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THE MONROVIA CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL SYSTEM:

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Foreword

This impact study was commissioned by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Liberia. Its major objective was to find out what effect the Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS) Project has had, if any, on the people it was intended for, on the community in which it was located, and on the Government and its development efforts. The study sought to identify the areas of success and failure as well as reasons for success or lack thereof.

The MCSS Project was a USAID-assisted educational program jointly carried out with the Government of Liberia (GOL). This 10-year capital and technical assistance program to the education sector of the Liberian Government by USAID was a unique experience in bilateral aid arrangements between the US Government and the Government of Liberia. Although there were other such cooperative arrangements in the education sector in earlier years between the two Governments, the MCSS drama was different in structure and scope. It was an "experiment" in creating and developing an institutional infrastructure relatively modern, consciously urban, and administratively innovative. Obviously, the venture was politically sensitive to a government elite which was socially and politically passive to administrative change.

Economically, the small enclave economy of Liberia was experiencing a phenomenal growth from a very low base, and based on primary export commodities (rubber and iron ore). Two new large-scale iron ore mines were being opened at the time the MCSS Project was started. Ironically, though public sector finances had reached a peak by 1962-1963, a decline was eminent. Consequently, a dramatic investment program in the social sector involving radical administrative innovations and modernization at that time could be economically vulnerable. Such vulnerability was not limited to investment requirements in consonance with the terms and conditions of the contract, but more so in terms of the recurrent cost implications down the road.

The findings of this impact study is in the interest of both the USAID and the Government of Liberia. Both parties should learn from these evaluated experiences how future development projects can be more meaningfully conceived and implemented. Specifically, it should help to provide improved ways of doing things and show how the intended beneficiaries as well as other groups and organizations were affected by the project.

The objective of the study did not warrant a comprehensive and quantitative exercise. The results, therefore, are neither exhaustive nor do they constitute a statistically justifiable entity. Rather, they represent pertinent facts and indicators.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS) Project, jointly implemented by the Government of Liberia and USAID between 1962 and 1972, was an innovative process of school organization and administration introduced in the national education system of Liberia. The project was administratively different and in many ways the direct opposite of the prevailing administrative practices of the Government in running public schools. The magnitude of change required was enormous and unrealistic, neglecting the social and political realities of the time. It is clear from the experience of the project in the early years that the political will for a scheme with such scope was absent. The Liberian authorities somewhat submerged their true views only to allow for the development of modern physical facilities by the project. Nevertheless, it served well the target population, the Monrovia youth, and brought many extended benefits to the larger society: it made school facilities in Monrovia conducive to learning; it improved and standardized elementary and secondary school curricula although they were largely still American biased; it enhanced teaching methodology and introduced better administrative procedures and practices thereby making school supervision more effective; enrollment increased some threefold and with the introduction of evening programs, it broke the "social-taboo" that girls who had become victims of early pregnancies were no longer fit for school; it provided an opportunity for poor parents to send their children to low cost but quality schools; it trained 80 Liberian teachers and school administrators at the master degree level; and of paramount importance, it re-inforced GOL's growing positive attitude towards the education of its people as evidenced by its increased budgetary allotment to the sector.

Notwithstanding the positive impacts, the project failed in other respects. Firstly, it failed in its attempt to achieve full autonomy. The concept of autonomy had no place in public school administration and was in conflict with the overall central tendencies and orientation of government and the Liberian nation-state. The idea was therefore an imposition by USAID. Secondly, the MCSS Council made little impact because it was dominated by "politicians" who had no real interest in the project. Thirdly, the vocational education program never quite succeeded primarily because it was misconceptualized from the very beginning. Fourthly, the project made no substantial economic impact because the bulk of the money spent was on non-capital outlays and in distant economies.

Better results would have been achieved had the project been implemented on a small scale; had USAID ensured greater top level acceptance of the project; had more low priced schools been built and equipped with culturally relevant facilities rather than with sophisticated installations; had USAID continued at a reduced scale after 1972; had there been good ordering of expenditure priorities; and had the project been designed "with" Liberia than "for" Liberia.

To improve future cooperative ventures between USAID and Liberia, it is essential for both parties to bear in mind certain critical factors, including: non-imposition of ideas, delineation of clear and realistic objectives, concern for post project running costs, appreciation of the existing social, political, and economic environments, and the adequate involvement of all parties in the design and planning phases of projects. Additionally, projects must be undertaken against the background that institutional building in Liberia takes a longer time especially where the process is the introduction of a new idea. Thus USAID would do well if it avoids terminating projects only because the contracts say so.

INTRODUCTION

A. Background & Justification

In 1960 President Tubman appointed a committee, chaired by the Secretary of Public Instruction, Nathaniel A. Massaquoi, to investigate the conditions of education in schools in Monrovia. On this Committee were two USAID representatives, Mr. James A. Babcock, Director of the Mission and Mr. Harry D. Craig, Chief Education Advisor.

The report of this Committee identified six problems that characterized schools in Monrovia: "(i) poor attendance and inattention to duty by many teachers and supervisors; (ii) poor condition of school buildings and the use of inadequate and inappropriate facilities for schools (e.g., churches and dwellings); (iii) overcrowded classrooms; (iv) inadequate remuneration for teachers; (v) a wide range in the age of students in many classrooms; and (vi) a dearth of instructional materials and equipment"

As a result of the Committee's report, the Liberian Government represented by the Department of Public Instruction and the United States Government, represented by USAID entered in an agreement to undertake a program aimed at alleviating these problems.

Under this agreement, a survey team from the San Francisco State College in California undertook a one-month fact-finding and feasibility assessment exercise. The findings of this undertaking confirmed the observations of the Massaquoi Committee, and led to a three party contract between the College, the Department of Public Instructions, and USAID. Under the contract San Francisco State College was to provide technical assistance (operational and later advisory) to the Department of Public Instructions in solving the problems confronting the Monrovia schools. The USAID was to fund the contract.

The contract called for the re-organization of all public elementary and secondary schools in the Monrovia area into a consolidated modern integrated system under a single administration; hence the idea of a Monrovia Consolidated School System.

B. Objectives

The major objective of the project was the creation and development of a consolidated school system, an intermediate level of school administration capable of effectively and efficiently administering a program of primary and secondary education for a rapidly increasing school-age population in the expanding urban and industrial center of Monrovia. The

1/ Special Committee, Ministry of Education, Evaluation of the Monrovia Consolidated School System, Report 1972.

system was conceived as an important vehicle in the achievement of national education goals. Specifically, it sought to develop a unified and coordinated educational program (curricula, instructional methods, facilities, personnel services, vocational education) and institutionalize an effective administrative organization with corresponding policies and practices.

To facilitate the attainment of this major objective, four subsidiary objectives were set:^{2/}

First, as part of a national program of educational improvement during the decade from 1962 to 1972, public elementary and secondary schools in Monrovia were to be extended. This program was aimed at benefiting 14,000 elementary school pupils (including 2,000 over-age students) and 4,700 secondary school pupils. Special programs for the over-age group were to be introduced covering literacy, general education and vocationally oriented training;

Second, additional school plant facilities required in the implementation of primary and secondary educational programs under the project were to be designed, constructed and equipped. Involved were 11 proposed new elementary schools (3 with 10 classrooms and 8 with 14 classrooms), 2 secondary schools (1 for 1,400 students and 1 for 1,000 students), an educational services building with administrative offices, and a warehouse and maintenance building;

Third, the instructional program was to be improved. This entailed improvement in curriculum content and instructional methods; and

Fourth, the introduction of sound business administration practices.

The charter formally amalgamating public primary and secondary schools in Monrovia was enacted by the Legislature of the Government of Liberia on December 24, 1964. The charter, entitled "Charter of Monrovia Consolidated School System", was made a part of the educational law of Liberia by "An Act to Amend the Education Law To Create The Monrovia Consolidated School System." The Act received presidential approval on January 5, 1965.

THE PROJECT

A. Target Group

The Project was aimed at benefiting the school-going population of Monrovia. As Liberia's chief center of industry, trade and commerce

^{2/} Fifth Semi-annual Report of the Monrovia Consolidated School System, Monrovia, Liberia, July - December 1964.

Monrovia was and still is, a rapidly growing city. In 1962, while the population growth rate of Liberia was 3% per annum, Monrovia was growing at the rate of 7%, primarily as a result of migration from rural communities.^{3/} During this period, (the period immediately prior to 1962) public schools in Monrovia accounted for about 25% of all public schools in Montserrado County.^{4/} The elementary and secondary school-age population (ages 6-19) in Monrovia at the time was 26,000 representing 3% of the total national school-age population and 34% of those enrolled. Projected enrollment at the beginning of the project was 12,500 students or 48% of the school-age population of Monrovia. As planned, the project's enrollment capacity would increase to accommodate up to 56% of the Monrovia school-age population or 22,000 students by 1972. (See Table I).

B. Project Components

- I) Construction/Rehabilitation of Schools: This component entailed designing and constructing new school buildings and rehabilitating delapidated ones. The new construction phase involved two new elementary schools, (G.W. Gibson and Boatswain Elementary Schools) to respectively accommodate 600 and 450 students, a 600 student junior high school (Newport Junior High) and a junior/senior high school (William V.S. Tubman High) capable of enrolling 1,200 students. The new schools contained libraries, reading rooms, science and language laboratories and were provided audio-visual equipment and materials (teaching aids). In addition to the 4 new schools constructed, 1 central office building along with a warehouse and maintenance building was erected to accommodate the administrative unit of the system. The original plan called for the erection of 11 elementary schools to accommodate 300 to 500 students each and 2 junior high schools to accommodate approximately 600 students each. Following the announcement of an austerity policy by the Government of Liberia in 1963, the construction of the remaining new schools became impossible.

- II) Improvement of Instructional Methods: This component required an undertaking in which the SFSC team worked along with the Ministry of Education in researching and developing better teaching methods especially in the areas of mathematics and science. In this respect, the project inaugurated an in-service training program which afforded teachers and administrators the opportunity of being exposed to new approaches and methods of instructing and handling elementary and secondary school pupils and situations.

- III) Curriculum Development: This component sought to improve existing educational materials by making them relevant to both the needs of the Monrovia youth and the Liberian society. The thrust was to

^{3/} Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Monrovia

^{4/} Annual Report, Department of Public Instructions, 1962.

Liberianize the non-substantive aspects of the exclusively dominant American educational materials, by, for instance, drawing on Liberian situations and cases, rather than using the often unknown American experiences. The research advisory services of the project were primarily in support of curriculum development efforts. As an ancillary component to curriculum improvement, the project included vocational training in the basic skills required in local industries. Training was carried on in woodwork, electricity, metal work, masonry, auto mechanics, mechanical drawings, arts and crafts, home economics and secretarial science. Such training was provided at Bassa-Teen-Age and more elaborately at the William V.S. Tubman High School.

- IV) Participants Training: Almost from the start, a massive training program was launched. This program, unlike its in-service counterpart, was designed to provide pre-service training not locally available. This took the form of participant training at SFSC at the masters degree level. It provided for diversified training in elementary and secondary school teaching and supervision. Under this program, 80 Liberians received training in a number of specialized fields.
- V) Improved Administrative Policies/Practices: This component of the project involved the introduction of sound policies and procedures regarding both professional and non-professional personnel of the system; maintenance and custodial services, as well as student personnel services. It also covered the designing of plans and procedures for obtaining and distributing textbooks to students. Additionally, this administrative element dealt with the establishment of satisfactory business administration policies and practices in the areas of finance and the purchase, storage and distribution of commodities (materials, supplies, equipment).

C. Institutional Arrangement

An Act of the Legislature created a Monrovia Consolidated School System, run by a permanent body, the Monrovia School Council, responsible to the Secretary of Public Instruction (now Minister of Education) through the Under Secretary of Education for Instruction (now Deputy Minister of Education for Instruction). Members of the Council (7) were appointed (actually recommended) by the Minister and approved (actually appointed) by the President (Head of State). The Council discharged its duties through a Superintendent and a core of central administration staff.

Overall policy guidelines for the conduct of the System by the Council was obtained from the Ministry of Education. Hence, it was closely and operationally linked with the Ministry and the general Government. Its

budget was prepared under the direction of the Council and submitted to the President (Head of State) through the Ministry of Education for approval. Appropriations and disbursements were then made through general Government channels. The Council/System did not have the mandate to raise funds.

D. Duration

The project had a duration of ten years. It began in 1962 and ended in 1972. Preliminary activities occurred between 1960 and 1962.

E. Funding

Total funding for the project was \$21.920 million. Of this amount, the United States Government provided \$9.005 million in grants and \$3.155 million in loan funds. The Government of Liberia contributed an overall operating budget of \$9.760 million. (See Table II).

The USAID grant was used for partial support of operating expenses and to procure furniture, equipment supplies and vehicles. Total expenditures on operations amounted to \$6.481 million; the expenditure covered areas such as expatriate salaries and allowances (\$3.654 million), travel and transportation (\$665,000), overheads (\$1.122 million), and participant training (\$550,800). Approximately, \$571,313 was expended on new furniture, equipment and supplies, mostly for the new schools and the administrative building.

The AID loan of \$3.155 million was used to construct and fully equip the Educational Service Building, The G.W. Gibson School and the William V.S. Tubman High School.

Government contribution was almost entirely directed at basic operations. It covered salaries of local staff, logistical support, maintenance, and certain supplies and materials. A distinct undertaking of Government was the construction of the Boatswain Elementary School with its own financial and human resources. Its contribution was also combined with AID's in renovating existing school facilities.

SECTOR SETTING

Government operations twenty years ago showed a highly centralized structure with power and authority vested in the central Government. Policy decisions and programs, whether in politics, health, or the economy, were made at the central level most often without regard to local inputs. The role often played at the local level was the implementation of policies, rules and procedures under the direction and control of the central Government.

Education in Liberia was, as is today, a vivid evidence of this centralized administrative control. The responsibility for the supervision of education has always been with the central Government. This responsibility was exercised through its national functionary, the Department of Public Instruction. The Department formulated policies, and promulgated rules and regulations for the supervision of education across the country. Complementarily, public schools were exclusively financed by central Government funds as integral parts of the Department of Public Instruction. On an annual basis, the Department made provisions for the schools in its budget request to the President and when approved, disbursements were made directly through government machineries such as the Ministry of Finance. Government also subsidized private schools through the Department.

Thus prior to the 1964 Amendment of the Education Act, all schools within the Monrovia area, whether public or private, were controlled and supervised by the Department under the Supervisor of Schools for Montserrado County. The responsibilities of the Supervisor of Schools were essentially inspectorial. He settled disputes and to a minor extent, collected statistical information for the Department. Under this arrangement, the Supervisor and his two assistants had 99 public schools under their jurisdiction.

School facilities were generally inappropriate for conducting classes and were usually poorly maintained. At about the time the project was launched, only three out of the twenty-five buildings, then in use as public schools in Monrovia, had been originally designed as school buildings.^{5/} Those three buildings were also the only ones owned by the Government. The others were houses, apartments, warehouses and churches rented or leased from or through individuals (often in the highest ranks of Government).

Instructional programs in primary and secondary public schools did not enhance quality and relevant education. Curricula varied amongst schools despite their being operated from one central authority. Where a curriculum existed, it was often of little relevance to the learning needs of the Liberian child. Pupils most often did not have textbooks, and the schools themselves lacked essential materials and other school supplies.

The Liberian educational program reflected a number of imbalances:^{6/} First, there was the imbalance in the geographical distribution of schools. The coastal counties (excluding Montserrado) -- Maryland, Sinoe and Bassa-- although with lower percentages of school-age population, accounted for more schools than Bong, Lofa and Nimba with comparatively higher percentages of school-age population.

Then there was the anti-Liberia bias. The content of the educational program was exclusively American. It emphasized American culture and experience over Liberian or African culture and experience. The Liberian

^{5/} Final Report, Monrovia Consolidated School System, SFCS, 1972

^{6/} Dr. Amos Sawyer, "Imbalance of Educational Opportunities And The Implication for National Development", The Liberian Education Review, 1980.

youth learned about Robin Hood and nothing about Chief Buzzi of the Lorma confederacy. The Liberian youth learned nouns by examples of wagons and snow, both of which he had not experienced. When the first national course of studies was formulated in 1953, the elementary curriculum devoted twice as much time to art and music than to mathematics or science. The result of this bias was the production of an American culture in Liberia.

The third imbalance was the anti-technical bias. The educational package accentuated liberal arts education at the neglect of technical and vocational education. Prior to 1962, technical education was limited predominantly to the Booker Washington Institute. Needless to say that Liberian technical education was meant to produce technical servicemen, people capable of maintaining commodities fabricated by the centers of the Western international system. It did not produce production managers and technicians capable of creating commodities.

The fourth imbalance was the poor attention paid to non-formal education. The handicraft industry of the peasantry, farming techniques and general literacy and numeracy of the rural population were neglected. As a result, unskilled peasants, in search of wage labor, migrated to Monrovia. Given the inattention to non-formal education, it becomes clear why as late as 1962 less than 10% of the Liberian population was literate. Today less than 30% of the population is functionally literate.

Enrollment in primary schools (including pre-primary grades) increased at an average rate of 8% yearly over the five years precedent to the start of the project. In spite of such high rate of increase only about 60% were actually enrolled. Of this limited amount, 75% were over-aged boys and girls who began school late. ^{1/}

The proportion of girls to boys enrolled in schools did not reflect the proportion of the sexes in the national population. Nation-wide, school girls were out-numbered by boys as much as 2.5 times. (See Table I). In Montserrado County, the ratio was 1.9 to 1. The cause for such wide differences in enrollment of girls as compared to boys mainly resulted from certain cultural factors:

- a. Most parents closely adhered to the traditional idea that Western formal education is unnecessary for girls, given their role in the household;
- b. The decision to send girls to school often took a number of years to be made; and when the decision was reached the child was already over-aged;

- c. Sex education either at school or in the home was somehow considered inappropriate. Hence, girls were not tutored in birth control methods, thus making them victims of early pregnancies;
- d. Early customary marriages at ages 14 to 15 was a disrupting factor, causing a decrease in enrollment; and
- e. Sande (bush school for girls) traditions or religious customs disrupted school attendance for long periods.

Ancillary ingredients of a meaningful broad-based system of general education were lacking. The communities and individual public schools did not have adequate libraries. Science education programs were not supported by laboratories. Though Liberians predominantly had rural backgrounds, the programs of instruction did not provide any form of agricultural education. Neither were programs available in Monrovia to introduce the pupils to the business world, which was attracting numerous young people.

Given the Liberian socio-cultural milieu during this period, teaching was not prestigious. Instead, politics and law were considered the "golden professions". Hence the teaching profession was relegated to low social status. Consequently, salaries were low and many people did not aspire to it. The few qualified teachers deserted classrooms for more lucrative areas of employment. Such exodus of teachers, coupled with the existing manpower problem, made the shortage of teachers more acute. In some Monrovia schools, teacher to pupil ratios were as low as 1:125. As a result, unqualified and untrained persons who were desirous of some gainful means of employment were accepted into schools. Up to 80% of teachers found in the primary schools of Monrovia in 1962 were unqualified.^{8/}

IMPACTS

A. General Impact

The most immediate change brought about by the Project was better and improved school facilities conducive to learning. The new schools built and the delapidated ones that were renovated, as well as the addition of ancillary elements such as libraries, laboratories, reading rooms and vocational training, added new and relevant dimensions to Liberian education. An interesting experience is that the project put Liberian education, for the first time, into a wholistic context, providing guidance, counseling, health, sports and other staff/student personnel services as integral parts of a meaningful education.

The provision of these services and facilities, as well as the effect of modernization, the growing awareness of the socio-economic benefits of education, and the rapid growth of population in Monrovia due to

natural increase and migration, had a positive impact on enrollment. As shown in Table III, enrollment in both the elementary and secondary divisions increased threefold during the project period. The rate of increase was equal to the geometric rate of population increase of the country. (See Table III).

The project improved the literacy rate of Liberia. Over the period of the project, some 150,987 students received elementary and secondary education.

Institutionally, the project made no impact. From all indications, the system was meant to be autonomous, but what finally emerged, and continues to exist, is a semi-autonomous, entity. It failed to positively affect the political and administrative central tendencies of GOL. Decentralization would have been inconsistent with the existing pattern of national centralism.

Since the termination of the project, however, its example has positively reflected in other areas of government, though not necessarily through a direct relationship. The Monrovia City Corporation, for example, was created and incorporated in the mid-1970's as a separate and distinct legal entity. Today, it operates its own security unit, manages its finances, and recently was allowed to collect real estate taxes in Monrovia.

The desire to decentralize still lingers within the national educational system. In July 1982, Ministry of Education officials, reported on negotiations between the Ministry of Education and the African Development Bank for funding to establish regional educational centers.

At another institutional level, at the level of the Council, the project made little or no impact. The Council, as envisaged under a system like this, was meant to foster "community participation" in education through the selection of "concerned citizens" to its membership. Rather, what resulted was the appointment of "politicians" who had no real interest in the project. This, of course, is reflective of the "patron-client" culture of the Liberian nation-state in which the people are more inclined to look up to a "big man" for all answers to their social, economic, political and judicial problems.

The vocational education aspect of the project had little impact. The vocational training program at Bassa Teen-Age Junior High and Tubman High have been discontinued due to poor maintenance of industrial facilities. Secondly, there persist serious doubts as to whether the vocational training program was relevant to skills needed by the local job market. The program, being a transplant of an American educational value, was really meant to give students a layman's

appreciation of industries. Hence, it was designed and presented against the background of providing general industrial knowledge (industrial arts) and not to build market-oriented skills (vocational education). This may explain why vocational education was an elective and not a required course.

B. Policy Impact

The most outstanding effect of the project at the policy level was the reinforcement of GOL's growing positive attitude towards the education of its citizenry. It was one of those factors which contributed to the translation of what had remained a mere "confession of faith" (lip service) to one of commitment; GOL increasingly began to accept its real responsibility which had heretofore been left largely to private (mostly church supported) institutions. A practical indication of this was the increase in its budgetary allocation to education. Prior to implementation of the project in 1962, GOL was spending merely \$1.60 million on education or 4.0% of its national budget. By the time the project ended in 1972, the GOL was already spending \$6.50 million on education, or 9.0% of its total national budget. Today, (1981/1982), GOL is spending \$59.20 million or 14.0% of its national budget on education. (See Table IV). The massive expansion of school facilities is also an attestation of this commitment. "For example, between 1960 and 1978 a total of 817 new schools were added to previously existing ones. Between 1978 and 1980 alone the number of school buildings rose by 210 or 15.0%, from 1,441 to 1,651".

Another meaningful effect was the positive change in the orientation of Liberian education. The introduction of African Studies in Liberian education was significant: for the first time Liberian education began to look "inward". This was a conspicuous attempt to contain the anti-Liberian bias. Similarly, the introduction of vocational education as a component of a meaningful broad-based education was significant; it drew attention to the need for technical education. This effort, aimed at the long-term arrest of the anti-technical bias in Liberian education, however, proved hopeless because school counsellors never quite succeeded in selling industrial training (blue collar jobs) as respectable and economically worthwhile occupations.

9/ Dr. Augustus F. Caine, "Access To Education" paper delivered at the National Conference on Education, July 20 - 25, 1981, University of Liberia.

C. Organizational Impact

Organizationally, the project brought improved methods of supervision and administration to the Monrovia schools. With all schools under one administrative umbrella, rules and procedures as well as staff/student personnel services were regularized and professionally administered across the board. This middle level administrative arrangement catered better and faster to school needs than the Ministry of Education because it brought authorities closer to the center of school activities.

The project introduced a gradual structural change in the Ministry of Education. As education policy makers became sensitized to the wholistic approach to education, new units (planning and research, student personnel services, etc.) began to be created. As a result, there are today departments for planning and development, general supervision, technical education, and instruction, among many other smaller, newer units.

An improved curriculum is another positive effect of the project. Elementary and secondary curricula have been revised and standardized. These curricula now allocate more time to mathematics, science and English. Complementarily, instructional techniques have also improved. With qualified teachers and the introduction of audio-visual materials/equipment, the technology of imparting information and skills to students has been made better and easier. As the Ministry of Education was closely associated with the Project, through it, some of these positive developments had a "spill over" effect on schools in the rest of the country. The standardized curricula, some elements of vocational education (typing and secretarial sciences, home economics, bookkeeping, etc.), and the African Studies program found their way into both private and public schools across the country.

The end result of all these positive effects was, therefore, a comparatively higher quality of education. This can be seen in the percentage increase in the number of students from the system that passed either the University of Liberia placement test or the national examination administered by the Ministry of Education or both as compared to students from other schools. (See Table V and VI).

D. Impact on Women

Out of the 80 participants trained under the project 33 were women, representing 41.0% of the total personnel trained. Although 75.0% of the women trained have left the system, most of these (54.0%) are still within the field of education, reflecting an old time Liberian social phenomenon which implies that the "classroom is for women". Interestingly, the core of the education industry is equally shared, if not more, by women. The University of Liberia

is headed by a woman, Cuttington University College has a woman as Academic Vice President, and several of the nation's outstanding secondary schools (CWA, Ricks, MC, etc.) are run by women. The Ministry of Education itself has its share of women: women continue to occupy top and middle-level managerial and professional positions within its bureaucracy. Within the system itself, 40% of its cadre of teachers are women.

Additionally, a lot of school-age girls benefitted from the project. This is especially true of girls who had become victims of early pregnancies, since it afforded them an opportunity to continue their education at night. The ratio of girls to boys in school in Monrovia improved and, complementarily, the number of girls graduating from secondary school in Monrovia increased. (See Table VI and VII).

E. Social Impact

The mass drift of rural people to urban areas accounts for the high demand for enrollment in the MCSS Schools. The volumes of lifetime in, out and net migration between 1962 and 1974 showed that Montserrado was the only county which recorded a net gain of 201,000 persons. With Monrovia as the main urban center, Montserrado County was obviously the universal gainer with 88 percent of the total net gains of the various counties. The predominant net migration streams to Montserrado came from Lofa (44,000), Grand Bassa (41,000) and Bong (40,000). These streams reflect the continuation of the predominant net-migration pattern observed since the first National Census in 1962.^{10/}

Sizeably included in this migration are those young people from rural Liberia who were attracted to Monrovia to pursue training and general education. For some of these people, relocating to Monrovia was almost a necessity since their areas lacked high schools. Some came to Monrovia to obtain job opportunities which were very promising in Monrovia during the first half of the project period. MCSS therefore became very appealing for the migrant youths. It provided an opportunity for obtaining general secondary education which was a strong requirement for employment in the monetized economy.

The evening school program was a means by which MCSS effectively introduced change within the community. It was instrumental in breaking the "social-taboo" that school girls who became victims of early pregnancies were no longer fit to be enrolled in school. The night sessions additionally provided the opportunity for continuing education. It was an avenue by which males and females who had other pre-occupations during the course of the day to obtain education up to the regular high school level. Such

^{10/} Demographic Unit, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs.

flexibilities in school policies and practices were eventually adopted by private and religious schools which were once opposed to them.

In a related sense, the MCSS contributed to the reduction of social and economic inequalities by providing equal opportunities for all Liberians to obtain a quality program of education. Admission requirements are generally liberal. Additionally, school fees are considerably low, regardless of the fact that the MCSS education program is ranked on par, and better in certain aspects, to the high-cost private schools. As a result, many more parents who could most probably never have had the resources to support a child through junior high level were now afforded the means to support several children through twelfth grade. The highest impact of this development was therefore, comparatively on the poor masses.

By providing opportunities for learning, the project increased the likelihood of the target population to find jobs and reduced the incidence of criminal activities (e.g., juvenile delinquencies) associated with unemployment.

F. Economic Impact

The economic impact of a social sector project such as education is difficult to measure in qualitative and quantitative terms. Usually, education requires a long gestation period to realize its economic contribution and when such achievements occur, they are not restricted to a particular locale or sector of the economy. As such, the analysis and interpretation of results require a series of indirect and complicated computations which are often difficult to control. A better but more difficult approach would have been an analysis of the opportunity cost of the project.

Against this background, the economic impact of the project costed at \$21 million was modest. The expenditures of the project did not stimulate meaningful activities within the Liberian economy because most of the spendings were made in non-productive areas and into distant economies.

Of the total USAID funding, only about a third was directed at capital costs. Most of the remaining costs went towards overheads, salaries and accommodation for the SFCS contract personnel. That essentially meant up to \$9 million of the amount expended on the project actually went back to the USA. Portions of this amount could have probably been used to build more schools. Even the spendings on capital costs were relegated off-shore. Most commodities purchased for the project were obtained from the US market. Implicitly, spare parts for capital commodities would also have to be obtained from the US market.

The project's most direct contribution to local resource enhancement was to the manpower development of Liberia. Under it, 80 Liberians, mostly teachers, received advanced training at the master degree level. Upon completion, they saw immediately increases in their levels of earnings. The extension of this benefit reflects in the much higher salaries paid to participants who left the system. The essence of this development for the 80 Liberians was that their expected life-time earnings had increased as a result of their participation in the project.

The project indirectly provided some linkage effects for local entrepreneurship. Its creation provided an identifiable market that businessmen would cater to. Hence, during the duration of the project, a number of commercial establishments emerged with the sole purpose of providing school supplies such as books and uniforms. Interestingly enough, most of these businesses, such as the Auriole Enterprises and Mesurado Textiles, were owned and managed by Liberians. The value-added content, in the case of Mesurado, became more attractive when they advanced from basic importation to local fabrication and distribution of uniforms to other sections of the country.

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Conclusion

Assessing the impact of MCSS described earlier in this study was not easy, given, among other things the well-known difficulties of measuring educational benefits. For example, many external benefits of educational projects are non-exclusive and are difficult to quantify. Notwithstanding, the findings of this study clearly reveal that the MCSS Project was, to a large extent, successful in terms of its overall effect and benefit to the target group as well as to the Liberian society. However, it failed to achieve its cardinal objective - the administrative decentralization of effective school supervision and control. Nevertheless, its policy, organizational, and socio-economic impacts as well as its impact on women, were generally positive.

Lessons Learned

Project Objectives Must Be Clear: There was lack of clarity as to the precise objective of the project. Many of those interviewed seem to have had a different perception of the project. While some saw it as a definite attempt to meet an identified need, others saw it as a mere experiment; a pilot project to test a concept. In fact, some interviewees submitted that the original idea was to improve schools in Monrovia, not to consolidate.

Overly-Ambitious Objectives: Specific target goals were too ambitious. For example, the project started with the grandiose idea of constructing (17) new schools; rather it built only (4) schools or about 25% of the stated target. In fact, the "scope of work" had to be revised to synchronize with existing realities including GOL absorptive financial capacity. Additional to the construction phase of the project, contents of the program were also ambitiously planned and implemented. The inclusion from the very beginning of programs on vocational education, school feeding, teenage programs, and other electives as means of upgrading education was too much for the absorptive capability of the existing educational bureaucracy. The effect of these programs would probably have been more rewarding had these various aspects been introduced incrementally and gradually over a period of years. In an institution-building project as the MCSS, especially where attitudes and practices are concerned, it is usually better to go small than big, allowing for learning (demonstration effects).

Consider Total Social And Political Environment: The total pre-existing environment was not adequately considered. The decentralized school consolidation concept was an innovation in the Liberian education industry. Although it advocated better ways of school organization and supervision, it was foreign and inconsistent to the political and administrative central tendencies of the Liberian society. Seemingly, USAID overlooked this pre-existing political parameter and consequently did not sufficiently consider "how" to bring about greater top level acceptance of the innovation. Rather it relied on the formalities of "contract signing" and conspicuousness of the ills the project was meant to remedy.

USAID Should Not Impose Projects: There is every indication that top education policy makers at the time were opposed to decentralization which was the central thrust of the project. Against the background of a politically conservative environment, one in which a minority ruling elite was dispensing national resources (including educational resources) in such a way as to maintain its power base, the "Monrovia Schools", given its size, formed a "big constituency". Therefore taking any bit of control from the authorities was perceived, regrettably, as "chipping away" their "powers" and therefore, politically disastrous. It must be remembered that during this period, education was a political instrument, being "selectively" deployed so as to maintain national stability. Nevertheless, USAID imposed the project on the GOL by means of some hard selling and negotiations. For example, a loan was withheld until the formal charter was signed. The construction of physical facilities were also used to make the project more appealing.

Consider Long-Term Operational Costs: Often in developing countries, the excitement of immediate donor funds make national

project planners myopic to long-run cost implications. Thus little attention is paid to the funding arrangements for sustaining development projects beyond their duration, especially in the area of maintenance (spare parts). The MCSS project reflects a semblance of this planning malady. Many of the equipment that were purchased during the project now stand idle due to the lack of spare parts. Additionally, some of the school buildings continue to be poorly maintained due to financial constraints. For example, several months ago the King Boatswain School was focused on the national scene as a blatant example of the bureaucracy's inability to maintain its institutions. Although the situation has been remedied, other schools run the risk of such problems. In a social sector project, long period administrative follow-up funding is a necessity. Additionally, activity cost allocation was not the best. Since this was a new method, it should have done more in construction and training than on expatriate personnel.

High Cost, Buildings: The schools built under the project were relatively too modern, and at very high cost. The cost of Tubman High, G.W. Gibson and Matilda Newport Junior High (\$1,352,210.00; \$547,068.00; and \$502,558.00, respectively) could have, combined, built and equipped at least 10 additional schools. Estimates given in 1970 by the Ministry of Public Works and the World Bank revealed a shocking variation in construction cost of school building. Public Works estimated that a 30-classroom junior-senior high school in Lofa County would cost \$149,852.00 or \$4,955.00 per classroom, including 15.0% for overhead and profit. A similar structure would have been 10-30.0% less costly in Monrovia. World Bank estimates showed that a good secondary school building in Monrovia would have cost \$12.00 - \$14.00 per sq. ft. and at least 10.0% higher outside Monrovia. In comparable terms, construction of Tubman High cost \$36,000.00 per classroom.

Institutional Building Takes Longer in Liberia: The 10-year contract period was useful to both USAID and GOL to the extent it advanced target dates against which the accomplishments of objectives were to be monitored. It was however, not sufficient for the full institutionalization of an innovative process within a Liberian setting. An institutional building project in Liberia as the MCSS would definitely take more than 10 years, owing to social constraints (attitudes and practices), low administrative absorptive capacity (inefficient bureaucracy) and lack of effective political commitment (the mere desire to attract "donor dollars" by policy-makers).

Liberia Not Adequately Involved In the Design: Inferably, the project was "pre-packaged", leaving little or no room for Liberia to affect its design. As an American transplanted concept, it was seemingly already designed by the Americans and meant only to be tested in a Liberian setting.

11/ Mrs. Bertha Baker Azango, "Crisis and Delimma in Liberian Education", The Julius C. Stevenson Annual Lectures in Education, 1972.

APPENDIX I

METHODOLOGY

The survey method of research was employed in this study using the "Key Informants" approach. Based on the objectives of the study and as a result of a thorough review of the project documentation, a comprehensive survey instrument was developed. (See Appendix III). A number of people well knowledgeable about various aspects of the project (key informants) were identified. The instrument was tested on a random sample of ten key informants. This resulted into the refinement of the instrument. Twenty key informants were then interviewed. The twenty key informants consisted of three GOL Representatives involved in the planning stage, three Professional Associates involved in the implementation of the project, eight participants who are still with the System as either teachers or principals, five participants who are no longer with the System, and one World Bank educational official.

Additionally, various documents on the MCSS Project were reviewed. Fortunately, there exists adequate such literature including annual reports, mid-term reports, and final reports, among others.

The findings of the survey data and review of the various documents were then combined to fulfill the objectives of the study.

The research was carried out by G. Pewu Subah and Willie Belleh, Jr., two professional members of SUBAH BELLEH Management Consultants with many years of work in the public and private sectors. Mr. Subah has a Master degree in Economics from the University of Oregon, U.S.A. and five years of experience in the preparation and assessment of economic and financial studies and projects. Mr. Belleh holds a Master degree in Business Administration from the Indiana State University, U.S.A., with three years experience in management training, research, and consultancy.

Appendix II-A

TABLE I

SCHOOL-AGE POPULATION

LIBERIA

1962, 1972 & 1974

		<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>ENROLLED</u>	<u>NOT ENROLLED</u>
<u>1962</u>	Male	421,926	54,046	367,880
	Female	429,135	21,964	407,171
<u>1972*</u>	Male	609,278	104,379	504,899
	Female	596,901	54,189	542,712
<u>1974</u>	Male	642,857	112,972	529,885
	Female	631,786	56,523	575,263

* Estimated on basis of average growth rate of school-age population

Source: National Housing & Population Census, 1974

National Population Census, 1962

Appendix II-B

TABLE II. COST OF MCSS OPERATIONS, 1962-1972

	<u>GOL</u>		<u>U.S.</u>	
	<u>GRANTS</u>	<u>CAPITAL COSTS</u>	<u>GRANTS</u>	<u>CAPITAL COSTS</u>
1963	\$1,426,107.00		\$4,107,000.00	
1964	482,672.00		171,000.00	
1965	540,223.00		347,000.00	
1966	702,896.00		605,000.00	
1967	774,520.00		589,000.00	\$2,698,000.00
1968	908,920.00		359,000.00	
1969	908,706.00	\$287,879.00	1,020,000.00	457,000.00
1970	977,658.00	494,000.00	1,187,000.00	
1971	1,110,962.00		407,000.00	
1972	<u>1,146,074.00</u>		<u>213,000.00</u>	
	\$8,978,738.00	\$781,879.00	\$9,005,000.00	\$3,155,000.00
	TOTAL GOL:-	\$9,760,017.00		
	TOTAL U.S:-	<u>12,160,000.00</u>		
	GRAND TOTAL:-	<u>\$21,920,017.00</u>		

* Source:- Compiled from various MCSS Annual Reports and Evaluation Studies.

Appendix II-C

TABLE III. ENROLLMENT IN MCSS - 1962-1972

	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>Total</u>
1962	5,954	209	6,163
1963	8,268	1,016	9,284
1964	8,377	1,182	9,559
1965	10,176	1,456	11,632
1966	11,701	1,851	13,552
1967	13,103	2,695	15,798
1968	13,630	2,762	16,392
1969	13,254	3,498	16,752
1970	12,200	3,294	15,494
1971	14,119	3,364	17,483
1972	14,260	3,811	18,071

Source:- Compiled from various MCSS Annual Reports.

Appendix II-D

TABLE-IV EDUCATION BUDGET
1960 - 1981/82
(US Million)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NATIONAL ED. BUDGET</u>	<u>% GOL BUDGET</u>	<u>MCSS BUDGET</u>	<u>% OF NATIONAL EDUCATION BUDGET</u>
1961	1.3	5.0	---	---
1962	1.6	4.0	---	---
1963	4.7	11.0	0.1	2.0
1964	4.7	11.0	0.1	2.0
1965	5.5	11.0	0.1	2.0
1966	5.6	12.0	0.6	11.0
1967	6.1	12.0	0.8	13.0
1968	5.8	10.0	0.9	16.0
1969	5.8	10.0	0.9	16.0
1970	5.9	9.0	1.0	17.0
1971	6.4	9.0	1.1	17.0
1972	6.5	9.0	1.1	17.0
1973	7.1	9.0	1.3	18.0
1974	11.3	12.0	1.4	12.0
1975	19.3	16.0	1.7	9.0
1976/'77	23.5	15.0	1.6	7.0
1977/'78	43.7	15.0	2.8	6.0
1978/'79	47.5	14.0	3.3	7.0
1979/'80	43.8	14.0	3.9	9.0
1980/'81	55.9	15.0	4.9	9.0
1981/'82	59.2	14.0	5.1	9.0

Source:- The Budgets of the GOL, Bureau of the Budget, Executive Mansion, Republic of Liberia.

TABLE- V

NATIONAL EXAM RESULTS - TUBMAN
HIGH - MCSS

1968 - 1969

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PASSED</u>	<u>FAILED</u>	<u>TOTAL SITTING</u>
1968	183	36	219
1969	148	7	155
1970	191	9	200
1971	237	144	381
1972	280	34	314
1973	144	21	165
1974	186	1	187
1975	169	15	184
1976	115	19	134
1977	127	35	162
1978	217	90	307
1979	296	21	317
1980	286	31	317
1981	400	14	414

Source:- Registrar's Office, William V.S. Tubman High, Monrovia

Appendix II-F

TABLE-VI UL PLACEMENT TEST RESULTS
GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOLS
1972 & 1980

	STUDENTS SITTING		ENGLISH				MATHEMATICS			
	1972	1980	PASSED		FAILED		PASSED		FAILED	
			'72	'80	'72	'80	'72	'80	'72	'80
TURMAN HIGH	87	129	34%	42%	24%	0.0%	17%	35%	38%	45%
W.R. TOLBERT HIGH ^a	—	75	—	22	—	44	—	18	—	38
GBOVEH HIGH	7	12	29	23	57	11	0	35	43	40
BASSA HIGH	6	15	50	45	17	11	50	35	17	50
GV. HIGH(C'MOUNT)	8	18	0	27	13	55	0	20	62	38
TURMAN WILSON INST.	8	8	0	13	62	65	0	6	38	36
ZWEDRU MULTILATERAL HIGH	—	25	—	25	—	49	—	30	—	32
VOINJAMA MULTI-LATERAL HIGH ^b	8	20	25	15	50	37	0	35	12	23
SANNIQUELLIE HIGH	6	17	17	15	50	48	17	10	17	44
SINOE HIGH	5	8	0	9	80	53	0	0	80	75

^a Renamed D. Tweh High.

^b The Multilateral High succeeded Voinjama High School.

Source:- Ministry of Education

Appendix II-G

TABLE - VII TWELVTH GRADE GRADUATES BY SEX - TUBMAN HIGH
1968 - 1981

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1968	174	45	219
1969	129	26	155
1970	172	28	200
1971	299	82	381
1972	258	56	314
1973	134	31	165
1974	155	32	187
1975	125	59	184
1976	98	36	134
1977°	121	41	162
1978	265	42	307
1979	241	76	317
1980	247	70	317
1981	333	81	414

Source:- Registrar's Office, William V.S. Tubman High School, Monrovia.

SUBAH BELLEH
(MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS)

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

PROJECT: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEW LOCATION: _____

ORGANIZATION/AGENCY
(Of Interviewee): _____

TENURE WITH ORGANIZATION: _____

PURPOSE OF STUDY

- i) This impact study has been commissioned by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Liberia. It is intended to find out what effect the Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS) Project has had, if any, on the people it was intended for, on the community in which it was located, and on the Government and its development efforts. The study seeks to identify the areas of success and failure as well as reasons for success or lack thereof.
- ii) As you may recall, the MCSS Project was a USAID-assisted program jointly carried out with the Government of Liberia (GOL). Therefore the findings of this impact study will be in the interest of both the USAID and the Government of Liberia. Both parties will learn from these evaluated experiences how future development projects can be more meaningfully conceived and implemented. Specifically, it should help to provide improved ways of doing things and show how the intended beneficiaries as well as other groups and organizations were affected by the Project.
- iii) Neither names nor positions are mentioned in this interview or any report resulting from it. No statement will be personally attributed to any individual. You can therefore be completely open and have no fear to express whatever views you hold.

PART I: BACKGROUND, SETTING, PROJECT

A. BACKGROUND

1.(a) What aspects of this Project are you familiar with?
(construction & rehabilitation of schools, curriculum development, training, vocational education, research, administration, etc.)

(b) At what stage and in what capacity did you become familiar with the Project?

i) At what stage (planning, implementation and assessment?)

ii) In what capacity (e.g., as a government representative, as a participant in the program, as a USAID representative, a contractor, etc?)

2. What were the main objectives of the Project?

3. Were there alternative methods of achieving the objectives of the Project?

_____ No

_____ Don't know

_____ Yes, Explain alternatives starting with the most appropriate one: _____

4. Who or what was to benefit from the Project?

B. SETTING

5. Please describe briefly what the educational situation was like in Monrovia before the Project was undertaken with specific emphasis on primary and secondary education (organizational arrangements of public schools, school enrollment, competing private schools, GOL Education Policy, quality of instruction, curriculum and availability of textbooks/school materials, etc).

6. Why was the Project located in Monrovia and not in another community? Was Monrovia the proper site, or do people generally believe that if the Project had been placed elsewhere it might have been better?

7. Were there practical indications that primary and secondary education was a priority at the time the Project was launched? (Give examples of indicators)

8. Can you tag a relationship between the Project and Liberia's needs in this sector at the time the Project was undertaken?

C. PROJECT

9. Do you think the Project was feasible and practical at the time?

Explain: _____

10. How would you rank the quality of USAID's inputs into this Project on a scale of 1 to 5?

- _____ Facilities
- _____ Materials & Equipment
- _____ Technicians
- _____ Training of Liberians
- _____ Operational & Logistical Support
- _____ Overall Funding
- _____ Curriculum Development

- 1 = Low
- 2 = Marginal
- 3 = Average
- 4 = Good
- 5 = Excellent

11. How would you rank the quality of Government's inputs into this Project on the same scale? (if applicable)

- _____ Facilities
- _____ Materials & Equipment
- _____ Maintenance
- _____ Liberian Staff & Counterparts
- _____ Operational & Logistical Support
- _____ Budget

12. What was your understanding of the roles/obligations of the parties under this Project?

- a) USAID: _____

- b) GOL: _____

- c) SFSC: _____

13. In your opinion did adequate consultation take place at the planning stage so that objectives and intended beneficiaries were clearly identified?

14. How effective as the counterpart arrangement? (e.g., how qualified were contract team members? Were they capable of and willing to transfer skills? How carefully selected were Liberian counterparts?).

15. Do you think most people trained under the Project's staff development program are still with the System?

_____ Yes

_____ No: Explain possible reasons for their exit.

16. Do you think the USAID's assistance to the Project was withdrawn/terminated at the right time? (i.e. in terms of Liberia's capability to effectively operate the project).

_____ Yes: (Give indicators): _____

_____ No: (Explain what other considerations were to be made): _____

17. What significant changes (positive or negative) have occurred in the System since the withdrawal of USAID's assistance?

a) Organizational changes: (structure of the system linkage to Ministry) _____

b) Administrative changes: (personnel, policies and procedure) _____

c) Funding: (budget support) _____

d) Others: (maintenance, logistics) _____

18. Did the USAID (Not SFSC) ever follow-up on the Project after it terminated its assistance?

_____ No

_____ Don't know

_____ Yes: Explain how _____

PART II. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

19. In what ways has the Project affected the target population/organization?

a) **ECONOMICALLY** : (In terms of increased income, savings, productivity, employment, etc.)

b) **SOCIALLY** : i) (In terms of opportunities for special groups, i.e., women, the poor, elites.)

ii) (Its improvement of living conditions, health, education, nutrition, organizationally, etc.)

c) **POLITICALLY** : (i.e., Participation in the political process, changes in government policies, making of new policies, etc)

d) **TECHNICALLY** : (Impact on beneficiaries in terms of skills acquisition, technology transfer, different ways of doing things, etc.)

20. What unintended side-effects, if any, did the Project have on the target groups/organizations?

21. Who were the main group(s) and institution(s) affected by this Project?

a) Intended target group: _____

b) Group(s) other than target group(s): _____

c) Intended institution(s) (e.g., implementing agency): _____

d) Other Institution(s) (ministries/agencies/organizations): _____

22. Do you consider the Project to have been successful in achieving its objectives?

a) Successful, state reason: _____

b) Partially successful, state reason: _____

c) Unsuccessful, state reason: _____

23. How would you consider the total benefit of this Project to Liberia: (Please check your answer.)

_____ No benefit

_____ Marginal benefit

_____ Average benefit

_____ Better than average benefit

_____ Greatly beneficial

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PART III. IMPLICATIONS/LESSONS LEARNED

24. What lessons have we learned from this Project that should serve as guidelines for planning and implementing future projects?

a) Lessons for USAID: _____

b) Lessons for GOL: _____

c) Lessons for both: _____

25. Do you think that a similar project would be appropriate elsewhere in Liberia today?

_____ Yes: Explain _____

_____ No: Explain _____

26. Were you to prepare a similar project today, what would be your approach to:-

a) Objectives: _____

b) Planning: _____

c) Design: _____

d) Funding: _____

e) Target Groups: _____

f) Implementation: _____

g) Cooperating Agency participation: _____

h) Staffing: _____

i) Location: _____

j) Other(s): Specify _____

PART IV. OTHERS

27. Are there other persons sources or things that you might know that could help us in being more knowledgeable about the Project?

_____ No.

_____ Yes: Explain _____

Follow-up Interview Notes (if applicable)

Thank you very much;
you have been helpful.
GOODBYE

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