A.12   Liberia - 2007- IDPs, refugees

Case study: Update - Self-build shelters

Project type:
Community mobilisation
Self build
Materials distribution
Cash payment for materials and labour
Technical support for improved design

Emergency:
Liberian returnees, 2007.

Houses damaged:
Estimated 80% of housing was damaged.

number of people displaced:
Approximately half of a million of Liberia's 3 million population was displaced by the civil war.

Project target population:
500 individual shelters in Cape Mount, Bomi and Gbarpolu counties, benefitting 1,328 beneficiaries. After completion, 1,782 people were living in the houses as family members or lodgers.

Occupancy rate on handover:
100%

Shelter size
25m^2 (5m by 5m)

Project timeline

6 months-	– Project completed.
	– Verification of occupancy and final payment
5 months-	– Final distribution of materials 2nd payment
2 months-	– Part-distribution of materials
	– First payment
1 month-	– Construction begins
	– Agreements signed with communities
Aug 2007-	– Project begins
Jun 2007-	– Official return date for refugees
Mar 2006-	– Official return date for IDPs
Aug 2003-	– Peace signed. UN Mission In Liberia begins.
1999-	– After the 1989-96 conflict, civil war starts again

Summary

Shelter assistance for vulnerable returnees (IDP and refugees). Building materials were provided and cash incentives given to communities for construction. The agency provided technical support and close project monitoring in collaboration with the community.

Update

Liberia's reconstruction continues to be challenging, with on-going displacements of small numbers of people due to land-ownership conflicts. By the end of 2008, displaced people who had found shelter in public buildings remained unregistered and subsequently excluded from official assistance. Many people returned to the areas of their former area of displacement due to the lack of services available in return areas.

In this programme, shelter maintenance has been a problem post-completion – both in terms of beneficiaries' physical/financial ability to maintain shelters (45% are classified as having no external help) and the durability of materials used. However, the occupancy rate remains high – 95% of the shelters are occupied by the original families, and they continue to rate the project achievements highly.

In a project review, it was recommended that future similar projects should:

• include a follow-up monitoring budget
• consider use of more durable materials (such as a cement floor)
• provide basic furniture such as beds (as some people are sleeping on floors)