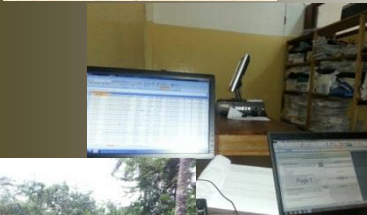


SPA

# Liberia Youth, Employment, Skills (YES) Project and Liberia Youth Employment Program (LYEP) *Country Pilot Report*



March 2014

Inter-  
Agency Social Protection Assessment (SPA) Initiative



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CfWTEP	Cash for Work Temporary Employment Program
CFSNS	Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWG	Community Working Group
CWQI	Core Welfare Questionnaire Indicator
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoL	Government of Liberia
ILO	International Labor Office
LFS	Labor Force Survey
LGA	Local Government Authority
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LYEP	Liberia Youth Employment Program
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
MoL	Ministry of Labor
MoPEA	Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
MoPWs	Ministry of Public Works
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YEP	Youths Employment Project
YES	Youth, Employment, Skills (Project)
WFP	World Food Programme
W&S	Waste & Sanitation

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The effective application of the tool would have not been possible without the generous engagement of the Government of Liberia. In particular, we are indebted to the project teams at LACE, in particular George Dayrell and Andrew Macgona, and at MoYS, especially Mack Mulbah, Anita Kolunah and Tenneh Johnson Nelson, for their precious time, insights and support. The draft tool is a joint product of the Social Protection Assessment technical working group on public works, including Niels Balzer (WFP), Martina Bergthaller (GIZ), Lisa Hanningan (AusAID), Anna McCord (ODI), Eppu Mikkonen-Jeanneret (HelpAge International), Terje Tessem (ILO), Mito Tsukamoto (ILO), David Robalino (World Bank) and Ugo Gentilini (World Bank). Mr Dejene Salhe (ILO) joined the country mission for three days and provided key inputs and advice on the report's overall findings. Technical support by Claudia Rodriguez-Alas (World Bank) and Laura Figazzolo (consultant) was key to develop the tool, including building on earlier versions spearheaded by Colin Andrews (World Bank). The group is grateful to the World Bank's Suleiman Namara, Emily Weedon Chapman and Samsudeen Amusa for the guidance and support received before, during and after the mission to Liberia.

# 1. BACKGROUND

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1. This report presents the context and findings emerging from the application of a new assessment tool for public works programs. Such tool was progressively developed as part of the Social Protection Assessment (SPA) multi-actor platform, including dedicated reference and technical working groups on public works<sup>1</sup>.
2. In particular, the tool was applied to two innovative safety net programs in Liberia, namely the Youth, Employment and Skills (YES) Project and the Liberia Youth Employment Program (LYEP). The former has been implemented for over three years, while the latter for less than one. While not being meant to be a comparative study, the assessment examined key issues pertaining to the programs at their different stages of implementation. Specifically, it provided an opportunity to take-stock of current performance, identify opportunities and challenges, and explore possible future strategic and operational pathways. This paper examines such issues drawing from desk simulations, literature reviews, country field tests and stakeholder consultations.
3. Underpinning such initiative is a set of principles, including the following:
  - *Ensure country ownership.* The tool is intended to be a vehicle to support governments in enhancing their public works programs in line with national priorities and approaches.
  - *Promote dynamic and collaborative learning.* The tool is the result of a close collaboration between AusAID, GIZ, HelpAge International, ILO, ODI, WFP and the World Bank, and has been pilot-tested in partnership with the government of Liberia and, previously, with that of El Salvador.
  - *Provide a simple, practical and rapid assessment.* The tool is meant to offer a rapid and practical approach that can be applied within 7-10 days of reviews and field work, and then subsequently updated in future reviews as appropriate.
  - *Set out a common system-oriented platform.* The tool can be a powerful mechanism to highlight performance on different aspects of public works, promote their linkages, foster a shared understanding of challenges and opportunities among actors, and identify areas for possible further improvement and collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> The Social Protection Assessment (SPA) is an inter-agency initiative to support countries in building social protection systems. SPA activities help develop common instruments to assessing systems, supporting their application, and fostering knowledge sharing. SPA serves as platform for collaboration across partners to support a common vision and approach to social protection systems, apply a common set of core tools and metrics, and facilitate dialogue and cross-country learning. SPA was formerly known as SPARCS (Social Protection Assessment for Results and Country Systems).

- *Be context-sensitive.* Although it can be used in different contexts, the tool should be interpreted in the light of the specificities that characterize a given setting, including in terms of practices and assessment lens.
  - *Do not reinvent the wheel.* The tool would not seek to duplicate efforts, but identify, systematize and synthesize large volumes of information sometimes scattered and fragmented.
4. The report is organized as follows. Section 2 lays out major contextual factors, including key trends and largest national safety net programs. Section 3 explains the assessment methodology and process, while section 4 presents the findings emerging from the application of the tool to both programs. Finally, section 5 sets out strategic and cross-cutting options and recommendations. The report is complemented by three annexes.

## 2. CONTEXT

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### 2.1 Trends and figures

5. After years of civil unrest, Liberia's gross domestic product (GDP) increased steadily in the mid-2000s: between 2005 and 2008, growth soared from 5.3 percent to 7.1 percent respectively. Yet, the global financial crisis dropped growth rates to 2.8 percent in 2009, bouncing back in 2010 (7.3 percent) and 2011 (8.2 percent).
6. About 64 percent of the population falls below the national poverty line<sup>2</sup>, and 48 percent of Liberians are below the extreme poverty line estimated at US\$0.67 per day. Latest data show a poverty gap at US\$1.25/day of 40.9 percent; the gap at US\$2/day is 59.6 percent. It is estimated that in 28.6 percent of Liberians are undernourished, while about 42 percent of children are stunted and 19 percent are underweight.
7. The Labor Force Survey of 2010 estimates the unemployment rate at 3.7 percent. However, such definition only counts as unemployed "those who report working less than one hour per week". The Survey also underscores that formal employment reaches only five percent of the population, while nearly 80 percent of the labor force is in vulnerable employment – a level that reaches 90 percent for women.
8. Youth unemployment and underemployment are of particular concern. The Liberia's National Youth Policy shows that the youth constitutes more than a third of the total population and nearly half of the total labor force in Liberia. However, the labor force participation rate for the 15-24 youth cohort is 35.1, substantially lower than the national average of 63.5.

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<sup>2</sup> The rural line is estimated at US\$1/day, while the urban one is at US\$1.4/day.

9. As such, youth employment and employability is high priority for the GoL. In 2013, the government allocated US\$75 million over five years to address youth unemployment (i.e., US\$15 million per FY). This funding is additional to international assistance and signals a strong political and financial commitment on the matter.
10. Like in other low-income and fragile states, then, the agenda for employment-creation in Liberia faces extraordinary challenges. Weak infrastructure, limited finance, low institutional capacity and other structural issues may limit the prospects for rapid and sustainable generation of jobs. Therefore, interventions to enhance the capacity of the supply-side of the employment equation (i.e., program participants) are often not matched, from the demand-side, by available jobs opportunities in the short-term, especially in the formal sector.
11. Against this backdrop, the Government of Liberia (GoL) launched a series of social protection initiatives. At present, spending on social protection accounts for approximately 1.6 percent of GDP, including donor support. The sector is significantly supported by international assistance, which represents about 93.8 percent of all social safety net expenditures.
12. Overall, the system for the development and implementation of social protection in Liberia has been characterized by high levels of fragmentation. Limited financial resources may pose trade-offs between the dual objectives of public works programs: on one hand, the provision of predictable and adequate income; on the other hand, the creation of sustainable assets and capital (human and physical). While both approaches have merits and limitations, striking the right balance and mix in contexts of high poverty and unemployment is a core quandary. Both YES and LYEP interventions are in line with a safety net approach to prioritize the income and consumption-smoothing function. The next section reviews major programs more in detail.

## **2.2. Overview of major safety net programs**

13. Among the interventions with largest coverage, the World Food Programme (WFP) supports a school feeding program managed by the Ministry of Education (MoE). In 2013/14, the initiative aims to provide 234,000 primary schoolchildren with a fortified school meal per day. The WFP also provides supplementary food rations targeted to pregnant women, teenage pregnant mothers (15-19 years), children under 5, and caretakers of severely malnourished children. In 2013, this intervention reached 10,000 pregnant women, 34,000 children under 5, and 1,600 caretakers.
14. The Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) manages the EU-funded Social Cash Transfer Project. Beneficiary households receive monthly cash transfers for an amount varying by household size. In general, a family of 4 members and above receives US\$25 per month. While the transfer is unconditional, the program is intended to provide an incentive for education, discourage child labor and provide caregivers with additional support. As such, an additional US\$2 is provided for each child enrolled in primary school



and US\$4 when done so in secondary school. The intervention reached 5,000 households over the last three years.

15. Public works programs are an important instrument in the GoL safety net toolbox. The two programs considered in this analysis, the YES and LYEP, are among the most prominent. In addition, a third program, the Youths Employment Project (YEP), provides three months of employment to 2,500 young people between the 18 and 35 years of age. Each beneficiary receives US\$60/month for unskilled work, while US\$100/month is paid for skilled labor. The YEP is currently implemented in Grand Bassa, Margibi, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount and Montserrado. The intervention is implemented by the Liberian Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) under the overall institutional oversight by the Ministry of Labor (MoL) and the Ministry of Public Works (MoPWs).
16. Unveiled in July 2010, the YES aims to provide poor and young Liberians with temporary employment and to improve youth employability. The program had an initial duration of three years; however, a recent extension allowed it to operate for an additional 6 months (until December 2013). The YES has two components. The first one responds to the current youth employment crisis by creating temporary employment via community-based public works activities. This pillar has two sub-components: one reaches 45,000 Liberians in temporary (40 days)<sup>3</sup> employment with a particular emphasis on targeting youth at risk. The second sub-component aims to build GoL's capacity to undertake and coordinate similar activities. The second YES component funds skills training programs to improve youth employability, including providing institutional support to technical and vocational training (TVET). The report will explore these features more in detail in section 4.
17. The other examined program, the LYEP, is a relatively new initiative introduced in February 2013. Similarly to the YES, it aims to provide employment of the vulnerable youth (18-35 years of age) and increase employability. Differently from the YES, however, it provides employment for a full year. The program is implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) and has an overall duration of three years.
18. The LYEP has four components. The first, the Youth Community Works Component, is divided into two sub-components: the Waste and Sanitation (W&S) Management and other Community Works programs (e.g., feeder roads construction and maintenance). The focus of this report is on the former subcomponent, which is for the moment the only active one among the different components and subcomponents. The second component includes Community Youth Volunteers Support. This is intended to provide volunteer service jobs within the communities where participants live. Third, the Vocational Trades and Entrepreneurship Development component provides vocational skills and promote entrepreneurial development among the target youth. Finally, the LYEP envisages an Institutional Development component. This is intended to improve administrative, technical and managerial capacities of the various line agencies involved in program design

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<sup>3</sup> Specifically, 32 days of work plus 8 of training.

and implementation. Only the Waste and Sanitation management sub-component of the LYEP is currently operational.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

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19. The assessment was conducted based on an instrument including data, semi-structured questionnaire, and open-ended questions compounded by descriptive and explanatory notes. The instrument includes six section (or modules) focusing on different dimensions of public works design and implementation: these include targeting, benefits, projects and services, institutions, M&E, and harmonization. The tool is accompanied by a guidance note (“What Matters”) laying out methodology and practices.
20. The tool was field tested in Liberia on 9-17 December 2013. In partnership with the YES and the LYEP teams, mission members included Ugo Gentilini (World Bank) and Laura Figazzolo (consultant). Mr Dejene Sahle (ILO) joined for most part of the mission. In particular, the mission included the following steps<sup>4</sup>:
  - *Consultations with central government officials, including a series of meetings with the core institutions in charge of these interventions, namely LACE and the MoYS (LYEP Team).* Technical and policy matters were discussed with a wide array of government officials at different levels, ranging from deputy-Ministers to operation specialists. These were complemented by one-to-one interviews with technical officials on specific modules, as well as the provision of quantitative and qualitative data.
  - *Meetings with other government lines and multilateral partners.* These included meetings with other government ministries, such as the MoL and the MoPWs. The team gathered perspectives from partner agencies such as WFP and ILO.
  - *Field visits and interviews with local implementers.* Both interventions offer a wide gamut of activities to participants, ranging from the opening of rice paddies to soil restoration to community cleaning. The team had the opportunity to visit about a dozen project sites. These provided ample scope to collect qualitative information around key implementation challenges from front-line implementers, both from local government and communities’ perspectives. Visited YES sites were located in rural Montserrado (Cheesemanburg and Foley Town) and in Koilala (Bong); visits to LYEP activities included Buchanan (Grand Bassa) and Kakata (Margibi).
  - *Field interviews with participants in basic skills and manual activities.* Participants in life skills and community works provided precious feedback on program performance,

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<sup>4</sup> The detailed mission agenda, together with the list of people interviewed, are available in Annexes 1 and 2.

as well as generating insights on important contextual barriers to employment and education in both rural and urban areas.

- *Stocktaking and review of published literature, reports, guidelines and assessments.* The team collected and analyzed a wide range of publications and reports on both YES and LYEP. A dedicated folder is being created and can be access and shared with interested parties.
- *Data entry and processing.* The quantitative and qualitative information gathered through the various steps was entered into the instrument. This required an intensive process of cross-checking, validation and analysis. The complete set of data gathered throughout the process is available in an excel file inclusive of 171 questions and 13 data sheets.
- *Final consultation and debriefing with government counterparts.* Results from the assessments were shared with government officials and implementing agencies. The consultation was held via VC in January 2014 to enable attendance and representation of the different actors involved.

## **4. EMERGING FINDINGS**

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21. This section presents emerging findings from the assessment. In particular, section 4.1 discusses the performance of the YES program, while LYEP is examined in section 4.2. Those sections are structured in a similar way, including laying out key performance indicators (e.g., coverage, incidence, generosity, duration and expenditures), followed by analyzing the programs' single modules. These include eligibility and targeting, nature of benefit, timing and duration of the program, asset creation and services, institutional arrangements, M&E and accountability, harmonization and interaction with other programs, capacity building, skills and employability efforts, and conditions of work and labor practices during implementation. A summary color-coded matrix complements the section.

### **4.1. Liberia Youth, Employment, Skills (YES) Project**

#### **4.1.1. Key performance indicators**

- Total number of beneficiaries (individuals, households): 47,500 individuals.
- Total number of employment-days provided: 1,900,000.

- Program duration (number of months of work per year, number of years): 2 months per year, per 3 years<sup>5</sup>.
- Total of hours per day worked: 5 hours/day.
- Women participation (percent): 50 percent.
- Coverage as a percentage of the working age population: 2.6 percent.
- Coverage as a percentage of the poor (national poverty line): 2.1 percent.
- Transfers as a share of monthly income or expenditures of beneficiaries: 63 percent (average consumption in 2007 estimated at US\$17/month per individual per an average of 5.6 household members = US\$95.2).
- Annual budget of the program (average per year): US\$2,500,000.
- Share of wages in total cost per year: 72 percent.
- Total program expenditure as percent of GDP: 0.4 percent (GDP US\$1.767 billion in 2012).
- Total program expenditure as percent of public expenditures in social protection<sup>6</sup>: 4.6 percent in 2012.

#### **4.1.2. Modules**

##### ***Eligibility and targeting***

22. Targeting criteria have been clearly designed within program manuals. Protocols include a four-level process: a first layer includes geographical targeting. Districts are selected on the basis of the share of extreme poor in single districts, obtained by combining the poverty headcount from the 2007 Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) Survey with the results of county populations from the 2008 Census. Within the identified locations, a second layer of six conditions must be met in order to be considered in the selection process. These include the following: (a) being at least 18 years old, (b) be able to perform work, (c) live in the targeted community, (d) not have formal public or private employment, (e) not having participated to the program before, and (f) not having other household members participating in the program. A third level of targeting procedures includes five “poverty and vulnerability” proxies, namely (a) belonging to a large household, (b) having

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<sup>5</sup> Individuals are only eligible for 2 months of work under the YES Project.

<sup>6</sup> Because of limited data availability, expenditures for “social sector” are used as a proxy of social protection (public expenditures in social sector was US\$162,870,288 in 2012). Hence the latter might be considerably lower than signaled in the indicator.

dependents, (c) being between 18 and 34 years of age (yet heading the household composed of younger siblings), (d) being illiterate, and (e) not owing land. Lastly, eligible individuals participate in a lottery and are randomly selected into the program.

23. Overall, the project performs adequately in reaching intended beneficiaries. No substantial inclusion errors seem to have been reported. The use of lotteries as a vehicle for targeting has been widely perceived as bolstering a perception of fairness and minimizing possible social tensions. This review corroborates those findings. Yet the proportion of actual participants randomly selected out the lottery system is in the range of 1:5, leaving large sections of populations unreached by formal safety nets.
24. The targeting method and quotas (at least 50 percent women<sup>7</sup>, 75 percent youth, plus single-digit percentage reserved for people with disabilities) ensure a broad participation of different groups of beneficiaries with largely different profiles. Lotteries are designed in a way that those quotas are taken into account, while tasks are often calibrated to specific needs. For instance, the program implementation manual envisions a role for women that look after each other's children while rotating on worksites. People with disabilities are assigned lighter tasks, such as watching after the tools as a security measure, while blind people are often recruited to sing while other participants work.
25. Individual work schedules are task-based and, as such, they allow for a certain degree of flexibility. The performance of daily works, therefore, is not necessarily based on hours worked but on completion of a defined volume of activity. Substitution with other members of the family is also permitted if participants are unable to complete the assigned tasks. Intra-household substitution has been observed, especially to ensure that women could attend competing tasks during the day, or in the case of pregnant women.

#### ***Benefits, timing and duration of program***

26. The daily wage rate of the program is set at US\$3 per day for a 5-hour workday (equal to US\$0.6/hour), which is double the prevailing market wage rate for unskilled labor (US\$2.5/day for an 8-hour workday, or US\$0.3/hour based on 2010 data). The option of reducing the wage rate to increase the coverage of the program was carefully considered in the design phase. However, other programs including those funded by the government provide similar wage rates of about US\$3/day. For example, the LYEP public works program provides US\$4/day for 5-hours work for a full calendar year. While generally high, reducing the wage rate would create a misalignment between YES and other similar projects, possibly generate tensions at community level. Moreover, an expansion of beneficiaries yielded by a reduction in the wage rate would pose additional capacity and logistical challenges<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Currently, it is suggested that actual figures indeed show almost a 50 percent participation rate.

<sup>8</sup> The discussion on the minimum wage of US\$6/day – or US\$0.75/hour – is currently on hold after an initial approval by the Senate in September 2013.

27. YES provides a predictable source of income. Cash transfers are manually disbursed by Ecobank with mobile banking services at work-sites or nearby locations. Distributions are made in two installments (two times after 20 working days each). Accessing benefits seems not to entail major transaction costs from beneficiaries, who live and work nearby the worksites. The choice of such delivery system stems from the low level of literacy of beneficiaries, weak connectivity, and availability of bank branches. At the same time, such model also poses challenges, particularly in terms of cost-efficiency, security and accessibility during the rainy season (including possible payment delays).
28. The payment process of the program is working adequately. Drawing on the previous experience of the Cash for Work Temporary Employment Program (CfWTEP) pilot, a range of payment instruments has been introduced, including contracts for the workers, a daily attendance sheet, monthly payroll sheets, and photo identification cards to ensure transparency. Some of these points are further discussed in the accountability section of this note.
29. Field observations and anecdotal evidence suggest that there is a range of small-scale economic activities mushrooming around YES project sites (i.e. food and beverage vendors, etc.). A number of participants report having been able to invest parts of the received cash into small businesses. Capturing these dynamics may further the understanding of the program's local economic multipliers.

### ***Projects***

30. Communities are responsible for identifying and selecting the activities to be conducted. Guiding criteria require projects to ensure the following: (a) provide a public good or service and to benefit community-owned land (i.e., works should not be undertaken on private land); (b) benefit the wider local community, not a few individuals or families; (c) not to affect negatively the environment or have negative social consequences; and (d) to be performable in the time period allotted (32 work days).
31. Implemented projects focus on road construction and maintenance and, increasingly, productive activities such as the opening of agricultural land or the creation of fish ponds, among others. Projects are implemented at community level. Supervisors allocate participants to different projects on the basis of their physical status, strength, and skills. Participants rotate over different projects.
32. Required tools and materials are procured by LACE through national competitive bidding procedures, and there seems no specific preference devoted to locally produced resources. The use of local material should, within reasonable costs parameters, be encouraged as a way to enhance the program's impact on local economies when possible.
33. LACE is also responsible for the delivery of the tools and materials to the project sites. Purchased tools and equipment remain under the supervision of group leaders until the end of the sub-projects. Then they are subsequently retained by Community Facilitators (CFs)

for future use on other projects in the area. At the end of the projects, tools are usually transferred to participating communities (e.g., working on cassava farms, rice farms, etc.). In communities where no manual activities were carried out, tools are given to the local government authorities (LGAs), or retained by the CFs .

34. The handing-over of tools to local actors seems the only support provided for maintenance of implemented projects. No other mechanism seems envisioned within the program, and maintenance of projects is left to the initiative of single communities. As a result, more proactive communities are likely to be able to invest in project maintenance more than others. Overall, productive and agricultural projects tend to be maintained – if not expanded – over time as they represent a source of income for the community. In some cases, maintenance is supported by local NGOs/CBOs.

### ***Institutional arrangements***

35. Overall, institutional set up of YES is well designed: responsibilities are clearly assigned, and mechanisms of coordination among the different levels are precisely envisioned within implementation manuals.
36. LACE is the government agency that has the overall project implementation and fiduciary responsibility, including contracting community facilitators in the various counties where the project is implemented. Those facilitators have the daily responsibility for sub-project implementation and training in the field, including hiring the life skills training providers. LACE also contracts the commercial bank to make the cash payments to project participants. LGAs help select the communities in which sub-projects take place and ensure coordination between this and other interventions, including the County Development Strategies.
37. In practice, though, a main challenge concerns the coordination between central level and local government authorities. At local level, community participation in both beneficiary and project selection shows positive engagement from communities and, in turn, an enhanced sense of ownership.

### ***Skills and capacity building***

38. Capacity building of relevant stakeholders features as a sub-component (1.2) in the program, with a dedicated budget of US\$1 million. The sub-component aims to build “the capacity within the government to coordinate, monitor, and orient a public works program as part of a full system of protection for the poor against systemic crises”. The MoPEA, together with the MoL and MoPWs, have been the main beneficiaries of targeted technical assistance, including as provided through learning initiatives, participation in workshops, field visits, and missions to countries implementing similar programs.
39. At local level, efforts are devoted by LACE to strengthen capacity of key actors. First, LACE provides preliminary training to local NGOs involved in the selection of the

project's community facilitators and trainers. NGOs are provided with a one-week inception training aimed to illustrate the project cycle and the implementation manual. Second, technical assistance is provided to local authorities (i.e., mayors) to support implementation of sub-projects in the community.

40. The delivery of an eight-day basic life skills training to participants proved successful. Interviews with beneficiaries in different communities show great appreciation for the training received. In particular, participants report higher self-esteem and an enhanced sense of awareness and empowerment within communities and households.
41. A different component of the program concerned the provision of formal and informal skills training programs with the objective of improving youth employability. This component was supported by a planned budget of US\$7.5 million. Overall, the initiative presented a number of challenges. A first one related to the profile of participants. These encompassed a diversified and heterogeneous group with different needs, motivations and expectations. Secondly, there were unclear linkages between the trainings provided and the type of skills demanded by the labor market. Third, the GoL sub-contracted a local firm, Transtec, to oversee training activities. Transtec, however, managed to only train roughly half of targeted beneficiaries (2,200 out of 4,500 people by the third year of implementation).

#### ***Accountability and M&E***

42. Over the years, the YES program has developed a fairly advanced MIS. Such system is Access-based with plans to transition to Oracle. It currently includes data for nearly 45,000 individuals. It is articulated around 24 dimensions, namely (1) project code, (2) implementing partner, (3) last/first name of participants, (4) gender, (5) date of birth, (6) description of work done, (7) unskilled/skilled workers<sup>9</sup>, (8) task rate (planned volume of work to perform), (9) dimension of work completed (actual volume of work performed), (10) length of area volume, (11) quality checks of works undertaken (Y/N), (12) project location, (13) county, (14) town/district, (15) date of contract signed per participant, (16) date contract expired, (17) number of days worked, (18) number of days absent, (19) disability (Y/N), (20) pregnant women (Y/N), (21) amount of cash received, (22) photo, (23) notes, (24) cycle or phase (the program is currently commencing phase 7).
43. Recent reviews have appraised the state of development in MIS tools across agencies and stressed the need for further coordination<sup>10</sup>. The M&E team managing the MIS has provided support to other agencies such as LYEP in setting-up their respective MISs. In general, the YES MIS has strong potential to offer a platform for connecting and harmonizing individual MISs available. Indeed, it was developed based on technical assistance provided to the MoPEA and with broad-based consultation among various actors (government ministries and agencies, as well as development partners). As projects by

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<sup>9</sup> Skilled workers refer to supervisors, normally paid at a wage of US\$5/day. A total of five supervisors are employed for each sub-projects to oversee a group of 100 (unskilled) workers.

<sup>10</sup> See MoL (2013b).



other agencies are considered in nearby areas, an option could be to request that data collected as part of those project is gathered with forms compatible with the YES MIS and entered into such system.

44. It is unclear, however, if the MIS includes a single identification number per beneficiaries. While it was clarified that each beneficiaries have been assigned a single number on their “identity card” for the program, this was not observed in all project site visited – including on both cards and attendance sheets. It is important to ensure that such number is present in order to maximize transparency on worksites and facilitate identification in the MIS. Also, in the medium-long term, it would be preferable to explore the introduction of (possibly biometric-based) national ID cards as the primary identification vehicle<sup>11</sup>.
45. A total of five process indicator reports are regularly compiled, including modules on (a) selection of workers, (b) selection of subprojects and works, (c) awareness and communication, (d) attendance and ghost workers, and (e) payments. An impact evaluation is planned for January 2014. Household-level data was collected in 2012 by Zuba Belleh Associates over phases 5 and 6 of the program. The evaluation will provide a robust basis to assess quantitative, longer-term impacts generated by the initiative<sup>12</sup>.
46. Information on prosecution and investigation on possible un-transparent practices are provided. An internal auditor in LACE ensures verification of payment and financial processes, while information on projects and budgets are available on the website. As part of the recruitment process, radio talk-shows are hosted (e.g., UNMIL, LBS, community radios) with a view of raising awareness on forthcoming projects and inform about rules and criteria for participation. Specific adjustments to the guidance manual have been introduced, for example in accommodating the needs of particular individuals who felt uneasy to speak out in focus-group discussions to provide feedback to program implementers on a bilateral basis.
47. One key challenge in M&E revolves around post-project follow-up. This is part of the broader issue of sustainability, although it has some specific features. For example, project managers are currently able to undertake sporadic visits to ex-project sites as part of other supervision missions in nearby areas. Clearly, this signals the high level of commitment and dedication of management on projects, but cannot be deemed an effective strategy. Similarly, in a number of project sites it was observed that community members kept

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<sup>11</sup> A recent study (Gelb and Clark, 2013) reviewed 75 biometric applications in Africa. These included the use of biometric technology to promote financial access, access to social transfers, registration projects and a handful of national ID initiatives.

<sup>12</sup> The evaluation will focus primarily on changes to the standard of living within participating households by collecting information such as the net income gains of beneficiary households, the impact and use of these additional resources, and potential job substitutions effects. It will also assess the relevance and impact of the life skills trainings activities provided during the community works. In addition, the evaluation will focus on project implementation, including the effectiveness of targeting mechanisms to promote the inclusion of youth, women and vulnerable participants in the project.

working on the project's assets even after its official completion (i.e. with no remuneration). Even community members living in urban areas returned to sites to help in those activities. This showed a remarkable sense to community commitment and cohesion.

48. A more systematic approach to post-project completion would help shed light on a number of relevant issues, such as (a) the use of earned cash by beneficiaries; (b) whether the activities commenced under the project are continued by communities, including for example basic maintenance of roads that connect to markets; and (c) whether other complementary interventions (e.g. by Ministry of Agriculture or FAO) have been planned and rolled-out. For instance, in one visited community the opening of rice paddies bolstered local food availability, including surpluses being sold as part of other development interventions in the area (i.e., WFP Purchase for Progress and Brac). Future budget allocations could consider devoting some level of resources for proper post-project follow-up to fulfill the above activities.

### ***Harmonization and interaction with other programs***

49. In the context like Liberia, ensuring basic integration and connection between interventions remains challenging, including at programmatic and administrative levels. This holds for different public works programs, between public works and other types of safety nets (e.g., unconditional transfers), or with other developmental programs (e.g., trainings, microcredit). In other words, the fragmentation of programs and approaches significantly hinders the process of systems-building among classes of interventions or for social protection more broadly. Interventions such as YES provide a crucial source of short-term and temporary income; but, if implemented in isolation, they may offer limited prospects for sustainable pathways out of poverty.
50. Yet there might be strategic opportunities to unlock some of the synergistic potential among programs. For example, at the administrative level the development of the YES MIS is already receiving attention. If properly funded, the process toward a common MIS could pay significant dividends in terms of data harmonization (and cost savings) across interventions, including for targeting and various M&E functions. It would be advisable to draft a dedicated proposal to tap possible funding opportunities such as offered by available trust funds. This could help strengthen the MIS, build bridges with other systems, and roll out the MIS more fully.
51. There are other two areas for harmonization that seem promising. These include a more integrated approach with selected activities provided, on one hand, by the MoPWs and, on the other hand, by MoL: in the former case, linkages could be strengthened around the sequencing of road construction activities; in the latter case, there might be scope for identifying and enhancing the provision of carefully assessed, market-demanded skills. These will be briefly discussed in Section 5.

### ***Conditions of work***

52. The relatively short-term nature of the project (40 days of work) makes the application of labor standards challenging. For instance, no insurance is provided to participants and, in cases of accidents, workers are attended by nearby community clinics. Maternity leave is not provided; however, pregnant women are accepted only up to the 6th month of pregnancy; also, they benefit from rotation as described in the targeting section above.
53. Potable water is reported to not be always available on sites, nor are other types of work place support, i.e. first aid provision or shaded areas for resting. Supervisors constantly rotate across the various project sites, and community facilitators also provide daily supervision on projects. However, technical supervision on the quality of implemented tasks is less systematic, and is mainly provided by LACE during its visits to communities.
54. The recruitment process seems transparent, and communities are well informed on the different selection steps (see section on accountability). Also, transparency has been enhanced by a closer oversight on local authorities aimed to avoid reported attempts to influence selection.
55. The specification of employment conditions are ensured by, in addition to awareness-raising activities, the handing of a signed copy of the contract to both beneficiaries and community facilitators (a third signed copy is kept by LACE).

#### 4.1.3. Color-coded status

56. Based on the discussion in previous sections, table 1 summaries key assessment results in a color-coded system<sup>13</sup>. The system was designed to illustrate the current status of each particular module and offer a general indication against which future reviews may analyze potential progress and challenges. See annex 3 for an overview and guidance. The state in individual modules reflects the consultations held with government officials as part of the mission debriefing.

Table 1. Summary of colors by YES modules

Dimension	Proposed color
Targeting	Yellow
Benefits	Yellow
Projects	Orange
Institutions	Yellow
Skills & capacity building	Orange
Accountability and M&E	Green

<sup>13</sup> A red color highlights that significant attention needs to be paid to a particular dimension; orange signals that a dimension requires vigilance, elements for effective performance are in place, but significant gaps or constraints persist; yellow indicates moderately satisfactory performance, with most of the elements showing satisfactory parameters; finally, green indicates well-performing practice, with broad-based success in the examined elements.

Harmonization	
Conditions of work	

## 4.2. Liberia Youth Employment Program (LYEP) - Waste & Sanitation Management Sub-Component

### 4.2.1. Key performance indicators

- Total number of beneficiaries (individuals, households): 17,000 individuals.
- Total number of employment-days provided: 4,284,000.
- Program duration (number of months of work per year, number of years): 12 months per year, per 3 years.
- Total of hours per day worked: 5 hours/day.
- Women participation (percent): target 30 percent.
- Coverage as a percentage of the working age population: 0.9 percent.
- Coverage as a percentage of the poor (national poverty line): 0.75 percent.
- Transfers as a share of monthly income or expenditures of beneficiaries: 84 percent<sup>14</sup>.
- Annual budget of the program (average per year): US\$2,687,664 (2013, i.e. March/April to August).
- Share of wages in total cost per year: 63 percent (US\$1,685,523, March to August 2013, including wages and salaries).
- Total program expenditure as percent of GDP: 0.01 percent for one year (GDP US\$1.767 billion in 2012).
- Total program expenditure as percent of public expenditures in social protection<sup>15</sup>: 1.6 percent in 2012.

### 4.2.2. Modules

#### *Eligibility and targeting*

<sup>14</sup> This was calculate don the basis of an average consumption in 2007 estimated at US\$17/month per individual per an average of 5.6 household members (= US\$95.2).

<sup>15</sup> As mentioned for YES, also in this case “social sector” was used as a proxy for social protection (public expenditures in the social sector were US\$162,870,288 in 2012).

57. According to manuals, targeting should involve a combination of (a) geographical targeting by the Youth Sector Steering Committee (YSSC), and (b) community-based targeting involving the socio-economic status of individual youth (e.g., present income source, period out of employment, number of children, etc.). In particular, the manual indicates some “socio-economic characteristics for special consideration”, including the following: (i) youth who have dropout from school and training institutions; (ii) youth living in slums, city streets, high risk and impoverished communities; (iii) youth without opportunity to attend formal education, (iv) single parent youth; (v) physically challenged youth; and (vi) youth who have completed secondary school or tertiary institutions. These criteria apply to the LYEP program in general, which is envisioned to roll-out additional sub-components targeted for youth of varying backgrounds if and when resources are made available.
58. In practice, however, some parts of the targeting process may not be particularly clear. For example, there does not seem to be particular mechanisms to ensure that individuals belonging to the same household would not participate in the program. Similarly, for the final phase of the selection process a de facto lottery system was introduced. While effective, such process was not indicated in the manual and it is probably the result of a large debate that took place within the GoL in January 2013 during the design of LYEP. More to the point, high pressure to jump-start implementation may have resulted in relaxing some of the targeting criteria. There are anecdotes suggesting that, for example, the first round has followed a “first comes, first served” approach. This is meant not to offer a critique of the method per se – other countries have adopted similar strategies to manage “excess demand” – but to note that such methods were not supported by guidance in the manual. These issues are recognized by program staff and will be addressed in the revised version of the manual, currently in draft form.
59. Women are meant to constitute at least 30 percent of the program participants. Yet there seem to be limited measures to facilitate their inclusion, such as child-care. However, women make an effort to take the necessary measures (such as leaving children with their parents or with older siblings) to be able to take part in the program. The flexibility of the working schedule – i.e., participants are allowed to work in the morning or in the afternoon – facilitates these efforts.
60. The program reserves a quota of 3 percent for the participation of people with disabilities. They are assigned “lighter” tasks, for instance the management of the daily attendance sheets or similar assignments.
61. On site observations show that sub-project participants constitute a heterogeneous group, with very different levels of education (ranging from illiterate to bachelor holders and above). This may suggest the possibility to streamline possible approaches according to needs, motivations and expectations. We will further discuss this issue in the context of program harmonization and section 5.

### ***Benefits, timing and duration of program***

62. The program provides a very high wage rate, generally comparable to that of similar programs in middle-income countries, such as PATI in El Salvador. Indeed, LYEP's wage is currently set at US\$4/day, or US\$0.8/hour and US\$80/month. Effectively, this is almost triple the prevailing market wage rate for unskilled labor (US\$2.5/day for an 8-hour workday, or US\$0.3/hour based on 2010 data)<sup>16</sup>. While a daily \$4/day would provide a strong income support function, it is not clear how such level was determined. This is particularly compelling in light of the program's duration over the entire calendar year (e.g., as opposed to other public works projects typically ranging from 2 to 6 months and providing \$3/day for similar activities).
63. One possible reason for such rate level is to meet the operating principle of "... ensuring that 80 percent of the resources of the project go for wages for the youth". At the moment, 63 percent of program's budget is allocated to wages (and salaries<sup>17</sup>). A net wage share of about 65 percent is in line with international standards for safety nets, so this could be already deemed an acceptable level.
64. In practice, a typical participant is expected to earn over US\$1,000 over the lifespan for the program (i.e., US\$4 per 21 days per 12 months). In high-unemployment environments such as Liberia – and in the context of heavily budget-constrained programs such as LYEP – a downward revision in the daily wages could, for future cycles, be considered.
65. A possibility could be to aligning wages with the level of US\$3/day (US\$0.6/hour) provided by programs such as LACE's YES and WFP's cash-for-work programs. Should such principle be applied from March 2014, it could result in potential savings in the order of US\$252/person (i.e., US\$1 per 21 per 12). If applied to the perspective 6,000 beneficiaries, savings could total over US\$1.5 million (US\$252 per 6,000 beneficiaries) – basically almost doubling the current operating budget. Therefore, suggestion options could be to, preferably, reduce the wage at US\$3/day and expand program coverage or, alternatively, to keep the remuneration at US\$4 but increase the daily work hours.
66. The issue of predictability of payment delivery is particularly relevant in the Liberia context and is likely to affect the overall performance of the program. LYEP provides a reliable and predictable source of income for a full year. However, the regular delivery of transfers has been stifled by delayed allocation of funds between different government levels. In some cases, participants interviewed in December had yet to receive the November and December payments. Many participants report they had to take credit to meet pressing needs, e.g. to pay school fees. The LYEP team has been skillfully managing the challenges that such delays entail, including being able to manage possible social discontent in a sensible and admirable way while keep handling day-to-day operations.

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<sup>16</sup> The discussion on the minimum wage of US\$6/day – or US\$0.75/hour – is currently on hold after an initial approval by the Senate in September 2013.

<sup>17</sup> We assume that "salaries" refers to remuneration of program administrators.

67. LYEP uses three methods of payment. In the eight counties where City Bank has a local presence, beneficiaries are required to open a bank account, and wages are transferred to their personal account. Where local City Bank branches are not available, money are transferred via mobile phones (in four counties). In the three remaining counties, Ecobank delivers cash on site during work days. Interviewed beneficiaries show great appreciation of the opportunity to open and learn how to manage a bank account, including saving resources (for a recommended amount of US\$20/month).
68. Field observations and anecdotal evidence indicate a range of small-scale economic activities spinning around the project sites (i.e. food and beverage vendors, etc.). A number of participants also report having been able to invest a share of the received cash into small businesses. Like for YES, capturing these dynamics may provide an understanding of the project's economic multiplier benefits.

### ***Projects***

69. City governments are responsible for identifying and selecting the activities to be conducted and the allocation of participants to the different projects. However, there seems to be limited guidance on how to conduct such selection in practice. While participants are simply allocated to different projects on the basis of their physical status, strength, and preferences, and can rotate over different projects, the criteria chosen for selecting sub-projects deserve careful monitoring. In particular, income generating activities, as the ones proposed within the YES Project, could be considered for their potential for longer-term sustainability of beneficiaries and their community.
70. The implemented community works focused primarily on primary and secondary garbage collection and disposal. According to the implementation manual, the creation of dumpsites should have been a pre-requisite for the realization of W&S activities. Preexisting dumpsites have been identified and used, but new ones were not created due to lack of funding (see context section).
71. The required tools and materials are procured by LYEP according to the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) Act. However, there seems to be limited specification of procurement procedures for sub-project equipment. LYEP is responsible for the delivery of the tools and materials to the project sites. Purchased tools and equipment remain under the supervision of designated "tool masters" until the end of the sub-projects. Upon project completion, they are retained by city authorities for use on other projects in the area. If there are no plans for additional local projects, the tools may be transferred to the local authorities permanently. The National Secretariat reports that, in the future, partnership with local organizations or enterprises may be considered as an option for sub-projects maintenance.

72. As required by the manual, field observations tend to confirm that participants undergo one-week induction trainings. These are meant to provide orientation around the nature of work and health precautions.

### ***Skills and capacity building***

73. LYEP capacity building component has not yet been implemented; as such, the following comments are based on observations on design and feedback on the planned realization of the component.

74. Planned capacity building focuses on three main areas. First, community volunteer support (CVS) may start next FY for youth interested in receiving training as auxiliary health care assistants and community education teaching assistants. The other components, which have been mentioned in section 2 (i.e., Vocational Trades and Entrepreneurship Development, Institutional Development) are described in details within the implementation manual. However, the allocation of funds for implementation of these components is yet to be confirmed.

75. At the moment, it is highly unlikely that quality trainings will be organized and delivered by February 2014. The fact that those trainings may not occur, alongside the 3-months follow-up advisory services to the youth envisioned in the manual's exit strategy, may reinforce a lingering negative perception about the effectiveness of trainings already underscored in the manual itself.

76. Interestingly, the project envisions links to longer-term employability through the provision of complementary services such the creation of independent cooperatives or enterprises (CBE, i.e. community-based enterprises). This is meant to ensure the continuation of sub-projects in agreement with local authorities. Just like for the previous point, however, the limited time to plan for those initiatives has not allowed for actual organization and implementation.

77. Training is particularly relevant for employability and for longer term sustainability of any program. The LYEP team could consider the type of skill training to be provided within the program. This issue will be further explored in section 5.

### ***Institutional arrangements***

78. At national level, the Youth Sector Steering Committee (YSCC) chaired by the Vice President is responsible for overall policy direction and budget oversight. It is convened on a monthly basis and it's composed by MoF, MoYS, MoH, MoE, MoL, MoIA, MoA and MoPWs. The MoYS is the coordination agency. To this end, it has established a dedicated National Secretariat mandated to oversee the implementation of the LYEP. In addition, a National Technical Committee (NTC) has been created, which comprises representatives of the relevant sector/line ministries and is responsible for the review of all project



documents (manuals, budgets, etc.) and the technical guidance of the different implementing agencies.

79. At county level, overall guidance in project implementation is ensured by the County Steering Committees (CSC) set up in each county. Each CSC meets monthly and reports to the National Secretariat. In addition, LYEP has established a County Secretariat reporting to the CSC with implementation and oversight responsibilities. Also, Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs), including selected Ministries, city governments, LACE, contracted NGOs/CSOs and private sector are responsible for the actual implementation of the Community Work sub-projects. This applies to the all the community works projects of the LYEP.
80. At community level, participants form Community Working Groups (CWG). County Secretariats ensure that the CWG actively participate in the implementation of the sub-projects.
81. As per the manual, CSOs/NGOs and private firms should be involved in the implementation of components number 1, 2, 3 and 4, ranging from the provision of training to youth employment. Their selection should be done on the basis of the Liberian legislation, especially the PPCC Act mentioned above. Criteria include the organizations/firms' legal status, their experience, skills and track record in specific topics (i.e. vocational skills training and/or entrepreneurship development skills training, participatory methodologies, youth employment, life skills, etc.). At the moment, however, there seems to be limited if any involvement of those actors. Also, efforts to form and engage youth groups should be made more convincingly.

#### ***Accountability and M&E***

82. From October 2013, the program has introduced a new Access-based MIS system, including with support rendered by LACE's M&E unit. This is enabling to shift from a paper-based to an electronic information management process. Currently, data is being entered manually, transferring information from paper forms to the MIS. The planned process envisions a shift to Excel sheets that, as local connectivity improves in the field, will be sent to the HQ's national M&E officer and entered accordingly into Access.
83. The MIS includes information on 7 main dimensions, namely (1) open report, (2) over-paid members (based on complaints), (3) people paid, (4) tables, (5) member sex, (6) payments and (7) time sheets.
84. The program issues ID to participants. Since the roll-out of the program, some selected individuals did not receive an ID. In those cases, an attestation form is issued and signed by the county coordinator, local M&E officer, the supervisor and major. Yet unique IDs are being increasingly rolled out in a number of countries such as India. They may help in enhancing transparency, although they may generate a number of capacity-strengthening

needs. A complementary SPA tool to this public works instrument is examining the issue of IDs in more detail.

85. The issued IDs do not include a serial number. Hence also attendance sheets only require participants to sign off with their initials. The presence of a serial number in the IDs would have been ideal for MIS management purposes as well as an important control layer in the daily attendance records. City Bank has agreed to open bank accounts to individuals without a proper, “real” national ID. In this case, an individual certification submitted to the bank by the MoYS and inclusive of photo was deemed sufficient.
86. The program does not seem to have an institutionalized logframe. A draft is being produced by the national M&E unit and is under consideration. Such draft proposes interesting indicators not previously included in the manual, such as “percentage of youth in self-employment after the program”.
87. Key performance indicators include a set of 5 measures, 3 of which are output-based, one is qualitative and one is outcome-oriented. In the latter case, this includes “increase in income of targeted youth (percent)”, although it is unclear how such indicator will be measured in the absence of baseline data. More generally, given the considerable duration of the program cycle (one full year), it might be appropriate to introduce more outcome and impact indicators such as the one included in the draft logframe. It is also important to ensure that basic baseline data is collected to measure and identify outcomes and impacts.
88. The enhancement of social cohesion is a somewhat implicit, albeit crucial outcome stemming from the program’s activities. Interviews with front-line implementers and participants themselves confirmed that LYEP fostered interactions, a decline in illegal/violent behaviors, and a sense of ownership of the work outcomes (“beautification of environment”), even at basic level of activities such as road cleaning. Yet there is limited qualitative measurement of such important outcomes, as well as measuring possible reductions in crime activities and domestic violence. Capturing these dynamics would be particularly relevant in a context of widespread violence and social fragmentation, particularly in urban areas.

#### ***Harmonization and interaction with other programs***

89. The LYEP is currently not linked to other social protection programs. The management of LYEP is spending great efforts to seek partnerships but, as mentioned in the previous section, even some of its key components such as trainings are unlikely to be rolled-out for the first cycle.
90. In general, there seems to be a need to better harmonize the basic elements of public works programs – at least those with similar design features and objectives. Hosting a public works workshop to seek consensus and coordination on those basic features would be desirable. This could include actors involved in labor and public works-related issues – such as MoYS, MoL, MoPWs, World Bank, ILO, WFP and others – and build on existing

forums such as the Aid Coordination Committee. The initiative could also help better harmonizing the planning and approaches between, on one hand, technology-intensive public works (such as those operated by MoPWs, inclusive of tractors and machineries) and, on the other hand, those more transfer and labor-oriented, such as the safety net-oriented W&S.

91. The targeting section noted that LYEP participants constitute a heterogeneous group, particularly on education levels. As such, it is likely that offering a standard program in such diverse context may lead to modest impacts on average. Indeed, it is somewhat challenging to define an overarching metric of performance for LYEP – that would ultimately depend on the specific objective considered, the profile of people whose expectations were aligned to that objective, and the quantity and quality of institutional and technical efforts devoted to such end.
92. In particular, field visits noted the presence of youth with BSc degrees and above conducting very basic manual activities. One option might be to adjust program design for people with higher levels of education. This may include the possibility to participating to multi-months, cash-for-training activities (instead of basic manual works) appropriately designed to deepen expertise, knowledge and capacities (e.g., teachers, health workers, ICT, etc. as, for instance, originally envisioned in the manual). This component may consider partnerships with institutes, colleges and universities.
93. Finally, there seem to be relevant potential synergies with LACE, which already has a remarkable experience in implementing public works in the country. Strengthening linkages with this institution, if possible, could be an option worth considering.

### ***Conditions of work***

94. The actual application of labor standards during the implementation of the W&S is challenging. While certain conditions of employment are respected, the application of others is more challenging.
95. For instance, LYEP offers maternity leave. Pregnant mothers are granted two months of leave, i.e. the ninth month of pregnancy and the first month after delivery. The program also provides sick leave upon the submission of a written medical justification. However, there seems to be no insurance provided for accidents; in case these occur, participants are transported to local clinics for assistance.
96. Also, the actual compliance with the provision of a safe and healthy working environment for participants is not homogeneous. For instance, participants are given adequate materials for the implementation of assigned activities, e.g. boots, gloves and protective suits, however, their compliance in using the provided equipment seems not subjected to rigorous checks. In addition, the program seems not to provide work place amenities, e.g. water, first aid, while many worksites offer shaded areas for resting.

97. Supervision on projects is in place, supervisors are on site on a daily basis and rotate across the various project areas. However, technical supervision on the implementation of tasks is limited to preliminary advice given to local authorities and participant groups before starting activities. As such, there seems to be limited technical follow-up during the activities' roll-out.

98. The sensitization process is transparent and communities are well informed on the different selection steps and on terms of employment. The specification of conditions is ensured by the handing of a signed copy of the contract to beneficiaries and various awareness-raising activities.

#### 4.2.3. Color-coded status

99. The LYEP's W&S sub-component has been operational for about a year. As all programs at the early stages of implementation, extensive information may not be available (e.g., impact evaluations), while practices are improved and refined as operations roll out - there is hence still scope for "learning by doing". It is almost physiological that challenges are encountered, and it is important that lessons are identified and future guidance adjusted accordingly. In addition to being new, the LYEP has suffered from significant budget shortfalls. Indeed, the actual resource-base for its implementation was only a fraction of the planned level<sup>18</sup>. At the same time, the program was under considerable pressure to jump-start implementation in an expedited way. Bearing those important contextual features in mind as well as the discussion in previous sections, table 2 summaries key assessment results in a color-coded system.

Table 2. Summary of colors by LYEP modules

Dimension	Proposed color
Targeting	Red
Benefits	Yellow
Projects	Orange
Institutions	Yellow
Skills & capacity building	Orange
Accountability and M&E	Yellow
Harmonization	Orange
Conditions of work	Orange

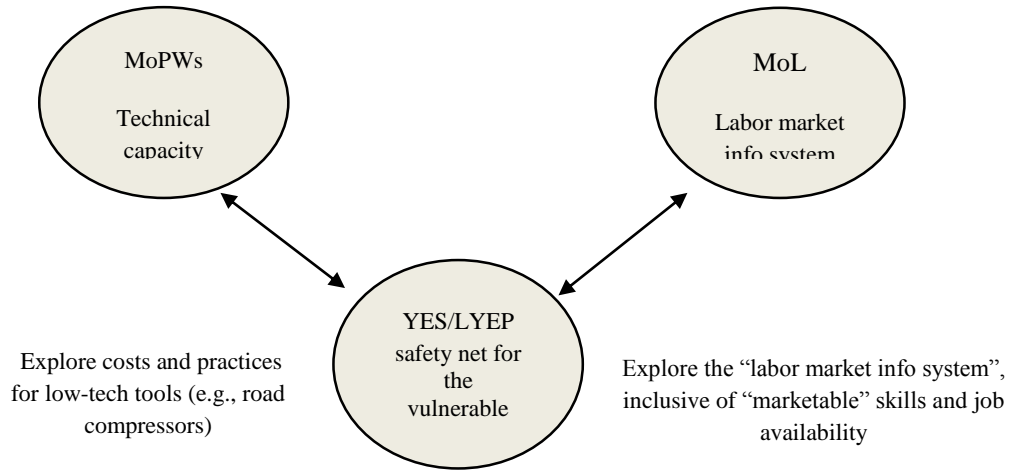
## 5. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

<sup>18</sup> LYEP's actual resources include US\$1.9 million for the first FY, while the planned figure was US\$15 million.

100. In reviewing each of the two programs, we have discussed some particular option and recommendation. These included specific issues, such as transfer levels or MISs. In this section, instead, we present a set of broader issues that may be relevant to both initiatives.
101. As mentioned in the context section, finding the balance between an income-support objective and asset-oriented one poses trade-offs between equity and sustainability. This distinction also differentiates between a safety net approach from other public works models. While contributing in reducing poverty and vulnerability, some public works schemes such as those operated by the MoPWs are generally technology-intensive and asset-oriented (e.g., inclusive of tractors and compressors). These tend to allocate lower share of budgets to wage costs (e.g., about 20-25 percent), compared to more simple and labor-oriented programs such as YES (here such share is about 72 percent).
102. In this regard, it might be interesting to consider the possible adoption of low-tech tools in future in YES programs. This should not be seen as substantial revision of current approaches, but as tailored improvements at the margin. For example, an option could be to top the first-order, LACE-supported “hand cleaning” of roads with follow-up, second-round interventions inclusive of small road compressors. It is not unlikely that, in the absence of such technical follow-up, the initial investment by LACE for “soft” road construction could be eroded rather quickly by natural shocks and other factors. However, it is clear that revisiting the allocation of wage and non-wage costs may entail a certain upfront investment, for example in procuring tools (often not available locally) and trainings for their use. Yet it might be important to explore possible costs and existing practices more in detail, including the experience of MoPWs, ILO and African Development Bank (AfDB).
103. In a similar vein, it could be interesting to consider expanding the current strategic approach of a youth-only focus. Such approach is reasonable, since the youth currently represent about a third of the population and half of the workforce. Yet a more comprehensive approach could be explored – one that may also reach vulnerable adults, such as single-parents, poor slum dwellers and others. As it was put in an interview with high officials, the focus of the public works agenda should move “from those available to those vulnerable”.
104. It is clear that the Liberian job market presents daunting challenges. With this in mind, it would be desirable to establishing a realistic strategy for the following, including (a) setting-up a labor market surveillance system that identifies demanded jobs, (b) differentiating possible jobs apt for higher and lower-education levels, (c) seeking partnerships to create curriculums accordingly, especially with the private sector and specialized bodies, (d) delivering trainings, and (e) devising a follow-up mechanism (e.g. with MoL) that tracks and supports people’s job market entry.
105. Interestingly, the MoL is working to develop a “labor market information system”. This would include a database with technical and vocational institutions, instructors and survey-

based requested job profiles and opportunities for people with different levels of education and capability. At the moment, the initiative is underfunded, but it seems to have potential to contribute in connecting social assistance and labor markets more fully (figure 1).

Figure 1. Strengthening strategic linkages



106. Finally, other options have also been raised by stakeholders, such as LIPA (Liberia Institute for Public Administration) that provided trainings to UNICEF’s program targeting ex-combatants, and the UNDP-supported microfinance and community savings programs. These could provide interesting avenues to explore for connecting initiatives programmatically and administratively.



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## **ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTNERS INTERVIEWED**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Title</b>
George Dayrell	LACE	Project manager, YES Community Works
Andrew Macgona	LACE	M&E Specialist, YES Community Works
Anita Kolubah	LYEP	Coordinator, LYEP Community Works
Tenneh Johnson Nelson	LYEP	National M&E Officer
Saah Charles N' Tow	MoYS	Acting Deputy Minister for Youth Development
Neto Lige	MoL	Deputy Min, HR Development Planning
Ambrose Wureh	MoPWs	Labor-Intensive Public Works Specialist
Bernard Owadi	WFP	Senior Analyst, Food Security
Lansana Woneh	WFP	Program Officer P4P & Livelihoods
Mayor	LGA	Buchanan

## ANNEX 2: MISSION AGENDA

<b>Mon 9 Dec 2013</b>			
10:00-11:00	SPA Internal debriefing	---	WB
11:30-12:00	LACE Meeting: Overview of SPA mission	LACE	LACE
12:30-1:30	Working lunch		
<b>Tue 10 Dec 2013</b>			
8:00-12:00	Field Trip (Cheesemanburg and Foday Town)	LACE Team	Montserrado
3:00-4:00	Meeting with WFP	Lansana Wonneh and Bernard Owadi	WFP
<b>Wed 11 Dec 2013</b>			
8:00-4:00	Field Trip	LYEP Team	Buchanan
8:00 pm	Dinner	---	Cape Hotel
<b>Thu 12 Dec 2013</b>			
10:00-11:30	Meeting with MOL	Deputy Minister Neto Lighe and Team	MOL
1:00-2:00	Meeting with MOYS	Acting Deputy Minister for Youth Development, Saah Charles N' Tow	MOYS
2:00-4:00	Working meeting with LYEP	LY EP Team	LYEP
<b>Fri 13 Dec 2013</b>			
TBC	Working meeting with LACE	LACE	LACE
<b>Mon 16 Dec 2013</b>			
8:00-12:00	Field Trip to Kakata	LYEP Team	Kakata
Afternoon	Meeting with MOPWs	Mr Ambrose Wureh	MOPWs
<b>Tue 17 Dec 2013</b>			
All day	Field Trip	YES Team	Koilala

### ANNEX 3: COLOR-CODED MATRIX OF PRACTICES

Module				
<b>Eligibility and Targeting</b>	Target population needs clarification; program eligibility criteria may be loosely specified or applied; and procedures may not be conducted in line with program manuals. Mechanisms to target poor and vulnerable may not be functional. Evidence of large inclusion and exclusion errors may exist. Direct or indirect measures to promote female participation are may not be present.	Target population and eligibility criteria are clear. However, targeting mechanisms may present a number of gaps, e.g. possible issues in wage setting protocols, use of geographic targeting, or in eligibility criteria. Evidence of significant inclusion and exclusion errors, accompanied by actual low female participation compared to planned rates.	Yellow signals clear target population, eligibility criteria and functioning targeting mechanisms. Yet, there may be evidence of inclusion or exclusion errors. Or, there may be gaps in program design limiting the participation of women.	Program exhibits clear target population and eligibility criteria. Evidence of effective targeting mechanisms is available, including as documented by robust impact evaluations. The program has promoted participation in line with program manuals, as well as encouraged the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as disabled people.
<b>Benefits, Timing and Duration</b>	The level of benefits may be inadequate or inappropriate, e.g. benefits too low, program duration too short, or generating labor market distortions. High incidence of payment delays is reported, as well as high opportunity cost for beneficiaries.	The level of benefits may not be set adequately given local needs e.g. wage levels too high/low, with consequent impacts on local markets and incentives. This, however, may be accompanied by low incidence of payment delays.	The program may have set benefits that are adequate, appropriate and incentive compatible.	The program includes benefits that are adequate, appropriate and incentive compatible with local context. Sizable spillovers have been documented, while additional benefits are provided through combined interventions.
<b>Projects and Services</b>	The rationale for projects and/or services is unclear and may be inadequate given the local context or timing of the program. Process and criteria for project selection may be unclear or not applied correctly. Implementation arrangements may not meet operational requirements. Needs of community may not be addressed. There may not be measures to ensure completion and quality control of assets. Environmental impact of projects may be of concerns. Measures for safe working environment may be absent. Participants may	The rationale for projects is relatively clear, although the participation of people in different activities is not well documented. Quality of projects and service may be of concern. Safety on worksites has not been addressed convincingly, while pre-project training and supervision is insufficient.	Projects and/or services are well defined and respond to community needs. Implementation arrangements are well defined, but projects may lack adequate supervision. Steps for safety at worksite have been taken, but additional measures are desirable.	Projects and services are well defined. Quality of projects and services has been well documented, while environmental safeguards have been taken into account. Participants have received adequate training before project commencement. Local contractors are used for material provision. Adequate technical supervision of projects is in place.

	not receive adequate training before working on these tasks. Technical supervision on projects may be absent or inefficient.			
<b>Institutional Arrangements</b>	The program may have unclear roles and responsibilities amongst stakeholders. Oversight and coordination mechanisms may be limited. Program is not flexible in face of crisis.	Roles and responsibilities may be defined for some stakeholders. There may be limited coordination and oversight capacity. Manuals and contracts to support coordination could be more developed. Program may lack preparedness for crisis response.	The program assigns clear roles and responsibilities to diverse stakeholders. Program features oversight and coordination mechanisms, but flexibility to respond to crisis is limited.	The program assigns clear roles and responsibilities amongst diverse stakeholders to ensure effective implementation, coordination and oversight. Stakeholders have developed capacity to implement program efficiently. Institutional arrangements devised to ensure responsiveness to crises.
<b>M&amp;E and Accountability</b>	The program may not present a well-defined M&E system. An MIS is not established. Indicators for performance may not be well defined and systematically collected. Measures to address accountability concerns may not be in place. At present, evaluations have not been conducted or planned.	An MIS may not be well developed. Input and output indicators may be collected but not outcome or impact indicators. Accountability mechanisms may be underdeveloped. Evaluations may have not been conducted but are planned.	The program exhibits clear M&E arrangements, as well as mechanisms to promote accountability. The program should enhance ways to capture and disseminate evidence. MIS is developed but it could be strengthened. Some evaluations have been conducted or are planned.	Mechanisms are in place to enhance transparency and reduce error, fraud and corruption. M&E protocols track results and impacts of the program across time and space. MIS is fully developed. Process and impact evaluations have been conducted.
<b>Harmonization</b>	The program may not be harmonized or integrated with similar or complementary interventions. Program may not use complementary administrative tools. There is limited potential for harmonization.	The program has loose harmonization arrangements with other programs. Use of complementary administrative tools is limited. There is some potential of harmonization among a few programs.	The program is well integrated and complemented with other interventions, and may use complementary administrative tools to support implementation. Potential for harmonization exist.	The program is harmonized and complemented with other interventions to contribute to shared objectives of similar programs and to complement the efforts of other programs. Program uses complementary administrative tools. There is great potential to continue harmonizing programs at various levels.
<b>Skills, Capacity Building and Employability</b> <i>(section is currently under revision).</i>				
<b>Conditions of Work and Labor Practices</b>	The program may not take into account the relevant national	Labor standards are applied to a limited extent, hence decent	National labor legislations and codes of conduct are available and can be used	Relevant national laws and codes of conduct have been used as a

	<p>legislation or codes of conduct. Labor standards may not be applied, hence the program may not provide social insurance benefits, and may not guarantee a safe and healthy working environment. The recruitment process may not be clear or transparent, and the contract signed with participants may not be explained or shared with them. The participants' right to collective bargaining may not be recognized, while the minimum age of workers is not respected. Women reproductive rights may not be considered, and maternity protection may not be granted.</p>	<p>working conditions may not be granted. The recruitment process may not be fully transparent. Worker rights (to maternity, to collective bargaining, etc.) may not be always respected in project implementation.</p>	<p>as a reference. Some social insurance benefits are in place, as well as safe and healthy working conditions. The right to collective bargaining is respected, and the minimum working age, too. Participants have been provided with a signed contract.</p>	<p>reference for designing the program. The program offers appropriate social insurance measures and provisions for safety at work, together with means for facilitate the participation of working parents. Participants have been provided with a clear description of the recruitment process and their contract. The right to collective bargaining is respected, and so is the minimum age of workers. Maternity protection and women reproductive rights are ensured.</p>
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