



Joint SEED Project Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Workshop REPORT

LOCATION :

Montserrat County / Rose Garden Plaza

DATE: May 23rd 2019

Summary:

The nature of development work relating to targeting at-risk, or street-absorbed youth in a post-conflict setting such as Liberia, requires a multi-sectoral approach that galvanizes private and public partners' resources, knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt towards more harmonized, pragmatic and sustainable solutions. With the purpose of seeking to transform the lives of young individuals who are potential agents for growth and prosperity of the nation, alternatively, conduits of political manipulation, instability and violence, relevant national partner were called upon to have informed discussion towards the implementation of the SEED Project. Overall, the multi-stakeholder workshop provided a transparent platform for inclusive and strategic planning, while ensuring national and local ownership across partners in government and development stratosphere. With more than (35) participants in attendance, the project team inculcated partners on the fundamentals of the project, as well as its pilot nature and engaged in a series of interactive exercises that served to highlight common understanding of the challenges faced in dealing with disadvantage youth from slum and ghetto communities. The breadth of knowledge and experience captured in the one-day working session helped to validate, reinforce and cross-examine many of UNDP and UNFPA assumptions and strategies in working with at-risk youth population. Two major outcomes as a result of the multi-stakeholder workshop include the mapping and identification of at-risk youth communities (Annex A) and general criteria's for the selection and recruitment of potential project beneficiaries (Annex B).

Main Objectives:

In the light of the above, the main objectives of the workshop were the following:

- Develop criteria for the selection of 500 at-risk youth and classification system for at-risk youth
- Map and triangulate potential communities for intervention across Monrovia and Paynesville
- Determine and compile leaders and leadership structure among at-risk youth
- Identify relevant local community leaders and businesses for orientation and sensitization
- Map existing TVET institutions at community level to support project implementation and ensure community ownership and sustainability.
- Brief and orientate partners and health clinicians on SEED Project implementation strategy, approach and general background.
- Prepare relevant partners on requirements of UNDP and UNFPA.
- Agree on potential official launch date for SEED Project with partners.

Expected Outcome:

- Targeted communities for intervention identified
- Criteria's for at-risk youth selection finalized
- At-risk youth and communities' leaders identified
- Official project launch date determined
- Roadmap for key project activities developed e.g. needs assessment, validation, community engagement/orientations, etc.

Background:

The literature on the history of conflicts in Liberia shows marginalization as the main root cause for the rebellion. Within the current socioeconomic environment, disadvantaged and at-risk Liberian youth (Zogos/Zogesse) have grown increasingly agitated with the lack of opportunities for them and often times resort to destructive and destabilizing activities, including violent protests, criminal behavior, drug addiction and self-abuse, to express their concerns and deal with their issues. Acknowledging the UN global call for action through UNSC Resolution 2250 (Youth, Peace and Security) and 1325 (Women, Peace and Security), Liberia's fragile context now more than ever before rests on the comprehensive inclusion and engagement of youth in peace and development processes. Taking this call to action into account, there remains a unique demographic of citizens such as the at-risk youth who have suffered disproportionately as a result of their status and characteristics, justifies the support this project seeks to provide and integrate them into the mainstream society. Ultimately, if not positively engaged, this demographic of high-risk youth threatens the very foundations of progress by undermining the peace dividend gains made over the past 12 years.

Against this backdrop and within the context of Liberia's recent political and security transition, increased economic hardship and social volatility, the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged (SEED) Youth Project, as a pilot, resonates with concerns of the government, UN and other development partners about the need to address the increasing at-risk youth menace. It will contribute to sustainable peace and social cohesion through the transformation of at-risk youth from potential agents/threats of conflicts to facilitators of peace and constructive citizens engaged in decent means of livelihood. On the basis of an agreed criteria, the project will strategically select 500 at-risk youth in Montserrado, and enroll them into a series of vocational trainings, practical field exercises and other interventions, aimed at rehabilitating them and influencing behavioral change. These will include engagement in meaningful and constructive thinking and activities, improved self-image and access to social and health services, and thus laying the foundations for their social reintegration.

The project thus has three phases/stages (which overlap):

Phase (I): Selection, Orientation and Rehabilitation;

Phase (II): Capacity Building, Vocational Skills-training and Social Reintegration; and

Phase (III): Job Creation and Linkage with Business Support Services, and its target county is Montserrado.

It is anticipated that through the SEED Project, beneficiaries will be rehabilitated, acquire vocational skills to earn their living, reintegrate into their families and communities, and participate effectively in local conflict prevention mechanisms, as their potential to destabilize their communities and the country are minimized, reduced and eventually eliminated.

Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Workshop:

The workshop commenced with key facilitators and UNDP/UNFPA project team, Eric Opoku, Maybe Livingstone, Gerald L. Witherspoon and Comfort Kollie welcoming guests, with opening remarks shared by Hon. Minister Isaac Doe of the Ministry of Youth & Sports (MYS). As the leading government institution with a mandate to strategically engage, empower and develop Liberian youth, the MYS serve as UNDP leading partner on behalf of the Government of Liberia. Similarly, UNFPA's longstanding partnership with Liberia Ministry of Health (MoH) and the dedicated medical, psychosocial and mental health counselling integrated into the project as component of phase (1) of the rehabilitation justifies said collaboration between UNFPA and the MoH.

Following welcome remarks and introductions, the agenda disseminated included an ice-breaker to allow for fellow development practitioners, technocrats, security personnel and medical professionals to purge themselves of general inquiries and concerns as it relates to their expectations of the workshop and the overall project. The nature of development work dealing with homeless, poverty stricken and drug addicted youth takes on a multidimensional approach that requires concerted effort across sectors to ensure a comprehensive and durable strategy towards at-risk youth rehabilitation, capacity development and economic empowerment that will yield transformational results. Initially, participants expressed apprehension and dissatisfaction as to what they believed the project would do and how it would do it. The primary point of contention dealt with rehabilitation phase of the project due to the outpatient approach adopted by both agencies. Particularly, medical and health professional shared their knowledge/experience of treating and dealing with drug abusers, taking into consideration the duration required to assess, treat and rehabilitate such individuals with volatile mind state and condition. However, having communicated the project and as a pilot and the catalytic nature of the intervention, coupled with finite resources and budgetary constraints, participants welcomed the funding and support provided by PBSO and the UN system in Liberia.

The topic of sustainability proved to be convincing grounds upon which partners acquiesced and help to solicit buy-in across institutions, NGOs and larger civil society. Present day Liberia experiences relative stability with undercurrents of economic, social and political volatility. The Government of Liberia is cash-strapped and experiencing economic underperformance that limits its ability to scale up initiatives deemed necessary, let alone investing in new and innovative solutions in addressing the ever increasing threat to peace posed by youth delinquency and unemployment. Taking the larger picture and realities into consideration, the programme proceeded with an overview of the project and detail reflection of the implementation strategy. UNDP project manager and community development specialist, Eric Opoku, led the session with an insightful and consummate delivery that galvanized support and quelled participants concerns. The identification and community mapping exercise was led by UNDP livelihood project coordinator, Gerald L. Witherspoon. The mapping exercise proved to be valuable and engaging as workshop participants were invited to demarcate areas on larger map to help visualize where the population density for at-risk youth seems to be concentrated.

Maybe Livingstone, UNFPA national programme specialist, guided the subsequent session on the determination of criteria's for selection and classification of beneficiaries. Understanding that at-risk youth vary from behaviour, condition, attitude and general profile on a case-to-case basis, it is prudent to set criteria's and classify potential beneficiaries to ease and inform selection of target group that will contribute

to the success of the project and have long lasting impact on their transformation. For example, hard core drug abuser and/or criminals inherently present a challenge to the pilot given the added resources and attention required to rehabilitate and reform them. Thus, it is advisable we set criteria's that will help to classify target beneficiaries based on agreed upon standards and best practices. Ms. Livingstone concluded the session by having participants divide into groups and present their findings on criteria that would help attract compatible beneficiaries for the project. For a detail overview of the outcome of this session, please refer to Annex (A).

Phase (II) of the SEED project looks at capacity building and vocational skills training for disadvantage youth through flexible modalities such as apprenticeship, master craftsman approach, on the job skills training, or standard classroom setting teaching. Based on individual's interest and capacity they will be linked to one of the abovementioned training modality to further advance their skills and improve employability. Patrick Anderson, Director of TVET Programmes at the Ministry of Education, proceeded by leading the next session on identifying TVET trade area(s) and map TVET institution at community level. Mr. Anderson provided a succinct presentation of functional TVET institutions in Greater Monrovia and their trade area(s) of expertise. Adopting a bottom up approach that will be conducive to the reintegration of at-risk youth into their communities, it is tantamount that at the local level communities take immediate ownership of the products of the project and therefore, it is envisaged that the knowledge, networks and resources honed in the community be utilized to help capacitate and motivate other delinquent youth to take advantage of the support offered in the communities. In applying this strategy the sustainability of the project is strengthened by utilizing existing structures, institutions and resources that would have otherwise gone untapped.

In preparation for the Joint SEED Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Workshop, participants were required to fill-in and complete a community leadership matrix that would help articulate the various hot-spots in Monrovia, as well as identify at-risk youth and community leadership. However, due to the overwhelming demand to extend the deadline for the consolidation and completion of said matrix, two sessions were postponed including: (I) Identify and Determine At-Risk Youth Leaders per Community Mapping and (II) Identify Relevant Community, Religious and Business Leaders. In closing the one day workshop, UNDP and UNFPA held an open Q&A session following a brief presentation on UNDP and UNFPA compliance, rules, regulation and reporting. This session served inform potential partners on the appropriate internal systems agencies assess and evaluate prior to formalizing partnership.

Overall, the objectives of the working session were met as UNDP/UNFPA were collectively able to fine-tune the project's focus, target beneficiaries, key criteria for selection and implementation strategy/processes. In order to ensure equal appreciation of the project, secure undivided support of all key partners, strengthening collaboration and national ownership, UNDP and UNFPA have earlier held one-on-one meetings with key partners prior to the multi-stakeholder workshop.

Annex A:

Socio-Economic Empowerment of Disadvantage (SEED) Youth in Liberia

COMMUNITY	SUB-COMMUNITY	Number of Beneficiaries	Total (Beneficiaries)
West Point	Fanti Town		75
	Kru Beach		
	White Flower		
New Kru Town	Zondo Town		100
	Blamo Town		
	Fuel Oil Water		
	Popo Beach		
Center Street	Pennoh Building / Bloc E		50
	Tranch Town		
	Vlabah (Defense Ministry)		
Gardnersville	New Georgia Junction / Facebook		30
	Bassa Town		
	Barnersville Junction		
Thinker Village	Chairman G / White House		
	Big Ju		

	Grand Geddeh		30
Duport Road	Better Day Community		35
	4 Houses		
	704 Community		
King Gray	Nagbe Town		40
	Mat Village		
	Kpelle Town		
Old Road	Nippy Town		35
	Peace Island (540)		
	Tarr Town		
Sinkor	24 th Street		30
	12 th Street		
	Saye Town		
Red Light	Goba-Chop		75
	Nezoe		
	72 nd Barack		
TOTAL: 500			

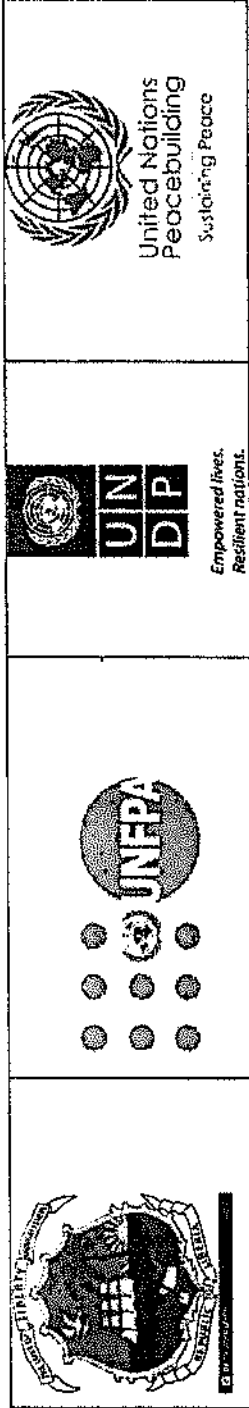
Annex B:

Notes for Selection Criteria for SEED Project Beneficiaries

Thematic area #1: Skills training/Economic Livelihood	
General Selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-interest /commitment ✓ Stable mind set ✓ Career counseling/awareness ✓ No cash for participation ✓ Community driven/engage leaders ✓ 18-35 years ✓ Literate/illiterate ✓ Assistance/mentorship ✓
Why those criteria are selected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ training duration is short: need to have masters & mentors ✓ passion for transformation
Potential Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Loss of interest in training due to craving ✓ Rejection by community/family ✓ Desire for instant benefit ✓ High number of youths coming at the beginning with expectations
Project Minimize Potential Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Involve community & family members in the entire engagement process ✓ Give option to choose desired skills after career counselling
Best practices/lessons Learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Once the community & families are involved, transformation can be permanent ✓ Transformation is possible, through trust building & training
Thematic area #2: Linking to Job Market	
Selection Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Age: youth (15-35 years) ✓ Interest: Project support ✓ Commitment ✓ Psychosocial status ✓ School drop-out ✓ No or minimal use of drugs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Marketability of skill areas ✓ Low or no criminal records working with the police ✓ Team playing attitude ✓ Family ties/reintegration prospect ✓ Past experience
Potential Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 500 out of 25,000 ✓ Sustainability
Thematic area #3: Health Mental Acuity	
Selection criteria process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community engagement & awareness on services ✓ Intake process using intake form screening tools (BDAST) ✓ Assessment forms (ASSIST)
Why are these criteria needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To clearly identify potential beneficiaries ✓ To identify those who will need brief intervention or long-term intervention ✓ To identify what kind of substance and frequency of use ✓ Because these criteria are evidence based and best practices
Potential Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Potential of recruiting more participants than is required ✓ Risk of high remand for medical supplies ✓ Increase work load on service providers
Project Minimize Potential Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Benefit of project should be ahead of project ✓ Only awareness and availability of services should be provided at the various communities ✓ Individual and families should take responsibilities on going to access services on their own ✓
Best Practices/Lessons Learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Family support/inclusion ✓ Community support/inclusion ✓ Making use of recovery coaches
Thematic area #4: Social Reintegration into Communities and Families	
Selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community mobilization, outreach and awareness creation ✓ Providing community dwellers education of acceptance
Why are these criteria needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To reduce stigmatization and discrimination ✓ Peer to peer education

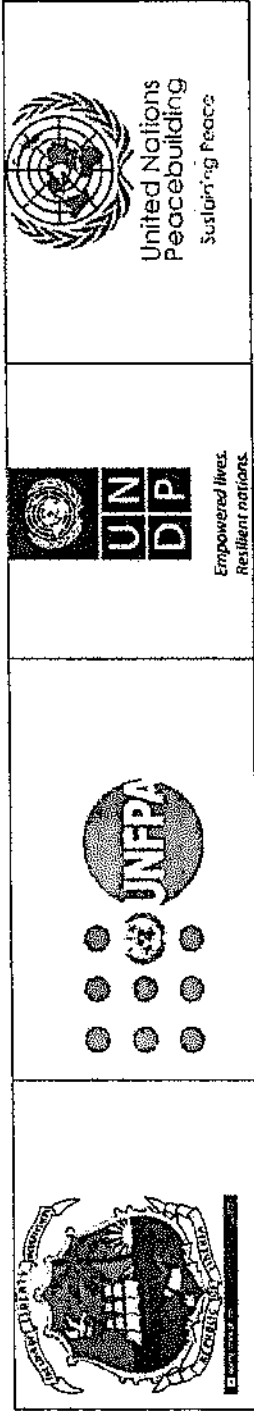
Potential Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Resistance from the community ✓ Resistance from youth at-risk ✓ Trust/lack of trust from community dweller ✓ Trust building between family members and relatives ✓
Risk Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Preventive education ✓ Extra school activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Music o Home Arts ✓ Sports (All) activities
Best Practices/Lessons Learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community engagement, Acceptance and Involvement ✓ Involvement of at-risk youth ✓ Regular NA engagement



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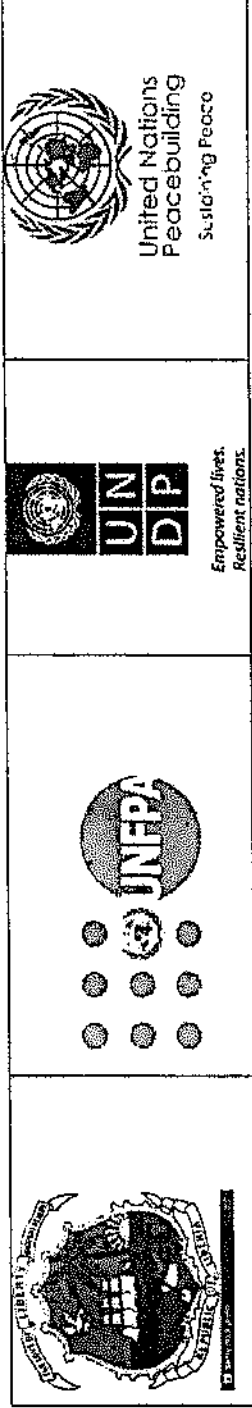
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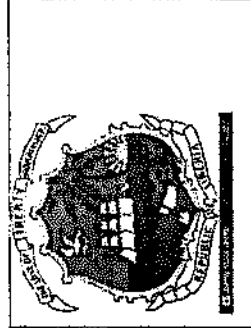
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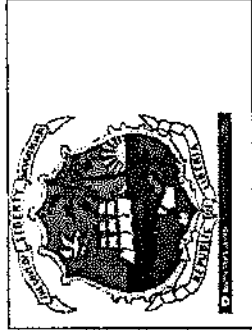


United Nations
Peacebuilding
Sustaining Peace

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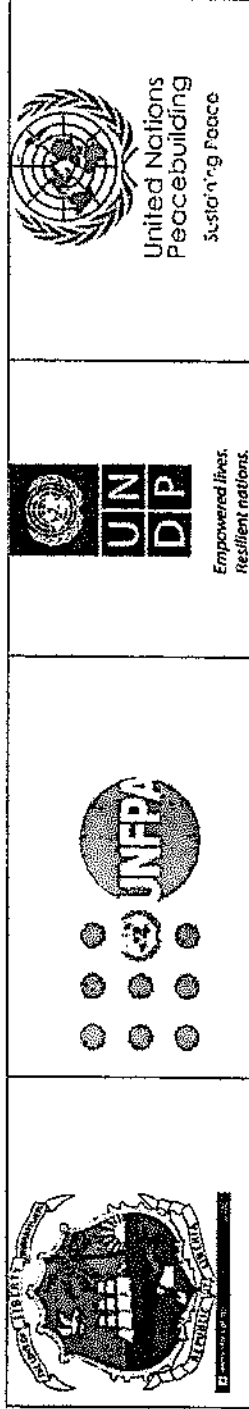
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