

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)  
CONCEPT STAGE**

Report No.: AB3636

<b>Project Name</b>	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Liberia
<b>Region</b>	AFRICA
<b>Sector</b>	Vocational training (70%);Adult literacy/non-formal education (30%)
<b>Project ID</b>	P110571
<b>Borrower(s)</b>	Project is a grant for GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA
<b>Implementing Agency</b>	Will depend on final design of the program
<b>Environment Category</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI <input type="checkbox"/> TBD (to be determined)
<b>Date PID Prepared</b>	January 30, 2008
<b>Estimated Date of Appraisal Authorization</b>	
<b>Estimated Date of Board Approval</b>	December 31, 2008

1. Key development issues and rationale for Bank involvement

Liberia's 14-year long war (1989-2003) debilitated the country's human development capacity, paralyzed markets, and left a generation of young people with little education and few skills. Girls were particularly disadvantaged. In 2003, almost 60% of young girls and 40% of young boys had no formal schooling (ILO/UNICEF 2005). Their disadvantage reflects long-standing gender inequality in Liberian society. Preliminary findings from the DHS survey show that more than 40% of women had no education, compared to less than 20% of men, while 23% of women and 44% of men had some secondary schooling (DHS 2007).

While both adolescent girls and boys need to "catch up" quickly in terms of education and skills training for productive employment in the short term – and broad-based economic growth in the medium and long term – adolescent girls need additional policy and program efforts to achieve better outcomes. As in many other post-conflict situations, emergency skills training and public works programs in Liberia have targeted male youth ex-combatants, likely reinforcing rather than reducing adolescent girls' disadvantage. The few skills training programs for adolescent girls, run largely by NGOs, have focused on traditional female skills (such as sewing, soap production, tie-dying) for which there is little or no market demand. Unless there is an additional effort specifically targeted to adolescent girls, Liberian policies developed within the PRS exercise may overlook girls' economic needs and potential economic contributions; with subsequent costs for poverty reduction and economic growth.

The proposed project builds on the Bank's comparative advantage in designing demand-driven approaches to skills and entrepreneurship training and in conducting serious impact evaluations of new initiatives. There have been few evaluations of youth-oriented training programs, and none on programs targeted to young women and girls. The lessons that will be drawn from this program can be used to change program design, scale up activities, or to replicate the program in other settings.

## 2. Proposed objective(s)

The proposed development objective for the project is improved employability and incomes for adolescent girls and young women in the Monrovia area, and development of a new model for demand-driven training of youth in Liberia.

## 3. Preliminary description

The project proposes to provide skills training to adolescent girls and young women (aged 15-24) in such a way as to increase their employability and place them in jobs or self-employment. The target population will comprise adolescent girls in urban and peri-urban Monrovia. The need for investments outside Monrovia will be decided once the results of the initial pilot phase have been analyzed. The target population may be more narrowly defined, for example, to concentrate on adolescent girls who have recently completed or are completing the Accelerated Learning Program, or with a certain educational profile. Further targeting details remain to be determined.

Four government agencies have been identified as key partners and potential government counterparts: Gender and Development, Youth and Sports, Education, and Labor. All will be involved in project design and implementation, whether directly or indirectly. The choice of government counterpart will depend, in part, on the final design of the program and will be determined in the pre-appraisal mission.

The project design envisions the following four components:

*Component 1: Job skill training for wage employment* – The focus of this component will be on providing relevant skills training to girls and young women to enable them to obtain paid employment. Examples of areas of employment might include high-quality urban services (such as telecommunications, administrative and secretarial services, equipment repair and contract management, and the hospitality industry).

*Component 2: Entrepreneurship training with linkages to micro-finance* – The focus of this component will be to provide young female entrepreneurs access to training and micro-credit that will boost their productivity, competitiveness and access to markets. A key element of this package will be training in business development services, which typically include business planning, consultancy and advisory services, marketing assistance, technology development and transfer, and links to finance and financial services.

*Component 3: Institutional strengthening of counterpart ministry* – The war, under-investment in human and institutional capacity, and the lack of engagement with the international community have taken their toll on local capacity for project implementation and financial management in key ministries. As soon as a government agency is selected to execute this project, the formation of a Project Implementing Unit will also begin. Institutional strengthening will be focused on three areas: (i) basic introduction to World Bank operations and fiduciary issues; (ii) procurement and financial management of World Bank operations; and, (iii) results-oriented monitoring and evaluation systems.

*Component 4: Impact evaluation* – The focus of this component will be designing and carrying out a rigorous impact evaluation framework for the initiative.

Representatives of private sector groups in Liberia have noted the great difficulty in finding young employees with appropriate job skills, including both technical knowledge as well as what are referred to as “non-cognitive” skills, including the ability to show up for work on time, interact creatively and positively with colleagues, and take initiative to solve problems.<sup>1</sup> Given the relatively slow pace of private-sector jobs growth relative to the high rate of unemployment currently existing in Liberia, however, providing training only for wage employment would not be prudent. Thus, the project contains training options for both wage employment and self-employment (entrepreneurship). Adolescent girls and young women will be able to self-select into the training option that best suits their needs and preferences.

Ideally, training should be provided for skills and occupations for which demand will be expanding in coming years. The Ministry of Commerce (2007) predicts that growth will come from all sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, natural resource extraction, and services. Radelet (2007) notes that in other African post-conflict countries, output growth was initially most rapid in the service sector, with agricultural growth rebounding strongly 3-5 years after the end of the conflict. Growth in manufacturing was the slowest to rebound but the most robust in the medium term.

The a priori identification of future high-growth sectors in which to conduct training, however, is prohibitively risky. Instead, mechanisms will be built into the project to ensure that training is done—thus avoiding a pitfall that has plagued previous training programs in Liberia and elsewhere. Two mechanisms will be put in place to promote linkages to the demand side of the labor market and hence maximize the probabilities of employment for graduates of training. First, a private sector advisory council will be formed to advise training providers on which employees will be needed in the short-term.<sup>2</sup> Second, the institutions offering training for wage employment will be hired under performance-based contracts: providers that are more successful in placing their graduates in jobs will be given performance bonuses and will have their contract renewed and expanded; those that are less successful may have their contracts cancelled.<sup>3</sup>

Training will be delivered by training providers (which may be quasi-governmental, NGO or private sector agencies) who will be invited to submit bids to provide services under this project. The government institution in charge of execution of the project will select, on a competitive basis and subject to Bank contracting rules, the providers who will deliver the training. Key criteria for selection will include quality of training curriculum, track record of delivering training, and documented demand for the skills that the training will impart. Training will stress development of marketable skills. In addition, training curricula should address some of the

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews conducted during the identification mission.

<sup>2</sup> As collaboration increases between the advisory council and the training providers over time, it is possible to envision training providers entering into direct relationships with businesses to train for particular vacancies or needs.

<sup>3</sup> The project will also consider performance-based contracts for institutions providing business development services and microcredit to entrepreneurs; it must be recognized, however, that measuring performance in this component may be more difficult. Some potential measures include: beginning a business within six months of graduation and business surviving one year after graduation.

crucial barriers to the development of adolescent girls in Liberia, including early pregnancy and endemic sexual violence and transactional sex.

4. Safeguard policies that might apply

*[Guideline: Refer to section 5 of the PCN. Which safeguard policies might apply to the project and in what ways? What actions might be needed during project preparation to assess safeguard issues and prepare to mitigate them?]*

No Safeguard policies apply.

5. Tentative financing

Source:	(\$m.)
Borrower	0
Gender Trust Funds	2.96
Total	2.96

6. Contact point

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