A. Walters noted, "Liberia's hope for sustained economic growth depends on early action to improve public administration, education, agriculture and industrial technology".

The history of administrative development in Liberia, in an effort to percolate the fruits of economic development downward, is yet to be written systematically. Nevertheless, the developments which affected the Liberian administrative structure during President Tubman's regime need special mention. President Tubman's Unification and Integration policy of 1955 was designed to permit a growing number of persons from the indigenous population to have access to education and placement in the civil service at certain levels. This policy also facilitated modification of "the central-local relations" whose significant reform was involved in the upgrading of three provinces namely: Western, Central and Eastern into the counties of Nimba, Bong, Lofa and Grand Gedeh. This reorganization also provided for various provincial administrative setups. At the county level, the county and the territorial Superintendents were to be responsible to the President for the overall administration of their counties and territories, including the responsibility for tribal authority.

Priorities of survival, maintenance of law and order and maintenance of external linkages on the one hand with the United States for military and economic help, and need for clever, diplomatic dealings with European powers to safeguard its territory from encroachments, on the other, influenced the evolution of administrative institutions like the predominance of ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Treasury.

The revenue in-take of Government increased impressively, mainly due to the post-war boom in exports and lucrative foreign concessions. The increase in revenues had two types of impacts; first, in the absence of a well-developed civil service and budgetary control system, excess revenues were swallowed by rapid increases in the ranks of the civil service; and secondly, it gave the first impetus to launching a program of economic and social development. In December 1950, an agreement for technical assistance between the U.S. Government and the Government of Liberia was signed, establishing a joint U.S.-Liberia Commission for Economic Development

which was catalytic in stimulating a process of economic and social development through projects for infrastructural development and for agriculture, health and education. This gave rise to the first consideration of preparing a plan of five year development. The five year development program (1951-1955) involved an expenditure of \$32.6 million of which \$10 million was for the construction of highways. It also included a photogrammetric survey of Liberia and the setting up of the Agricultural Research Station at Suakoko.

Implementation of even this modest programme of development created many absorptive problems due to the absence of a well-developed planning and implementation machinery at the national and local level. The absence of a financial control and planning system led to the non-realization of an expected 100% increase in revenues during the lifetime of the plan, with the result that in 1954 the plan period was extended to a period of 9 years instead of five. The absence of a well-developed fiscal and monetary control system, coupled with unrestrained imports of consumer goods and repatriation of profits by the concession owners, resulted in grave financial difficulties.

Despite the remarkable growth trend between 1950 and 1961 and the government's efforts towards decentralisation, there was very little delegation of authority and responsibility accompanying the organization efforts. The government at that time practiced what can be termed a "Patronage Administrative System". This system was one which granted rewards and support to those who gave unflinching loyalty to the President. These rewards came through job offers and actual cash handouts. As a result of this practice the cost of running the government created an enormous burden on the country's limited financial resources. As cited in Martin Lowenkopf's Politics in Liberia, the SCOGO noted "in 1964 most government departments were overstaffed, the civil servants' salaries depended on criteria other than merit and seniority and, many government employees were either inadequately paid or overpaid".

Another practice that heavily eroded government's resources was that government officials unofficially used government property such as vehicles, heavy-duty equipment, office machines and other materials and supplies for personal use. Before 1964, as much as 40 percent of the total GOI outlays were disbursed outside the regular budgetary channels.

The problem was exacerbated by low salaries which were inadequate to attract and retain professional and qualified people. There was no uniform procedure for recruitment, promotion and no salary scale or fringe benefits program in the civil service.

Due to these administrative practices, coupled with inadequate budgetary resources, absenteeism of public employees was high, routine office operations were performed poorly, the filing system, accounting records and other forms of office management were unsystematized and sometimes in disarray. There were also inordinate delays in transacting government business.

It became increasingly recognizable that if Liberia was to achieve growth with development it required the development of institutions and people capable of administering the operations of the state; for effective administrations is considered to be a pre-condition for economic development.

The first major investigation of the Liberian economic, social and political structures was carried out by research scholars of North-Western University in early 60s. The team concluded that inspite of a very high rate of economic growth, corresponding institutional changes to pave the way for more sustained economic and social development had not been undertaken. The study states: "nothing has been done to alter traditional institutional practices that directly inhibit social and economic development. The diversion of government equipment and personnel for private/commercial use, overt and underhand garnishing of salaries, acceptance of favors, financial or otherwise, by government officials, easy tolerance of blatant conflict of interest situations; high-level civil servants acting as loan sharks to the employees; these are just a few of the traditional practices that remain in force".

Even some years later Elliot Berg had the following to comment on the status of public administration in Liberia: "For more than 100 years the Liberian Government operated like a kind of private club-without budgets, records, accounts, filing systems and without much in the way of apparatus of administration or systems and procedures for making public decisions and executing them once made. It was a system in which expenditure control resided in the Presidential power to sign all checks of over \$25, and in which formal budgeting was almost unknown; it was something dealt with in conversation with the President. That things worked this way didn't matter before the 1960s, since government had only a few million dollars to spend anyway, most of it for salaries". Thus the magnitude of relatively recent investment in mining and other facilities (roads, government buildings) had thrust Liberia into the modern world in an extremely short period of time, with its swiftly multiplying tasks and responsibilities.

During the period 1950 to 1960, it became increasingly apparent that an effective and functional administrative system could be built only through a coordinated reorganization of the government as a whole.

As a result of prevailing circumstances and severe criticism by outside observers, as well as direct and indirect pressure brought to bear by the international and bilateral aid-giving agencies, the Government of Liberia appointed a Special Commission on Government Operations in 1961, by an Act of Legislature, to undertake a broad programme on public administration improvement. It was the first ever major enquiry into the administrative system of Liberia, with expert staffing and political support.

The Commission comprised of a chairman and six members appointed by the President and attached to the President's Office. The chairman reported directly to the Chief Executive and enjoyed full cabinet status. The technical staff of the Commission consisted of a seven member team provided through a USAID-financed contract. Some Liberian counterparts were assigned to work closely with the foreign technicians, and training of some Liberian staff in the U.S.A. was also arranged.

The terms of reference of the Commission were wide. In addition to conducting studies and presentations of findings and recommendations to the government, it was also entrusted with surveillance over the implementation of reform measures. This was partly done because of absence of a high-level civil service agency or department of administration well equipped and staffed to process the implementation; and partly to ensure that the time and effort put in by all did not result in non-action on recommendations. The whole pattern of steering the entire reform effort through the technical experts of the Contractor, Public Administration Service (PAS) of Chicago, was similar to attempts by AID to induce administrative reforms in Latin American countries. The rationale for empowering a temporary Commission with the responsibility for sustained reform work was based on the assumption that the civil service in a developing country would be primarily responsible for change, as the first link in the Executive Branch. In addition, cost are incurred when establishing and maintaining a permanent body for government reorganization.

The membership of the Commission reflected the emphasis put on financial administration and the curbing of irregularities in government expenditure. The Chairman (James T. Philips) was formerly the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Co-chairman (Albert D. Peabody), a Counsellor at Law. The other members held the positions of under-secretary of the Treasury for Fiscal Affairs of State (Frank Steward), and the Director of the Bureau of General Accounting (D. Tucker-Jackson (Mrs)).

B. PLANNING THE PROJECT

The U.S. Agency for International Development (then ICA) entered into a contract with Public Administration Service of Chicago on May 2, 1961, to provide technical assistance to the Government of Liberia in Public Administration Improvement. AID had already been planning assistance in overall government management, and agreed to assist SCOGO in its venture. The contract with PAS authorized provision of technical staff to implement a program of administrative reform. This program had been developed earlier by the Government of Liberia, with the technical assistance of a USAID public administration advisor.

The services to be extended by Public Administration Service (PAS) to the Government of Liberia, as set forth in the contract with USAID, were as follows:

" To provide technical advice and assistance to the ... Government in improving and strengthening the organization and administration of all departments and agencies of the Executive Branch by providing technical advice and guidance, and staff assistance to the President's Special Commission on Government Operations; by developing organization proposals, forms and procedures and, if necessary, drafts of laws and orders, giving particular attention to devising and assisting in the installation of improved methods and procedures in fiscal management in the Government at the central and district levels, including budgeting, accounting and reporting, treasury management, auditing, and customs and tax administration; and by training of employees of the ... Government".

Initially, a staff of seven American technicians was authorized for two years. The first of the staff arrived in Monrovia in May, 1961. Within the general context of the charge to SCOGO, the project was conceived and viewed as: (1) evaluating governmental organization and administration; (2) recommending improvements; and (3) after governmental acceptance of proposals, assisting with putting recommendations into effect.

Three broad work areas were initially identified as critical for effecting improvement: general organization and administration; fiscal management, and revenue administration. In 1963, the area of personnel management was added, and late in 1965 the procurement and supply areas were added as a complement to the fiscal system modernization.

GENERAL ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

In order to tackle the specific and emergent needs of the Government operations, comprehensive studies of each major department and agency of the Executive Branch were planned. It was anticipated that after the approval of the findings of these studies, the Public Administration Service team of SCOGO would assist in implementing the recommendations as follows:

1. Developing detailed organizational plans, functional charts and personnel staffing patterns.
2. Designing needed manuals, records, forms and the like.
3. Training personnel in administrative methods and procedures.
4. Continuing consultation with concerned officials, evaluating results achieved, and modifying and refining systems on the basis of experience.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The fiscal management work area was to be concerned with improving the elements of an integrated system: budgeting, accounting, auditing, supply and treasury transactions. The approach was to be in terms of formulating effective policies, and developing improved systems and fiscal concepts in conjunction with the conduct of general administrative studies of those concerned with fiscal management affairs.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Declining revenues posed a challenge to Government in its efforts toward maintaining administrative services and meeting developmental needs. In this light, emphasis was to be given to improved revenue administration. It was anticipated that revenues could be significantly increased through improved administration, and particularly through more effective enforcement of existing tax schedules without introducing additional rates.

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

The area of personnel management as a critical concern was introduced after the completion of preliminary organizational analyses and studies. Plans of improvement included developing a government-wide Personnel Management System.

The work plan for the project was revised several times in order to accommodate new demands from the government, and due to several local problems a new network plan presented with the project progress

report covering the third quarter of 1963 stated that "The implementation of the ... broad administration reform ... being carried out through SCOGO should be completed by the middle of 1965 - the termination of the present PAS contract extension. Responsibility for a continuing program of administrative improvement within the Government would best be transferred at that time to the Bureau of the Budget".

The PAS contract was, however, not phased out in 1965 as anticipated, but extended to the end of 1968. SOCOGO was still in operation with its functions officially undiminished, and the Bureau of the Budget had neither sought nor assumed any major appropriations for continuing reform efforts.

C. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The functions of the Special Commission, as specified in the creating Act were:

1. To investigate the programs, practices and procedures of every department and agency of the Government, with a view to discovering where inefficiency exists and implement specific programs for eliminating such inefficiency.
2. To investigate the use of funds, personnel, and equipment so as to discover where misallocations, duplications and misuse exist and to recommend related and practical reforms.
3. To review all past proposals and policies to ascertain what current regulations are being enforced and whether useful ideas have been discarded or ignored.
4. To institute procedures for regular, systematic policing of the implementation of its recommendations, with the assistance of a watch-dog committee to be set up for each department or agency, which shall survey, at least three times a year, the manner in which suggestions are enforced, and to recommend changes if such suggestions are not successful.
5. To seek and utilize fully the expert information techniques, and assistance regarding public administration that are available to the Government from such foreign and international agencies as AID and the United Nations, as well as from private foundations.

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IMPLEMENTATION

The contract was amended and extended several times, and with the departure at the end of November 1968 of the last remaining technician, PAS had provided advisors for a total of about 40 man-years.

The contract called for submission of a final report with review of the project status on its termination; review of problems and successes; and recommendations for future actions.

The contract also specified GOL contributions towards office space, supplies, personal services and participant monthly costs while in training in the U.S. The SCOGO was considered as the counterpart activity to the USAID assistance project, and the budget of SCOGO was thus the measure of the GOL contribution.

GOL financial support of the project had been fairly constant since inception and was expected to continue with little change through fiscal year 1968. Actual budget items for Fiscal year 1965 were as follows:

1. Actual GOL budgeted item for personal services ...	\$ 42,800
2. Actual GOL budgeted item for "other costs".....	\$100,340
3. Participant cost to GOL on factor value of \$150 per month while in training (37x\$150).....	<u>\$ 5,550</u>
TOTAL	\$148,690

Four additional counterparts were assigned in fiscal year 1966 with an additional total cost of \$10,000.

There was no significant contribution to the project from other donors. The British audit group (Whinney, Murray & Co.) which operated under SCOGO auspices was financed by the GOL under the annual SCOGO budget.

AID - CONTRACT: SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE

STATEMENT OF BILLED COSTS THROUGH DEC. 31, 1968

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total Expenditures</u>
Salaries:	
Consultants and Executive Personnel	3,914.48
Regular staff	535,948.57
Total	539,863.05
Salary Differential.....	121,178.56
Transportation	139,436.46

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total Expenditure</u>
Subsistence	7,026.51
Insurance	38,981.05
Equipments, Materials, and Supplies	9,844.29
Miscellaneous	5,729.75
Other direct costs	4,151.83
Education, cost of living and quarterly allowance	126,887.64
Overhead	<u>279,132.46</u>
	\$1,279,231.60

Source: Final Report of PAS, 1969.

A further amount of \$1.942 m. was expended directly by AID to fund between 40 and 50 training fellowships as well as short term observation travel, special studies, provided assistance to related government activities (UL school of Public Administration, National Archives, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, the Civil Service Agency, the J. Rudolf Grimes School of Law as well as various related training efforts in spin-off projects).

D. ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES

The key informants felt that the evaluation of a major administrative reform work in government which consumed inter alia considerable numbers of man years of technical assistance, could be approached from two important dimensions. Firstly, an enumeration of organizational analysis, reorganizations effected, new systems and procedures developed and installed, and the number of on-the-job instructions, etc. Secondly, the extent to which technical efforts helped in establishing the institutional machinery and processes through which better public administration could be achieved and maintained by Liberians and directed toward accomplishing Development Plan programs, purposes and objectives.

The Informants said that the above bases of evaluation are not mutually exclusive. "However", some of them pointed out that "the most meaningful basis for measuring accomplishments is the second approach" as mentioned above. Asked whether there existed a reliable system for measuring accomplishments immediately after the reorganization work, some of them felt that accomplishments are difficult to measure since the results of efforts do not always spin-off effects affecting the reform efforts of successive governments. Instances of such spin-offs were cited during the Tolbert

regime and after. They also maintained that those spin-off effects were mostly influenced by the prevailing political expediencies and socio-economic conditions.

Others maintained that the evaluation of accomplishments should be primarily based on the quality and comprehensiveness of the technical groundwork of the administrative reform, and the chief responsibility of introducing changes, while implementing the recommendations rested with the government administration and its personnel.

Based on partial responses from the informants (most of them had difficulties in remembering and identifying the specific accomplishments of the Commission and its technical team due to considerable time lapse) and review of the progress reports, the following were identified as the major accomplishments.

1. A process of administrative change was induced in Liberia through the appointment of SCOGO and related AID-funded activities. The various activities of the Commission resulted in a first-ever comprehensive inquiry into the nature and functioning of the Executive Branch of Government and its personnel.
2. Significant structural changes in several departments of the government to provide a framework for better delivery of services to the public. There were also 19 reorganization Acts passed by the GOL Legislature, realigning and streamlining the government organization.
3. A management improvement program for the Public Works Department. (later assisted by AID)
4. Improvement of a general procurement and supply management for economy, efficiency and better services.
5. Rigorous enforcement of tax laws and improvement of tax collection; the system was meant to enhance the predictability of revenue collections.
6. Improved fiscal controls and standards in the department of Treasury.
7. Development of standards relating to official housing, fuel purchases, official compensation, government scholarships, etc.; standards were expected to improve the public image of the bureaucracy.
8. Administrative and procedure manuals for departments in the Executive Branch.
9. Proposals on Personnel Classification and Pay Plan.

In addition to making specific recommendations on each agency, the committee propounded the following main concepts governing the reorganization tasks:

1. Government programmes and activities should be grouped on the basis of functional similarity.
2. The number of primary organizational units should be held to a minimum.

(This recommendation was based on the inevitable need to reduce the span of control for President.)

3. Autonomous agencies should be created only when there is a compelling need. (Existence of autonomous units outside the regular departmental structure destroys organizational unity.)
4. Boards and commissions should be used sparingly and where created, should not be given executive functions.
5. The government corporation is a useful organizational device for commercial types of activities and should be reserved for such work only.

Among other important recommendations of the Commission were the creation of an Office of Personnel to undertake vital Government-wide personnel functions; a National Planning Council charged with overall planning for the country; to do away with the then prevailing distinction between coastal counties and hinterland provinces; strengthening of the Department of Interior by bringing under it all functions relating to urban and rural Local Government, tribal affairs, national police and public information; separation of the then existing functions of police services, prosecution and prison administration in the single department of Justice; transfer of the secondary school system from the University of Liberia to the Ministry of Education; creation of a new department of Commerce and Industry bringing together all Government programmes concerned with the encouragement and supervision of commercial and industrial activity, etc.

The informants felt that a basic government philosophy on reorganization was an essential pre-requisite for sustained future programming of reform efforts. In this light, they lauded the efforts of SCOGO for continued reorganization.

The major problems that retarded the optimal success of the project in its evolutionary, implementation and follow-up stages are as follows:

1. Membership of the Commission

The membership of the Commission reflected the primary emphasis put on financial administration and curbing of irregularities in government expenditure. Although it may be argued that the technical arm of the Commission (PAS) constituted a stabilizing force towards the realization of reform objectives, an analysis of the activities of the PAS team in particular, strongly proves the basic orientation of the Commission. Thus, absence of representation from the development-oriented sectors like health, education, local government as well as the University, has negatively affected the orientation of the Commission and contents of its recommendations. The assumption that imported inputs from a strong technical team would destabilize the political preoccupation of the Commission, was thus questioned.

2. Paucity of Trained Personnel and Financial Resources.

In a developing country like Liberia, the ability to institutionalize externally-induced improvement plans depends to a large extent upon the strength of the Civil Service, especially the middle management cadre of the Government. A serious shortage of persons trained in administrative and managerial skills affected the smooth conduct of the Commission's envisaged phases of work. For example, the technical work involved in organizational analysis and development of recommendations moved along at a good pace during the early stages of the project. The recommendations received official blessing and necessary legal and administrative directives. The succeeding phases of implementing proposed changes didn't receive the much-needed attention from the operative personnel. In this connection, the majority of the interviewees felt that due consideration was not given to the quality of manpower available within each department at the design stage of the project. They felt that availability of skilled manpower is a pre-requisite to understand clearly the need for reorganization and the new systems and procedures. To them, the measures appeared to be a reform forced upon unwilling recipients from above or from without.

3. Overinvolvement of the Commission and its technical wing in "Ad Hoc" projects and routine government operation.

The Commission, as constituted by the Legislature, enjoyed a very high degree of Presidential support in the beginning. This support was essential to foster the reorganization efforts with the necessary policy backing from the top. On the other hand, the technical wing (PAS) was supposed to be the promoter of new systems and procedures, and the watch-dog of the implementation process. During the successive phases of the Commission it tended to become too

much involved in many "ad hoc" projects in which Presidential interests existed. This incongruent situation was mainly due to the growing concern within government with actual and impending financial crises, and the absence of any effective governmental fiscal agency to deal with them. For instance, at each budget preparation exercise, the foreign technicians became heavily involved in the actual allocations of expendable funds and in efforts to increase tax collections. This was regrettable. Another activity of an "ad hoc" nature related to dealing with crisis situations in which the SCOGO staff performed special investigative function. Thus, it became apparent that activities of an "ad hoc" nature and crisis management pushed the Commission into routine governmental operations with the attendant political risks. These unscheduled tasks, therefore, demanded a significant share of the Commission's time and staff resources.

4. Pre-Occupation of the Technical Staff in Training Operative Personnel

As the Commission's work progressed, the technical staff became more directly engaged in on-the-job training of departmental personnel. This was due to the acute shortage of skilled manpower at all levels. Needless to say this activity absorbed unjustifiably large portions of time which could have been used for resolving critical administrative issues.

5. Inability of the Government to provide Sustained Support to Technical Efforts

Implementation of activities in several departments which aimed at strengthening administrative machinery was the responsibility of SCOGO and the Bureau of Budget. The role of the Budget Bureau very crucial in the improvement program. Although some improvements in budgeting processes were effected, no really viable budget agency was evolved. Failure to consolidate a base for continued and sustained improvement of public administration throughout the government was a major reason for the reform movement running out of steam in the next decade.

6. There was no Broadly-based Interest and Support for Administrative Reform

The inability to initiate steps which might attract this support, such as improving salaries, equipment and facilities, coupled with the need to emphasize unpopular economy measures, further aggravated the problem.

7. Lack of Sympathy with the Objectives of SCOGO Project

This lack of support emanated from a feeling of unwarranted intrusion into the affairs of the departments under scrutiny.

4. IMPACT OF THE SCOGO PROJECT

A. General

The evaluation of the impact of the SCOGO project (general impact, impact on the policy and program coordination, economic impact, social impact on women) can be approached from the following major dimension:

1. The quality, comprehensiveness and depth of technical preparatory work prior to implementing major re-organizations; and
2. The extent to which technical efforts helped in establishing the institutions, machinery and processes at national and executive-department level through which better public administration could be ensured--sustained and improved by Liberians.
 - Impact of Technical Preparatory work prior to implementing major reorganization recommendations.

The project is considered successful to some extent. The following outputs contributed to the general impact.

1. A national consciousness was created for the first time on the need for traditional objectives of economy, efficiency and simplicity in government operations. A set of major policies and concepts on government organization and management emerged.
2. A broad national inventory on the organization and operation of each separate department of the Executive Branch, including current operational practices and problems. This enabled the government to consider the Executive Branch as a total entity for delivering services to people efficiently and effectively.
3. Detailed reorganization plans for each department; organization charts; authority-responsibility relationships; manuals of procedures for each type of departmental operations; requirements of effective control, etc.
4. Enactment of Legislative Acts for the reorganization of 19 departments.

Some of the leading informants felt that the Commission was biased toward solving the current and impending problems that disturbed the then government expenditure control and revenue generation. In support of their argument, they pointed out the pattern of membership of the Commission with top officials who had held positions in the Treasury, budgetary activities and in accounting. They maintained that absence of representatives from development-oriented ministries like Health, Agriculture, Education, and Local Government restricted the scope of the Commission's work to "house-keeping" and resulted in routine reports and philosophical generalizations.

The informants also accused AID of its inability to perceive the dearth of skilled manpower as a major constraint in any development-oriented reorganization. This, they argued lead to technical efforts being wasted in routine job situations.

Other informants felt that the programming of the project didn't take into account the need for breathing space essential for the rapid application of a broad programme of administrative reform.

B. IMPACT ON POLICY

Key informants unananimously agreed that the legislative establishment of SCOGO with substantial Presidential support marked a major policy direction in the functioning of the government.

The expansion in magnitude and scope of governmental functions required their breakdown into smaller components with each unit of work to be performed presumably with greater efficiency for a more equitable distribution of economic gains to the periphery. The appointment of SCOGO established beyond doubt that a strategy of planned economic and social development cannot be unfurled without an effective, well-trained, motivated Civil Service System. In addition, it also set the much-needed pace to discredit the patronage system that had become the glaring phenomenon of political development in Liberia. Therefore, the infusion of SCOGO into the administrative framework of Liberia was a major political as well as policy event.

The dramatic change in Liberia's political philosophy toward a better administrative system was strengthened by President Tubman who maintained a close and continuing interest in the work of SCOGO. He indicated priority areas of concern, granted at least weekly audiences for the discussion of programme progress, and personally reviewed each report submitted. He also supported the Commission by such means as encouraging the cooperation of the Executive Branch, ordering implementation of recommendations, and endorsing legislative proposals.

Despite top-level commitment to the philosophy of change, things did not work out for the better. One of the major factors identified by the leading informants is that Executive Branch operative personnel did not understand and appreciate the need for a change in the government organization and operations. Rather, they felt comfortable in the status quo. The administrative and operative personnel thought that they had nothing to do with an externally induced change program.

It must also be emphasized that lack of continuous broadly-based political support and institutionalization did damage to the implementation phase of the work. Although the responsibility for a continuing program of administrative improvement was delegated to the Bureau of Budget, nothing was put into place to police the implementation. Eventually, the Presidential support revolved around utilizing the SCOGO and technical resources to solve day-to-day problems of the government (allocation of budgets, monitoring revenue in-takes, investigative teams on fraud and corruption, and so on). It was felt that the political will and vigor should have been used to consolidate the efforts of Commission through the appointment of a permanent institution in government charged with the follow-up, monitoring and improvement functions in administrative reforms (as was the case in Ghana's Office of Government Machinery as part of the office of the Head of State at "The Castle").

C. ECONOMIC IMPACT

Under the reorganization plan, the objectives of economy, simplicity, and efficiency were sought through the abolition of departments whose functions were no longer necessary, the merger of agencies performing duplicating functions, and the abolition of unnecessary positions. In addition, the project should also be measured in terms of cost-savings from increased productivity of personnel, increased revenue-intake and cost-savings from the use of logistics and essential supplies. Unfortunately, a useful data base is not available either to prove or disprove the economic impact based on various scales. However, some short-term economic-impacts were identified from reports:

A national budgeting system was developed and installed to administer a budget which was 30 times greater than that of 1945. Extensive assistance had also been given in administration of real estate, income, property and vehicle taxes. Various reforms led to a large increase since 1961 in the amount of income tax collected (from 70 returns in 1961 to 8,000 in 1964), and had made it possible for the GOL to qualify for vital IMF Loans. Efforts in customs management resulted in an increase of \$8 million in customs revenue in 1966 over those collected in 1965.

The absence of sound statistical data had affected the formulation of effective economic plans. In 1963, the Economic Research and Statistics Project (also AID supported under this general grant) completed an economic survey which established the beginning of the required statistical, analytical, technical, and organizational bases for continued planning and policy formulation. The project was instrumental in the establishment of the GOL National Planning Agency which was given the task of long and intermediate planning, and constituted a forerunner of the current Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs.

D. SOCIAL IMPACT

Key informants identified social impact in terms of training opportunities for Liberians, enhancement of social services, and development in traditional sectors. They were not specific in number and nature of activities in this area.

The project created the following opportunities and solid benefits:

1. Academic and practical training

- to 40 participants trained in the U.S. who represented 19 departments and bureaus of GOL.
- overseas training in photography, commercial art, and the use of audio-visual and other mass media tools by 1965 and 1967 for over half of the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs.
- 49 Liberians from the National Police Academy received instruction in the U.S. in various aspects of police administration.
- training to 15 Liberians in Economic Planning (1962)

2. The Communication Media Project (1959-1967)

The project assisted in development of an effective administrative and technical staff at the GOL Department of Information and Cultural Affairs.

3. The Public Safety Project (1959-1967)

AID assisted in the establishment and construction of the National Police Academy. The project emphasized police services to rural areas (this was funded separately.)

4. Regional Area Development (1962)

Activities such as improvement of local government, encouragement of rural self-help projects, and the building of roads, fish ponds, schools, and clinics were included in this project.

E. IMPACT ON WOMEN

There is no data readily available on the impact on women. However, it must be noted that one of the members of SCOGO was a woman (Mrs. D. Tucker Johnson).

F. IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH TECHNICAL EFFORTS HELPED IN ESTABLISHING INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY

Even though the PAS contract was phased out in 1965, SCOGO was still in operation with its charge officially undiminished. The Bureau of Budget did not assume an active role as the supporter of continued reform efforts. That responsibility was probably misplaced. The lack of widespread support throughout the Government for administrative reform, coupled with lack of trained managerial manpower, put a large burden of support on the President. As time passed, some activity or other had to be suspended or a proposed action postponed because the President or some cabinet official was very much pre-occupied in routine matters. At the close of the project, the future of SCOGO was uncertain. It had finally become a part of the bureaucracy.

The SCOGO document entitled "Manpower and Training for the Public Service in Liberia" (1965) recommended the establishment of a center for Liberia staff development for assisting government departments in management, supervision and clerical skills. The findings of the survey finally led to the creation of LIPA in 1969. LIPA was therefore, one of the major spinoff effects of the SCOGO project.

The Civil Service Agency Act was approved in 1973, which gave the CSA a dynamic role to play in activating, promoting, and maintaining a potentially motivated civil service for national development. Both LIPA and the CSA were expected to dovetail their policies, programs, and activities for the development of an integrated personnel management function in government. Unfortunately, the reality has been far from what was envisioned.

One of the novelties of the public administration scene in Liberia was the creation of the Ministry of Action for Development and Progress in 1974 as a kind of trouble-shooter to speed up planning and implementation of special development projects. The Ministry was a prime candidate to be called a development administration-oriented organization. It did not work out that way.

Instead of the Civil Service Agency itself dealing with the problem of behavior and conduct of civil servants, the National Force for the Eradication of Corruption (NFEC) was created in 1975. The government believed that the best way to tackle corruption was to emphasize the moral, and religious natures of the people so that they would abstain from such behavior. This too was a naive and misplaced assumption, as the top leadership itself did not set a positive example.

5. LESSONS LEARNED

A. Design Lessons

1. The project was designed for three years in the first instance. The objectives as outlined in the project were too many to be accomplished within such a short period of time.
2. The objectives were more regulatory than developmental. For instance, one of the objectives of the commission was "to investigate the use of funds, personnel, and equipment so as to discover where mis-allocations and duplications ..." Regulatory functions normally conflict with improvement objectives.
3. Due consideration was not given to the absorptive capacity of the "higher level" manpower of the departments of the Executive Branch to understand the rationale for changes, and operate improvement plans.
4. At the design stage, a priority listing of problems that needed immediate attention of the commission should have been made.
5. The project team failed to identify clearly the total of activities in an integrated performance-improvement plan. Network plans were revised several times to suit emerging demands and needs.

B. Implementation Lessons

1. The guarantee for a successful process of administrative reform lies in continued, broadly based political support. President Tubman exhibited a high sense of commitment to the project, but the lower levels of the bureaucracy lacked the vision and ability to foster improvement efforts.
2. The continued pre-occupation of the Commission and the technical staff in solving the day-to-day problems affected the effective implementation of major innovative recommendations.
3. The Commission and the staff did not clearly perceive the socio-cultural and psychological needs of a tradition-oriented Civil Service in a major reform activity. Most of them considered the project as an externally induced reform effort with no visible effect on their careers.

4. Lack of support from USAID in terms of technicians serving as advisors in several departments to assist in the systematic implementation.
5. A tendency to shirk away from the responsibilities of implementation seems imminent from the Commission's philosophical advise that "emphasis must be placed, even more than in the past, on the acceptance of responsibility of officials throughout the Executive Branch for administrative improvement".