

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

LIBERIA

IN 2007



CORE COUNTRY DATA

Population under 18 (thousands)	1769
U5 mortality rate	235
Infant mortality rate	157
Maternal mortality ratio (2000, adjusted)	760
Primary school enrolment ratio, 2000-2005, net (male/female)	74/58
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3)	87
% population using improved drinking water sources	61
HIV prevalence	n/a
% U5 suffering from moderate and severe underweight	26

Source: *The State of the World's Children 2007*

Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2007

Sector	US\$
Health and nutrition	7,000,000
Water and environmental sanitation	4,800,000
Education	5,000,000
Child protection	4,000,000
Total*	20,800,000

* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7 per cent. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Liberia continues as a difficult implementing environment. However, with the Government of Liberia's commitment to a Millennium Development Goal (MDG)-based Poverty Reduction Strategy, and with an improving yet fragile security climate, UNICEF Liberia's programme management environment is opportunistic in building on the significant results for children and women achieved in 2006. UNICEF remains committed to assisting Liberia's children and women, especially as the country shifts from humanitarian emergency to development. With funds raised by the *Humanitarian Action Report*, UNICEF Liberia will benefit more than 800,000 children and women in health and nutrition; 485,000 in water and sanitation; 1,011,329 in education; and more than 10,000 through child protection.

Despite opportunities for positive change, the capacity of the Government remains extremely limited, especially in the delivery of basic social services. It is estimated that the United Nations, NGOs and community-based organizations are directly funding 85 per cent of activities in the areas of health, education, and water and sanitation. Institutional capacity was decimated during the 14-year war (1989-2003) and most institutions, including government ministries, lack essential equipment and supplies. Gross Domestic Product has fallen by 90 per cent since 1980. Monrovia remains a capital city with limited electricity and piped water and with a population threatened by malaria (the country's biggest child killer), endemic cholera, and HIV/AIDS. With a population of more than 3.2 million, there are only 28 Liberian doctors working in the country (including three paediatricians). Liberia continues to be among the most food-insecure countries – it is estimated that 35 per cent of the population is undernourished – and to have one of the world's highest rates of child stunting at 39 per cent. The country's estimated 2005 Human Development Index is 0.319, well below the estimated 0.515 for sub-Saharan Africa. Despite ongoing national and sub-regional security concerns, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is working to restore basic social services, but infrastructure is still a small proportion of what it was before the war and much effort is needed to rebuild and staff it.

While the gender gap in education has reduced since 1989, there are still approximately three boys to two girls in primary and secondary schools and more than three boys to one girl at tertiary level. Pressures for girls to work and high teenage pregnancy are among the reasons for the disparities. Liberia can make real progress towards MDG 2, but needs to work hard and fast to do so. It is unlikely that the MDGs for child mortality, maternal health and malaria will be met. The national prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Liberia is not known but a 2001 estimate puts infection rates at 8.2 per cent – although for adolescents it is thought to be significantly higher. It is unlikely the MDG for HIV/AIDS will be met.

Exacerbated by the war, gender-based violence continues as a major problem in Liberia. In 2004, surveys conducted in camps for internally displaced persons and other programme data showed that 75 per cent of women and girls had experienced some form of sexual violence during and after the war. Despite the adoption in 2005 of a Rape Law that sentences convicted rapists to life imprisonment, sexual violence against women and children continues to be high and recognized as a serious problem by the President, though improved reporting may be a contributing factor.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2006

In close collaboration with local, national, and international partners, UNICEF has continued to respond to the humanitarian needs of Liberia's children and women. It has mainly focused on the priority areas of health and nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, education, and child protection.

In the area of health and nutrition, routine immunization services have been improved through increased technical and supply assistance to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Measles

and DPT3 coverage increased from 42 and 31 per cent in 2004 to 94 and 87 per cent in 2005. Liberia is on track to be polio-free. A national campaign to provide more than 500,000 children with vitamin A and Albendazole de-worming tablets was held and, for the first time, a national tetanus vaccination campaign was launched in Liberia, targeting 800,000 women of childbearing age. Wells, handpumps, and latrine facilities for 1,000 schools were constructed, benefiting approximately 220,000 students (with separate latrines for girls, boys, and teachers), and safe water supplies and latrines were provided to 90 health facilities. During the year, some 400 participatory hygiene promotion sessions were held in schools.

With the support of UNICEF, a national avian and human influenza (AHI) preparedness plan has been adopted by the Government and a National AHI Task Force is working to implement it.

To help rebuild Liberia's public school system, and to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education, UNICEF provided essential learning materials and other supplies for 400,000 students at 2,000 public schools and trained 500 government school teachers. With UNICEF's support, President Sirleaf launched the Government's Girls' Education National Policy that calls for meeting MDG 2 by providing free and compulsory primary education, reducing secondary school fees by 50 per cent and recruiting and training more female teachers. UNICEF is working in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Liberia and many other partners to enrol into basic formal primary education 5,000 demobilized children formerly associated with fighting forces (CAFF) through the Community Education Investment Programme. An additional 5,000 demobilized CAFF will receive skills training.

3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2007

Coordination and partnership

The United Nations in Liberia is an integrated mission with the UN Country Team working as a pilot country for the humanitarian cluster system. UNICEF, as the lead UN agency in nutrition and water under the humanitarian cluster approach, is also expected to be part of the protection, health, and early recovery clusters. Key partners include the United States Agency for International Development, the European Commission, the World Bank, and more than 100 Liberian NGOs.

Regular programme

The 2007 Country Programme is an emergency programme that aims to restore basic service delivery while simultaneously providing services to returning IDPs and refugees as they work to rebuild their lives and their nation. Capacity development is focusing on implementation strategies to strengthen mid-level management at the national ministry and county levels.

Health and nutrition (US\$ 7,000,000)

More than 800,000 children and women will benefit from the following key activities:

- Procure and distribute essential emergency drugs and equipment to 27 health centres;
- Train 200 health workers on the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness initiative;
- Launch a measles vaccination campaign for an estimated target population of 500,000 children;
- Vaccinate 140,000 children under age one with DPT3 and maintain DPT3 coverage above 87 per cent (coverage level in 2004 was 31 per cent); vaccinate 800,000 women of childbearing age with tetanus toxoid during a maternal and neonatal tetanus vaccination campaign;
- Support malaria prevention through the distribution of 150,000 impregnated mosquito nets to under-five children and pregnant women;
- As the lead agency in infant and young child feeding in emergencies, and in collaboration with WFP, help ensure the timely supplementary feeding of children suffering from moderate acute malnutrition. Support the integrated management and care of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition through facility- and community-based approaches to ensure wider

coverage and better impact on mortality reduction, including the support to three therapeutic feeding centres for 2,000 severely malnourished children;

- Procure and distribute vitamin A and de-worming tablets to under-five children, directly benefiting 600,000 children;
- Support four newly established centres for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV.

Water and environmental sanitation (US\$ 4,800,000)

Some 485,000 displaced persons, focusing particularly on children and women, will be reached through the following key activities:

- Construct/rehabilitate wells and adequate sanitary facilities in 300 schools;
- Construct/rehabilitate 250 wells and boreholes and install handpumps to provide safe drinking water to some 85,000 individuals in permanent and return areas;
- Support construction/rehabilitation of 1,500 household latrines and 50 wells;
- Train 100 local water authority management teams and 15 central teams in county/city water and sanitation assessments, strategic options, rehabilitation planning, leak detection, water testing, repair and maintenance of mini-water supply systems;
- Promote hygiene education and hygiene-awareness programmes in 1,000 schools and 1,000 local communities in order to complement existing water and sanitation services.

Education (US\$ 5,000,000)

A total of 1,011,329 displaced and war-affected children and 28,266 teachers will benefit from the following key activities:

- Procure and distribute recreation kits and school supplies for 1,011,329 children and 28,266 teachers;
- Train 500 primary schoolteachers, with special emphasis on life skills, including HIV/AIDS and peace education;
- Support county and district education officers in seven counties that suffered high levels of destruction during the war and today need urgent humanitarian action, especially as refugees and IDPs return to rebuild their lives and their country.

Child protection (US\$ 4,000,000)

Some 10,000 children formerly associated with fighting forces (CAFF) as well as children at risk of recruitment are targeted through the following key activities:

- Complete the reintegration process of 10,000 demobilized CAFF through the community education investment programme and the skills training programme, and provide 2,500 former CAFF with business development skills training;
- Train 500 teachers on sexual exploitation and abuse and train and sensitize 5,000 students in 50 schools;
- Continue to support transit centres for juveniles as an alternative to their detention with adults, with separate centres for girls and boys;
- Provide training on legal protection to 50 judges, 50 magistrates, 50 social workers, and 30 law school students, and revitalize juvenile court;
- Train 150 Liberian National Police (LNP) officers serving in the LNP's Women and Children's Protection Unit.