



Christian Children's Fund Liberia

**Revitalization of War Affected Communities and
Reintegration of Women and Children Associated with the
Fighting Forces**

RWAC PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2007

List of Acronyms

CAFF	Children Affected by Fighting Forces
CCF	Christian Children's Fund
CWC	Child Welfare Committees
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
GoL	Government of Liberia
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICC	Interim Care Centers
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labor Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LCIP	Liberia Community Infrastructure Project
LRRRC	Liberian Repatriation Reintegration and Reconstruction Commission
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NACP	National AIDS Control Program
NCDDRR	National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OFDA	USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
RWAC	Revitalization of War Affected Communities and Reintegration of Women and Children Associated with the Fighting Forces
SCF-UK	Save the Children Fund, UK
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Virus
STD/I	Sexually Transmitted Disease/Infections
TDC	Town Development Councils
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WAFF	Women Affected by Fighting Forces

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The presented report has been produced at the request of Christian Children's Fund's-LIBERIA, RWAC Project. It has been written on the basis of the documentation provided by RWAC Managers and the information gathered on the ground from the field staff and beneficiaries.

The evaluator would like hereby to address his warmest thanks to the RWAC Program Manager and his team for the quality of the documentation and field visits facilities and hospitality.

He also extends his sincere thanks and appreciation to the West Africa MED TA and CCF-Liberia National Office respectively for the technical assistance and for all the support for the purpose of the evaluation.

Ousmane Thiongane

1. Evaluation Profile Sheet

- Organization Name and Cooperative Agreement Number:
Christian Children's Fund, Inc. (CCF, Inc.)
Cooperative Agreement Number: 669-A-00-04-00056
- Country Program Site: Christian Children's Fund (CCF) – Liberia
- Program Period (Month/Year): September 10, 2004 - August 30, 2007
- Budget and Expenditures to date (\$):
Budget: USAID - \$2,677,000, CCF - \$799,450
Expenditures as of 31/08/2007: USAID - \$2,674,761, CCF - \$799,457
- Date DIP was first approved and changes made to DIP:
Submitted: May 12, 2005
Changed: n/a
- Evaluation Start Date: August 20, 2007
End Date: September 02, 2007
Completion of Draft Report: No later than September 17, 2007

2. Summary of Major Conclusions

The overall goal of the Revitalization of War Affected Communities and Reintegration of Women and Children Associated with the Fighting Forces (RWAC) program was to revitalize communities and increase their capacity to effectively integrate Women Affected by the Fighting Forces (WAFF), Children Affected by the Fighting Forces (CAFF) and war affected community members, including refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

The RWAC program wanted to contribute to building the social foundations necessary for successful reintegration of WAFF, CAFF and war affected individuals through the strengthening or creation of participatory community structures, including Child Welfare Committees (CWCs).

This was to be accomplished under two main objectives:

- To facilitate social integration through the strengthening of community capacity to ensure the protection rights of CAFF, WAFF and war affected children, including survival, non-discrimination, development and participation;
- To promote economic growth opportunities through the provision of literacy/numeracy, vocational skills training, entrepreneurship training, links to employment through apprenticeships and mentoring programs and follow up employment support.

Assessing the progress toward the two major objectives, the following appears to have occurred:

- Under the first objective, ‘social reintegration’, RWAC has performed pretty well, reaching most of its indicators.
- Under the second objective, ‘promote economic growth opportunities’, RWAC had some difficulties achieving some of the indicators and due to factors both external (beneficiary migration, a lower-than-anticipated caseload of CAFF & WAFF, etc) and internal (high turnover of key staff, failure to adapt the program in a timely fashion), under some components less was done during the 3-year run of the program. In short, the contribution of this objective was not as effective as it had intended to be toward the achievement of the overall goal.
- Being aware of its difficulties, it was decided in year 3 to refocus its workplan to include agriculture and new business training in the vocational training component. But the issue is, even if it is never late to do better, these new activities were so recent there was no time for M& E to know its impact.
- The high turn over of the senior staff especially the Program Managers (3 PMs for a 3 year program) caused serious and negative effects for the whole overall program management and the achievement of results by being unstable and inconsistent about the strategies used and creating real frustration among the entire staff.
- No micro-credit scheme was made available to provide start-up capital. A lot of money had been budgeted for micro credit, more than \$200,000 of CCF match funds, but nothing with microcredit was done during the 3 years of the program. RWAC did not recruit a specialist in microcredit after the resignation of the first Economic Technical Advisor in late year one. RWAC did start giving in-kind raw materials (equivalent of \$50) in year 3 to business trainees.
- Due to several factors, communication between CCF and USAID was not always regular. Throughout program implementation CCF was in regular contact with UN agencies and with USDoS which were funding programs in Liberia. It should be noted that the RWAC Program Manager was only able to meet with USAID’s CTO on one occasion in order to discuss revising the workplan for Year 3.

3. Lessons Learned and Program Recommendations

- A program must have an M & E component: Among the origins of the main difficulties of RWAC is the absence of an M & E team in Years 1 and 2 which would have helped keep the project manager informed in a timely manner of potential problems in program implementation. CCF-Liberia took corrective steps and established an M&E team in Year 3 to capture past achievements. Also in Year 3, the PM created the post of roving M&E advisor to monitor program progress in the field and submit quarterly reports.
- The closing out process: It should have been well planned and two important dimensions should have been included as it is CCF’s intention to responsibly implement programs and continue its activities in the country. The two dimensions are:
 - Community meeting: To create a meeting with communities members and explain the end of the project and to receive their feed back. This was agreed to by Field Coordinators in an Exit Strategy planning meeting in the final months of the program, but only implemented in some communities.

- Staff meeting: To give them more consideration and creating a productive meeting at the end of project as RWAC has well trained staff who can be used in the future by other CCF programs.

RWAC planned well most of the close out process but the two items described above were not fully executed.

- PM and senior staff recruitment: It is important to select well-engaged and experienced staff to start a new program in a post conflict country as is the case in Liberia. There was a real problem with the instability and level of experience of key staff.
- External Technical Assistance: Such kind of staff is very important, but can be very costly, especially if used on a full time basis. So if possible can use West Africa TA in their domains and who have more experience in CCF procedures, guidelines and objectives. RWAC spent a lot of money on TA recruitment with no experienced results over the three year program. One important exception was the hiring of the midterm review consultant, whose report became the basis of the revised work plan in the Economic Recovery component in Year 3.
- Cultivate cross sector/program partnerships: It is well accepted that a program has its own goal and objectives, but that does not mean working alone is the only way of achieving its objectives. CCF must be seen as ONE agency, so the relationship between programs is a necessity. The RWAC program collaborated with the BPRM and Child Fund Ireland funded SAFE program. RWAC realized that the dimension of cultivating partnerships is a key to success in Year 3 of the program.
- Relationship with Donors: This is a very critical issue. The end of a program does not mean the end of partnership and it is CCF's advantage to develop and maintain positive relationship with its main donors. CCF is well known by its efforts to respect the terms of both the signed Cooperative Agreement and the agreed DIP.
- Master the Art of Adaptation: RWAC revised its Year 3 work plan in response to the mid-term evaluation. It made this revision to increase its impact, but unfortunately that measure was taken in Year 3. What can be learned is the necessity along the program life cycle of reacting rapidly by modifying its original approach on the basis of external signals. Rapid adaptability is sometimes the key for program success in post war countries.

4. Program Background

In August 2003 the warring factions in Liberia signed a Peace Agreement bringing to a halt a series of violent conflicts that had gone on since 1989. During these 14 years of war, electricity, water, telecommunications, roads, housing, and industrial and agricultural infrastructure were either damaged or completely destroyed. Over 350,000 Liberian refugees fled to neighboring countries and almost half a million IDPs were chased from their homes. An estimated 15,000 children were associated with the fighting forces, given drugs, used as sex slaves, and used to perpetrate many of the atrocities in one of Africa's bloodiest conflicts.

The signatories to the Peace Agreement were the Government of Liberia (GoL), the Liberians United for Reconciliation and democracy (LURD), the Movement for Democracy in Liberia

(Model) and Liberian political parties. The National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) was established. In September 2003, the UN Security Council approved the creation, and deployment of a 15 000 strong UNMIL force to support the peace process and the transitional government. The UN coordinated Appeal for Liberia was launched in October.

An initial Disarmament and Demobilization process was begun in December 2003. Between April 15 and May 23, 2004, approximately 20,000 former adult combatants were disarmed and brought to cantonment sites for medical screening, counseling and preparation for their return to their communities. In addition, over 2,000 CAFF had been brought to Interim Care Centers (ICCs) to receive medical care, food, clothing, educational and psycho-social services, and to be traced and reunified with their families or caregivers. Approximately 300 children in Bomi and Bong counties have been reunited with their families. In total UNMIL estimates that between 38,000 – 45,000 combatants will be processed by the DDRR, of which approximately 15,000¹ are children. Moreover, there are 600,000 IDPs and refugees that will have returned over two years.

From the few child and women combatants who spontaneously demobilized and the more than 2,000, who were processed through the 15 ICCs, it appeared that a significant percentage of these CAFF used marijuana and other illegal substances and had little or no education. Moreover, many WAFF and girl CAFF were sexually abused. CAFF and WAFF examined in cantonment sites showed a high incidence of gonorrhea and other STIs, and assumptions were that HIV rates were significantly higher with these groups than in the general population. In general, CAFF and WAFF had few opportunities for positive social interaction and development. Nor did they have access to services to address the many atrocities they had witnessed and participated in. Training and employment opportunities for these children and youth were slim. There was great risk that they would once again become involved in violence, drugs, and other illegal activities once they return to their communities.

While the WAFF and CAFF were affected by their participation in the fighting, communities were also devastated by the 14 year cycle of violence, poverty, lack of education and training, and a dearth of opportunities for normal development. Economic growth was much lower than pre-war levels. The unemployment rate in the formal sector rose to 85% of the total labor force of about one million people. Liberia remains amongst the most food insecure countries in West Africa, with 27% of the children under five years old undernourished. The adult literacy rate is 37% compared to an African average of 58% (OXFAM and UNOCHA statistics).

There was considerable displacement of people throughout Liberia, with the hardest hit counties being Lofa, Bomi, Bong and Gbarpolu. For example, over 52% of the population of Lofa was displaced during the 14 year instability, while in Bomi, that figure was about 24%, with nearly 124,000 people either IDPs or refugees². The dislocation of persons and separation of families caused by the civil war also provided opportunities for the spread of HIV/AIDS. According to UNDP, the national sero-prevalence rate was estimated at 8% at the beginning of 2003, and sero-prevalence was projected to reach 12% by the end of 2004.³

In focus group discussions conducted as part of the pre-RWAC assessment, CWC members

¹ USAID APS for Peace and Security through Community Revitalization and Reintegration. Page 4.

² Source: February 2004 UN/WB Joint Needs Assessment Sector Working Paper

³ www.lr.undp.org

listed substance abuse as a major threat to their children, estimating that between 80% and 90% of local businesses openly sold marijuana. In at least 18 focus group discussions held across the four intervention areas, involving over 250 people in May 2004, rape and sexual violence against girls were consistently emphasized as major problems during war. Discussion participants confirmed that GBV continued to be a persistent problem.

Another problem encountered throughout the four proposed counties was the lack of education and literacy skills among the CAFF, and WAFF. Once again, focus group discussions revealed a high level of school dropouts, and a strong desire to acquire literacy and numeracy skills in order to pursue various livelihoods.

CCF-Liberia

According to the original program agreement, CCF-Liberia implemented six Interim Care Center (ICC) programs aimed at facilitating the transition of CAFF toward peaceful and productive lives. CCF also implemented an OFDA funded water and sanitation project in three counties, including Bomi, Gbarpolu, and Grand Cape Mount. CCF-Liberia had over 200 program and support staff and had the infrastructure in place implement this project. CCF-Liberia's core team was made up of experienced expatriates, including its Country Representative. Aside from the core staff, CCF-Liberia was staffed primarily by experienced nationals who knew the situation, language and culture of Liberia and understood the complex dynamics of reintegration and reconciliation. CCF-Liberia expanded its staff pool to include technical, logistical, and managerial positions to implement the RWAC project.

CCF has an independent registration in Liberia and has been a strong advocate for getting youth and children's concerns on the DDRR program through bilateral meetings and collective work in the Child Protection Core Group. CCF partnered with UNICEF and UNDP in running ICCs in Bomi, Bong and Gbarpolu Counties. CCF also worked in close association with the DDRR process. CCF Liberia worked closely with various stakeholders and was well established in the four target counties which facilitated the implementation of RWAC.

Community Role (As proposed)

The RWAC program was to build upon the community organization work accomplished by CCF in its then on-going UNICEF/UNDP funded "Interim Care for War Affected Children" (ICC) in Gbarpolu, Bong, Lofa, and Bomi Counties. Through the ICC project, CCF established Community Wellbeing Committees (CWCs) in communities around the ICCs and established additional committees at the clan, district, and village levels. The RWAC project worked with established CWCs in 10 RWAC target communities and facilitated the formation of new CWCs in each of the other target communities.

CWCs were comprised of 12 or more dedicated community members (including children and youth) and leaders who were selected by the communities after a series of sensitization and awareness meetings facilitated by CCF. The CWCs were then trained to facilitate the process of community risk assessment and mapping, prioritizing and ranking problems and lead the development of community solutions to those problems at the district and village level in matters relating to the rights of the child.

CWCs sensitized host communities to the difficulties facing returning CAFF, WAFF and tried

to ensure that they were included in the analysis, planning, and implementation of community solutions. In addition, since no active child protection component existed in Liberian Repatriation Reintegration and Reconstruction Commission's (LRRRC's) proposed re-integration structures, CWCs served to inform the work of LRRRC's proposed Town Development Councils (TDCs) at the district and village level in matters relating to children. The 20 CWC's were also trained to identify suitable community workshops and artisans focusing on the informal sector production and services. In each of the 20 communities, some eight to 10 qualified community members were to serve as master artisans and mentors in the vocational skills training project component for a total of 160 to 200 Master Artisan trainers in the program area. During the program lifecycle as post conflict recovery continued, CCF was to continue to explore with CWC's new possibilities for diversifying skills and non-traditional careers and identify gaps in present vocations that can be filled. CCF community outreach and social workers and small business trainers were to work with CWC's and local mentors to provide literacy and numeracy training, counseling, appropriate family support, links to employment, entrepreneur skills training, and continued guidance and support after employment.

5. Original Proposed Program

Program Model or Approach

CCF is the UNICEF designated child protection agency in Bong, Bomi and Gbarpolu Counties, serving an estimated 1,800 CAFF in six ICCs and supervising eight others. CCF will build upon and extend its initial re-integration work accomplished with CAFF in the ICC's and in their communities and throughout the children's family tracing and re-unification process. Using a phased approach to project implementation, the proposed project will start in communities with existing CCF programs in Bong, Bomi and Gbarpolu, and Lofa Counties, and consolidate activities. In addition, CCF is currently working to provide psychosocial care to Liberian refugees in eight Sierra Leonean camps, the majority of who will return to the designated project area. UNHCR plans for these refugees to return to Liberia beginning October 2004. The RWAC program will coordinate with the International Rescue Committee in Lofa, where IRC interventions are planned in Kolahun and Vojama districts. The RWAC program will work in districts which have a high return of CAFF, such as Foya, Vahun, Zorzor and Salayea. In addition, the RWAC program will coordinate with Save the Children UK (SCF-UK) in Gbarnga to ensure complementary coverage of districts.

The prevention of HIV/AIDS is also a priority topic throughout Liberia, but especially in areas with high movement of the population. The National AIDS Control Program (NACP) is embarking on a new multisectoral HIV prevention project, with support from UNDP. The RWAC program will support these efforts by including community sensitization, the creation of crosscutting HIV/AIDS prevention messages to be disseminated and activities throughout this project, and thereby contribute to the government's multisectoral approach to the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS.

The RWAC program will be phased over three-years beginning with community sensitization and formation of CWCs, organization of civic works projects, community based reconciliation and psychosocial activities, pre-vocational orientation, introduction of literacy, numeracy, and lifeskills program components, formation of community vocational skills training venues, and job placement, follow-up and support. CCF recognizes the importance of community participation and ownership of the reintegration process and the urgency in

stabilizing communities and to create the conditions for longer term development. Over the first two years of implementation, the RWAC program will use a community based, participatory approach, in which community members will facilitate all skills training and re-integration activities. The third year of the project cycle will be used for consolidation of program gains. During this year, there will be further follow-up and monitoring of the first 1500 program participants, placement and follow-up of the second group of beneficiaries and work to hand over remaining CCF functions to CWC's. Also by this time, it is possible that the majority of CAFF, WAFF, and war-affected children will be fully integrated into the community and that community structures facilitated during CCF's involvement will become freestanding. To reduce or offset the potential opportunity cost to families due to having one or more of their children participating in the training programs, a Training Allowance will be given to these families.

The exact modalities of these grants will be developed with the communities and families. CCF proposes this innovative support model because the population in the target areas is extremely poor and vulnerable. As such, families may not be able to allow their children to participate in training activities, even if they recognize the benefits to the children and the family in the long run. Unfortunately, short term food and income needs could preclude participation in training activities, as families are forced to allocate all available labor in pursuit of greater food security. Similarly, artisans will be compensated for their participation in the program, and will be given a combination of cash and materials.

Specific Interventions and Program Activities

Social Reintegration and Reconciliation

Reintegration and reconciliation in post-war societies is best accomplished through an array of activities. CAFF in particular need organized activities that work in different ways to bring about positive and lasting change in their lives. To accomplish this objective, CCF will employ a highly successful model it used in other war-torn countries to assist the reintegration of former child soldiers and war-affected youth by organizing young people's participation in community-selected civic work projects, engaging youth and community members in organized dialogues and promoting recreation and other activities to improve the psychosocial conditions of children.

CCF will use the REFLECT methodology to guide the vision of, and facilitate the activities in its reintegration and reconciliation program. Reflect is an innovative approach to learning and social change which fuses the theories of Paulo Freire⁴ with the methodology of participatory rural appraisal⁵. REFLECT's participatory, empowering process gives participants the opportunity to discuss the causes of and explore the solutions for day to day socio-economic, political, and cultural issues and also to uncover complicated social problems such as domestic violence, teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Reflect will also create the link between social and economic reintegration via linking the NRC Youth Pack literacy approach to provide basic education/literacy competency to participants in the Project's Skills Building components .

Civic Works Projects

⁴ Paulo Freire: <http://217.206.205.24/reflect/tree/freire.htm>

⁵ participatory rural appraisal: <http://217.206.205.24/reflect/tree/participatorytools.htm>

To advance reconciliation, ex-combatants and community members will cooperate on at least 40 civic projects that build basic infrastructure and strengthen local capacities such as building and community development associations. These civic works projects will compliment DAI's activities within the USAID funded Liberia Community Infrastructure Project (LCIP). LCIP is a large, complex, three-year effort focusing on demobilizing ex-combatants and other war-affected populations and reintegrating them into the productive work place. The program emphasizes the reconstruction of community infrastructure—schools, clinics, water services, markets, and roads—as a means for coupling gainful employment and skills training with priority social services. While LCIP targets up to 20,000 former adult combatants and war affected adults, CCF's RWAC project involve CAFF and other under 18 war affected children and youth.

Community dialogues will be held in each of the 20 target communities on topics such as reconciliation and human rights will support acceptance of ex-combatants, who will demonstrate their community commitment through participation in civic works and through attitudes and behaviors learned in psychosocial workshops.

CCF will employ a model it has used in other post-conflict countries to assist the reintegration of former child soldiers and war-affected youth. In these regions, CCF along with community committees, organized young people's participation in community-selected civic work projects, engaged youth and community members in organized dialogues and facilitated recreation and other activities to improve the psychosocial welfare of children. In addition, the use of traditional cleansing rituals used in certain communities will be incorporated into the reconciliation process when appropriate. These indigenous rituals were found to be extremely helpful in contributing to the reconciliation and re-integration process employed by CCF-Sierra Leone.

Construction or reconstruction of local infrastructure such as schools, water and sanitation facilities, roads, small bridges, and schools is a very high priority in Liberia. The 80 projects anticipated under this program will be selected by CWC's and local authorities to employ youth as unskilled laborers in civic works projects. The average amount allocated to these civic works will be US\$5,000 per project, or US\$400,000 invested over the three-year implementation period. CCF is currently implementing an OFDA funded emergency water and sanitation rehabilitation project in Gbarpolu and Bomi Counties. Returning CAFF, WAFF, and war-affected children will be recruited into the work force for these projects.

The collaboration of former child soldiers with young people who were not actively involved with the fighting forces is excellent means of reducing tension, building tolerance, and increasing integration. Youth participation in civic works projects will provide them with an immediate goal, some "pocket funds", and will present CAFF in a more favorable light to the rest of the community. As elders observe young people fulfilling a positive role for their community, they may begin to respect young people's ability to participate in the rehabilitation and life of their communities. In addition, community celebrations will be organized by CWCs at the completion of each project, recognize and highlight youth participation and contribution to the community.

The key to the success of these projects is that they are community-selected and owned. CCF staff will work with the 20 CWCs to facilitate village dialogues to identify projects that are most needed. After a village has selected a project, CCF will organize the necessary logistics such as obtaining building materials and working with engineering experts. To organize

participating youth, estimated at approximately 150 per community, community mobilizers will work with individual young people selected for their dynamism, ability to mobilize youth for community service, and level of respect by young people and elders in their local community. At least 15 youth leaders will be selected and trained per community.

The LRRRC has proposed a local development structure, Town Development Councils, (TDAs), to identify and monitor all development projects taking place in local communities. Unfortunately, this committee is not organized to assure the participation of youth. CCF Child Welfare Committees will collaborate with LRRRC local structures to ensure that children's rights and participation are considered in all projects selections. In addition, USAID funded civic works projects through Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI); do not include those under 18. Through its civic works component, CCF extends the social and economic benefits of this approach to include CAFF.

Compensation will be given to civic works participants, with the amount depending on whether they contribute skilled or unskilled labor. The exact amounts to be paid will be decided with the CWCs during the design phase of these projects, and in accordance with current wage rates.

Recreation and Psychosocial Support

In addition to community and peer dialogues, the 20 outreach workers (five in each county) will facilitate activities such as drawing, arts and crafts, cultural songs and drama, traditional dance, and sports activities designed to promote emotional and social reintegration. Team sports such as football and volleyball are particularly useful as a reconciliation and psychosocial strategy for groups of youth. Teams will be organized of mixed groups of CAFF, returnees, and IDP's, which serves as an anecdote for replacing the rivalry of war with healthy competition and belonging to a normative group based on cooperation. Youth team leaders will be selected by CWCs and trained by a combination of CWC members and CCF community mobilizers. This activity will build on CAFF's experience in participating in team sports in ICCs.

CCF estimates that with the addition of structured activities the majority of war-affected children's psychosocial needs can be addressed. CCF's approach of training CWC's in child and youth protection, identification of children with special needs, and ensuring extra support for vulnerable youth and children to join, and continue to participate in these activities will assist the community in providing psychosocial care for its children. In addition, providing teacher training in recognizing and treating the psychological effects of war in students will assist students to stay in school. With the lack of professional mental health services in Liberia, culturally appropriate approaches to treatment are the best desirable and most sustainable alternative.

Additionally, during the skills training process, CCF social workers will meet regularly with participants to systematically monitor their progress. These meetings will identify which youth are having difficulties reintegrating into the community, with his/her family, experiencing behavior problems or experiencing other psychosocial problems such as depression, anxiety, post traumatic distress symptoms, or having difficulty participating in the program as a result of his/her war experience.

Economic Growth and Reintegration

Literacy/Numeracy/Skills Training

Improving the education and creating employment opportunities at the same time are the greatest challenges right now facing Liberia (ILO, March, 2004). A weakness common to most vocational skills training programs in Liberia is the lack of job placement, business planning and follow-up of graduates. At the root of this problem is illiteracy and limited exposure to improved business practices. There have been a number of innovative approaches developed for teaching functional literacy and business skills to small enterprise managers to complement the skills training provided in the community workshops. CCF will adapt Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) successful Youth Pack literacy, numeracy program, and life skills to its on-going business skills and hands-on skills training. The youth literacy program has been designed, keeping in mind the needs of youth between the ages of 14 and 22, who have little or no formal educational background, and includes components on literacy, numeracy, health, physical education, peace, and human rights, as well as practical skills training to facilitate functional literacy for young people, help build their self reliance, and increase their chance of employment. This program has been specifically designed for ex-combatants, IDPs, returnees, and local youth.

Skills Training and Mentoring

This strategy addresses the immediate needs of many CAFF to turn a newly acquired skill into a viable business opportunity. There is a pressing need for a program that provides basic training in technical skills that can be mastered in less than 6 months, like baking, brick making or fishing, and a another option for skills development requiring a longer period, such as for carpentry, welding or car mechanics. The RWAC program will offer choices to participants and design programs accordingly, with consideration and programming options for youth who have previously received training.

Short-term training is especially appropriate for older CAFF who may have received some training, as well as youth who are entering the workforce for the first time, but do not want additional training. RWAC will begin by offering an introductory skill course for each of the major fields of interest, which will provide basic information about the business or skill. At the end of the course, participants are required to organize themselves into groups of five to seven individuals. The program will link each group with an experienced business person or Master Artisan who will continue to monitor the development of their technical skills and serve as a business mentor to the group. Appropriate tool kits will be given to each of the 200 community mentors at the beginning of the training sessions and will remain with the artisan mentors for as long as the apprentice remains with the mentor.

Simultaneously, a CCF Small Business Training Officer will help the group decide how they will work together, provide formal business management training and assist the group develop a simple business plan. It is expected that the majority of groups will need a fixed asset that can be shared, like an oven, tool set or circular saw. With an acceptable business plan in place, CCF will offer group loans for fixed asset purchases and working capital. These loans will be reimbursed through community service, such as donated labor to civic works projects, or time allocated to training others in vocational skills or literacy. Other ways of repayment may be possible, depending upon the community needs as decided in consultation with the CWCs. The unique characteristic of this component is that during the project period, the

mentor will continue to act as a technical advisor to the group.

Vocational skills demanding more than six months to achieve complete competency include carpenter, mason, metal-worker, electrician, mechanic, and tailoring. Each master artisan will receive training from CCF's Economic Reintegration Officers to upgrade the artisan's business management skills and assist the artisan in transferring both his or her technical and business skills to the apprentice(s). This in particular is intended to provide a means to reach those beneficiaries who may benefit from a more structured format, i.e. youth experiencing adjustment difficulties, those desiring to fully master a skill before starting their own business, or those with interest in a particular trade. The time period, level of supervision and continuity are more intensive allowing the CAFF, WAFF or war affected child to feel secure in their future.

Upon acceptance of the business plan at the end of the training period, start up grants will be offered in either cash, in-kind, or some combination of the two for up to \$150 per approved plan. Recipients of the grants would then be obliged to contribute either time, skills or products to their communities, as stipulated in the business plans. For example, trained program beneficiaries can devote time to training other new program beneficiaries. The business plans will be approved and monitored by the CWCs and relevant community structures.

In the event that a community or district lacks available master artisans in specific fields, especially female master artisans, CCF will contract with a vocational training institute to provide vocational and basic business skills to the program participants.

6. Program Goals and Objectives as Proposed:

The goal of the Revitalization of War Affected Communities and Reintegration of Women and Children Associated with the Fighting Forces (RWAC) program is to revitalize communities and increase their capacity to effectively integrate:

- Women Associated with the fighting forces (WAFF),
- Children affected by the Fighting Forces (CAFF) and
- War affected community members, including refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

The program will target 3,000 direct beneficiaries, to include, 1,500 CAFF, 750 WAFF and 750 war affected children in Lofa, Gbarpolu, Bong, and Bomi counties.

The project will have two main objectives:

- To facilitate social integration through the strengthening of community capacity to ensure the protection rights of CAFF, WAFF and war affected children, including survival, non-discrimination, development and participation;
- To promote economic growth opportunities through the provision of literacy/numeracy, vocational skills training, entrepreneurship training, links to employment through apprenticeships and mentoring programs and follow up employment support.

7. PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Constraints of Actual Program Implementation

OBJECTIVE	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES/CONSTRAINTS
<p>1. To facilitate <u>social integration</u> through the strengthening of community capacity to ensure the protection rights of CAFF, WAFF and war affected children, including survival, non-discrimination, development and participation;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good community-based and participatory approach during implementation ownership of the process. • RWAC staff was based in the community where they served ;that proximity was fundamental to the success of main activities and social reintegration of CAFF and WAFF; creating trust with community members during dialogs for example • RWAC increased community awareness and understanding of various issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and SGBV and developed community solutions for prevention • Because of RWAC community members know the importance of their rights and how to follow up their plights to Districts • RWAC stimulated in all the areas of intervention recreational activities and provided children recreational materials such as footballs, volleyballs, enabling an environment of unity of the children and youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff mobility: each RWAC staff member served in average 5 communities and was confronted with a shortage of motorbikes; RWAC did not budget enough to resolve that issue or to repair the existing ones. • Promises made were not always respected, including delivery of some materials with a delay, especially during raining season • Rapid migration of target population caused difficulties in some areas to effectively know the location of beneficiaries for follow up of activities. Also, CCF-Liberia never received the anticipated numbers of CAFF and WAFF cases. • Program was designed to target mostly CAFF and WAFF, but at the community level there wasn't always a real difference between beneficiaries and other community members (OCM), thus the program was later opened up to OCM.
<p>2. To <u>promote economic</u> growth opportunities through the provision of literacy/numeracy, vocational skills training, entrepreneurship training, links to employment through apprenticeships and mentoring programs and follow up employment support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using effectively and consistently the REFLECT methodology in the communities • A lot of well-appreciated trainings on literacy/numeracy. • High number of skilled literacy trainers who will be available to continue training at the community level and beyond • Many vocational and entrepreneurship skill trainings for artisans and women • Intensive on-site training on agriculture issues (crop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instability of strategy used, difficulties having a coherent approach: resulted in refocusing RWAC workplan in Year 3 to include agriculture and business training in its vocational skills training along with the trade skills training (carpentry, masonry, soap making). • Artisans and trainees expected to receive a training allowance for their participation in skills training session, many difficulties respecting this for changing implementation approach reasons; migration of beneficiaries to other NGOS programs that were giving stipends.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> science, composting, etc.) • Small grants given to start businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills taught were based on a market survey and the preferences of beneficiaries themselves. However, in a cash-poor post-conflict rural economy, trade skills are often not marketable. This prompted the change to agricultural and small business skills in Year 3. • Starting saving clubs or given start up funds in some areas without any expertise in microfinance or guiding and monitoring plan
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Achievement of Objectives

Objective One: Social Reintegration				
MAJOR PLANNED ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS AND TARGETS	TARGETS - EOP	ACHIEVED EOP	COMMENTS
Provide needed psycho-social assistance via recreational, non-formal education activities for children and youth, community monitoring and follow up, and peer dialogues;	A total of 20 Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) will be established and functioning in year I and will continue in Years II and III. (Twenty Committees over Three Years)	20	66	RWAC perform well by surpassing the target
	1,500 CAFF, WAFF and war affected children will participate in Year I, and another batch of 1500 will participate in Year II. In Year III all 3000 will be participating in organized recreational, psychosocial, and non-formal education activities (3,000 over Three Years)	3000	3848	
Raise awareness on issues related to the reintegration of these target groups and cross cutting issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, STDs and SGBV and develop community solutions for prevention; and,	240 community dialogue sessions per year will take place in Year I of the project, followed by the same number in Years II and III. These sessions will focus on Peer and community dialogues on HIV/AIDS, GBV, and substance abuse using the REFLECT methodology. (Over three years, 720 sessions will take place)	720	760	Many dialogues were organized by staff

Develop referral mechanisms and structures for those needing special care (victims of torture and sexual abuse, disabled, mentally ill, and substance abusers).	It is estimated that 20 cases per year of substance abuse and GBV will need more thorough care, beyond the community well-being structure. These cases will be referred to appropriate medical facilities in Monrovia or referred to other organizations that can provide them a higher level of care.	60	486	If during Y1&Y2, the annual targets have not been achieved, at Y3 RWAC partnership with the GBV program has allowed it to far exceed its target as RWAC staff consistently report 5 or more cases per month to their GBV colleagues
Strengthen social support networks and build the capacity of existing support mechanisms and institutions, such as the CWCs	A total of 20 Civic Works Projects will be designed and implemented in Year I by CWCs with CAFF, WAFF and war affected children.	20	19	RWAC has performed reasonably well by working with the community to design and implement the projects in a participatory manner, and in employing the CAFF trainees to do some of the construction work whenever possible.
Objective Two: Promote Economic growth opportunities				
MAJOR PLANNED ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS AND TARGETS	TARGETS EOP	ACHIEVED EOP	COMMENTS
Provide skills training via apprenticeships, mentoring, and community workshops (integrated with literacy and numeracy training and life skills).	A total of 3000 CAFF/WAFF (1500 in Year I, and 1500 in Year II) will participate in the literacy and numeracy training	3000	1755	CCF Liberia was unable to achieve full REFLECT participation due to a lack of demand.
	A total of 150 community teachers will be trained in the NRC Youth Pack methodology. The training will take place in Year I, and they will continue teaching in Years II and III.	150	82	
	200 Artisan workshops upgraded 100 each in Year I and II.	200	164	
	A total of 3000 Participants (1500 each in Year I and II) will be involved in skills training via mentoring and community workshops	3000	2677	
	A total of 2250 participants (1125 each in Year I, and II) are expected to undergo and complete one vocational skills training program.	2250	2026	
Establish and strengthen referral services for employment.	It is expected that of the total 2250 participants who will finish the skills training program, 562 will develop business plans in Year I and 563 in Year II (total of 1125).	1125	811	Under this objective , it is recognized that RWAC had a lot of difficulties to find ways to help trainees developing BP and

	It is expected that 1125 CAFF, WAFF will be employed by master Artisans or will be self-employed in Year I , and will be followed by another batch of participants in Year II . By Year III a total of 2250 participants will be employed either with Artisans or self-employed	2250	1425	strengthen a favourable environment of job creation
Provide appropriate credit for qualifying graduates.		n/a	n/a	Rather than loans, RWAC provided packages of in-kind raw materials with values of \$50 to start businesses to 811 beneficiaries.
Improve coordination with DAI, USAID, UNHCR, UNDP and other agencies involved in economic integration programs.		n/a	n/a	CCF has been in regular communication with UN agencies and US DoS.

Results Analysis

Objective 1

RWAC has performed fairly well under this objective, reaching most of its indicators and its activities under this objective with most of the results having been achieved in the past 2 years

Indicators

As of 30 July 2007, the indicators were as follows:

- A total of 66 Child Welfare Committees have been established (20 Committees over three years was targeted).
- 3,848 CAFF and WAFF participated in recreational, psychosocial, and non-formal education activities organized by RWAC (3,000 over three years was the target).
- Over the three years, a total of 760 community dialogue sessions focusing on HIV/AIDS, GBV, and substance abuse using the REFLECT methodology have been organized. This is not far from the 720 sessions targeted at EOP.
- 486 cases of substance abuse and GBV were noted and referred to appropriate medical facilities in Monrovia or referred to other organizations that can provide them a higher level of care. The target was 20 cases per year.
- 19 Civic Works Projects have been designed and implemented by CWCs with CAFF and WAFF, not far from the target of 20.

Activities

- Provide needed psycho-social assistance via recreational, non-formal education activities for children and youth, community monitoring and follow up, and peer dialogues.

RWAC successfully used the REFLECT methodology to facilitate the activities in its reintegration and reconciliation program. It is well known that REFLECT is an

innovative approach to learning and social change which fuses the theories of Paulo Freire with the methodology of participatory rural appraisal. It gives participants the opportunity to discuss the causes of their problems and explore the solutions for day to day socio-economic, political, and cultural issues and also to uncover complicated social problems such as domestic violence, teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. All these are done through various actions such as recreational, psychosocial, and non-formal education activities.

Although the planned activities worked well overall, RWAC encountered some problems such as:

The WAFF were treated separately to the other women in the community and focusing on the younger women. This approach did not work well because at the community level there is no distinction between WAFF and other community women and WAFF have diverse age differences.

- Raise awareness on issues related to the reintegration of these target groups and cross cutting issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, STDs and SGBV and develop community solutions for prevention.

Using the REFLECT methodology, 760 community dialogue sessions were organized by RWAC. Because the prevention of HIV/AIDS is a priority topic throughout Liberia, especially in areas with high movement of population, RWAC's efforts included community sensitization which aimed to increase knowledge on HIV/AIDS and erase misconceptions on methods of transmission and improving knowledge, availability and use of contraceptives such as condoms and hormonal pills.

RWAC staff was well trained to deliver adequate messages and to make follow up on gender based violence reports.

- Develop referral mechanisms and structures for those needing special care (victims of torture and sexual abuse, disabled, mentally ill, and substance abusers)

RWAC performed very well because of its close partnership with the GBV program. All cases which need more thorough care were identified and reported to GBV staff for appropriate treatment.

- Strengthen social support networks and build the capacity of existing support mechanisms and institutions, such as the CWCs.

About the CWCs, RWAC put in place more than the target over the 3 years, but it is noted the absence of full support to run all the CWCs activities (stationeries, recreational, and sports materials).

Objective 2

For a variety of reasons, both external and internal, RWAC did not perform as well under the economic component. The initial major planned activities did not work well. In Year 3, RWAC staff refocused its work plan to also include agriculture under the vocational training program and significant gains were made.

Indicators

As of 30 July 2007, the indicators were as follows:

- It was planned that at the EOP, a total of 3,000 CAFF/WAFF (1500 in Year 1, and 1500 in Year 2) will participate in the literacy and numeracy training. Only 1,755 participated over the 3 years.
- A total of 82 community teachers have been trained in the NRC Youth Pack methodology, far from the 150 community teachers targeted. CCF-Liberia shifted the training curriculum to match the GoL-approved Accelerated Learning methodology. Another 160 teachers were trained in conflict resolution in Year 3.
- RWAC upgraded only 164 Artisan workshops but 200 artisans was the target. This illustrates RWAC problems with artisans who required fees before participating in workshops. It must be noted here that CCF-Liberia skills training was competing with other NGOs operating in the region that gave fees for workshop participation. Also, staff claims that in some areas they encountered a lack of enough qualified artisans to participate in the project.
- RWAC targeted a total of 3,000 participants who would be involved in skills training via mentoring and community workshops. Because of its difficulties in mobilizing participants, only 2,677 were obtained. 1743 participants completed one vocational skills training program (2,250 was the target over the 3 year program).
- RWAC targeted to help 1,125 participants on skills training program to develop a business plan before the end of the program period, only for the same reasons listed above, only 811 participants developed a Business Plan.
- At EOP, RWAC expected a total of 2,250 participants to be employed either with Artisans or self-employed, only 1,375 were realized. RWAC had a lot of difficulties finding ways to help trainees developing BP and strengthen a favourable environment of job creation. It may have been unrealistic to expect that large numbers of trainees could find a market for their trade skills in the post-conflict rural economy.
- RWAC planned to provide appropriate credit for qualifying graduates (no targets given). At the EOP, no microcredit scheme was observed for qualifying graduates. Instead it is noted that in-kind raw materials were given to business skill trainee graduates.
- CCF coordinated the RWAC program with other programs funded by UN agencies, and US DoS which were involved in economic integration programs.

7. Cross-cutting Issues

External - with other partners

One key to the success of the social reintegration efforts has been CCF-Liberia's regular collaboration with various local and international partners in all four RWAC counties. CCF

county offices are regular participants of the various monthly interagency working group and coordinating meetings and county-level coordination meetings in GBV, reintegration, and civic works. Over the grant period, the RWAC program also led or participated in a great many collaborative efforts to stage large-scale public events.

Internal - linkages with other CCF-Liberia Programs

RWAC recognized the necessity to be linked to the other CCF-Liberia programs if it wanted to succeed; some coordination was started in Year 3 with the SAFE program to provide GBV case management in the 4 counties.

Also the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Program staff was instrumental in helping RWAC to complete its 19 community-driven public works projects, namely latrine blocks and water points.

8. ADVOCACY

Following on the achievement of facilitating the creation of some 62 Child Welfare Committees in the four counties, RWAC staff began working to facilitate the creation of elected district-level CWCs, as well as four elected county-level CWCs, providing transportation, encouragement, and stationery to members.

9. Program Management

Management Approach

Evaluations of program staff have demonstrated that the RWAC program had well engaged and hardworking staff at the field level who have received various trainings during the program. However, RWAC experienced a frequent turn over of key staff such as the Program Manager. Each new PM tried to find his own way of resolving problems and achieving RWAC's main goals. During focus groups meetings and after reviewing a lot of reports, it appears that with a minimum of strategic orientation and adequate supervision, RWAC could have fully achieved its overall goal.

Financial Management

Financially, RWAC was managed by the CCF Liberia Finance Controller, and based on CCF accounting procedures. Adequate financial control systems existed to manage RWAC funds. At the end of the program, 100% of the budget was spent and yearly CCF-Liberia sent a financial report to USAID through CCF,-HQ. As of June 30, 2006, a financial external audit was approved by HQ and executed by Ernst and Young. After reviewing all the program financial statements, and selecting 25 items/expenditures for testing, only one item had incomplete documentation. Appropriate recommendation was given to resolve that issue.

10. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation was conducted to gather information about the impact of the RWAC program in the targeted communities. Field visits were done in 3 counties Bomi, Lofa and Bong, but because of transportation difficulties the evaluator was not able to visit Gbarpolu. The evaluator was aided by the CCF RWAC Program Manager and field staff in the target

counties visited. The evaluation was a comparative and analytical exercise, “before and after”, containing a mix of evaluation methods such as:

- Surveys for comparing targets and EOP measures;
- Content analysis of management information, such as quarterly reports, previous evaluation reports, and meeting minutes;
- Results of precedent key informant interviews
- Focus groups with beneficiaries and field staff

11. Reference Documents

1. USAID / Christian Children’s Fund, Inc. (CCF, Inc.):Cooperative Agreement Document: 669-A-00-04-00056
2. Report on RWAC dialogue conducted in Bong and Lofa counties from the 19th of March to the 23rd,2007
3. Notes from focus group discussion in Bomi County during the Quarterly Review Meeting with 12 Liberian Reintegration Officers and CCF Social Workers who have lived among rural war-affected communities for 2.5 years, working to reintegrate young ex-combatants and revitalize war-affected communities generally with the goal of protecting vulnerable children (Date: 11 April 2007)
4. A review of the RWAC and CEIP Project: A one day review of the program in both Bomi and Bong counties on Monday 3rd and Wednesday 5th July 2006 respectively.
5. RWAC Program Manager’s Quarterly Report, April 2007 - June 2007
6. RWAC close out plan
7. RWAC base-line survey (Final Report- Dec 2005)
8. CCF-Liberia Skills Training Report (March – June 2006)
9. Project Proposal Submission, June 30, 2004, Submitted to: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Ghana
10. RWAC Agriculture Training Program 2007 Work Plan
11. Kithinji Boore’s Report dated June 2006 “Integrating the Center, Small-Enterprise Revitalization for War Affected Communities in Liberia
12. Guidelines for focus group discussions and interview with community leaders (baseline survey)