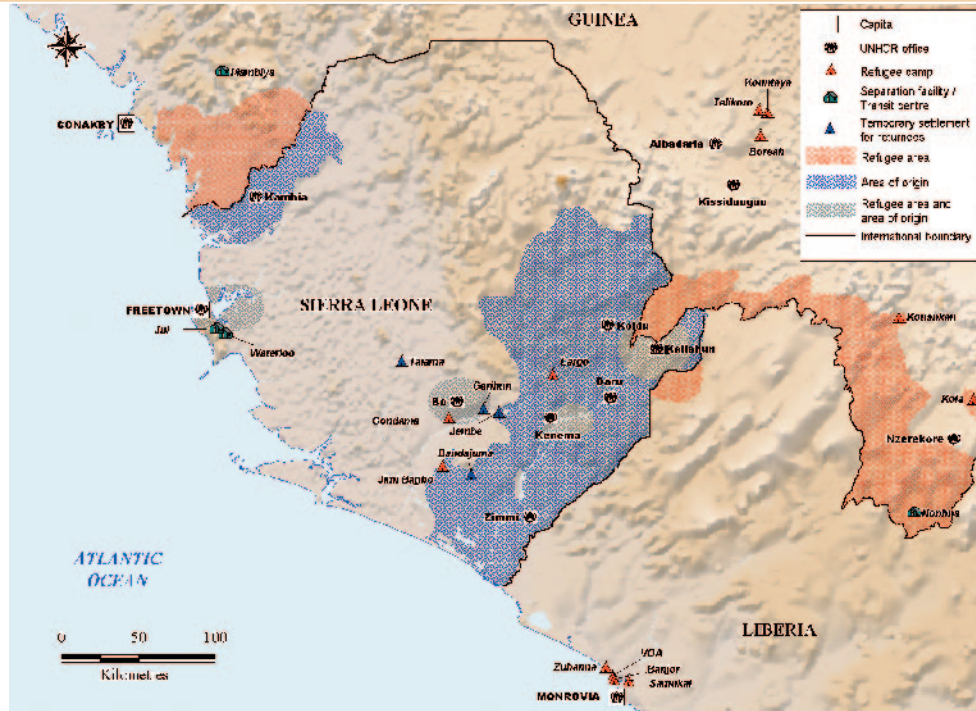


Sierra Leone

Main Objectives

- Promote and facilitate the voluntary return of some 80,000 Sierra Leonean refugees.
- Provide Sierra Leonean refugees in countries of asylum with information on security and living conditions in their place of origin.
- In close co-operation with the Government and other partners, ensure the protection of returnees; provide initial re-integration assistance to returnees and host communities while engaging development actors to address longer-term needs.
- Provide international protection and basic humanitarian assistance to some 140,000 Liberian refugees (new arrivals and refugees who arrived in the 1990s).
- Seek durable solutions for Liberian refugees (the long-standing group) including local integration, naturalisation and resettlement.
- Promote the enactment, by the Government, of national legislation on refugee issues as well as the adoption of administrative procedures.



Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2003	Dec. 2003
Liberian Refugees	75,000	140,000
Sierra Leonean Returnees	132,000	212,000
Total	207,000	352,000

Total Requirements: USD 31,811,834

returned (assisted and unassisted) and 124,000 IDPs went back to their home areas. Most of the resettled population returned to northern and eastern provinces which are experiencing some hardship, and lack adequate basic services. Effective reintegration and rehabilitation processes will require extensive assistance.

Working Environment

Recent Developments

For Sierra Leone, 2002 was the year of rediscovered stability, marked by the declaration of the end of the civil war, the extended deployment of UN and national security forces, the extension of state authority and the holding of peaceful elections. In 2002, over 100,000 Sierra Leonean refugees

As the situation in Sierra Leone improved, conditions in neighbouring Liberia deteriorated. One result was the influx of 37,000 Liberian refugees, bringing the total number of Liberian asylum-seekers to 58,000. Despite the long list of disparate problems that the Sierra Leonean Government has to contend with, it has managed to ensure that refugees are accommodated in camps, and has insisted that they be moved away from border areas. Concerns persist over the infiltration of

armed dissidents; the screening of the incoming populations is therefore essential if the civilian nature of refugee camps is to be maintained.

The security and stability of the country will depend largely on the Government's capacity to address several major challenges: the continuation of an inclusive political process; the maintenance of internal and external security; the consolidation of state authority in all areas of the country; the effective management of natural resources; the reintegration and reconciliation process, and the effective functioning of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The support of the international community will be required, including the maintenance of a UN peacekeeping presence.

Constraints

Much of Sierra Leone was devastated by the war, more than half of the entire population was forced into displacement and the main sources of economic prosperity were severely disrupted. As refugees and returnees depend on the same scarce resources as the local communities, tensions have arisen. The consequences for UNHCR's local integration work are inescapable. However, the systematic inclusion of host communities in the assistance programmes has helped to reduce these tensions.

Sierra Leone cannot escape being affected by the influence of the two neighbouring countries of the Mano River Union (Guinea and Liberia). Peace in Sierra Leone could therefore be jeopardized by the escalating crisis in Liberia. There is also a fear that the evolving crisis in Côte d'Ivoire could destabilise the sub-region as a whole.

Strategy

To ensure a successful reintegration and reconciliation process, recovery efforts will focus on: the restoration of civil authority; the rehabilitation and extension of basic social services; the revival of agriculture; the creation of economic opportunities; and the promotion of a culture of human rights and peace building. UNHCR's role in this process will cover the activities and awareness raising strategies outlined below.

Sierra Leonean Returnees: By the end of 2003, it is expected that some 212,000 Sierra Leonean returnees will be receiving assistance in their places of origin. UNHCR in Sierra Leone will maintain close co-operation with the offices in countries hosting Sierra Leonean refugees. This co-operation will cover: all stages of voluntary repatriation; the mass information campaigns to give refugees hard facts about the situation in their place of origin; the registration of refugees who express the wish to return; negotiations on the opening of border points with authorities on both sides; and the actual movement of refugees across the borders.

In Sierra Leone, UNHCR will continue to monitor the repatriation and organise in-country transport to the returnees' final destinations. During the journey (cross-border and in-country), all the basic needs of the returnees will be covered. Cooked meals, and water will be distributed and a medical escort will accompany the convoys. Long trips will be undertaken in manageable stages, and refugees will be sheltered in way stations or transit centres. Upon their return, UNHCR will also ensure that returnees are aware of their rights and that they have, or can obtain, adequate identification documents.

UNHCR's primary function in the country will be to continue to monitor and, as far as possible, improve security and living conditions for the returnees. In 2002, a large part of the Office's programme also focused on ensuring that the basic needs of returnees were met. In 2003, UNHCR will continue to directly address the lack of services in areas of return, while establishing partnerships with development actors. UNHCR staff will collect data on the principal needs in the main areas of origin of refugees, which will be used by the Office and development actors for the design of projects and strategies that address such needs.

The main objective of the reintegration programme will be to increase the capacity of the host communities to receive returnees. UNHCR will adopt a community-based approach, empowering communities and individuals to play a strategic part in the recovery of their society. The choice of activities to be undertaken will be discussed within the communities. Using pre-war skills or expertise

acquired through training received in refugee camps, returnees will take responsibility for the implementation of selected projects. In the main areas of return, UNHCR will supplement the health, nutrition, water, sanitation and education programmes undertaken by UNICEF, WHO and other humanitarian agencies. UNHCR's support in these sectors will include: medical care and psychological counselling for victims of SGBV; the organisation of educational projects for the prevention of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) including HIV/AIDS; the rehabilitation of primary healthcare centres and the purchase of basic medical equipment and drugs; the rehabilitation and construction of wells and gravity water systems; the reconstruction and rehabilitation of schools and the procurement of furniture and sanitary equipment. WFP will distribute a six-month food ration to returnees upon arrival and will also support food-for-work programmes thereafter. FAO will provide seeds and tools as well as livestock to both returnee and IDP families.

Under the regional plan of action on SGBV, programmes initiated in 2002 will be strengthened. UNHCR will support activities to empower women and increase their role in the reconstruction process. Women will be the main beneficiaries of a wide range of agricultural and income-generating activities including: poultry-raising, bee-keeping, food-processing, and construction work. Emphasis will be placed on the education of girls and women. To enhance the status of women in society, the Office will support the work of women lawyers who are calling for a review of laws on inheritance and land ownership that are biased against women.

Environmental management, and environmental awareness raising will be a part of the programmes of all UNHCR's operational partners. Communities will receive guidance and support to develop the production of 'eco-stoves', the establishment of tree nurseries and income generation projects based on prudent use of natural resources.

Liberian Refugees and Asylum-Seekers:

UNHCR believes that the current situation in Liberia could cause the number of newly arrived Liberian refugees in the eight existing camps in the southern districts to rise to 75,000 by the end of 2002. As the Government has set a strict population limit for

each camp (varying between 8,000 and 10,000), UNHCR has asked if the Government can urgently identify a minimum of three additional sites where new camps can be established. It is estimated that by the end of 2003, there could be as many as 140,000 Liberian refugees in the country.

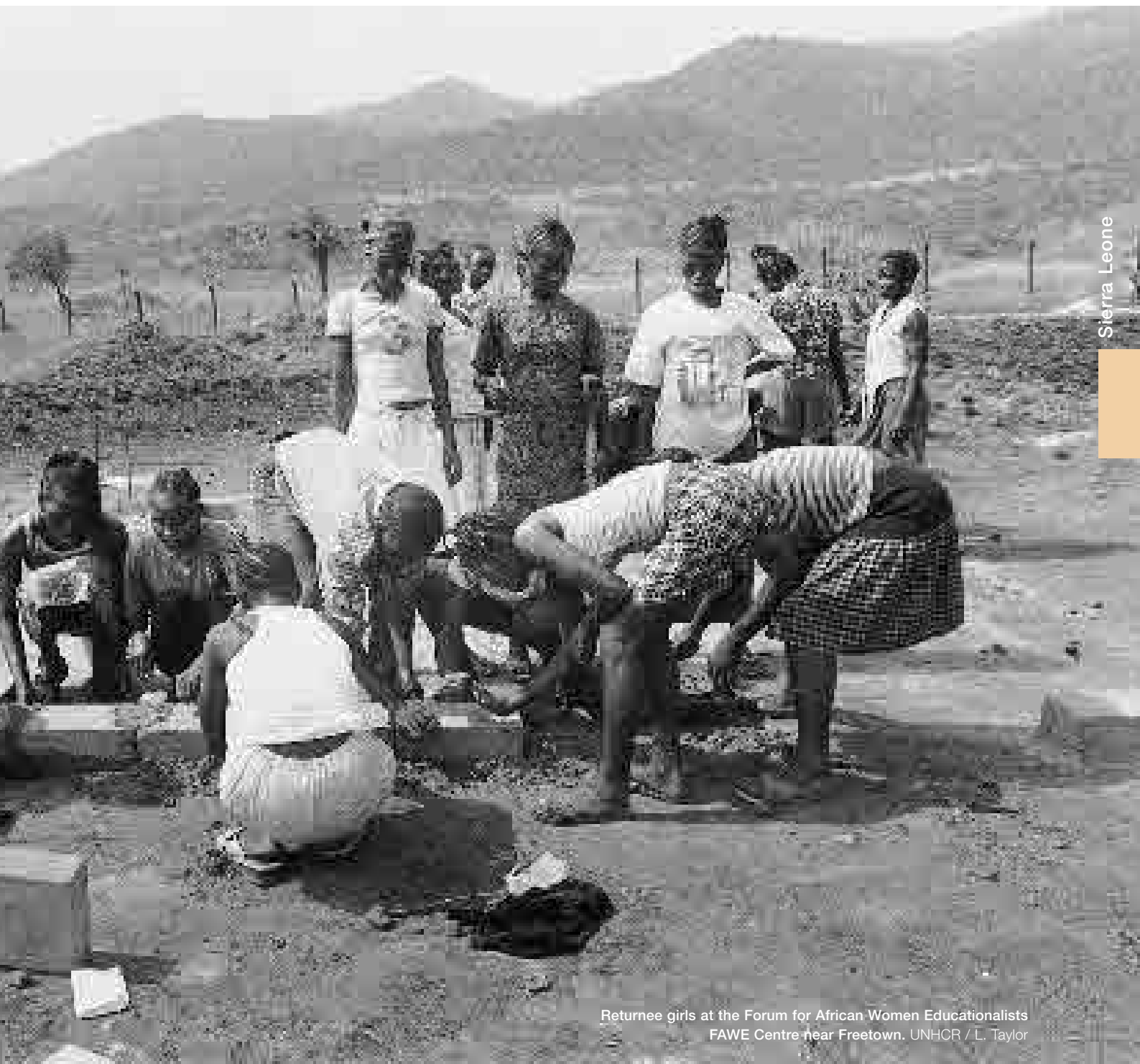
UNHCR's activities on behalf of Liberian new arrivals will focus on ensuring their protection and providing them with basic assistance in the main



sectors of shelter, water and sanitation, education, and community services. The Office will maintain a data management system for each camp. It will serve as an important tool in the planning, implementation and monitoring phases of the assistance programme. UNHCR will also organise family tracing for separated children and ensure that they receive interim care until they can be reunited with their family. The programme will also include income generation projects (agricultural produc-

tion in particular) to reduce the refugees' dependency on humanitarian aid.

UNHCR will continue to provide the older Liberian refugee population (those who arrived more than ten years ago) with legal assistance and will promote their local integration as the best durable solution. UNHCR will pursue negotiations with the Government on their legal status and possible local integration. As part of this process, UNHCR



Sierra Leone

Returnee girls at the Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWE Centre near Freetown. UNHCR / L. Taylor

will assist refugees to obtain legal documentation (identity cards, residence status, work permits, and birth certificates).

Organisation and Implementation

Management Structure

UNHCR in Sierra Leone has a total of 151 staff, including 29 international, 109 national, four JPOs, and nine UNVs. This staffing level is however being reassessed in the light of the large influx from Liberia.

UNHCR will be managed by the office in Freetown, with the support of a sub-office in Kenema and its six field offices in Bo, Daru, Kailahun, Kambia, Koidu and Zimmi.

Co-ordination

To ensure effective co-ordination and to develop complementary strategies, UNHCR will participate in the sub-regional meetings regarding Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees.

UNHCR's programmes and interventions have been designed and will be implemented in partnership with UNHCR's main government counterpart, the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) formerly NCRRR, international and national non-governmental organisations, the Red Cross and other community-based organisations. The programme also aims to complement and support the National Recovery Strategy and the UN's Peace building and Recovery Strategy.

Capitalising on the recent peace building and recovery opportunities in the early transition phase, the UN country team and UNAMSIL (the UN Mission in Sierra Leone) prepared a UN Strategy to Support National Recovery and Peacebuilding. This strategy draws on national policies and priorities established by the National Recovery Programme and the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP). It also draws on the 2003 CAP for Sierra Leone as well as global targets, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The purpose of this strategy paper is to

explore how the United Nations as a whole, including humanitarian, development agencies and UNAMSIL, can best contribute to the process of transition and peace building in Sierra Leone.

UNHCR will continue to facilitate joint missions with donors in its operational zones and to provide them with information on key developments through monthly meetings in Freetown.

Offices
Freetown
Bo
Daru
Kailahun
Kambia
Kenema
Koidu
Zimmi

Partners
Government Agencies
National Commission for Social Action
NGOs
African Concern
American Refugee Committee
Bo Pujehun Development Associates
Catholic Relief Service
Concern Worldwide
Forum For African Women Educationalists (FAWE)
<i>Initiative pour une Afrique solidaire</i>
International Islamic Youth League
International Medical Corps Sierra Leone
International Rescue Committee
Medical Emergency Relief International
Methodist Church of Sierra Leone
Norwegian Refugee Council
OXFAM International
Peace Winds Japan
Save the Children
Talking Drums Studio information
The Environmental Foundation for Africa
World Vision
Others
<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
FAO
UNVs

Budget (USD)	
Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	4,058,691
Community Services	1,452,270
Crop Production	1,357,270
Domestic Needs	965,900
Education	3,383,350
Food	110,000
Forestry	294,360
Health	1,687,270
Income Generation	1,657,270
Legal Assistance	332,910
Operational Support (to Agencies)	2,621,280
Sanitation	545,070
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	1,692,700
Transport / Logistics	6,744,450
Water	1,985,900
Total Operations	28,888,691
Programme Support	2,923,143
Total	31,811,834