



1. Project Data

Project ID
P121052

Project Name
SL-Youth Employment Support (FY10)

Country
Sierra Leone

Practice Area(Lead)
Social Protection & Labor

L/C/TF Number(s)
IDA-47900,IDA-H6050

Closing Date (Original)
30-Jun-2013

Total Project Cost (USD)
20,000,000.00

Bank Approval Date
30-Jun-2010

Closing Date (Actual)
30-Jun-2015

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	20,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	19,921,449.39	0.00
Actual	20,819,681.84	0.00

Sector(s)
Other social services(87%):Public administration- Other social services(13%)

Theme(s)
Social Safety Nets/Social Assistance & Social Care Services(50%):Improving labor markets(50%)

Prepared by
Anthony Martin Tyrrell

Reviewed by
Judyth L. Twigg

ICR Review Coordinator
Joy Behrens

Group
IEGHC (Unit 2)

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The project development objective (PDO) is consistently stated across relevant documentation (Financing Agreement, p. 5; Project Appraisal Document, p. 8) as follows: "*to increase access to short-term employment opportunities and to improve employability of targeted youth.*"

For the purposes of this review IEG will assess what are two separate objectives: (i) *to increase access to short-term employment opportunities*; and (ii) *to improve employability of targeted youth*.

Both the PDO and associated outcome indicators remained unchanged throughout, but some minor changes were made to targets without formal restructuring. The change made to the target for Indicator 1a (number of beneficiaries of cash for work program) reflects a presentational issue and does not change the essence of the achievement envisaged. The change made to the target for Indicator 1b (number beneficiaries of training programs) reflects a correction to an error made in the original project design due to a mix up of projected



numbers associated with different types of training. Given the non-material nature of the informal changes made to these targets, this ICRR, in agreement with the approach taken in the ICR, will not perform a split rating.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Components

The project is structured under the following three components:

1. "Cash for Work" Labor Based Public Works Programs (Appraisal: US\$11.10 million; Actual: US\$10.851 million). Building on existing cash for work programs, this component was designed to support a nationwide labor-intensive public works program, which would provide short term employment to young people. The component included geographic targeting, project and beneficiary selection and monitoring, and rehabilitation and/or improvement of priority infrastructure sub-projects. About 60 percent of the works were expected to be on feeder road rehabilitation and 40 percent would be on other works particularly to encourage women's participation. The component also planned for the provision of training and support for some of the youth groups participating in the project as contractors to acquire improved technical skills. The vision was for these contractors to be able to operate independently and continue to employ unskilled youth after the project closed.

2. Skills Development and Employment Support (Appraisal: US\$7.5 million; Actual: US\$7.4 million). This component was designed to scale up and test approaches to support young individuals and youth groups who either had established businesses or were interested in pursuing business/employment opportunities through technical training (apprenticeship schemes) in the formal and informal sectors, business development support and coaching, and other life skills. The component was to support three innovative approaches targeting specific segments of the population (urban youth with low levels of education, urban youth with higher levels of education, and rural youth) to provide skills development opportunities to unemployed and under-employed youth to improve their livelihoods and employability in agriculture and other economic sectors.

3. Institutional Support, Policy Development, and Impact Evaluation (Appraisal: US\$2.5 million; Actual: US\$2.49 million). This component consisted of two sub-components. The first (*Institutional Support and Policy Development*) was to provide financial and technical support to help the National Youth Commission to fulfill its mandated role, and assist the government to develop policy responses in various areas through further analytical work on labor markets, skills certification, monitoring and evaluation of existing programs, and setting up of systems to assist in the identification and follow-up of beneficiaries. The sub-component would also finance knowledge management and learning events to promote the interests of youth. The second sub-component on *Impact Evaluation* was planned to support impact evaluations of activities under the first two components.

d. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Project Cost:

- Actual project cost was US\$20.82 million against an original commitment of US\$20 million. The slight variation is due to XDR exchange rate fluctuations.

Financing:

- The project was financed by an IDA Credit of US\$11 million, and an IDA Grant of US\$9 million.

Borrower Contribution:

- There was no planned or actual borrower contribution.

Dates:

- The project became effective on 10/18/2010 and underwent mid-term review on 09/24/2012. It was due to close on 06/30/2013 but



was restructured / extended on two occasions for a total of 24 months. The first 18-month extension (agreed 05/16/2013) was to compensate for delays early in the life of Component 2 associated with procurement issues and local capacity in that regard. The second six-month extension (agreed 12/17/2014) was associated with disruption to the project following the outbreak of Ebola. The project closed on 06/30/2015.

3. Relevance of Objectives & Design

a. Relevance of Objectives

High: The project objective was particularly relevant in the country's post-civil war context and responded to a policy priority as expressed in the government's poverty reduction strategy, Agenda for Change (2008-2012). Young, marginalized people, mostly young men, were at the heart of the conflict in Sierra Leone. In the post-conflict situation, about 800,000 young people (aged 15-35) remained unemployed and/or under-employed. Many were migrating from rural to urban areas in search of opportunities they were unlikely to find, and were in danger of becoming increasingly disaffected. The local context was exacerbated by the global economic crisis, increasing the risk of instability and social unrest in the country. The project was designed in response to the government's request for urgent assistance, and was part of a joint donor response that also included parallel action and support on the part of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), and the European Commission (EC) (Joint Assistance Strategy approved by the Board of the World Bank, 040610). The objective remains relevant in the ongoing context; in fact, the crisis of youth unemployment heightened as a result of the Ebola outbreak and remains a critical challenge going forward. In that regard, the Bank is preparing a new Youth Employment Support Project (YESP 2) that seeks to expand access to income generation opportunities for vulnerable youth in Sierra Leone.

Rating

High

b. Relevance of Design

Substantial: The results chain for this emergency intervention project is suitably simple and largely plausible in the post-conflict context. The core of the project is focused on income transfer through the cash for works component (Component 1), flanked by various forms of training priorities (including Component 2) identified in the government's Agenda for Change. The results chain provides a logical and plausible connection between planned activities and anticipated outcomes. The project responded to demand and was informed by past lessons that are clearly set out in Annex 9 of the PAD. For example, based on past lessons and research, the project aimed to provide training in addition to cash for work in order to add durable value for beneficiaries. The envisaged implementation structure was also clearly thought through, and national agencies with established capacity and capability were appointed to manage implementation while the National Youth Commission (NYC) was being set up, with the NYC assuming responsibility once operational. Component 3 supported relevant institutional development to enhance sustainability. The project was also designed to ensure equitable distribution of benefits with reference to gender (alternatives to road works planned for) and geography (resources divided between 14 districts weighted by population and, within districts, by levels of poverty). On a technical, more pedantic note, Component 2 was designed to scale up and test approaches to self-employment, which, strictly speaking, sits outside of the core objective (to provide short-term work opportunities and increase employability).

Rating

Substantial

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)



Objective 1

Objective

Increased access to short term employment opportunities.

Rationale

The achievement of this objective, which relates to Component 1 of the project (cash for work), is rated **Substantial**. A core, relevant indicator (1a - number of beneficiaries of cash for work program) listed in the PAD as an outcome indicator is, in fact, an output indicator. The indicator measures the number of beneficiaries (male and female) of the cash for work program. The original overall baseline (32,085) and target (55,585) were changed during the Mid-term in March 2012 to differentiate the achievement under the project from ongoing cash for work projects, noting the revised overall baseline was 0 and the revised target 23,500 (i.e., the difference between the original baseline and target). The target number of beneficiaries of Component 1 was surpassed as was the targeted number of female beneficiaries. An impact evaluation supported under Component 3 found that beneficiaries of Component 1 were 34% more likely to be employed three to four months after participation compared to a control group (a statistically significant difference).

Outputs:

- 36,393 individuals temporarily employed in cash for works program (target 23,500), of whom 16,054 women (target 7,050).
- 1,762,369 person-days in labor-intensive public works (target 2,800,000).
- 540 community-based sub-projects implemented (target of 470).
- 19,220 beneficiaries receiving mentorship support under the cash for work component (target 15,900).

Outcomes:

- A subset of beneficiaries of the "Cash for Work" component were found to be 34% more likely to be employed as of December 2012 than their counterparts in a control group, based on findings of an impact evaluation carried out under Component 3.

Rating

Substantial

Objective 2

Objective

Improved employability of targeted youth.

Rationale

The achievement of this objective, which relates mostly to Component 2 of the project, is rated **Modest**. Noting the semantic issue at play here - the objective refers to employability whereas the training under Component 2 relates to self-employment - the core outcome indicator is Indicator 2 (beneficiaries employed or self-employed in the field of training six months after receiving skills development and employment support), which was 75% achieved.

Outputs:

- 9,600 youth (of which 4,864 were female) were trained across programs implemented by three contracted service providers (target was 6,000 youth trained, of which 2,400 were expected to be female).
- 97.6% beneficiary completion rate for skills development and employment interventions (target 85%).
- 19,220 beneficiaries under Component 1 received mentorship support (target 15,900).

Outcomes:



- 44.5% of beneficiaries were employed or self-employed in their field of training six months after receiving skills development and employment support (target 60.0%).

Rating
Modest

5. Efficiency

Efficiency is rated **Modest** due to insufficient information. No cost-benefit analysis was undertaken at appraisal due to limited available data. Sixty percent of the costs of sub-projects went directly to beneficiary wages and, as such, the potential to realize efficiencies was relatively limited. The ICR suggests the average investment of US\$275 per public works beneficiary compares favorably to the US\$394 per beneficiary established through a study of other youth employment programs in Sierra Leone (ICR, p. 14); however, in the absence of a comparison of inputs, outputs and outcomes between the project and projects included in the study, the comparison of 'unit' costs has little meaning. The ICR also references efforts to improve efficiency over the course of the project through: (i) shifting responsibility for sub-project implementation from contractors to communities; (ii) improving the data collection system through digitalization and electronic transmission of timesheets; and (iii) using a mobile payment solution. Given the emergency nature of the project, 'time' may be regarded as a key unit of efficiency. In that regard, implementation delays (totaling 2 years) may be regarded as a sign of inefficiency. Weak initial targeting of the poor that was uncovered by a targeting assessment exercise also suggests certain inefficiencies, even if corrections were subsequently made.

Efficiency Rating
Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

Relevance of the project's objectives is rated High reflecting a rapid, bespoke response to a pressing government priority. Relevance of project design is rated Substantial, with planned activities logically and plausibly related to anticipated outcomes. Achievement of the objective to increase access to short-term employment opportunities is rated Substantial as all targets were met, and achievement of the objective to increase the employability of youth is rated Modest based on the available evidence, which indicates that the key outcome target (employment post-training) was not realized. Efficiency is also rated Modest due to insufficient information and significant delays in the implementation of this emergency response project.

Taken together, these ratings are indicative of moderate shortcomings in the project's preparation and implementation, resulting in an overall Outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory.



- a. Outcome Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

7. Rationale for Risk to Development Outcome Rating

Despite the fact that youth employment is an ongoing policy priority with strong Government commitment and enhanced institutional capacity, economic activities were severely disrupted by the Ebola epidemic and the effects of low iron ore prices. Although there is some upturn in GDP expected in 2016-17, the capacity of the economy to support significant employment opportunities and business development is limited. The country continues to be susceptible to financial crisis and to regional flaring of violence.

- a. Risk to Development Outcome Rating
Substantial

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

- a. Quality-at-Entry

This emergency response project was part of a coordinated joint response among donors (UNDP, ILO, GTZ, EC) to urgent Government requests, and was prepared under time pressure. There was a six-month period between initiation and Board approval. The Bank worked closely with Government and other donors to identify its niche position. The technical design for the project was informed by existing analysis (*Youth Employment in Sierra Leone* (World Bank, 2009)). Appropriately simple implementation arrangements were made, drawing on existing agencies that were 'known' quantities. The project documentation is clear in its assessment of the situation and indicates that significant care was taken in terms of financial management, risk assessment, monitoring, and gender-related issues, despite the time pressure. Furthermore, the inclusion of support for impact evaluation signaled intent to learn with a view to continuous improvement. However, there was some imprecision in the detailing of outcome and intermediate indicators that had to be addressed during implementation.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Satisfactory

- b. Quality of supervision

The project was steered to conclusion through a difficult context that included a challenging political and economic climate, an investigation of corruption, and, ultimately, the outbreak of Ebola. The Bank team (and Government) responded quickly to allegations of corruption associated with the cash for work program (which was subject to INT investigation in 2012). The investigation found that government employees solicited and received kickback payments from contractors under Component 1, and that contractors, with the knowledge and assistance of government employees, submitted documents with inflated expenditures to recover the kickback payments they had made. As a result, mitigating measures were introduced, including the removal of certain staff and innovative use of technology to verify and associate relevant activity and payees. Perhaps the most significant challenge to impact the project was the delay to the implementation of Component 2 (training) associated with procurement difficulties, despite the fact that a thorough assessment of procurement arrangements and associated risk was undertaken at project initiation (PAD, Annex 5). That delay resulted in an 18-month project extension that, in turn, meant that the project ran into the start of the outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone, causing a further six-month extension. Given the emergency nature of the project where time was a critical factor, the delays were unfortunate. In addition, changes were made to outcome targets and intermediate outcome indicators relatively late in the process and, perhaps more importantly, these changes were never formalized.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating



Moderately Satisfactory

9. Assessment of Borrower Performance

a. Government Performance

The ICR reports that the Government of Sierra Leone remained committed to the project, which addressed a key policy concern, throughout. When allegations of corruption emerged on the part of certain staff of the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) in relation to the implementation of Component 1, INT undertook and completed an investigation. As a result, a number of mitigation measures were introduced, including the firing of some members of NaCSA staff and the introduction of innovative technology-based solutions to enhance monitoring and accountability (e.g., e-payment system linked to electronic timesheets to record beneficiary attendance). The authorities worked with the Bank to quickly address the allegations of corruption and also worked closely with the Bank to ensure the project reached completion despite the Ebola outbreak. The issue of youth employment remains a priority for the Government.

Government Performance Rating
Satisfactory

b. Implementing Agency Performance

The ICR (p. 17) states that the main government agencies involved in implementing the project acted in a dedicated and professional manner throughout: the Integrated Project Administration Unit (IPAU, operating under the Finance Ministry and with prior experience of administering IDA projects) managed overall administration and was directly responsible for contracting the three providers of training under Component 2; the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) managed the roll out of Component 1 (cash for work); and the Youth Secretariat was responsible for Component 3. However, the ICR notes persistent financial management and implementation issues, including allegations of corruption that resulted in an INT case and mitigating action by the Bank and Government.

Implementing Agency Performance Rating
Moderately Unsatisfactory

Overall Borrower Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

10. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The monitoring arrangements were well designed, using local communities and contracted entities to gather monitoring data that was ultimately collated by the IPAU that administered the project, noting the relatively straightforward nature of much of the data to be collected (largely reflecting participation in cash for work and/or training). The associated evaluation arrangements were also well conceived. Component 3 of the project was designed to support the execution of two impact evaluations (IEs), as part of which additional data were to be gathered regarding post-intervention status of beneficiaries.

b. M&E Implementation

The M&E activities were carried out as planned. The IPAU had overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation (as well as for general administration, fiduciary oversight, and coordination). Component 1 was implemented by NaCSA and other partners. Local communities, through Project Oversight Committees and local councils, provided monitoring returns to NaCSA, which in turn provided monthly progress updates to the IPAU. Component 2 was implemented by procured entities contracted to the IPAU to provide training and employment support services. These entities provided monitoring returns to IPAU, and youth advocacy groups took part in the spot monitoring of project activities. When allegations of corruption emerged on the part of certain NaCSA staff (Component 1), INT undertook and completed an



investigation. As a result, a number of mitigation measures were introduced, including the firing of some members of NaCSA staff and the introduction of innovative technology-based solutions to enhance monitoring and accountability (e.g., e-payment system linked to electronic timesheets to record beneficiary attendance).

The IE for Component 1 was completed at the end of 2013 and is reflected in the ICR. The IE for Component 2 was not completed in time for the ICR exercise, although preliminary analysis of a baseline survey analysis undertaken as part of the IE exercise was available. The ICR notes that the approach to beneficiary selection for the IE associated with Component 2 was overly 'rigid' and that the methodology should have been developed earlier in the project cycle given delays in implementation associated with the difficulty in implementing the IE.

c. M&E Utilization

The monitoring data fed into the impact evaluations supported under Component 3 and, as mentioned above, a more sophisticated approach to financial and physical monitoring was introduced in response to the INT investigation. The National Youth Commission (NYC) and Integrated Project Administration Unit (IPAU) monitored implementation progress of activities carried out by contracted entities on a quarterly basis (quarterly progress reports submitted by contractors). The NYC and IPAU also conducted joint field appraisals to further verify progress reported. The ICR does not provide further information on how monitoring data fed into decisions made during project implementation or supervision.

M&E Quality Rating

Modest

11. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as a Category B project, triggering O.P 4.01 (Environmental Assessment), O.P 4.09 (Pest Management), O.P 4.04 (Natural Habitats), and O.P 4.12 (Involuntary Resettlement). These safeguard policies were largely applicable to Component 1 (Cash for Works), which financed public works, but also to Component 2, which could finance some agricultural inputs. Public disclosure of an Environmental and Social Monitoring Framework (ESMF), which would include mitigation of risks to natural habitats, a Pest Management Plan, and a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), was a condition of effectiveness. The ICR reports that the National Commission for Social Action was responsible for ensuring that environmental issues, where applicable, were identified and made known to the beneficiaries and communities trained in monitoring environmental safeguards. The ICR (p. 7) reports that safeguards compliance was Satisfactory throughout.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

The ICR provides relatively little information on fiduciary compliance despite issues arising. The ICR (p. 8) notes that Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISR) consistently rated the project Moderately Satisfactory for Financial Management (FM) but suggests that challenges faced from a fiduciary perspective were technical in nature and associated with lack of capacity (e.g., stalled efforts to computerize the FM system). The ICR notes that the INT case, referenced above, was associated with straightforward corruption rather than financial management or procurement issues, and that the procurement delays (that set the project back 18 months) were also related to technical issues and lack of capacity that the World Bank ultimately addressed through the provision of adequate support while the relevant agency hired, as envisaged in the PAD, a qualified procurement specialist.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The ICR (pp. 15-16) reports that the project provided funds to support the Government's Ebola sensitization efforts for over 11,600 households in 145 communities in Sierra Leone between August and November of 2014. In elaborating general lessons, the ICR notes that the project's flexibility proved valuable in the Ebola outbreak context, providing resources to improve communication with beneficiaries (e.g., teaching ways to avoid Ebola).



d. Other

12. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	The overall objective is comprised of two sub-objectives, one of which is rated High, the other Modest. Efficiency is also rated Modest by IEG.
Risk to Development Outcome	Substantial	Substantial	---
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Whereas quality at entry was Satisfactory, implementation was less so. The Bank team was slow to address shortcomings in the results framework and, when it did, it failed to formalize changes made.
Borrower Performance	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	The evidence presented suggests there were issues to do with financial management and targeting that could have been better addressed by the implementing agencies. The procurement delay was also a critical shortcoming for this emergency response project.
Quality of ICR		Substantial	---

Note

When insufficient information is provided by the Bank for IEG to arrive at a clear rating, IEG will downgrade the relevant ratings as warranted beginning July 1, 2006.

The "Reason for Disagreement/Comments" column could cross-reference other sections of the ICR Review, as appropriate.

13. Lessons

This tempering of the scope of a project's objectives, while focusing on delivery, can provide a balanced approach that takes contextual factors into account. The objectives set for this emergency response project were realistic and attainable while also providing strategic support to the client.

Flexibility in adapting community engagement aspects of a project can result in effective service delivery and maximization of added value. In the case of the Youth Employment Project in Sierra Leone, such flexibility was particularly important and allowed for a much needed on-site response to the Ebola epidemic.

When two principal components of a project operate independently of one another, an explicit statement of how beneficiaries can move from one component to another can enhance overall design and coherence, and further strengthen the value added of a service delivery focus. IN this instance, the separation of the two components was understandable from an administrative perspective; however, it would have been appropriate from a beneficiary-focused perspective to make more clear how at least some beneficiaries could graduate from the cash-for-work intervention (Component 1) to the skills development/employment support intervention (Component 2).

Innovations involving electronic control measures that can be introduced in an emergency, post-conflict scenario can demonstrate real



opportunity for fiduciary and other (e.g. M&E) assurance and accuracy going forward. In this case, in response to corruption allegations and an INT investigation, e-payments, scanned photo ID, and similar measures were introduced.

14. Assessment Recommended?

No

15. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is concise, well written, and easy to read. It provides a good overview of the context for the project and project basics. However, it is light on detail in relation to critical issues. For example, although the project was delayed for 18 months due to difficulties experienced in procurement, the ICR provides no explanation of what, specifically, went wrong (despite the thorough treatment of procurement in the PAD). Given that this was an emergency response project, it was time-critical, and the 18-month delay due to procurement issues is germane to the intended purpose of the project. It is also the case that the 18-month delay meant that the project ran into the outbreak of the Ebola crisis, resulting in a further six-month extension / delay. The ICR provides a number of what appear to be considered lessons (general and component specific), but some are not grounded in detail included in the ICR itself and, as such, are hard to interpret in the context of the performance of the project in question.

- a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial