Building Safety net System to Protect Poor People—Before, During, and After Crisis

Following several waves of crisis in recent years, the government of Liberia recognized that a strategy for social protection would be a critical tool to safeguard the country’s poor and vulnerable populations, if and when another crisis hits. Such a strategy would account for Liberia’s specific pattern of vulnerability to food shortages, stemming from insufficient food production that is aggravated during the rainy season.

Social protection in Liberia depends heavily on donor financing. In addition, funds are spread thinly across many small-scale interventions, which are uncoordinated and often independent of government direction (Source: “The Social Protection Sector in Liberia: A Policy Note,” March 2012).

With flexible funds, the Rapid Social Response Program has mobilized expertise in response to the government’s need for technical assistance in developing a National Social Protection Strategy, as the country prepares to adopt its second Poverty Reduction Strategy in June 2012.

### Rapid Social Response Funding

**US $290,000**

**Timeline**

October 2010–March 2012

**Partners**

Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population, total</th>
<th>3,994,122</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty headcount ratio at $2 a day (PPP) (% of population) (2007)</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$)</td>
<td>200</td>
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An RSR-funded Social Protection Diagnostic Report was a critical first step in the development of a coordinated and comprehensive social protection strategy, which will form an integrated part of the human development pillar of the country’s poverty reduction strategy.

The diagnostic report and the accompanying policy note detail the ongoing social protection interventions in the country. They also provide recommendations on how to make the transition from fragmented social protection programs to an integrated social protection system that can support the chronic poor during normal times and be scaled up quickly during a crisis.

The Social Protection Diagnostic Report has given impetus to broader policy discussions across sectors and outside the working group of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, UNICEF, and the World Bank. Increasing numbers of representatives from the government, development agencies, and civil society organizations now attend regular meetings.

A social protection specialist was hired with RSR funds to support the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs and other government stakeholders in the drafting of the diagnostic report, to research informal indigenous coping mechanisms, and to help develop the social protection section of the poverty-reduction strategy. RSR also sponsored the participation of government officials in two South-South learning forums on public works and social safety nets, in 2010 and 2011.

Based on the Diagnostic Report and funded by the IDA Crisis Response Window and the Africa Catalytic Growth Fund Operation, the government is enhancing its capacity to monitor and evaluate its social protection programs.

Accomplishments to Date

- Completed a social protection diagnostic report and policy note
- Funded specialist to mobilize knowledge and guide agenda on social protection
- Facilitated rapid expansion of policy discussions on social protection

“No matter how developed Liberia becomes, there will still be people at the bottom of the ladder or who fall off the ladder, who will need the government to catch them.” Andrew Tehmeh, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Gender and Development, during the Regional Protection Strategy Consultations.