Ghana: Assistance to the Refugee Settlements in Buduburam and Krisan for their Repatriation, Local Integration and Resettlement. Liberia: Reintegration for Liberian Returnees through Skills Training and Job Creation

Context

Following a decade of peace in Liberia, Cessation Clauses were invoked in June 2012 ending the refugee status of more than 750,000 Liberians who sought shelter in the neighbouring countries during the two civil wars between 1989 and 2003. By the end of 2012, UNHCR completed the voluntary repatriation programme of more than 155,000 Liberians after 23 years from the start of the civil war. Reintegrating the returnees and providing them with opportunities to secure viable livelihoods puts an enormous burden on the country that is in the transition from post-conflict stabilization to long-term development. With high unemployment rates in the country where 70% of the population is under 30, it poses not only a challenge for the social and economic stability of the country, but also it is a perceived source of insecurity for the government of Liberia and in the region.

UNIDO assistance to Liberian refugees dates back to 2007 when a joint project between UNIDO, UNHCR and FAO aimed at assisting more than 11,000 Liberian refugees in the Buduburam and Krisan refugee camps with a funding from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. UNIDO provided the refugees with vocational skills and entrepreneurship skills training that helped them to achieve a sustainable livelihood and become self reliant, be it for repatriation, local integration or re-settlement in the third countries.

In the new phase, where a majority of Liberian refugees have repatriated to Liberia, this project aims at contributing to efforts of the Liberian Government in helping the returnees reintegrate socially and at the same time contribute to the economic recovery of the country. The project will also work closely with another UNIDO intervention, which succeeded an earlier UNIDO refugee project in Ghana.

Results:

◊ 600 returnees have received entrepreneurship training
◊ 300 returnees have received vocational skills training
◊ 300 returnees have found jobs or started their own businesses
◊ 10 new market driven curricula introduced into the TVET system of the country
◊ Partner institutions have built capacity to conduct entrepreneurship training
◊ Institutionalized assistance to returnees established within LRRRC
◊ Beneficiaries will be self-reliant by using the skills obtained through training programmes
◊ Beneficiaries will be successfully reintegrated

At a Glance

GOAL: Reintegration for Liberian Returnees through Skills Training and Job Creation

MDG: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, promote gender equality and empower women

THEME: Poverty Reduction through Productive Activities; Human security and post-crisis rehabilitation

DONORS: Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Youth and Sports, UNHCR Liberia

PARTNERS: Government of Japan

BUDGET: USD 1.5 million

STATUS: Started in April 2013

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Strategy

Capitalizing on the lessons learned from the previous UNIDO interventions in the area of skills training and livelihood recovery in conflict-affected environments, with the funding from the Government of Japan, this project in Liberia will undertake the following activities in close cooperation with the government counterpart, the Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC):

To enhance capacity of LRRRC to implement and coordinate projects/interventions to assist returnees in their re-integration in the country.

◊ By assisting the LRRRC to establish a database on the returnees. The database will include demographic profiles, contact information, skills, training needs and livelihood aspirations

◊ By supporting the institutionalization of the Returnee Reintegration Center to serve as node for returnees’ socio-economic integration services such as: training, job referral services, and access to land outside Montserrado County.

◊ Through strengthening the capacity of the Liberia Returnee Network to serve as a coordinating body for the concerns of the returnees and to initiate self-help initiatives among them.

To foster institutional capacities among training institutions and business service providers to provide entrepreneurship and vocational training to the returnees for employment or self-employment.

◊ By developing market driven and targeted skills training curricula with the competency-based training approach

◊ Through developing/adapting UNIDO entrepreneurship training programmes

◊ By conducting training of trainers on entrepreneurship

◊ By providing small equipment support to conduct the skills training

To facilitate immediate income generation of the returnees through the provision of short-term, flexible and targeted training.

◊ Through conducting entrepreneurship training programmes for those who want to go into business and provide guidance and mentoring services

◊ By organizing, supporting and conducting market driven skills training programmes for the returnees. All skills training will have an entrepreneurship development module.

◊ By providing start-up kits after the skills training to enable the returnees to immediately establish their livelihood activities

IMPACT/OUTLOOK

This UNIDO intervention aims to assist the socio-economic reintegration of Liberian returnees through provision of market-driven vocational skills training, entrepreneurship training and other related services that would enhance their opportunities for employment or self-employment.