

memorandum

DATE: May 24, 1984

REPLY TO
AT / IN OF: Mr. John Pielemeier, Acting Director, USAID/Liberia

SUBJECT: Final Report on Youth on the Job Training Project

TO: Office of Development Information and
Utilization (DS/DIU)
AID/W

I have enclosed for your records one copy of the final report on Youth on the Job Training Project which terminated in September 1983.

Enclosure: a/s

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May 23, 1984

Project Assistance Completion Report
Youth On The Job Training Project 569-0160

Introduction:

This is a final report on the Youth on-the-Job Training (YOJT) project implemented jointly by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) and USAID. This was a four year project, with a USAID funding level of \$495,000. The GOL contribution was to be \$481,000. The private sector was to contribute \$300,000 in stipends.

Background:

One of the significant problems existing in Monrovia is the large number of unemployed, unemployable youth. Many are constantly in the streets and often turn to begging, hustling, and/or other forms of delinquency. The problem is an outgrowth of the lack of jobs, inappropriate training in schools and lack of skills. Given the general shortage of semiskilled workers, it became clear that the needs of some unemployed/unemployable youths and some potential employers could be addressed simultaneously to the benefit of both groups and to the society at large through a single carefully designed project.

This project was designed to address these needs by training Liberian youth who have no job skills and whose chances of obtaining skills to fill available semi-skilled jobs

were limited by a lack of formal education. The primary beneficiaries were the youth of Monrovia including recent migrants from rural Liberia.

When USAID authorized the YOJT project on September 1, 1980 the GOL had been implementing a YOJT program for seven years. They had problems in getting the project moving effectively because of a lack of staff training, lack of a well organized administrative and program structure and lack of the necessary technical inputs to develop an effective structure of training.

Immediately after the signing of the Project Agreement, initiation of the project was delayed because of the Coup. Further the project began during a sharp decline in the economic situation in Liberia brought about by overspending for the 1979 Organization of African Unity Conference and a decline the prices of major exports (rubber, lumber and iron ore). These two factors seriously affected targets related to numbers of graduates and training placements.

The purpose of the project was "to upgrade the current YOJT program enabling it to place more and better trained semiskilled workers on the job market." It was not intended to have a major impact on unemployment or the labor market because of the large scale of unemployment in Liberia (Estimated at 40%).

The EOPs were:

- (1) A project with capability to plan for and supervise 500 trainees annually.
- (2) An Increase the number of employers
- (3) 1,100 trainees completing training with 75% placement rate.
- (4) MOYS with capability of backstopping other vocational training projects in its portfolioc.
- (5) Re-education in unemployment of semiskilled workers in Monrovia.
(The meaning of this EOP is not clear).

These targets were modified at the time of the first project review (January 1982) as follows because of the previously mentioned sharp downturn in the economy and parallel decline in industries available for employment.:

- (1) Project capability to supervise and plan for 200 trainees annually.

- (2) 400 trainees completing training during life of project. (This changed for the same reason as for (1) above.)
- (4) This EOP was dropped because it was unclear.
Other EOPs remained unchanged.

Targets:

The purpose of the project, to upgrade the current YOJT program enabling it to place more and better semiskilled workers on the job market, was accomplished. However, it could not be said that the results in terms of trained youth has had a significant impact on unemployment. This was due to an inaccurate assumption on the length of training needed, and the small scope of the project, and the economic problems mentioned above. The YOJT program was upgraded significantly with trained manpower, and new administrative, training, management, supervision and programming systems. Staff was trained in new on-the-job training methodologies as well as management. This enabled the project to train participants at a higher quality level using training materials for both the employer and the participants. Comments by employers indicated their

satisfaction with improved trainee supervision by YOJT staff, improved materials to be used in training and general YOJT staff support. There was an increase in the number of individuals placed, though not to the levels originally projected. In the seven years prior to AID's involvement in the project 38 trainees per year were being placed in training. In the last two years about 100 per year were being placed. The adjusted target was for planning and supervision of up to 200 trainees per year. With one hundred per year being placed in training, and over one hundred more being processed to await training, plus those already in the program, despite some overlap it could be concluded that this target was reached. This is not to say that the figures indicate adequate achievement. It should be noted that more students could have been placed with more energetic, persistent staff performance, better staff motivation and had the economy not declined so drastically following the military coup in 1980.

There was a significant increase in the number of employers participating in the program. It jumped from 30 in 1979 when the project started to 58 in 1983 when it finished. Other industries, (about 40) expressed interest in participating if and when the economy improved.

By the end of the project there had been one graduation of fifty seven trainees. This was considerably below the target of 500. The target was not met due to several problems.

First, most of the training programs had to be extended from one year to two years or more in particularly complex skills because the basic reading, writing and mathematics levels of the trainees were so low. Also, the economy declined dramatically after 1980 and many businesses could not afford the increased costs of new graduates. Finally, the period of project implementation was reduced by half due to delays brought about by the 1980 coup. Of the fifty seven graduates, 44 were placed on jobs. The average cost per graduate to the GOL was quite high during the developmental stage, \$15,000. However based on future projections of 75 graduates per year and a budget of \$90- \$100,000, the cost would come down to \$1,330, per year. Since stipends are not a GOL expense, that cost is not included.

The MOYS is now managing at least five other major vocational projects. It is not certain, however, if the YOJT project improved MOYS management of these other programs.

Inputs and Outputs: USAID funding under the project was to provide two years (1 person) of T.A., nine person months of short term T.A., a limited number of commodities and training for principle staff at a total cost of \$495,000.

As a result of the above mentioned inputs, the outputs were to be:

1. Training:
 - (A) Administration 2
 - (B) Supervisors 5
 - (C) Support and Clerical staff 5

2. Policies and Procedures:
 - (A) Administrative arrangements with employers (i.e. Terms and Conditions, stipends for each placement)
 - (B) Systematic supervision of trainees
 - (C) Trainee evaluation and skill performance certification
 - (D) Job placement and follow-up procedures.

3. Training Programs: In four vocational areas.
 - (A) Mechanics
 - (B) Electricity
 - (C) Building Construction
 - (D) Carpentry Joinery

4. Training Materials: Types of materials and procedures.
 - (A) Recruitment and information

- (B) Pretraining screening and testing
- (C) Orientation and guidance
- (D) Instructional modules for in plant training
- (E) Learning AIDS for trainees
- (F) Job performance rating scales
- (G) Achievement tests

All of the above outputs were accomplished except skill performance certification which was still being developed in conjunction with the Agricultural Industrial Training Bureau and job follow up procedures which have not been completed. Because of the coup in April 1980, there was a 9 month delay in fielding the Chief of Party. The contractor in spite of this did manage to fulfill almost all of his contractual obligations.

Contractor: The Contractor, P.S.I. of Washington, D.C., was assigned twelve tasks, (1) complete a Life of Project Plan (2) complete job descriptions for each GOL project position (3) select staff and arrange for training selection and placement (4) design the organization, administration and supervision procedures (5) design the student training program (6) develop an orientation and counseling program (7) design systems for testing and supervision of trainees (8) develop a system to measure skills of trainees (9) administer participant training (10) provide professional advisory services

(11) provide backstopping and support for contract and
(12) establish procedures to increase female participation in YOJT, all of which it completed except the test to measure skills of trained youths. Their Chief of Party, Mr. Joseph Butcher, was a well trained competent individual who early on directed the operations and then phased himself out so that all aspects of the project were eventually handled by the project staff.

Evaluations: There were five project evaluations, three by the contractor and two by GOL/USAID. All found the project to be substantially on track with no major problems. Eventhough it was recognized that targets for placement would fall short it as clear that project activities under the direction of the Chief of Party moved ahead effectively and on schedule after his arrival.

Training: Seven staff members were trained in six short term courses in the areas of counseling, administration, auto mechanics, carpentry, electricity building trades and supervision. Two did not return from training in the United States. They were replaced by personnel with some training relevant to the jobs they were hired to do. Support and clerical staff were trained on the job.

Commodities: All commodities needed for the project were purchased, this included 2 vehicles, a copy machine, office furniture, photo lab equipment and a mimeograph machine.

Training materials were also purchased and others developed in the project.

Present Situation: Project status at the completion of the project showed all targets related to institutionalization were met and the capability of the Liberian staff to run the project had been developed. There was a short-fall in placements due to delays in implementation of the project, economic and motivational factors. In January 1983 the project was turned over to the Liberian staff and they have been handling it since. The biggest problem since the Liberian take over has been their motivation. In the face of a declining economy, delays in pay, less funds for transportation and less receptivity for businesses to accept trainees, there has been some decline in placement. Improvement on this will not be realized until the economy picks up and GOL budget allocations increase.

Contributions: AID funds in the amount of \$478,000, were disbursed, \$17,000 less than programmed (these funds have been de-obligated). The G.O.L. provided \$395,000 of the \$481,000 planned. The \$86,000 short fall was due to budgetary reductions on overall G.O.L. spending.

Given the increase in unemployment recently and continued economic problems, this project was too small to actually have a major impact on the problem of unemployment. However, the fact that normally unemployable youths are given a means of

self support and training is certainly a significant social benefit.

No additional project adjustments are recommended. USAID should maintain informal contacts with the project to try to continue motivation and provide informal assistance. Also USAID should continue to provide PL 480 funds for recurrent costs.

No further review of data collection results on evaluations remains to be undertaken.

Conclusion:

In terms of smoothness of implementation, this project was satisfactory. Contractor performance was excellent. The shortfalls in graduates are attributable to three factors, (1) economic decline, (2) delays in the project (2 years), (3) inadequate motivation of Liberian staff even though they knew the job and could do it. The project staff is capable of processing, supervising and placing 200 persons a year. Whether there will be continued perseverance in this area is a key issue.

The MYS requested a project extension, but USAID denied the request in view of the fact that the project had been institutionalized and had been run for seven months with only 6 weeks of TDY technical assistance. The success of the program now depends on the motivation and hard work of the staff.

Clearances: DP:Sydney Anderson (in draft)

AD:John Pielemeier (in draft)