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Review of Past Educational  
Projects in Liberia  
and  
Recommendations Concerning Conduct  
of Future EHR Projects

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## PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this study has been to examine a number of previous educational projects in Liberia in order to provide guidance for the development and conduct of future EHRD efforts in that country. This purpose has immediate relevance to AID/W actions related to the November 1976 sector assessment and the three PRPs of that same date. Results of this study include an analysis of GOL and USG activities, management and support of activities in the EHRD sector.

### Methods included:

- 1) A review of available AID and GOL documents of AID-supported projects in the Liberian EHR sector. Twenty-two such documents were reviewed and are referenced as Appendix C.
- 2) Interviews with key staff and contractors involved in Liberian EHR projects. Thirty-five persons were thus interviewed of which 13 were interviewed individually and in person, 10 by telephone and 12 in a group session. Those interviewed are listed in Appendix B. The approach to interviews was very open-ended and sought to identify reasons for project successes or failures and to obtain reasoned advice for improving the conduct of future EHR projects.
- 3) Exerpts from documents and statements from interviews were categorized under eleven headings as a basis for analysis. The majority of such statements have been reproduced in Appendix A under eleven categories. Results of the analysis appear in the next section as Results and Recommendations.
- 4) This report, in draft form, was reviewed with staff of the Africa Bureau as a basis for revisions.

### Note

The interpretations and recommendations are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Agency for International Development.

This study undoubtedly has a built-in bias; all those interviewed were Americans. It would be wise to obtain the open and honest reaction of GOL officials before drawing firm conclusions from this study.

## RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A Measure of Success

AID generally feels that its past efforts in support of education in Liberia have been less than successful. I have concluded that this "failure syndrome" is unwarranted. The USG has made a substantial contribution to Liberian education.

Our support of Booker Washington Institute began in 1954 and ceased in 1969. During that time yearly enrollment grew from less than 200 to more than 900. Graduates are almost fully employed whereas some 25 percent of other high school graduates in Monrovia are out of work.

The Rural School Development project was primarily responsible between 1957 and 1966 for an increase in primary schools from 33 to 103 and an increase in enrollment from 2,500 to 19,000. These were rural children who previously had no opportunity for a formal education.

Two rural teacher training institutes were developed almost in their entirety by USG support. Since the beginning of the instructional program at Zorzor 1961 and in Kakata in 1964 these institutes had graduated (by 1966) some 209 teachers of which approximately 98 percent were teaching in their home countries (Ref. 9). Intake of students is approximately 100 per year.

The Liberian Testing Center was begun in 1961 and has grown to a staff of 15 under the direction of a professional trained under the participant program. It is responsible nationwide for school selection and achievement testing and has now joined the regional West African Examination Council.

The University of Liberia received assistance for building, faculty advisors, and postgraduate training and has increased student enrollment from 270 in 1962 to 1011 in 1968 while the proportion of dropouts was cut in half (48% to 22%).

The Monrovia Consolidated School District was developed during 1962-72, providing state-side training for 80 persons of whom 68 are currently in key roles in the system. Enrollment increased three-fold from 1962 (6,000) to 1972 (18,000) and 48 percent of 1972 students were learning in adequate facilities as compared to only 8 percent in 1962. A consolidated school system has been institutionalized.

Why, then, our feelings of failure? For one thing, we expected too much; we anticipated that the kind of investment we made beginning in the early 60s would make a small country such as Liberia a show piece of foreign aid. But we overestimated the country's ability to absorb such aid. Recurrent budget and infrastructure limitations could not support the institutions which the USG helped build. Even the relatively few rural schools which were built, for example, overloaded logistics and budget capabilities of the host country.

*Our two most serious mistakes were paternalism and lack of long-term support.*

Our paternalism was exemplified by (1) American curricula and American institutions, (2) designing projects which we considered to be in their best interests, (3) "selling" our projects to them rather than insisting on mutual planning, (4) operating some programs for them too long without making sufficient provisions for their assumption of responsibility, and (5) using pressure (usually threat of reduced support) to ensure that our ideas prevailed. Our failure to give long-term support to projects which we enthusiastically endorsed can be seen in (1) termination of projects, such as the rural schools and the integration with RAD, before institutional capability was assured, (2) imposing recurring costs of terminated projects on a weak budgetary structure when some minimal support might have allowed them to remain reasonably operational, and (3) switching our interest from one project to another (for example, from rural schools to Monrovia schools) without sufficient follow on to ensure institutional viability. Is it any wonder that the Liberians seem less than enthusiastic when we present them with some new scheme for improving their education? And is it any wonder that we have some sort of organizational "failure syndrome?" I must give credit to the persistence of Liberians in carrying on these projects as their own, and we need not feel that the USG failed since many of the improvements cited earlier result from our contributions. We did not fail, but we did make some mistakes which should provide guidance for future involvement in the EHRD sector. Following is a summary of some of our more positive and negative actions in specific projects.

#### Summary Project Evaluations

##### Booker Washington Institute

*Positive:* Development of project in response to indicated needs of Liberians; practical level of contract team; construction of needed facilities

and housing; development of farms intended for food self-sufficiency; "making do" under fairly primitive circumstances; training of local faculty; maintenance of excellent relations with students, faculty and political leaders; provision of direct hire consultant at close of contract.

*Negative:* Heavy concentration on academic achievement; inclusion of sophisticated equipment too soon; operation by American staff too long; insufficient attention to the assumption of responsibility by local staff; inattention to frailty of recurring national budget in providing continuous support; termination of USG support without sufficient long-term commitment to ensure continued operation.

### Rural School Development

*Positive:* Use of other resources such as IVS & PCV; coordination with other sectors via the rural area development project; dedication of direct-hire technicians; living in rural areas and positive interaction with local communities; in-service teacher training.

*Negative:* Inability of infrastructure and budget to support and maintain rural school development; concentration on building; switch from self-help to contractor construction and resultant lack of local support in identification; not filling technician positions resulting in staff overload; in some cases, technicians were too operational without permitting counterparts sufficient experience in exercising responsibility; cessation of RAD, eliminating potential value of integrated approach; sudden termination of USG support with no long-term commitment.

### Rural Teacher-Training Institutes

*Positive:* Locating projects and living in rural communities; excellent relation with students, locals and leaders; early hands-on approach to getting things done; transfer of responsibility to Liberian educators; use of teacher contracts to ensure return of graduates to rural communities.

*Negative:* American rather than rural-Liberian orientation of curriculum (e.g., two years of French); insufficient attention to teaching skills per se; tendency to equate secondary school certification with teaching performance of graduates; inability of graduates to fit into rural communities including their reported arrogance and lack of community development skills outside of the classroom; loss of graduates (after period of indentured service) to the bright lights and greater opportunities of cities; lack of sufficient incentive for graduates to remain as rural teachers; removal of USG support at close of contract period when some minimum level of long-term support could have assisted in continuous upgrading.

### Testing Center

*Positive:* Incorporation within an existing system; immediacy of visible positive results; regional identification; participant training; assumption of responsibilities by returned participants.

*Negative:* Lack of continued minimal support to ensure continued quality and focus of operations.

### University of Liberia

*Positive:* Relations with faculty and national leaders; the assumption by contractors of faculty roles as colleagues of local faculty; quality of contract staff; participant training.

*Negative:* Insufficient backstopping because of lack of contracting institution identification (contract team primarily recruited outside of organization); giving unrealized expectations to Liberians (new campus) resulting in lack of confidence in USG intentions.

### Monrovia Consolidated School System

*Positive:* Early planning in Liberia by a contract survey team; quality of staff; positive relation with Liberian leaders; working pattern with counterparts; participant training; institution building via role change of team members from operational/advisory to consultant.

*Negative:* Although there was a planning team there was not sufficient commitment on the part of Liberians to the concept of consolidated schools and particularly to the idea of an independent school board (clearly an American transplant); participant training and new school construction used as incentives to overcome resistance to the consolidated schools concept (local resistance resulted in lengthy delays in legislative approval of charter); construction of a modern high school used as a "forceful incentive" to obtain legislative approval; lateness in developing a Liberian oriented curriculum; providing educational improvement for the "haves" in Monrovia to the neglect of the "have nots" being bypassed by educational opportunities in rural areas; demands of the project on USG resources resulting in other programs (particularly Rural School Development) not being given long-term support.

## A Scenario for Success

Statements were garnered from interviews with 35 AID and contractor personnel all of whom have had extensive experience in Liberian educational projects and from 22 documents concerning those projects. This "Scenario for Success" has been derived from those statements, hopefully without too much interpretation or idealism of my own.\*

- Step 1. USAID conduct a sectoral analysis to determine priority of educational needs.
- Step 2. USAID and AID/W determine the types and level of support which are appropriate, considering both resources and AID philosophy.
- Step 3. USAID and GOL hold meetings in which all concerned officials are included. The purpose of these meetings is to determine which needs have the highest priorities, which general approaches are mutually agreeable and the allocation of resources which each party will be able to commit. There should be no attempt by USG to "sell" a given approach nor should there be a tendency to acquiesce to GOL wishes contrary to either AID philosophy or considered effectiveness of approach. (For example, if the agreed upon need concerns the upgrading of rural teachers, USAID probably should focus upon means for improving and upgrading teacher performance (and consequent student learning) rather than simply providing for additional academic training of unqualified teachers. This becomes the "posture" of AID regarding what it can or cannot do.) The result of these meetings should be an understanding and commitment on both sides.
- Step 4. USAID prepares a PRP in conjunction with the GOL. The PRP specifies the need to be addressed, illustrative alternative approaches and approximate level of resource allocation by USG and GOL. The first phase is for an initial planning survey by a contractor to work directly with the GOL in developing a definitive statement of work agreeable to GOL, the contractor and USAID.
- Step 5. Following AID/W review of the PRP, the PP is prepared by USAID with concurrence of the GOL.
- Step 6. An RFP is prepared for contractor bids. Scope of work follows that suggested in Step 4 (initial planning survey and development of statement of work with the GOL and USAID). Implementation phases are not spelled out except in general terms regarding length of contract and approximate costs.

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\* This "scenario" perhaps can be better understood if the statements in Appendix A were examined first.

- Step 7. A contractor is selected by USAID and GOL. A contract team goes to Liberia and develops a statement of work which is mutually agreed upon by the three parties. The proposed Chief-of-Party must be on the survey team as should be his Liberian counterpart. (If for any reason the GOL or USAID is not satisfied with contractor capability at this point, another may be selected.)
- Step 8. Contractor is given sufficient time to select an optimum field staff compatible with the project statement of work. Staff from the parent organization are preferred.
- Step 9. With arrival of the field team, work is begun with counterparts. On-the-job training precedes a participant training program which is focused on providing specific expertise so that returned participants will have the capability to assume appropriate positions in the project. Contract team relations with officials, community members and counterparts are maintained, USAID plans a supporting role and minimizes, in as much as possible, its management function.
- Step 10. Contractor follows a planned institution-building sequence of counterpart staff development so that Liberians assume early responsibility and Americans switch from operational/advisory roles to becoming consultants who can be called upon by Liberians for needed assistance.
- Step 11. The level of contract work tapers off as more-and-more responsibility is assumed by Liberians.
- Step 12. At the close of the implementation contract, USAID provides for a minimum level of long-term support. EHRD officers maintain contact with the project, identifying project needs (including contractor consulting) and providing for them at a reasonable and minimal support level. Project interest by USG is not altered by changes in EHRD officers, and new projects are not begun if they require a reduction in long-term support of existing projects.

## Next Steps

The sectoral assessment of Robert Jacobs provides a good starting point since it represents both a needs analysis and an AID posture of the kinds of support to Liberian education that the Agency can give. I feel that it should be the basic document for proposed discussions with the GOL.

The PRPs for (1) vocational training, (2) improved efficiency of learning, and (3) rural learning delivery system are too prescriptive at this time, particularly since GOL discussions about them have been minimal. They should be used solely as illustrative projects rather than definitive ones.

The present AID team of W. A. Whitten and B. Wilder probably should be supplemented with a person familiar with the operations of BWI. (Claire Richards, now retired, is a possibility since he was that last USAID representative at BWI.)

The suggested scope of work of the AID team is described on the previous pages as Steps 3 and 4, i.e., finding the highest priority needs and approaches which are mutually agreeable and developing PRPs in conjunction with the GOL. This PRP, again, should not be prescriptive but should provide sufficient information for the preparation of an RFP, the first phase of which would be an initial planning survey by the contractor to develop a definitive scope of work with GOL and USAID/Liberia.

The vocational training PP possibly could be developed by the Whitten team because it reflects fairly well the wishes of MOE at BWI and MOL in apprenticeship training. It also is an endeavor to give long-term support to our previous work at BWI.

The learning efficiency project probably will have to be started from scratch, using a posture that "AID is willing to assist in the upgrading of the performance of unqualified teachers but cannot commit its resources for providing them with a high school education." The programmed teaching approach in the present PRP can be used illustratively as one approach to the problem. Other approaches already have been considered by the GOL including educational radio and correspondence courses.

Location of the study at an RTTI seems clearly indicated. Zorzor is most appropriate in several ways because it is more-truly rural than Kakata and because it already has an in-service program. Kakata may be preferable primarily because of the schooling of technicians' children in Monrovia. A bus will have to be provided for their children to commute to Monrovia as well as for those of BWI technicians.

Housing at either Kakata or Zorzor may present the biggest (at least the most obvious) problem. In no way can an American team displace present faculty, and provision for housing will have to be made part of the USG input. Rather than buying trailers (which would be inappropriate for a long-term contract stay), I suggest that local housing (a la UNESCO) be utilized for the first year while contractor housing is built.

In many ways the rural learning delivery system is in a better state of readiness than is the learning efficiency project. It could be housed in Monrovia and the first stage could be an exploration of a variety of NFE methods to find approaches best suited to the country (both in the types of training and in its method of delivery). Previous discussions with the MLG were quite positive, the Minister understood and approved of the approach, but there was no firm commitment.

My final recommendation is for a careful reading of the many statements and excerpts in Appendix A. Perhaps more relevant recommendations and a "scenario of success" will result.

APPENDIX A: STATEMENTS FROM INTERVIEWS AND  
EXERPTS FROM DOCUMENTS

Statements and exerpts are reproduced in this section under the following categories:

1. Project Planning
2. American Solutions to Liberian Problems
3. Developing Project Support by Liberians
4. Contract Team Administration
5. Role of USAID Mission Regarding Contractors
6. Institution Building and Transfer
7. Working with Counterparts
8. Participant Training
9. Relations with Liberian Communities
10. Length of USAID Project Support
11. The Liberian Situation and American Expectations

Following each interview statement is a letter identifying the person being interviewed. However, the reader cannot identify the respondent from the letter. This is done to avoid problems from possible misquotes on my part and from reactions to highly critical or erroneous statements. All statements are in quotes, but they are not direct quotes of respondents; they are taken from my interview notes.

Reference numbers refer to documents listed in Appendix C.

## Project planning.

*Projects must be in response to the perceived needs of Liberians, but they must be constrained by the programmatic guidelines of the donor agency.*

*There should be no attempt to "sell" projects that the donor thinks would be of benefit to the country. Rather, there should be a mutual give-and-take in discussing alternatives.*

"We started and operated a large number of things because it was difficult to sit down in open discussions with MOE officials. (For instance, Secretary Caine couldn't be contacted even at home by USAID Education Officers.) Therefore, we designed programs, twisted arms, and implemented them with no real planning involvement or commitment." (F)

"The next time there is a need for more Liberian involvement in conceptualization about where 'they' want to go. We are past the time for Americans to 'dream their dreams.' The GOL must do their own planning and ask us for assistance. Better than to have an HIID study is for the Liberians to do their own assessment and planning even if we have to buy up their time to do it." (B)

"Any project to be successful must be a Liberian, not an American project. The Liberians must themselves concur with the aims and means. Americans cannot make decisions for them. However, they can provide them with alternatives." (H)

"The most critical block to success: permitting our USG documentation requirements to force us to accept paper agreements for which there is no real mutual discovery and planning. USG cannot and should not prescribe and push programs in Liberia." (G)

"USAID cannot tell GOL what to do." (L)

"For any new program you cannot be dogmatic. You cannot force on the Liberians something that they don't want in the first place. If you go in with the program already planned, passing them over, they will give you a hard time." (E)

"The general feeling on both sides was that the projects were 'ours,' not 'theirs.'" (V)

"All of USAID was criticized as being too operational and as devising schemes that [were judged by Americans to be] 'good for them.'" (T)

"We were insisting, in early days, on doing 'good' things that were not given priority by the GOL. Even if 'good' and 'priority' matched, there was still a Liberian feeling that our contribution was solely for political reasons." (S)

"Problems in project design stem from the lack of sufficient personnel in the country with the requisite skills for project formulation. This oftentimes necessitates foreign input at the formulation stage--sacrificing a degree of awareness and sensitivity to local conditions that may hinder or facilitate project implementation." (Ref. 16)

"MCSS was an example of forcing something on them that they didn't really want. The dollars going into physical things made GOL 'more cooperative.'" (F)

"Both Secretary Caine and Secretary Mitchell questioned the purpose of MCSS. The only reason that it began was that USG was adamant, yet some USAID education officers were far from committed. In some ways the Ministry was embarrassed. We must be sure not to build in potential conflicts in project design." (G)

"This, in the opinion of the Committee, emphasizes the need for preliminary research, particularly as to opinions, attitudes and other socio-psychological factors before foreign models are introduced into a system through legal means. Although the [MCSS] Charter was granted by the National Legislature and duly put into effect by the Ministry of Education, it is clear that this enactment was the product of pressure in very definite forms placed upon the Liberian Government by the American Government. Consequently, even though the Charter was drafted by a Committee of influential and knowledgeable Liberians and United States AID mission personnel, it never has had the enthusiastic or unqualified support of influential and decision-making Liberians as a whole, especially those close to the Ministry of Education (the membership of the Director of Elementary Education on the Council notwithstanding)." (Ref. 15)

"The resistances to the MCSS under its charter were such that it was not until December 31, 1966 that the members of the Council were appointed by the President and it was not until January 1, 1968, that Mr. Johnson assumed full responsibility as Superintendent." (Ref. 15)

*A contractor should be selected on the basis of capability in a given problem area with an understanding that a contract to implement a project would follow if the GOL, USAID and the contractor can mutually agree on an implementation plan.*

RFPs for contractor proposals should not be prescriptive of exactly what is to be implemented; they should present the problem, provide illustrative alternatives, state the Agency's position regarding the kinds of projects it is willing to support, and give guidelines regarding the level of support which it is willing to provide. Project Papers developed by the Mission and the GOL should, thus, reflect the same nonprescriptive approach. It is difficult for a contractor to follow a precise "recipe" developed by someone else, particularly in the human resources sector.

*A carefully developed plan made cooperatively by a contractor and the GOL seems preferable to a tightly-drawn scope of work developed by the USAID staff with the concurrence of the GOL, particularly when such concurrence may or may not represent commitment.*

There is precedence for this recommended approach:

"Secretary Yancy of the Department of Public Instruction made a trip to the United States and visited Prairie View, Tuskegee, and Hampton Colleges. He decided on Prairie View. Dr. George Smith and A. I. Thomas (President of Prairie View) spent one month in Liberia after

Yancy's visit to the United States. They talked to officials, inspected BWI and decided for Prairie View to undertake the project." (M)

"Cornell had an initial contract which helped them to plan their own project." (P)

"The contract chief-of-party made three or four trips to Monrovia to determine GOL commitment to the concept, developing a professional relationship with the division head. Together they developed overall guidelines for the project. This activity was followed by lengthy visits of a team member to develop specific plans and schedules." (Y)

"As authorized by the 1961 Agreement, a survey team from the San Francisco State College in California was sent to Monrovia in June and July, 1961, to study the educational situation, assess the feasibility of a general proposal for technical assistance, and propose a plan as a basis for a possible contract. The survey team prepared and submitted its report after conducting a thorough investigation and many interviews over a thirty-day period. This report agreed substantially with the report of the President's Committee and proposed a plan of technical assistance which took definite form in a three-party contract between the College, the Department of Public Instruction, and the U.S. AID Mission which funded the contract in full." (Ref. 15)

"Because the initial SFS needs survey team worked with GOL rather than USG, high GOL officials quickly identified with the project." (G)

"Our terms of reference changed up until a week before the SFSC survey team left for Liberia. Initially it was for improving secondary schools; finally it was for consolidation of all public schools in Monrovia." (C)

Several persons have expressed definite convictions about appropriate roles of USAID, GOL and contractors during initial planning.

"AID should say to a contractor: 'Here are the kinds of things that USG can do. Here is some money. You go out there and work with the GOL to determine, with them, the kinds of things you can help with. You should plan with them and obtain their commitment.'" (G)

"The USAID posture should be one of providing 'loan.' This loan is for the Liberians to say where they want to go, and for them to work with contractors to plan and do. Contractor selection and evaluation should almost always be on the Liberian side with AID in a much lower profile." (B)

"The GOL has to agree on the selection of contract personnel, and it is best if probable key members of the later team take part in initial survey work so that the Liberians can express an interest in having those particular persons, not just 'somebody.'" (G)

American solutions to Liberian problems.

This is an area in which we can possibly be faulted the most. Liberians are changing their perspective, but in the past there was a demand for US-type educational institutions and materials.

"The GOL began to consider self help as demeaning. (Why can't we have US type schools"?)" (K)

*Quality and effectiveness need not be equated with American education, and relevance cannot be so equated. If planning can be a mutual endeavor of the USG and the GOL, and if it can be problem- rather than solution-oriented, projects more appropriate to Liberian needs are likely to result.*

The inappropriateness of the curriculum has been documented in USAID reports for twenty years. The costs of textbook production has been the main obstacle. (The MCSS has made some progress, particularly in African Studies. Results of the UNESCO curriculum project at Kakata is an unknown.)

"There is a tremendous need to reassess what the curriculum ought to be, and there is a need for President Tolbert to stand up and say so. They cannot continue to use a pseudo American Curriculum." (B)

"When developing an educational system for Liberia there is a tendency on the part of US advisors to do the modern American things. This is wrong, there is a need for basic education. Reading, writing, arithmetic as opposed to new math." (R)

"US textbooks are a bad foundation upon which to teach youngsters. Textbooks must be something which relates to their own experiences." (J)

"Somehow the RTTI project got maneuvered into using a syllabus that was suitable for Alabama and a teaching education curriculum that was suitable for Tuskegee." (B)

"The text books used at RTTI should have had a more African setting. We need to include the needs of Liberia to a greater extent in our texts and we need team members who have familiarity with Liberia." (Z)

"American textbooks and methods are used which are based on an approach to teaching quite different from that which would seem appropriate for children of a tribal background. In addition to teaching the wrong things in the wrong way, American textbooks are also very expensive for parents with little cash income (up to \$27 at the primary level). The result is that few children in rural schools have textbooks. Those that do are confused by reading that which was intended for the children of an alien culture with illustrations of snowballs, circuses, and subways, and a technological bias which evidently even hinders the teaching of mathematics. (Quote continued on next page.)

The net effect is that the little knowledge the children gain from primary school is not only useless in the rural environment in which they live but tends to make them discontented with rural life without preparing them for the modern urban sector which is incapable of absorbing most of them in any event." (Ref. 13)

"Moreover, and in direct relationship to both the training of teachers and the improvement of community schools; (c) the revision and development of the curriculum, including instructional materials and textbooks, are essential. A considerable amount of special skills effort and material support are required, for example, to bring about science and mathematics education in rural primary schools which is directly relevant to agricultural development, or to replace imported social studies textbooks with ones prepared and produced for use in the local environment." (Ref. 19)

"A new curriculum, while being able to effect a change from the study of the rivers and valleys of the United States and Europe to the study of Liberian geography, may make little headway in teaching Liberian youngsters how to cope with problem solving and operational skills in a modernizing economy both in the rural and urban areas." (Ref. 15)

"One of the most urgent curriculum needs constantly expressed by teachers and principals in the System, as well as by the Secretary of Education and his staff and by other Liberian educators, is the need for materials for all elementary grades written by Liberians about Liberia." (Ref. 11)

"One further point needs to be made concerning the secondary school system. The Mission questions the applicability of the US-imported Industrial Arts concept to Liberian circumstances. The Monrovia Consolidated School System Industrial Arts Bulletin refers to the preparation of students for entrance into specific trades. A variety of courses are offered in the fields of fine arts, mechanics, metal-working, woodworking, electronics and drafting. The Mission feels that this programme is too ambitious (and expensive), if the objective is basic technical orientation and is definitely not sufficient for vocational training as such." (Ref. 13)

"In late 1970, MCSS administrators and supervisors indicated as a priority task the development of a curriculum which would be effective with Liberian students. As a first step, workshops for the training of MCSS persons as future workshop leaders and curriculum specialists was proposed for early 1971. Research into effective teaching methods and ways to encourage instructional change also was to be built into the workshop. It was hoped that the workshop experience would lead to the formation of working committees to develop more culturally relevant curriculum content and instructional materials." (Ref. 2) [Ed. Note: 9 years after project start])

"One difficulty was the fact that the MCSS was stuck with Illionis curriculum materials even though there was a readiness on the part of the team to adapt." (A)

"Tended to follow an American Curriculum too much rather than focusing on local needs (Ex.: Electric ranges for home, etc.)." (V)

"We brought a footlocker of American tests which we thought might be adaptable. We soon learned that, although the concepts of testing were reasonably appropriate, the tests themselves were not." (Y)

American style facilities and equipment also are criticized:

"We went a bit too fast in developing rural schools. And we often provided too modern kinds of equipment. For example, the hydraulic pumps which were installed are not know usable. There should of been a simple bucket and rope. We must start where they are." (R)

"We put too much sophisticated equipment in schools. Should have concentrated more on basic education (adding/subtracting/reading)." (I)

"We carried them too fast at BWI. Liberia had not developed the type of vocational competence needed to accommodate the machinery, etc. that we put in. A lot of hand tools would have been better initially as would a more gradual switch to more sophisticated equipment." (M)

"The language laboratory is probably premature for the English department. With the present extent of operational difficulties in the department, it is difficult for them to face the problem of appropriate use of the laboratory.

Additionally, will teachers be able to overcome the awe produced by the 'mechanical monster' in the laboratory? Unless an effective inservice program for teachers is provided, this advisor doubts that many English teachers will want to face the logistical and operational problems presented by the laboratory." (Ref. 11)

"In general, a visitor to the W.V.S. Tubman High School gets the impression that it was designed and equipped at a much too high a level of technical complexity for the status of education in Liberia and the capacity of the Liberian economy." (Ref. 15)

"The very fact that these schools were being built to foreign standards (i.e., U.S. Government specifications) implied clearly to the people that the school was a gift from either their government or from "the Americans." Repeatedly, it followed from this popular conclusion that the "government" donors would have other and continuing responsibilities for their "government" school. The implementation methods therefore became inadvertently a means of engendering a "Their School" spirit rather than "Our School" spirit." (Ref. 8)

"We didn't need to build that expensive MCSS high school." (B)

"A critical weakness of the project was the policy decision arrived at during the early stages to set and maintain semi-American standards for design, type of construction and equipping." (Ref. 15)

"The obvious emphasis on the fine, modern school buildings which were constructed under the project tend to be overshadowed by the increasingly serious problems of the growing size of the school age population which cannot be accommodated in these buildings." (Ref. 15)

". . . the number of new classrooms constructed could have been increased substantially--perhaps doubled - if for example the design and standards used had more closely approximated the "self-help" school at the BTC than the permanent American-like schools on Haile Selasse Avenue and Newport Street;" (Ref. 15)

And there are questions about transplanting/adapting the American system of education:

"First, it is abundantly clear that any form of assistance must originate with appropriate persons in the host country. Foreigners, no matter how well intentioned, cannot determine needs and priorities for other nationals. One can only bring to any situation the background he possesses and this background is most apt to be quite unrealistic to the realities of life and future goals of a developing nation. Priorities of Americans are not likely to be priorities of others; yet with the financial support offered by the United States Government, it is most tempting to accept the proposed assistance in the hopes that once established, this assistance might be channeled to meet, at least in part, some of the host nation's felt needs. An insistence on the part of the donor country to establish goals and procedures merely serves to alienate those who are to be helped or at best confuses them as they try to maintain a working relationship with their fellow countrymen who are not directly involved in the project.

Another real risk when the host nation does not originate the proposal is that of over commitment of local resources, both fiscal and personnel. Pressing needs for other local requirements either go unmet or make it appear that the host government is not living up to its commitment to the support of the project. Either way, tensions develop and the relationship between the helper and the helped becomes strained. This situation can too readily lead to low morale and an expenditure of energy during the life of the project that is truly nonproductive. It also is a major factor in the collapse of seemingly well-established programs, after the foreign nationals depart.

Strains of a new project on the political can be greatly reduced when the proposal is conceived by the recipient country. All too often projects create political power struggles that seriously impair the ability to achieve stated goals. This is particularly true when the goal is to establish an institution which is not indigenous to the political, social, economic or cultural structures of the nation." (Ref. 3)

"At the 1968 National Education Conference in Monrovia, a noted Liberian educator described American education as an "alien transplant." The tendency of the physical or social body's protective mechanism is to reject that which is alien. An alien thing may be expelled outright, it may be isolated and thus rendered ineffective, or under certain favorable conditions it may be assimilated. A transplant is only considered in any case when the body has exhausted or lost its own capacity to deal with its problem. Therefore, if this analogy is descriptive at all, we are saying that indigenous creativity is the first priority and adaptation is the second. In no case can we expect to import solutions intact. Finally, whether we speak of creativity or transplants, local development cannot take place without Liberian leadership acting toward Liberian goals." (Ref. 11)

"Aside from these few relatively bright spots in the Liberian educational system, primary education for the majority of children in Liberia is ineffective, inefficient and may actually be counter-productive to both the student and the nation's development requirements. With the best of intentions, Liberia has developed a primary education system in rural areas which, as one educationalist interviewer stated, is designed to produce failures.

The basic problem with the system is that it is not relevant to the needs of the rural population. It is imported from the United States and is designed for an advanced, industrialized, urban society where it is assumed most children entering the system will at least complete secondary school. This system is designed in a manner which assumes the early years of education are only preparatory for the education which will follow and those few who do not advance to at least the secondary level in the United States are viewed as mentally or emotionally deficient individuals for whom special, and expensive, educational, training and welfare programmes must be devised by the Government to enable them to somehow fit into the social fabric of the nation.

In a rich, advanced nation this approach to education may make sense but in Liberia it results in frustration for the individual and an unfortunate waste of the human resources of the nation." (Ref. 13)

"USAID personnel have conceived of a "demonstration project" as an activity designed to show how something can be done in a better way, worthy of being adopted locally, but the Project Director, for example, stated in a meeting with the Chief Education Advisor early in 1965 that demonstration projects were, in his judgment, for the purpose of proving to USAID that its ideas were feasible for further application. He indicated that he had no idea of using the project's demonstrations at Zorzor and Gbarnga as models for other GOL projects, but he was convinced that their success and value should fully persuade USAID to extend such projects to other areas and districts." (Ref. 8)

"The purpose of MCSS can be questioned. The California model may not be appropriate.

There is too much of favoring the already favored by such heavy support to Monrovia." (G)

"The purpose of MCSS was to demonstrate a US District School--contrary to history/tradition of Liberia (Liberia has a National School System rather than a System of Districts)." (F)

"In using a prototype CSS based so closely on an American model--regardless of the efforts to adapt it to the Liberian situation--there is the danger of overlooking or obliterating a pattern built on Liberian life, tradition and culture ." (Ref. 15)

"The administration-related objective of semi-autonomy for the System was achieved in some respects but not in others, reflecting the possibility that the original objectives, based on an American model and subsequently modified, may not yet be fully adapted to the Liberian situation. It remains to be determined whether more, less, or the same amount of autonomy as the System enjoys at present is in the best interest of the System, the nation's schools in general, and the country's development." (Ref. 15)

Developing project support by Liberians.

The commitment of Liberian leaders is necessary; their tolerance leaves a project fragile to political shifts, and their objection is damning.

*One means by which Liberian leaders identify with projects is by serving on policymaking committees and boards.*

BWI in 1956:

"Board of Managers:

C. D. B. King, Former President of Liberia--Chairman  
John W. Cooper, Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce  
Bravid Harris, Bishop, Protestant Episcopal Mission in Liberia  
Richard Lee Jones, United States Ambassador to Liberia  
Oscar Norman, Assistant Secretary of the Interior  
George Padmore, Liberian Ambassador to the United States  
George L. Smith, Principal Booker Washington Institute  
Harold Whetstone, Pastor, Lutheran Mission in Liberia  
Werner Wickstrum, Pastor, Methodist Episcopal Mission in Liberia  
Ross Wilson, General Manager, Firestone Plantations Company  
Ernest J. Yancy, Secretary of Public Instruction" (Ref. 1)

MCSS in 1969:

"The Council, though created and empowered by the Charter, seems to be useful and effective only to the extent that it is comprised of influential persons who, concertedly, could achieve measures for the MCSS which the Institution alone may not be able to achieve." (Ref. 15)

Both President Tubman and President Tolbert have evidenced strong interest in educational programs.

"One of the best ways to get a project accepted and a commitment made to it is to have the approval of the President who says 'let's do this.' The major speech of President Tubman on Monrovia education was a mandate for doing it." (B)

"President Tubman visited Dr. Smith at BWI twice a week. Dr. Smith attended Cabinet meetings. President Evans of Prairie View visited Tubman's home in Cape Palmas as guest." (M)

"One big plus that helped the institution building at Zorzor was having the President dedicate the institution." (H)

"The Cornell Chief of Party knew President Tolbert very well. Since returning to the States they have kept in touch, and several years ago President Tolbert invited the Chief of Party to return to Liberia as his guest." (P)

"A month later, the President granted the high school a private audience at the Executive Mansion. Together with the high school chorus, the Cultural Club troupe staged their best performance of the year. The students petitioned the President for his support in securing more teachers for African Studies. They thanked him for creating a climate

of acceptance and pride in the culture and traditions of Liberia. As a token of his support and appreciation, President Tubman presented one thousand dollars to the high school." (Ref. 12)

"...it is certainly true that the political necessities of the situation since the president's proclamation of the National Unification Policy have resulted in much more support for rural educational development than has been actually backed up with budget and appropriations. However, both Secretary Massequoi in the early part of this project and Secretary Caine at the present time were apparently genuinely interested in project development for a number of reasons including their own tribal backgrounds. To the extent to which rural school development has been feasible as a relatively painless aspect of the Unification Policy, it has received support and backing at high levels...

"Outside of the Central Department of Education it should be noted that during the life of the Joint Commission there was apparently a fairly high level of support for this project. A review of project funding by GOL during the years that the JC existed reveal some provision for important items such as school maintenance and costs other than personnel. The JC was comprised, in the majority, of cabinet ministers or their designees." (Ref. 8)

*It is always helpful to align new projects to existing policies; official statements and ongoing programs.*

"The Unification Policy, as mentioned previously, has served as a primary favorable factor. It has been consistently a basis for justification of efforts to provide educational opportunity in project areas. Teaching the use of English--the national language--is a unifying force. Teaching vocationally useful knowledge gives the tribal people opportunity to contribute their share to national development and to take their place in the total body politic. Often, defences of or supports for project activities have referred back to this policy pronouncement." (Ref. 8)

"Such training was aimed at preparing officials to assume responsibility for key positions in 'the new consolidated school district.' The term 'consolidated school district' in this context shows that it was assumed that the Monrovia Consolidated School System would serve as a prototype for similar administrative units in areas under this project." (Ref. 8)

"The Committee recommends that use be made of the MCSS as a model as much as is feasible and possible, in consolidating groups of schools around the country." (Ref. 15)

"Graves observed that Liberia in 1951 was on the verge of an 'educational renaissance.' He stated that '...the government (GOL) has made a substantial beginning in developing a nationwide program of its own, and that the Technical Cooperative Assistance program should be directed toward aiding the government in building upon, augmenting and accelerating this development.'" (Ref. 8)

"It is valuable to connect project to an ongoing GOL program. (This is particularly true of short-term projects.)" (S)

"The Testing Center was created under the Division of Testing and Guidance. It was the Director of that division with whom I worked directly. The

Center has grown and is still functioning and the Director is now a Deputy Minister." (Y)

"It is a good idea that a project somehow be identified with other projects in Africa."

*I doubt if there is a single grand strategy for gaining needed support beyond mutual planning, honest respect for Liberians, social friendships, demonstrated effectiveness, concern for Liberian education, and patience with non-American attitudes towards work. Some suggestions have been made, however:*

"We need to zero in on those GOL staff members who can make a difference in project success. We need to identify those who were centrally involved in previous projects. We need to pursue particular personalities." (N)

"In terms of incentives, if the Ministry of Education says do...they do. At least in those days there was almost unquestioned obedience to the directives of the Ministry." (T)

"In developing a real GOL commitment,  
• find a common focus of interest  
• determine who has this interest and seems willing to make a commitment--and cultivate these persons." (G)

"It is important that you find an entrée into the government power structure as it exists." (J)

"In order to establish good working relationships you must know some Liberians very well as friends. These friends can then provide you with entrée to other people in the government." (E)

Some instances of good relations:

"The project gained credibility with the Ministry because we were able to demonstrate significant results at an early time." (Y)

"Some good relations were established because a number of the American wives were sorority sisters of some of the Liberians' wives." (H)

"The Education Officer's wife was part of a Liberian bridge group which included officials and wives of officials." (I)

"He probably was the most successful chief of party. He maintained good Liberian contacts, and he tried to open up his contacts to other members of his team via briefings and the social gatherings." (B)

"He handled things with a strict hand, but he could do things that USAID personnel couldn't. He operated like a Liberian and got things done." (F)

"One should expect it to take some time to develop good rapport. For instance, it took six months for me to develop decent rapport with the new Minister of Education." (H)

"The Chief-of-Party was outgoing and was able to establish good rapport with the Ministry of Education. He could see the Minister even when

There also are pitfalls resulting from well-intended inputs which might be avoided through better planning with the GOL. Several examples:

"Our wise pull-out from an obligation to assist in building the new \$30 million University of Liberia campus may have had some effect on the GOL not trusting USG intentions. It would have been wiser not to have made the obligation in the first place." (L)

"Secretary Caine was 'sold' by the Chief Education Officer on a new project. President Tubman told the Secretary to drop the idea because it would undermine existing programs. One result was that Secretary Caine then became 'inaccessible' to USAID education officers." (X)

## Contract Team Administration

*A contractor should be allowed the maximum time possible to select a team after the project has been jointly planned by GOL, USG and the contractor.*

To ask a contractor to select and gain commitments for any team members other than the chief-of-party before definitive project planning would be a disservice to the project. *Selection should be based upon competence, experience and likelihood of adapting well to Liberia, to counterparts, to other team members and to other Americans.* Decisions must involve all members of a potential technician's family.

"One important cause of failure is recruitment error. Those who are recruited to serve on contract teams in Liberia should be well informed about conditions of living and working in the country." (G)

"There should be a selection of people on contract teams who truly believe that Liberians have ability. They should believe that what is needed is help and support and technical information. But a paternal attitude is a dangerous element." (C)

"Even with the most careful screening and selection procedures, persons do get selected who are not capable of adjusting to the requirements of being a professional advisor in an overseas setting. In some instances this is even true of persons who are well known and have already had a long and successful career in the United States with the contracting organization. Additionally, spouses and older children require careful screening to determine whether this type of assignment is really something they desire and if they have the personalities which will allow them to readily adjust to a new culture and way of life. The team member overseas, probably more than at any other previous time, requires strong home support." (Ref. 3)

"The Chief of Party must pick his own staff. He must make sure that he is able to get the people on his team who will mesh. This is particularly important if the full team is to live in close proximity." (J)

"A two year assignment is too short and a ten year assignment is too long. Assignments should be somewhere in between." (C)

"In selecting Tuskegee team members we made sure they were not college oriented. Experience has shown that University and high school oriented staff are subject oriented. Tuskegee took elementary teachers with the "smarts" that were able to develop and integrate functional program."  
(J)

"It is probably no more advisable to proceed with a community development project without a community development specialist on the staff who will be available to assist at the right times and to the extent necessary, that it is to engage in an engineering type activity without engineering services being available." (Ref. 8)

"Three persons interviewed every prospective team member twice. Of equal importance, however, was the fact that we interviewed wives three times. We had to be sure that (1) the team member would be professionally capable, (2) the family would adapt well to Liberia, and (3) the family could be part of an integrated contract team." (C)

"We recognized at the start that one potential team member and his wife were somewhat prejudiced against Blacks, an obvious choice not to go. But since both man and wife fully recognized and decried their prejudice, they were included and did an excellent job." (C)

"SFS attempted always to send the best quality people. For example, they sent only full professors and not junior faculty. This procedure indicated the importance that SFS gave to the project and it was recognized as such by counterparts and the GOL." (C)

"Few of contract team came from Cornell, even Dick Bond, COP." (V)

"Success also came because SFS was able to get real dedicated live wires on the contract early, including 4 of the 5 members of the initial survey team. They got a commitment that these people would be named as having a role in the contract even during the survey." (G)

"A black team has certain advantages, but they are useless unless level of competence can be demonstrated to the Liberians. Those who traded solely on "blackness" did not fare well--competence had to come first." (G)

"Some SFS members were younger than Liberian counterparts and with the same academic degrees. Result was a loss of respect by Liberian counterparts." (X)

"Early contract team members had commitment and enthusiasm; but, once the novelty of a new country wore off, many (particularly replacement team members) lacked enthusiasm and fell into the same kinds of manana patterns existing in the country itself." (S)

"TAs who came early to MCSS had enthusiasm. Later TAs seemed to lack, and they may not have been as strong technically." (X)

"It is difficult for a contractor to send home a nonperforming team member, so many were able to get by with minimal efforts and still stay." (S)

"There were some problems because some contract team members wanted to get things done while others didn't give a damn." (S)

"Technicians at BWI who were exceptional made a real impression on students. (Ex: Student followed the typing teacher around)." (M)

"Contract team members were not as oriented as they should be to living in rural areas. However, they did try to cope." (Z)

"Those that were willing to go to rural areas without special privilege were well-liked. (Best example was the Peace Corps.)"

(I)

"Some Monrovia-based projects had up-country components. Many didn't want to go up-country, and many didn't go." (S)

"Liberians considered the Prarie View Contract group as 2nd-class citizens (and as less-able advisors) because they came from a Black Southern College." (Quote: "If we had a white man in your position, we would get more from USG.") (M)

"Even during the latter period of Tuskegee's involvement with the RTTIs, we felt that the Liberians still looked upon the American Blacks as being a little inferior in technical competence. (E)

Some situations which may arise:

"The primary problem at Kakata for UNESCO was the schooling of their children. The solution was a one-hour commute to Monrovia for the youngsters each day." (G)

"Do not rely on the MOE okay about housing. Put housing in your contract." (H)

"The contract must provide for sufficient transportation to avoid those kinds of hassels we support vehicles, cars, with gasoline, maintenance, etc." (C)

"After got transport, were able to provide wives with shopping and sight-seeing." (M)

*Project teams, particularly large and isolated ones, must constantly (1) guard against becoming ingrown and being alienated from the larger Liberian and American community and (2) remain alert and critical of both their professional and social behavior.*

"Individuals, both on the contract team and direct hire in USAID, harbor real and imagined differences between 'contract people' and 'direct hire people.' While close personal as well as family friendships do develop, this cloud still seems to persist which causes some suspicion as to the motives behind specific actions. This is most unfortunate as the success of one enhances the success of the other. Additionally, it often leaves the host nationals in a quandry as both are seen as Americans dedicated to the same goals of assistance with no such differentiation as contractors, direct hire, and yes, even Peace Corps Military Mission, VOA, etc." (Ref. 3.)

"Contract team was too-royally treated (ex.: Almost one contract vehicle per person), and they became separated from their counterparts too much." (V)

"Many mission Americans resented the transport available to SF state. They saw wives shopping downtown using contract cars." (B)

"Most social contacts were within the team itself. Perhaps it had something to do with the size of the team." (A)

"The contract group was so large that it had an internal life of its own and didn't integrate sufficiently with either USAID or GOL." (V)

"Had some drinking and marital problems among staff. We sent one home and kept one family together." (M)

"It is very important to be self critical within your own contract teams. Very often we let the Liberians alone and held our own meetings in order to try to troubleshoot our own operation." (C)

"It was evident that we had to have better communication among ourselves if we were to continue to provide quality support to the MCSS. It was out of this condition that the team agreed to an intensive series of meetings, first as a team and later with our colleagues in the MCSS. These meetings were to attack problems of internal communication, role definition, and project operating principles.

The meeting lasted for the whole month of January 1969 and resulted in some basic changes which have meant better support for the MCSS. First, the team began to be housed all together at the high school. Then it agreed to meet for one morning each week in an evaluation session."  
(Ref. 12)

"Our way of staying on key in the area of developing processes was to continue weekly team meetings on Friday mornings. These meetings were devoted to evaluation and critique by the total team. The team meetings became a forum for considering any new ideas or proposals in light of their relevancy to our goal of developing processes. The experience of an internal "no-holds-barred" evaluation has been both harrowing and exhilarating, and seems to have improved our overall effectiveness."  
(Ref. 12)

*A contract organization must be able to give backstopping support to a team in the field.*

"The contract team at the University were not primarily from the Cornell faculty. Although early backstopping was adequate, a change in presidents at Cornell lessened the emphasis on Liberia and home support suffered. This situation compares unfavorably with that of San Francisco State which provided excellent backstopping. The majority of team members were from San Francisco." (G)

"The original project director of the initial survey team provided backstopping when the team went to Liberia. After four years a returned team member took over this responsibility, and home support remained outstanding." (C)

"An important condition of success is logistics support and timing. One typically sees the opposite in a number of United Nations operations."  
(G)

"Constant, as well as the availability of immediate contact between the home institution and the field is extremely important. Communications take on a heightened meaning when just the distance of separation creates possible misunderstandings. Morale and efficiency are greatly enhanced through the availability of a telex, cables and APO privileges." (Ref. 3)

"Support of the contract team is essential to the ultimate success of any project. Support is required from several key sources, each of which makes its own unique contribution.

First and foremost is the support from the Team's home institution or organization. An absolute necessity is a commitment by the institution to the project. If it is merely to add prestige or overhead money or to provide aggrandizement for selected individuals, the chance for success is minimal. Real commitment generates enthusiasm both at home and abroad, which leads to pride in accomplishment and resultant success. Confidence in sustained backstopping frees team members to operate at their optimum professional level without having to succumb to nonprofessional pressures exerted from a variety of sources." (Ref. 13)

"In all my overseas projects home support has been first-order whether I was in Liberia or Vietnam. We exist as a research contracting organization (not a job shop) and it is our business to provide for our own." (4)

Role of the USAID Mission regarding contractors.

The "bankers" role for the Mission (earlier depicted as a part of planning) could be extended in some degree to the management of projects by the Mission. In this real world of CPis and evaluation officers, *USAID has a responsibility to manage, but it could seek to minimize its burden on technicians and rely more on the professional competence of contractors and direct-hire technicians.*

Many of the following excerpts represent some frustration of both sides, but they also represent real episodes from which we can learn.

"There is a frustration in the USAID overseeing contractors. When I was there we weren't even sure where the mission should be on a given project." (B)

"There should be a minimum local AID official influence on a project once funded." (C)

"The contract team had to spend too much time for 'satisfying' USG, that it was tough for them to get on with the job. There is a need for more freedom to operate without giving justification. Approximately 2/3rds of contract team time in the first two years was given over to this kind of activity." (A)

"Three different auditing teams have made inquiries about the Monrovia Consolidated School Project. Team members have attempted to give full cooperation and to be candid in their appraisals. We fully realize the necessity for our work to be appraised. However, we do feel that any appraisal of our program should be based upon some reasonable minimum of contact with Contract Team and Liberian employees of the System. We were very much disappointed with the lack of depth to the inquiries made by some members of auditing teams. We hope that their evaluations are limited to those areas with which they have some familiarity." (Ref. 11)

"Shortly after the new Education Officer arrived we found that he was making an independent almost secret audit of what we were doing without involving the contract staff at all. We quickly learned to distrust him and had as little interaction as possible." (C)

"The program office tended to dominate the technical offices, telling technicians what to do. The PR was running the show. Between the Program Officer and the Director, there was no need for an Education Division because they were telling us what to do." (I)

"Even with efforts by these key staff members, we have experienced some difficulties which have tended to dilute the impact of our efforts. This has been most noticeable in terms of the length of time which was required to get decisions on key matters. Undoubtedly, some of this time lag between requests and decisions was due to administrative procedures which must be followed. It may be that there is (Quote continued on next page.)

no way of expediting such decisions. However, a delay often places the team in a difficult position. There are times when we must be able to respond quickly to system needs. This is particularly important in the case of proposals for research and short-term positions. We have one instance in which it took more than nine months to get a decision on a request for a short-term position. For several years the Mission has criticized the team for its failure to produce more in the way of research. This criticism was taken seriously by the team and efforts were made to do more in this area. Yet, we have been discouraged as the Mission posture seemed to have been lukewarm to proposals.

We understand the problems which the Mission had because of the delay in Congressional approval of funds. We hope, however, that the Mission will also understand that uncertainty in budget makes some planning impossible and seriously compromises it in other cases. For example, under the assumption that we had funds for research, we had planned certain team activities for the vacation period. We nearly lost the opportunity to do some of our most effective curriculum research with system colleagues because we did not know if research funds would be available. Even when funds became available we were late for an effective start." (Ref. 15)

"...it can be said that U.S. AID is credited with promoting the MCSS Project during its formation and establishment and with financing a significant portion of its costs. During the later stages of the project it appeared that the Contractors (building and technical assistance) tended to proceed within the scope of their contracts and with little active support and encouragement from the U.S. AID Mission. Evidence of this condition were visible in the failure to find ways and means to resolve the problems associated with incorrectly installed and inoperative equipment funded under the project loan and in delays in approving work for which funds had been committed, such as the research projects. A representative of USAID did consistently play a constructive role as a member of MCSS Council. USAID, however, shares with the Ministry of Education some of the responsibility for the policies which resulted in the construction of a limited number of high cost school buildings rather than more facilities at a lower unit cost. USAID's insistence on the enactment into law of the MCSS Charter as a pre-requisite for construction work to commence, resulted in long and undue delays in the Project." (Ref. 15)

"The support of the United States Government through its Embassy and Agency for International Development is crucial. The Embassy is the official tie with 'home' and provides those personal services that can become so important when one is residing outside his own country. Embassy personnel must maintain a very delicate balance between providing American amenities and at the same time not interfering with the incorporation of the U.S. citizen into the local community.

USAID, both locally and in Washington, carries a major responsibility for the success or failure of the assistance projects it funds. Like the contracting institution, USAID is essentially people - individuals who have committed themselves to a period of time in lending  
(Quote continued on next page.)

their expertise to the growth and development of a foreign nation. Interestingly enough, it is this individuality that can provide the most instant support or conversely be the greatest hindrance to immediate progress. Initial negotiations between USAID and the contractor involve face-to-face dealings with persons who are committed to the basic goals of a project. An understanding is reached and the project commences. Agreements and differences are fairly easy to work out in the early stages as individuals are involved who took part in the development of the contract. As years pass, personal changes in what individuals consider the most essential tasks to be accomplished. Fortunately, differences are almost always worked out, but in so doing much time and energy is lost to the project. To alleviate this situation, it is imperative that contractors become much more knowledgeable of the operations of USAID, and that USAID rely much more heavily on the competence of the contractor to fulfill its commitment without requiring constant justification for actions taken." (Ref. 3)

Institution building and transfer.

*Transfer, although planned, should not be on a definite time line; it should rely on indicators (usually difficult to measure) of the willingness and readiness of the GOL to accept responsibility. However, the transfer of responsibility to a Liberian staff should remain a target of any project, and staff development is a key component. One respondent suggests:*

"Some way must be found to plan the adoption/transfer process. This process must be built into the plan. There are three steps:

1. planned transfer,
2. use of key GOL people, and
3. capability of GOL to continue support." (U)

The several projects had varying success in planning for transfer, and some of the lack of success may reflect the drying up of educational funds and the early termination of activities. It was the Rural School Development project, for example, which was judged to require some 20-25 years of consistent support, and it is that project which most sorely needed planned institution building:

"We built rural schools. We left. That was it." (S)

"D. J. Hays did an excellent job in building schools in rural Liberia. One of his failures, however, was not to leave an institution behind. He did things, but did not train a counterpart to take over these activities." (K)

At BWI one problem was provision for an adequate GOL budget:

"We didn't plan adequately for the assumption of recurring costs at BWI by the GOL." (V)

The Testing Center was a small project which easily fit into the existing Ministry structure and for which institution building was less of a problem:

"The testing center was an excellent program because it was planned and implemented to be run by the Liberians. It is still operating." (R)

The Cornell team at the University of Liberia tried to improve an existing institution, however:

"We needed to focus more on institution building. (We did a lot of teaching at the University of Liberia ourselves and had difficulty getting trained counterparts back into appropriate University slots.)" (D)

Tuskegee started from scratch in developing the Rural Teacher Training Institutes at Kakata and Zorzor, and the contract team operated the RTTIs for a number of years. However, members of the team made a real attempt to transfer responsibilities:

"One way Tuskegee worked themselves out of a job was by selecting trainees for Stateside education who returned and took up the job and worked right along beside the contract team members." (E)

"The Tuskegee team gave Liberians the expertise so that they could take over. When Farrell moved to Kakata he turned over all operations at Zorzor to the Liberians. Then they did the same thing later at Kakata. They turned over their houses, materials, etc." (E)

The contractor which seemingly paid the greatest attention to its responsibilities for transfer was San Francisco State. Several persons (including some team members) feel that SFSC operated the system too long:

"The contract team manned the MCSS operation seemingly forever." (S)

"It took more than five years to effect a transfer of MCSS operation to Liberians. I feel that this was too lengthy a period." (A)

I am inclined to believe, however, that the delay in transfer resulted primarily from delays of the GOL (approving the charter, forming the council and appointing a superintendent)\* rather than any hesitation on the part of the contractor to relinquish control. There was a definite planned transfer of responsibility:

"The transition from American (SFSC) leadership to Liberian leadership was another significant aspect of project development. It consisted of three phases: (1) 1962-1966, full control by SFSC with Liberian associates; (2) 1967-1968, transition, with selection of Liberians for key positions and the revision of the SFSC contract as to scope of work and levels of staffing; and (3) 1968-1972, Liberian control with SFSC specialists as advisors and consultants. Since the first of July 1972, the MCSS has operated without any project advisors." (Ref. 15)

"If the San Francisco State College Contract Team is to fulfill its mission, it must be preoccupied with and committed to its own decline. It must resist temptations to entrench or take root--easy and ego-satisfying though these temptations may be. Inevitably, our success will be indicated by the growth of a strong MCSS and by our loss of visibility. Each year from now on, we must become less vital to the development of the System. Anything else is regression rather than progress." (Ref. 11)

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\*These GOL delays more than likely reflect the lack of total agreement among Liberians at the outset on the concept of having an independent council.

"Consistently our team has made a strong point of the fact that our efforts were directed at building a social institution which is compatible with the cultural milieu. We want to help build something which stands on its own and will not be dependent upon the continued presence of consultants or external support." (Ref. 12)

"I believe the System will have to answer these questions or face a serious gap in its instructional program. Where does the advisor fit? As indicated throughout this report, he becomes a growth catalyst, a communications developer, a sounding board, a quester who uses his technical knowledge as one of the common grounds on which to build a bridge of understanding and mutual acceptance with the advisee. Without the role the advisor might as well pack up and go home. He does not run and hide in his technical competence in order to avoid confrontation with the realities of Liberian education. It is the advisor's first responsibility to be 'with the advisee' in the broadest sense of the phrase. Anything less calls for a re-evaluation of the advisor's assignment." (Ref. 11)

"The effectiveness of the role of an advisor under the circumstances described above is dependent upon a number of conditions. Certainly one of the most difficult tasks of the Contract Team is to find effective ways to use highly talented professionals in advising settings rather than in directing or controlling ones. Every advisor was an integral part of a home scene and had mastered most of the social cues. He represented a set of values in some segment of a community and understood many others. No doubt he worked for recognition of his own achievements. Indeed, had he not been recognized as an effective 'doer' he would not have been selected as a team member for the Project.

"From this background the advisor comes as an alien to a scene that he can only know in part. He is expected to support others in their professional development when at the same time he may be predisposed to pick up the ball and run. He learns that he can attempt to impose his own familiar system, then later discovers that he had been talking in a vacuum to polite listeners (rejection). He may even get his advisee to go through the motions of writing a handbook that looks like the one at home but which no one intends to use (isolation). On the other hand, he may be sensitive enough to recognize that in all of the baggage and freight which was brought across the Atlantic there were no 'answers.' (No doubt much of the baggage was 'excess' and much of the freight was 'surface.')

The advisor can bring experience in defining problems, developing answers, a willingness to be of help, and a sensitivity to growth factors in others. We who are advisors must know, among other things, that our help can be received only under certain 'favorable conditions.' We believe that this happens when an advisor has respect for and faith in his advisee. It also requires an open-minded, non-defensive advisee. As advisors we are concerned that we operate not to thwart independence, but to foster self-direction and self-reliance." (Ref. 11)

"For any new program, the main thing is to make sure that people with whom you work understand what you are trying to do. There needs to be an in-depth study to make sure that the program is needed." (E)

"Advisory roles have to piggyback on operational roles. Contract people must fill a defined role. Once the GOL finds out that they are good then the GOL will respond favorably to advice." (G)

"Government officials will accept advisors only after there has been demonstrated competence. But this role is best that of a colleague rather than an advisor. A colleague has give-and-take, leaving GOL officials with the decisions." (G)

## Working with counterparts.

Lasting institutions quite clearly are those operated by competent and dedicated Liberian educators. And equally clearly, it is the contract team's primary responsibility to insure that such educators are in place and operating the system. Paternalism and advisor-advisee roles are clearly counterindicated. Some of the more successful staff development efforts have involved: (1) *insuring that counterparts are selected who are committed and who have sufficient prestige, (2) inclusion of counterparts in planning, (3) regarding them as true colleagues, (4) becoming involved with them on both a working and social level, and (5) withdrawing from active project roles, giving advice only when requested, as counterparts assume complete responsibility.*

"You should count on counterparts eventually slipping away from the program. The important point is to have counterparts with both energy and commitment." (G)

"The political factors mentioned above are supplemented by one which was the direct consequence of the recruitment policy of the project leadership--the tendency to give preference to people believed to possess actual or potentially favorable political influence. The inverse of this 'positive' factor was that some people used their influence for personal advantage not necessarily favorable for the MCSS and in some cases quite clearly unfavorable to it in one or more respects. Generally, this problem has taken the form of making it impossible for the MCSS administration to assign or reassign personnel to suit the best interests of the System." (Ref. 15)

"The contract team had no counterparts at first. This may have been a good idea so that the team could get operating and get plans made before counterparts were brought on." (A)

"One real plus in the early going was the attempts to get Liberian participation in initial planning." (A)

"...need for counterparts as an integral part of planning stage." (S)

"Tuskegee attempted to make the Liberians feel that they were part of planning at RTTI. We called on them for their opinions regardless of whether we followed the opinions or not." (E)

"The aims of education are exclusively Liberian. Consultants can help, however, to establish the process of redefining general aims into operational specifics. For example, vocational education has been widely stated to be an aim in Liberia. But there is a significant gap between the label 'vocational education' and a particular course of study. The consultant's role is to establish processes for moving from ideas to realities. It would be presumptuous to do more than this. We see this role as distinct from the traditional counterpart arrangement which assumes a knowing advisor and an unknowing advisee. On the contrary, we assume a knowing colleague who can grow with support and the stimulation of ideas which are catalytic." (Ref. 12)

"The idea of providing advisors to officials is almost a condition of failure because it is almost impossible to dispel the superior-inferior syndrome. This particular battle was won by the MCSS after Hillard came, but it did succeed because of the previous competence shown during the operation of the school system by contract personnel." (G)

"A key to the whole 'helping' process appears to be tied to a self-realization that must precede any meaningful interaction with another person, especially one from another culture and society. One must understand and accept himself enough to realize and be willing to admit that he does not have the answer to any Liberian problem, that he comes from a culture and society that has not solved many of the same issues with which Liberian educators are grappling.

"It takes a special kind of person to help overseas. Because a country is labeled a 'developing' country does not mean their problems are simple and can therefore be solved by any person who is lucky enough to be sent there. The advisor who would be successful in this environment must know who he is and be human enough to interact with other equal, if different, human beings." (Ref. 2)

"The real premise I have tried to establish in this overview is that the helping relationship should not be predicated on the hopes and aspirations of the country offering aid, but instead should be based on the desires and terms of the country receiving aid. The important theme then is that those foreigners involved as consultants for an overseas project must maintain a perspective on the helping relationships which will allow them to terminate their function as quickly and effectively as possible with the final goal of independence, self-reliance, and self-determination realized by the host nation. In this process the foreign consultant team must never sacrifice its role as a motivator of the change process. It can become possible for the consultant team to lose perspective and assume a role that actually stifles the primary function of the project--to create a viable institution founded on the realities of institutionalization in the host country. If the team of foreign experts becomes more committed to the project than the host country nationals, a disservice to the host nation has been rendered." (Ref. 3)

"Blackness is an asset only if an advisor or a contract member is highly competent. Pollard, RRTI, was an example because of his dedication and tremendous energy and excitement. Thompson and Clark of the Cornell team also were examples. They were able to get very close to Liberians." (G)

"Asa Hilliard was highly respected because, although black, he maintained his role as chief-of-party and technical director. He did not become 'Liberianized' as some have." (G)

"We Americans tend to impose upon Liberians our own philosophy without taking into consideration some of the culture of the local scene. Any advisor must walk carefully, particularly at first, until he is accepted as part of the local scene." (H)

"In the school of business the contract staff got too pushy and nothing happened. It is better to lay the germ of an idea and let it grow." (P)

"We found that documents published under our names were not always attended to. When we made sure that counterparts alone were given credit for documents, even though we may have assisted in some degree,

"...the advisor should not become mute when discussion takes place if he has a contribution to make. He should make a presentation of as broad a view as possible, but he does have to be sensitive to the difference between peer discussion and dominance by the advisor." (Ref. 11)

"Although early in the project we had programmed an American to be the first superintendent of the MCSS, this was never effected because we learned that a superintendent must have internal connections to facilitate solutions to problems." (C)

"The SFS team operated admirably in that they became a group of consultants who did not hover and did not intervene. There was an image among other Americans that staff members on the contract team were sitting at home. In reality they were not hovering--they were there to provide consultation and to give strength to the Liberian side and to provide them with self-reliance." (B)

"In answer to the question, how to you best help people, sometimes it is best done by removing yourself and letting them do for themselves. You should be available so that needed help can be asked for. This was the operating philosophy of the SF team once the system was in place and being operated by Liberians." (C)

"When the Liberians were exposed to a professionally trained group where the cohesiveness and interaction was so obvious, it seems that they also became more anxious to organize their own professional work group." (C)

"Contract team members became so involved in what they were doing that they would often forget the Liberians themselves, who would sort of withdraw. You must try to see the activities from the point of view and the perceptions of the locals." (A)

"In staff meetings of early years, the Americans would get wrapped up in American-type plans and interact with each other. The Liberians tended not to participate and often would disappear from the room. It was this mode of communication in those days that may have left the Liberians outside of the group." (A)

"Tuskegee involvement and rapport with Liberian staff should be compared with the virtual total lack of rapport by the UNESCO team. (Example: Pearl Headd's functional working relationship with KRTHI staff.)" (G)

"In establishing necessary rapport, it is necessary, it is important, that the Liberians be involved in planning and other activities to be a part of what is happening. Whenever you plan, plan with, and ask if there are any questions or inputs. You must have inputs from the point of view of Liberians." (E)

"Oftentimes President Weeks (U of L) would be fuming after talking with USAID or American Embassy. The most deadly advice is 'this is the way we do it in the U.S.' The best approach is to treat Liberians as colleagues--to give them food for thought and let them make their own decisions." (P)

"Good advice to advisors: stay in the background and don't demand. Some team members who pushed too hard at UL did not succeed. Try to lay out ideas and to build the confidence that you are concerned with the Liberians as people." (P)

"In giving advice it is best not to give direct advice. Quite often in discussions, advice was given as something to think over. Having thought it over, a counterpart often would do what the suggestion implied." (P)

"The advisory style that works best is represented by Gordon Holgremm, who was low-key and empathetic. This is a much more successful posture than is the high-powered salesman. We need to provide process rather than substance, and to be a facilitator, not a leader." (B)

"This is a good example of how an advisor who becomes operational has a long-term effect upon the operational role of the advisee. This again points up the necessity for the nonoperational role of advisors, if one of the Project's goals is to leave the decision-making in the System's hands.

"A trap that the advisor can easily fall into is that of presenting material, even in draft form, to the advisee before extensive open-ended discussion has taken place. It has been apparent time after time that if such discussion does not take place the growth potential of the advisee is emasculated." (Ref. 11)

"At this point in the evolution of the Monrovia Consolidated School System, it is recommended that the Advisory Staff back off and encourage the Liberian staff to take their own hard look at what now exists and to make their own decisions concerning where they want the System to go from here. As advisors, we can only assist and advise in what is needed and desired by the Liberian staff. The immediate next step is to get a sense of direction from those that best know the needs and to assist them, making input when it is needed, in moving toward their goals.

"The views expressed here might possibly be mistaken as a sit-and-wait policy in getting a job done in the schools in this System. There is certainly much to be done; the question is what is to be done. The Advisor to the Director of Curriculum and Training must admit that 'what' is of major concern. This advisor did not bring a 'bag of tricks' from the United States that will easily solve the educational problems that beset this System. In fact, educational systems in America are grappling with many of the same problems that we face here. It is recommended that a reassessment be made of the 'Helping Role' as it relates to each of our tasks as advisors to a school system in a developing African country. It is suspected that our services would be greatly enhanced if we worked harder on how to take steps and not so much on implementing the steps we propose." (Ref. 11)

"You cannot go into another country and remake it. You cannot force-train people. It has to be a natural growth with the people you are working with. This takes time, guidance, and patience." (C)

"It is important to 'work with' rather than 'direct' Liberians." (E)

"You must make it possible for the counterpart to head the project." (G)

"If the Liberians have the feeling that you are truly concerned, they will be inclined to interact with you and to accept your suggestions. But if you push Western ideas as such, you are not going to get very far." (P)

"It is important to put great emphasis on having and developing a helping relationship with the Liberians. It was often said that the SFS project people were more Liberian than the Liberians. Once this relationship has been established, you can find out from the Liberians themselves where the problems are." (C)

"Those on the contract team who truly listened to Liberians and who found how to get at their level of understanding were those who were most successful." (A)

"In the early days there were things that the local staff could do, but our mode of operation did not allow for giving them responsibility early enough." (A)

"Liberia now has an increasing number of competent teaching professionals, but we haven't used this competence effectively because we haven't approached them in ways that could give them recognition and status or to give them education in lieu of status." (S)

"The term 'advisors' was insulting to Liberians. We preferred to use, and did use, the term 'consultants.'" (C)

"Liberians have come to dislike the word 'counterpart.' It is better to use the word 'colleague.'" (H)

"Some Liberians have said that we want to be taken by the hand and be led but we don't want to know it." (H)

"Your counterpart will know if someone he may have conflict with has more clout with the government than he does. You can be sure of that." (J)

"The transporting of GOL officials has radically changed from a problem and a diversion into a pertinent opportunity for professional consultation, training, and learning by the technician about unknown or poorly understood factors in the situation." (Ref. 8)

"Sometimes we had the impression that the local staff felt they were more competent than they really were. But it was important that we be tolerant and work along with them, even though we may have thought we had all the answers." (E)

"There should be a continuing contact with Liberian people with the expectation of a personal relationship in work. By striving for and making personal relations it leads to friendship and cooperation on projects." (C)

"...need many informal meetings, perhaps some kind of retreat to develop honest interaction." (S)

"It is important to get together with Liberians on a social level if you're going to have any impact. A good example was McQueen, who had both the personality and was diplomatic. He had what it took to work well with people." (R)

"Had monthly party at Dr. Smith's house for contract and Liberian staff. Used for talking over problems." (M)

"Some of the Tuskegee team members lambasted the chief of party because although he sat with ministers, he would get on a tractor and clear the ground. They thought he should stay aloof. It is important to develop both working and social relations, inviting persons to your home and going into their homes. Dr. McQueen's wife developed a cookbook for Liberian food with the wife of Romeo Horton." (H)

"One of the important means for maintaining rapport was always involving Liberian staff in whatever social affairs there were." (E)

"The houses at RTTI were constructed for Americans first. The Liberians moved into all the houses after Tuskegee left." (E)

"An important way that the RTTI institutions were built up was to provide the Liberian faculty with houses, free electricity, water, and a reasonable salary." (H)

"The physical presence of the contract team on campus at the RTTI was extremely important. Tuskegee worked when lights went out, the pumps broke, the hogs got out....the Tuskegee team was there to help. The local staff did not have a feeling that we were superior to them." (E)

"With a single exception, UNESCO team members at KRTTI were only on campus when they had a class to teach. Otherwise they stayed home. The Tuskegee staff, on the other hand, lived on campus and became totally involved." (G)

## Participant Training.

The survey by HIID (Ref. 10) concluded that one of the most successful USAID contributions to Liberia has been the training which has been provided, both at home and abroad. This program has 'left behind a competent group of persons now in important positions in the system.' As will be seen below a consistent complaint of respondents has been the loss of returned trainees to the projects. MCSS, however, carefully programmed participant training in an attempt to qualify persons to take over key positions. The likely lesson to be learned from other references in this paper, as well as those below, is that *the success of participant training is associated with (1) careful selection, (2) on-the-job experience, (3) appropriate courses and practical internships, (4) returning to a specific job within the system, (5) working with expatriate counterparts and (6) assuming full job responsibilities.*

"The politicization of the recruitment process was viewed as an attempt to interpret the Liberian social attitude. It took the form of including in the criteria for recruitment and selection the question of the anticipated future influence of the candidate with respect of public opinion and the judgement of decision makers. For example, if two or more persons were approximately equally well qualified for a given position, the selection generally favored the person who was believed to be potentially most influential in advancing the Project. Although notable exceptions are identifiable, the building and establishment of the Central Office and the group of trained school administrators on these grounds was believed to give the organization its best prospects to be established and to develop." (Ref. 15)

"Participants at BWI after state-side training went to Monrovia rather than BWI." (M)

"Participant training was a problem at the University, particularly in insuring that returning trainees were given appropriate positions at U of L." (D)

"Liberians went to the states for training and came back with no place to go and no money in the budget (even if there was an agreement)." (V)

"Returning participants came back to their old jobs at the same low salaries and had to moonlight. They couldn't give their best efforts in the area for which they were trained." (L)

"Of the 12 other participants, 10 are on the jobs for which they were trained as county or district school supervisors. The two remaining participants are working as school principals in key locations..." (Ref. 8) (Ed. Note: Rural School Development Project)

"Because people were trained for specific jobs in the MCSS they typically did not defect from the system when they returned to Liberia. There are very few who that were trained in San Francisco State who are not now in the Monrovia School System. A total of 80 trainees gained degrees at San Francisco, and better than 75 percent are functioning in the system." (C)

"There was no politics involved in the selection of Liberians for US training. MCSS developed very strict restriction/selection standards, stuck to them and was supported in this by the GOL." (C)

"Participants at Prarie View wanted to attend Texas A&M instead because Prarie View was segregated ('2nd Class')." (M)

"The curriculum for participants at San Francisco State seemed to us in the field a bit too rigid and did not necessarily fit the needs of the project." (A)

"The methods for training counterparts and participants have also been a major factor because there remains a serious question as to what constitutes the best and most appropriate training for a school supervisor at the district and county levels in Liberia. Several of the supervisors who are not college graduates, but who received special training as participants in the U.S., are among the most dedicated and effective, while others who are college graduates and received their master's degrees in connection with participant training in the U.S. are performing in a manner which is less than gratifying." (Ref. 8)

"I believe contamination and constriction upon the Liberian educator for the development of realistic short-term goals come into play at this point. The Liberian specialist, having been somewhat supercharged through his or her stateside experience, returns with vicarious and personal involvement with the multiplicity of ideas for educating and guiding the young. The older and known ways of working within the Liberian mode now appear to him passe or non-progressive. Enhanced or handicapped further with an American advisor (I suggest it is perhaps a bit of both) ..." (Ref. 11)

## Relations with Liberian Communities.

Educational efforts can succeed or fail on the basis of relationships established with persons in the communities in which contractors serve. Contractor behaviors and attitudes which could serve them well are those which apply in any community. They include (1) *respect for persons as individuals*, (2) *social interaction*, (3) *meeting them through friends* and (4) *observance of tradition*.

"We built rapport in rural communities by visiting people, by walking to towns, by visiting regularly all people, listening to them. And you cannot jump over the basic steps of local additional protocol. There is a certain Scenario for each step. This scenario will have to be learned." (K)

"If one plans to survive in rural Liberia it is essential to establish rapport with the local people. This advice is in addition to advice to establish good relations with the GOL." (E)

"Tuskegee worked closely with the village chiefs in both Zorzor and Kakata." (H)

"In many ways this respondent is disgusted with personnel at the American Embassy in the way that they poke fun at the Liberians. The people at ELWA are quite different. We could well talk to ELWA and learn from them. I feel we need more of the sorts of activities being performed by ELWA rather than new fangled ideas." (P)

"Developed relations with students by  
- having in technicians homes for occasional meals.  
- technicians taking occasional meals in student's dining hall." (M)

"Dick Sutton who worked with the rural police did it right. He went around to the various communities with some one who had already established rapport with local people. This rapport then rubbed off on him." (K)

"Through careful planning and thorough, formal evaluations, the meetings with village leaders and citizens supplied much insight into the local situations for the USAID advisors and their counterparts while also largely achieving the aims of the meetings for the local villages. For example, a meeting evaluation contains the following revealing statement: 'It is to be observed that the normal methods used in western society are observed as such in tribal meetings. Their meetings conform more to what we would classify as conventions. Each speaker represents some group and has the authority to speak and act for them normally. However, there are cases where an individual will express a private opinion but even this often has implications for others.' (W. A. Whitten.)" (Ref. 8)

"All project activities were channeled through the District Supervisor and the Supervisor of Schools, Dr. Hays continued, and the Liberian and American technicians 'served principally as catalysts in developing the felt need for a school.' ... 'Village officials and parents were drawn into all decisions. The village decided to (Quote continued on next page.)

participate in the project through the democratic process of 'hanging head' [the traditional tribal council meeting] by the Chief and the village elders." (Ref. 8)

"As of the date of this report it therefore appears that whereas there has been much project implementation which proceeded according to this method and attitude, there have been unfortunate exceptions. Efforts to take a 'short-cut' in human relations and general shortages in staff time and availability have contributed to a number of instances of non-achievement. Perhaps most important, however, have been aspects of the culture, including governmental practices, which have constituted barriers to the using of discussion and open consent methods." (Ref. 8)

"Many Americans felt uncomfortable because the same Liberians were entertained all the time. The second and third level people were often excluded. There is a need to think consciously about getting them to attend a social group." (B)

"One other activity in the team meetings has been discussions with unique and informed individuals who have contributed to our continuing orientation to Liberia. The only taboo area in our meetings was MCSS planning. At the point where any idea for a specific plan for MCSS arose, our discussion was concluded. MCSS plans could only be formulated by its own staff. Our special consultants have been from the broad community. Some have been educators. Others have included businessmen, a local minister of the gospel and a missionary. We have often invited our colleagues from the local mission to these meetings. They have participated on such occasions." (Ref. 11)

"In working at Zorzor or Kakata we found that there will be severe differences among tribal groups no matter what the contractor does." (E)

Length of USAID project support.

We have such a tendency to want to get out of the rut and to do something new and dramatic that the projects which we earlier supported enthusiastically are all but forgotten. For example:

"No one at the mission even knew that the project was developed under a USAID contract thirteen years before. They knew of its existence but had no idea how well it was doing." (Y)

"UNESCO pretended that we had never been at KRTTI when it worked there on curriculum and teaching. We did not maintain our presence or evidence our continued interest." (B)

Even the thought of renewing support for a previous project which is now faltering brought such expressions as, "we are not going back into that, are we?" But we should consider how our start-and-stop posture must affect the Liberians and the confidence which they place in USG intentions. In the late 1960's USAID's educational sector was terminated. Why?

"USG stopped educational aid to Liberia because of growing dissatisfaction by Washington and because Washington demanded economic justification for everything done." (K)

And there is evidence that, for whatever reason it was terminated, the phaseout could have been planned for greater understanding of the Liberians.

"Secretary Caine felt that AID dropped support without sufficient advance notice." (X)

"There is a general problem with USAID support and that is so often the money in the pipeline dries up and the projects have to be terminated and turned over too soon before the Liberians are ready." (R)

"USOM/L pulled out of the project too soon after the schools were constructed. The education program within the school is far more important than the physical plant." (Ref. 8)

"As has been noted in other U-520 reports, and therefore needs little discussion here, the project, like most of the education program, was affected across the board by the shift in Agency policy regarding overall funding levels. Project work plans, especially during the years 1961 through 1964, were ambitious and undergirded with optimism regarding financial support. Downward adjustments to match fund deficiencies appear to have been slower in application and smaller in scope than would have been healthy for implementation of the plans. In any event, this factor inevitably had important effects on project leadership, continuity and intensity of effort, and on morale." (Ref. 8)

The above represents the complete stoppage in the educational sector, but our switching of emphasis within a sector may be as damaging. Perhaps we think that we have done enough, but a more likely reason has to do with the orientation of education officers in replacing one another. It is extremely difficult

for an officer to accept a role of simply being supportive of projects begun before his time; as a professional educator, he wants to give fresh impact to Liberian education.

"There is a definite tendency among a number of USAID education officers to try to do something new when they come to a new country. And this tendency quite often leads them to ignore ongoing projects and even to attempt to reduce their scope. This procedure leads to fits and starts on the part of USG and it is recognized as such by the local people." (C)

"Several mission education officers tried to whittle down the size of MCSS." (G)

*USAID and contractors alike have strongly recommended long-term support in institution building.* In the Rural School Development Project:

"Regarding the cultural factors identified in the Akeson report, eight years has not been a long enough period in which to accomplish much change, except in external forms." (Ref. 8).

"The Rural School Development Project has demonstrated quite well the principle that to effect sociological and cultural change long-range effort must be consistently applied." (D)

"When we built the 20 schools they were turned over to the Liberians. Problem is maintenance. We programmed tools and instructions but it was not sufficient. I often thought we could have kept an advisor much longer to assist in upkeep and the like." (R)

"In conclusion, the evidence in support of the idea that the process of change which is at the heart of this project is one which will take 20-25 years, or a generation, appears to be compelling. Too many changes at the central government level, or which require more and persistent effort over a longer period of time, are required to achieve project objectives beyond the present levels within the next five years or the current project termination date." (Ref. 8)

At the University of Liberia:

"Dick Bond recommended phasing out our work at the University unless we made a commitment to support 25-year development." (F)

In the Rural Teacher Training Institutes:

"We did not show proper 'ownership' of RTTI. It was turned over to Liberians without the kind of support that would sustain it. You need to invest 20 years in an educational development project. After the first more massive expense it should be tapered down." (G)

For the Monrovia Consolidated Schools project:

"We are proud of what we have done with MCSS. But we wish it were possible to keep an official relationship going. Once a year the Chief of Party r s c o e should a b a c k a d a c k w h e r e t h e y a r e g o i n g e t c

And, in general:

"We must have long-term commitments to whatever programs we begin. We need to provide AID money after the fact. Even one or two consultants to MCSS over the past several years would have helped. RAD should have been a twenty-year investment." (B)

"We should not start anything unless USG can plan to sustain it over a 20-year period. This recommendation does not mean that we give massive support over a 20-year period. It means that for some period of time we do support through advisory help, perhaps yearly trips by previous contractors to monitor, give advice, and show interest in 'our' programs." (G)

"For any project we should program 15 to 20 years for continued guidance and help of various kinds. There needs to be this kind of follow-up even if there is no mission in the country. It could be operated through an embassy." (R)

"Chances are that all the heavy investment projects in Liberia would have been a permanent success if we had only sustained our interest and presence...perhaps call it a 'continuation grant/project.'" (G)

"In future, programming should view the span of this type of project in terms of not less than 20 years or a generation. Shorter term projects appear to be applicable in the field of education only to such things as building a particular institution such as a teacher training institute or high school." (Ref. 8)

Some respondents, however, feel that we often overstayed our usefulness:

"Most contractors stayed too long." (S)

"It seems that a contractor never wants to quit and he can always find more to do. It is best to go to the Liberians and have them set up goals, rather than having Americans set goals." (B)

"I suggest that we go in for a limited time. Do it. Get out. But follow up for 10 years or so." (D)

The probable resolution is not in the absolute time of USG involvement; it is rather in the way in which we program and phase our involvement. Several suggested procedures:

"Phase 1: The emerging nation discovers the need for assistance.

"Phase 2: The helping relationship is established and defined. The negotiations are completed during this stage with consultant help provided to establish the approach and objectives of the project.

"Phase 3: The plan actually begins. The operational team arrives on the scene and offers direct help in setting up the rudiments of an institution. Administrative organization, building programs, and training programs are initiated. During this stage the host country must be involved directly to make sure that the new organization doesn't present changes that are totally unacceptable to the host country.

"Phase 4: The operational team of specialists move into advisory supportive roles allowing the host country to reconcile the institutional beginnings with the realities of institutionalization in the host country.

"Phase 5: The institution works toward stabilization within the realities that have been defined and/or realized.

"Phase 6: The helping relationship ends or a different type of continuing relationship is defined." (Ref. 3)

"A scenario for a successful project:

- "1. USG sets parameters for what it can do.
- "2. Qualified contractors work with GOL to develop plans. GOL says 'we want this.'
- "3. Contractor carries out the implementation, tapering off and transferring to GOL.
- "4. Contractor maintains contact with the project over lengthy period of time." (G)

The Liberian situation and American expectations.

Projects are conducted within the context of cultures with unique social, political, and work patterns. *The American tendency is to expect too much and be unwilling to accept gradual change.* But changes are occurring:

"There is a definite change taking place within the Liberian government, in that President Tolbert is trying to establish a real administration for the country. For example, government salaries are now competitive, and he has concern with how rapidly he can go in giving freedoms. One of the Liberian writers who typically was thrown in jail for writing criticisms has now been given a citation by President Tolbert." (P)

"Since 1974 the Liberian situation has changed. President Tolbert is more firmly entrenched, there is more anti-Americanism, the GOL is more in control of its own situation, it is more oriented to the third world, there is an increase in the quality and competence of officials, and the economy is stronger." (G)

Resistance to rapid change remains, however, and consideration of Liberian values and traditions should enable us to target for more reasonable goals.

"Traditional ways of thinking in Liberia resist change, and it is difficult to shortcut. We should not be discouraged by slow changes, and we should consider changes as part of a long-term program." (D)

"UAID should think more in terms of the setting in which their support goes. There should not be excessively high expectations for progress." (P)

"AID is a bit in a dream world. It sees things by American standards. However, living day to day with Liberians on a Liberian project, for example at the University of Liberia, you become part of it."

"The Chief of Party has to be willing to accept responsibility but he must be patient and accept slow changes rather than forcing changes." (J)

"One should not expect rapid change because of Liberian tradition. Our inputs were useful, but it would be silly to think that we made rapid changes." (D)

"For the future, it appears that it would be advisable to be much more cautious and conservative in assumptions regarding the rate of implementation, especially as regards the time required for any kind of contracting--for technical services as well as for construction purposes. Schedules pertaining to contracting for technical services should perhaps provide for not less than 15 months from the start of contract." (Ref. 8)

"To the extent that favorable timing is essential to development, the prospects call for caution. Although the Government has placed definite emphasis on speedy work and movement, the indications are generally that there is still little improvement in timing factors. For example, the ability to keep to schedules or to predict with reasonable accuracy the point of conjunction between different but related elements which must come together in a specific manner are still typically limited. Precise timing and close coordination can be included in development project design only with great caution and with careful attention to the identification of essential prerequisites..." (Ref. 19)

"...confusion still exists ... in personnel and payroll, but this is improving. The progress which was made in this sensitive area indicates once again that there is a Liberian timetable which is virtually impossible for an expatriate to read. Only a Liberian can guide this development with a minimum of institutional dislocation." (Ref. 11)

"On the one hand is the fact the highly educated officials are heavily burdened with a wide variety of duties and ad hoc assignments. On the other hand there is a shortage of high and middle level personnel with training and skill in the type of managerial skills required by project plans. Finally, lower level support and technical personnel are generally not capable of sustaining the type and quantity of work and the level of responsibility expected, with the result that there are endless delays. Expatriate experts and advisors are co-opted for operational services on an emergency or interim basis. It remains to be seen whether or not these stop-gap arrangements will be sufficient to supplement existing capabilities." (Ref. 19)

APPENDIX B: PERSONS INTERVIEWED

AID and contract personnel were interviewed in person (coded "P" below), by telephone ("T") and in groups ("G").

- (G) MERL AKESON  
Rural School Development (58-60)  
SFS, Curriculum (65-67)
- (T) CHARLES BERNHEISEL  
Training Officer (62-67)
- (G) CORWIN BJONERUD  
SFS, Teacher Education (62-64)  
Campus Coordinator (66-72)
- (P) VELMA L. BLACKWELL  
Tuskegee
- (P) KENNETH BLOOD  
SFS, Guidance (62-66)
- (G) WILLIAM COWAN  
SFS, First Project Director (61-66)
- (T) DANIEL COX  
USAID, Rural Area Development (62)
- (T) JAMES FARRELL  
Tuskegee (65-69)
- (G) DAVID M. FLORELL  
SFS, Chief-of-Party (64-67)
- (G) IRVIN C. FUTTER  
SFS, Dep. Chief of Party (65-67)
- (G) MARVIN GERBER  
SFS, Administration, Curriculum,  
In-Service Training (68-72)
- (G) RALPH HANSEN  
SFS, Curriculum (63-65)
- (P) LYNN P. HARTZLER  
USAID Education, Operations  
Officer (61-67)  
UNESCO & World Bank Education  
Planning Advisor (72-75)
- (G) ASA G. HILLIARD  
SFS, COR Peace Corps, Counseling  
& Guidance MCSS, Chief-of-Party  
(64-70)

- (P) WILLIAM HOLCOMB  
USAID, Agricultural Advisor
- (T) GORDON HOLMGREN  
(66-67)
- (T) DAVID IMIG  
USAID, Contract Services (68-70)
- (T) ROBERT JACOBS  
EHRD Assessment Consultant (76)
- (P) HAROLD LOPER  
Chief Education Officer (65-66)
- (T) FINLEY McQUEEN  
Tuskegee (62-69)
- (G) JACK LYNCH  
SFS, Coordinator of Participant Training (66-72)  
Coordinator of Peace Corps (63-64)
- (P) ALWIN MILLER  
Chief Education Officer (69-70)
- (P) ROBERT NOOTER  
USAID, Mission Director (
- (T) WILLIAM POLLARD  
Tuskegee (60-64)
- (T) CLAIRE RICHARDS (CR)  
Technical Advisor to BWI & Acting Education Officer (
- (P) ROBERT SCHMEDING  
AID/TAB
- (G) MARVIN SILVERMAN  
SFS, Secondary Curriculum (65-68)
- (P) GEORGE L. SMITH  
Prarie View, Chief-of-Party (54-58)
- (T) THOMAS R. SOLOMAN  
Prarie View, Chief-of-Party (58-61)
- (P) PRESTON STEGENGA  
Cornell, Chief-of-Party (66-68)
- (G) JOHN TIBBETS  
SFS, (68-72)

(P) CHARLES WARD  
USAID,

(P) DR. W.A. WHITTEN  
USAID, Rural Education (63-68)

(G) WILLIAM WINNETT  
SFS, Vocational Education (63-65, 69)

(P) ELIZABETH B. YATES  
NEA, Frequent Observer of Education in Liberia

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## APPENDIX D: CONCLUSIONS

At the suggestions of the Africa Bureau, I am including some subjective conclusions of my own.

1. Time frame. When transferring control and responsibility to the GOL, the USG should not simply "abandon" a project; it should maintain a supportive interest for 10-25 years, and the mission should have sufficient discretionary funds to provide a minimum level of assistance when critical needs are identified. This kind of long-term involvement has been lacking for previous projects.
2. Project phasing. The initial phase of any project should be one of collaborative planning with the GOL. During implementation a planned transfer of responsibility to counterparts should take place, followed by the above-described long-term minimal involvement. Collaborative planning has been a weakness of many previous projects, and necessary GOL concurrence and commitment have been less than enthusiastic.
3. Collaborative planning. The USG and GOL should openly plan projects together -- plans which will match the philosophy and constraints of the USG and the priority needs of the GOL. In previous planning there has been a well-intentioned tendency by the USG to design and sell projects to the GOL.
4. Appropriateness of inputs. Inputs, be they buildings or instructional materials, should be relevant to the needs of Liberia and appropriate to that country's capability to utilize and absorb them without continued large amounts of external support. This generalization has had specificity in the USG's previous infusion of American materials and systems which were neither relevant to the needs of the country nor within the capability of infrastructure and budget to be adequately maintained.
5. Choice of activity/purpose. Such choices will have to depend upon the priority needs identified by the GOL and upon the philosophy/willingness of USG. Again the mutual interests of the two governments can provide a basis for collaborative planning. They now coincide, for example, in wanting to extend the benefits of education to those by-passed by the formal system.
6. Linkages among projects. The RAD and Rural School Development linkage in the early days provided for an integrated approach to rural development. The cessation of RAD isolated the school development project. Our earlier development work at the Testing Center showed high concurrent validities of aptitude tests for selection of BWI students in both shop and theory. Use of the Center's capability evidently has been overlooked because one of the pressing needs at BWI now being stated is a capability for valid screening of applicants. AID is now wisely considering some means of joining the learning efficiency and rural life-skills delivery projects because both rely heavily upon a common instructional technology.

7. USG roles: Advisory vs. operational. Advice is not well taken unless respect for the competence of the advisor has been earned--usually in an operational capacity. The phasing from operational to advisory to colleague status should be planned, but the timeframe for this process will differ among projects. Many persons (direct hire and contract) were hands-on operators of projects too long. In doing so, they did not leave behind a functioning institution, e.g., "He built schools. Then he left."
  
8. Institution building. This is what it is all about: a functioning system operated solely by Liberian staff and focused on recognized priority needs. Requirements for viable institution building include (1) collaborative planning which is problem-oriented rather than solution-oriented, (2) identification and commitment to the project by leaders and counterpart staff, (3) technical competence of expatriates, (4) selection of counterparts with sufficient dedication, competence, and prestige, (5) participant training focusing on the capabilities required by previously identified job positions in the system, (6) tangible results early on (e.g., children are learning better), (7) assumption by trained counterparts of responsibilities in the system, (8) gradual change of expatriate roles from operational/ advisory to consultant, (9) adequacy of GOL recurrent budget to maintain system -- it cannot be an add-on to the budget, and (10) long-term interest and support of the USG, bolstering weak points in the system.