Sierra Leone: Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation

The objective of the project (Credit of US$25 million from the World Bank over the period 2000-2003) was to support the peace process and expedite the return of stability to Sierra Leone through the support of two initiatives: one that helped reintegrate demobilized combatants into social and economic life and the other that sought to restore basic socioeconomic infrastructure and services in the communities most affected by the war. The successful implementation of the project was also a precondition for any other Bank investment in Sierra Leone. Other multilateral donors who contributed to the project included the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, UNDP, Unicef, WFP, UNHSF and the EDF; DfID was a bilateral donor. One could say that for every $1 invested by the Bank, $0.36 was leveraged from other donors.

Impact on the Ground

- The Training and Employment Program (TEP) trained 48,000 ex-combatants (3,000 more than targeted) and helped close to 50% of the trainees find employment or self-employment.
- The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program eventually disarmed 72,490 fighters, well above the 45,000 originally intended. This was done through the creation of 16 demobilization centers in 12 districts and 7 interim care centers. The demobilization was key to enabling government to re-establish government services in affected areas; it also facilitated the free flow of people, goods and services within the country and re-ignited a stagnant economy (an earlier Infobrief No. 81, October 2002, discussed the Disarmament and Demobilization issues).
- Of the disarmed, 95% or 69,000 were demobilized and 56,751 or 81% registered with the National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) for reintegration training. As of mid-September 2003, 48,240 or 85% of the registered ex-combatants had benefited from reintegration services. Over 90% of those receiving reintegration services participated in the IDA-financed Training and Employment Program (TEP).
- The results of a mid-term assessment of the TEP were largely positive. The IDA Credit financed a total of 397 TEP projects with a disbursed value of $4.64 million—these projects were implemented primarily by NGOs. The majority of these projects dealt with vocational training (367).
- A system to ensure budget transparency was devised by which the NGO implementing agency gave the registered names for training to the DDR for cross-checking, thus ensuring that the potential trainees were indeed demobilized ex-combatants and that they had not benefited from a training program offered by any other...
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partner. The rapid response of the program was facilitated by NCDDR’s decentralized structure – it had 4 regional offices and 13 district offices which enabled better project supervision and problem-solving at the field level.

- Two-thirds of all ex-combatants are currently residing in their community of choice.
- The Emergency Recovery Support Fund component addressed the issue of restoring social infrastructure in hundreds of villages. It funded 269 sub-projects, benefitting an estimated 1,000,000 people in all of Sierra Leone’s districts, using IDA and ADB funds - the total disbursed amount was 25,730, 507,000 Leones. Education consumed the highest proportion (37%) of the budget, followed by agriculture (28%) and health (10%).

Lessons learned

- The project was one of the first efforts by the Bank to address reintegration and rehabilitation issues. The division of labour between the NCDDR and the NCRRR appears to have worked well. The DDR component requires a tightly-controlled, top-down, targeted approach; the ERSF requires a different structure designed to empower communities to own the rehabilitation process.
- Project design should take a realistic view of inter-ministerial collaboration. In this instance, it was difficult, at best, to get the ministries for health, water, education, agriculture and water and sanitation to collaborate.
- There is a trade-off between quickly re-establishing basic community services, so that Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are motivated to return, and high levels of community participation – high levels of the former may not be possible in the aftermath of conflict.
- An independent Financial Management and Procurement Unit may increase the effectiveness of post-conflict investments. In this case, it served to increase donor confidence in investment; establish a common set of administrative rules; and most important, increase the level of trust that the rebel forces had in the sincerity and transparency of the peace process.
- Significant up-front investment is required in capacity-building for implementing agencies, and in some cases, for the participating communities. NGO sector capacity limitations should be assessed in the design phase and a corresponding capacity building program should be developed and implemented.
- Project design should be structured around a few easy-to-monitor key performance indicators, based on relatively simple baseline studies.

This Infobrief has been excerpted from Implementation Completion Report No. 27263. For more information, e-mail Giuseppe Zampaglione, gzampaglione@worldbank.org