

CAP LIBERIA USAID/Liberia NGO Strengthening Assistance Program

Project Overview: The purpose of the CAP Liberia activity was to strengthen the capacity of selected local NGOs that were supported by USAID's primary partners—international PVOs—to mitigate conflict and promote recovery, stability and reform.

For this purpose, the CAP team worked with 15 PVOs, each of which identified two local NGOs as partner organizations. The specific objectives of the program were to:

- Promote good governance within NGOs;
- Strengthen the organizational capacity of local NGOs in such areas as leadership, advocacy, financial and administrative management, strategic planning, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation; and
- Assist international PVOs with the strengthening of effective partnerships with local NGOs (LNGOs).

Liberia Context: During the 14-year civil war, which ended with the Peace Accords in 1993, USAID's PVO partners operated largely in a relief mode, providing urgently needed humanitarian assistance. Now that the emergency is ending, the foundation must be laid for long-term and sustainable development. This means that the role of international PVOs is shifting from that of providing relief to enabling and facilitating local capacity and ownership. Thus, PVO-LNGO relations need to be updated and strengthened, with the former attending to the organizational capacity of and becoming mentors for the latter.

Program results included the following:

- During Phase One, the CAP team conducted an assessment among participating PVOs and a sample of LNGOs in order both to identify the needs of PVOs for them to integrate NGO capacity-building services into their existing portfolios, and to prioritize the organizational needs of the LNGOs. Assessment results were analyzed, then presented and discussed during a forum with participating organizations. That discussion informed the specific design and timing of subsequent program activities.
- Phase Two built on the results of the information collected to design and conduct a five-day workshop for LNGOs which was conducted twice (30 participants each time) This was designed to build the capacity of participating LNGOs in the areas of priority need identified through the assessment and subsequent discussion. Specific topics were drawn from the areas of organization development described above in Objective 2.
- In Phase Three, representatives of all PVOs and LNGOs were brought together for a three-day Partnership Forum focused on ways in which the two groups can work together in the longer term. The culmination of this workshop was the formulation of an outline for follow-on activities to further strengthen the organizational capacity of LNGOs as critical actors in the consolidation of democratic governance in Liberia.

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