

LIBERIA



Operational highlights

- UNHCR reduced the vulnerability and ensured the well-being of camp-based refugees by providing them with basic services and material assistance.
- Agricultural and income-generating activities supported refugees' self-reliance.
- Protection monitoring and follow-up were strengthened, particularly with regard to sexual and gender-based violence.
- UNHCR complemented the Government's efforts to rehabilitate infrastructure and provide basic services such as water, sanitation, education and health.
- Sierra Leonean refugees who opted for local integration in Liberia were provided with shelter and livelihood assistance to promote self-reliance and smooth their integration into their new communities.
- With funds from the UN Peacebuilding Fund, UNHCR implemented projects on Strengthening Rule of Law in Rural Communities and Community-Based Peace Education in areas with large numbers of refugees and returnees.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Côte d'Ivoire	6,600	6,600	49	23
	Sierra Leone	3,600	3,600	46	46
	Various	30	30	23	17
Refugee-like situations	Various	10	10	13	25
Asylum-seekers	Various	40	40	6	0
Returnees (refugees)	From Ghana	8,800	8,800	-	-
	From Sierra Leone	1,100	1,100	-	-
	Various	800	800	-	-
Total		20,380	20,380		

| Working environment |

A participatory assessment by UNHCR and other partners revealed the need to address issues such as inadequate livelihood opportunities and poverty, insufficient primary health care, limited enrolment in primary education, a dearth of school teachers and facilities, and a high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence. Other gaps were the lack of HIV and AIDS counselling and testing facilities, inadequate shelter for vulnerable families, and the weakness of the judiciary and the police in combating crime.

| Achievements and impact |

● *Main objectives:*

UNHCR's main objectives in 2008 were to build the capacity of the Government to assume primary responsibility for protecting refugees and to ensure international standards of protection for refugees in Liberia. In this regard, a major goal was the reactivation of the asylum and appeals committees. Allied objectives included caring for Ivorian refugees in camps and assisting those living among Liberians. UNHCR worked to find opportunities for self-reliance for refugees awaiting durable solutions and promoted the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees in safety and dignity.

The Office sought to mainstream considerations of age, gender, sexual and gender-based violence and HIV and AIDS into all sectors. Furthermore, it aimed to make the return of refugees and former IDPs sustainable by helping to restore basic services and promoting self-reliance; strengthen partnerships with relevant ministries and development actors; and continue to provide international protection to Sierra Leonean and other urban refugees.

● *Protection and solutions*

Due to lack of progress in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, UNHCR did not encourage voluntary repatriation as a solution for Ivorian refugees in Liberia. Resettlement was used as a protection tool for individual medical cases.

The cessation clause was invoked for Sierra Leonean refugees at the end of December 2008. Out of a population of nearly 3,600 people, some 2,200 opted for local integration as a durable solution. Following verification and documentation, this group was awaiting the issuance of national passports prior to receiving residence permits. Some 530 persons applied for an exemption from cessation and underwent full refugee status determination (RSD). Some 120 refugees who were integrated into Liberian communities received legal and socio-economic assistance.

UNHCR gave substantial support to the Liberian Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), helping it to build capacity in refugee status determination (RSD) and related areas.

On 16 April 2008, UNHCR resumed the second phase of organized voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees from countries in the region, mainly Ghana. By the end of the period, nearly 9,700 Liberians had returned from countries in the sub-region.

● *Activities and assistance*

Community services: Social and recreational clubs for children were established in Saclepea refugee camp. Recreational activities were used to disseminate information on HIV and AIDS prevention. In addition, condoms were distributed to adult men and women. Three groups of peer educators were established in the camp for awareness and advocacy purposes. In Maryland County, some 30 graduates of sewing or blacksmithing courses received start-up kits.



Liberian returnees go to school in Voinjama

All identified vulnerable refugees received individual case assistance and follow-up from social workers.

Crop production: More than 500 refugee families and some 700 returnee families received tools, seeds and technical assistance. Eight integrated returnee and refugee women's groups received vegetable-gardening tools, seeds and training.

Education: All refugee children of school-going age had access to free primary education. More than 1,200 refugee students received classroom supplies and uniforms, and some 50 refugee secondary school students were provided with uniforms and tuition. The construction of additional classrooms and the provision of furniture increased the access of school-age returnees and host-community children to education.

Forestry: More than 12,000 tree seedlings were planted and six vegetable gardens and six school nurseries established. The environment of former refugee camps was rehabilitated.

Health and nutrition: Fifty-six health clinics operating in areas of high return were turned over to the Government at the end of 2008. UNHCR's support for the Government in the health sector is channelled through the Ministry of Health. One hospital was rehabilitated in Bensonville. Over 6,800 women and 6,700 children were immunized. Returning refugees were medically screened and treated at transit centres and in their communities.

Income generation: More than 100 people benefited from training in basic business skills in Maryland County. Some 150 vulnerable families in communities of high return received small-business grants and were trained in small-business management. Refugees who received income-generation assistance in 2007 continued to receive training and guidance.

Legal assistance: All registered adult refugees were provided with identity cards. UNHCR provided training in refugee law to refugees, host communities, partners, UN agencies and government authorities. More than 1,000 refugees participated in consultations in refugee legal aid service centres.

Some 2,100 Sierra Leoneans were verified and documented so they could be issued with residence permits and naturalization documents. In addition, through the protection core group, UNHCR supported the judiciary, Ministry of Justice, police and correction facilities with furniture and stationery. UNHCR also supported the Government of Liberia/UN Joint Programme on sexual and gender-based violence.

Operational support (to agencies): Implementing partners received financial and technical support.

Sanitation: Fourteen latrines and 14 bathing areas were constructed in Saclepea refugee camp. Family latrines were

constructed for some 220 vulnerable refugee families. The refugee camp and its surroundings were fumigated quarterly. Fourteen latrines were also constructed at health clinics and schools in local-integration and refugee areas. Hygiene awareness workshops were conducted for 16 water and sanitation committees. Sanitary kits were distributed to all refugees in need.

Shelter and other infrastructure: Some 430 shelters were constructed or rehabilitated for refugee families in south-eastern Liberia. The refugee camp day-care centre, primary school, library and camp office were rehabilitated. Some 32 houses were repaired and an additional 50 constructed in Bensonville to aid the local integration of Sierra Leonean refugees. Thirty-five bridges were rehabilitated in south-eastern Liberia. Road improvements, using food-for-work schemes and community participation, improved access to high-return areas such as Shanphala, Zota and Panta.

Transport and logistics: Eighty-two trucks and light vehicles provided logistics support for UNHCR and its implementing partners under the project.

Water: Thirty-two wells were constructed or rehabilitated throughout the country in refugee and return areas. UNHCR facilitated the training of 26 community water committees and provided tools and spare parts.

○ Constraints

The mobilization of development agencies to support durable solutions and the local integration of small and dispersed refugee groups in urban areas, remain challenging. The poor road network and dispersed settlement of Ivorian refugees in the south-east of the country make protection monitoring and response difficult. Problems in acquiring government land to aid the local integration of Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia have led to delays in shelter construction.

| Financial information |

UNHCR's operation in Liberia suffered financial shortfall due to the fluctuating price of petroleum on the world market. The original budgetary allocation for fuel became insufficient in the course of the project's implementation, due principally to price increases. The immediate effect of this situation was felt in several sectors of the programme and the office had to make adjustments to project implementation.

The unprecedented resumption of organized voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees from Ghana also created a financial shortfall as this had not been anticipated during the budgetary planning for 2008. As a result, an appeal was presented to Headquarters to solicit funding from emergency funds. Funds were also reallocated from within UNHCR's annual budget in Liberia to facilitate the return of the refugees.



Organization and implementation

UNHCR operations were supervised by the Representation Office in Monrovia and implemented from sub-offices in Voinjama and Saclepea, as well as field offices in Gbarnga and Zwedru. In 2008, UNHCR had 171 staff, including 29 international staff, 128 national staff, 10 UNVs and four consultants in Liberia.

Working with others

UNHCR continued to work with governments and UN agencies with the aim of building a responsible disengagement and exit strategy.

Overall assessment

UNHCR, NGOs and other partners conducted participatory assessments that identified the following gaps: a dearth of livelihood opportunities; inadequate primary health care; limited enrolment in primary education, particularly among girls; poor school facilities; and widespread under-age marriage and teenage pregnancy. Also noted were a high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence; lack of HIV and AIDS counselling and testing facilities; inadequate shelter for vulnerable families; and a weak judicial and police system.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government: Ministry of Justice of Liberia. Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission

NGOs: African Concern International, African Development Network, African Humanitarian Action, American Refugee Committee, CARITAS, Christian Children's Fund, Danish Refugee Council, Environmental Foundation for Africa, International Medical Corps, Karmon Agriculture Development, Liberia National Red Cross Society, Liberia Opportunity Industrialization Centre, Logistics and Services Liberia, Medical Emergency Relief Cooperative, Norwegian Refugee Council, Peace Wind Japan, Special Emergency Activity to Restore Children's Hope, Sustainable Liberia Initiative, ZOA Refugee Care, Right To Play, The Carter Center

Others: *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ)

Budget, income and expenditure in Liberia (USD)

	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available ¹	Total expenditure
Annual budget	24,123,091	10,714,241	13,001,452	23,715,694	23,695,555
IDP operations in Liberia SB	3,049,920	1,857,452	1,232,959	3,090,411	2,859,821
Total	27,173,011	12,571,694	14,234,411	26,806,105	26,555,376

Note: Supplementary programmes do not include seven per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR. Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

¹ Total funds available include currency adjustments.

Financial report for UNHCR's operations in Liberia (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' project
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	6,177,995	151,390	6,329,385	0
Community services	572,795	45,755	618,550	297,114
Crop production	84,620	0	84,620	197,942
Education	533,608	166,260	699,868	130,249
Forestry	46,788	0	46,788	(13,141)
Health and nutrition	987,535	543,365	1,530,900	212,476
Income generation	190,189	0	190,189	83,047
Legal assistance	2,159,949	1,219,383	3,379,332	525,814
Livestock	0	0	0	2,100
Operational support (to agencies)	1,854,429	338,623	2,193,052	871,864
Sanitation	187,475	18,808	206,283	38,515
Shelter and infrastructure	878,411	1,311	879,722	197,645
Transport and logistics	4,501,546	123,715	4,625,261	660,201
Water	198,407	5,000	203,407	77,218
Instalments to implementing partners	1,347,345	246,211	1,593,556	(3,281,044)
Subtotal operational activities	19,721,092	2,859,821	22,580,913	0
Programme support	3,974,463	0	3,974,463	0
Total expenditure	23,695,555	2,859,821	26,555,376	0
Cancellation on prior years' expenditure				(165,464)
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	8,053,742	2,034,182	10,087,924	
Reporting received	(6,706,398)	(1,787,971)	(8,494,369)	
Balance	1,347,344	246,211	1,593,555	
Outstanding 1st January				4,991,643
Reporting received				(3,281,044)
Refunded to UNHCR				(886,684)
Currency adjustment				71
Outstanding 31st December				823,986