TRANSITION FROM EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO SELF-RELIANCE OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES IN GOMOA-BUDUBURAM, GHANA.

AMOS GAINJAY COLNOE
The Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Noragric, is the international gateway for the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB). It consists of eight departments, associated research institutions and the Norwegian College of Veterinary Medicine in Oslo. Established in 1986, Noragric’s contribution to international development lies in the interface between research, education (Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes) and assignments.

The Noragric Master theses are the final theses submitted by students in order to fulfill the requirements under the Noragric Master programme “Management of Natural Resources and Sustainable Agriculture” (MNRSA), “Development Studies” and other Master programmes.

The findings in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of Noragric. Extracts from this publication may only be reproduced after prior consultation with the author and on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation contact Noragric.

© Amos Gainjay Colnoe June 2007
E-mail: amoscolnoe@yahoo.co.uk

Noragric
Department of International Environment and Development Studies
P.O. Box 5003
N-1432 Ås
Norway
Tel.: +47 64 96 52 00
Fax: +47 64 96 52 01
Internet: http://www.umb.no/noragric
DECLARATION

While acknowledging information from other sources, I, Amos Gainjay Colnoe do hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis was performed entirely by me under strict supervision. I also declare that this work has neither been presented for any degree or published anywhere except me.

AMOS GAINJAY COLNOE

Ås, June 2007
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Hon. John Dorsue Colnoe Sr for his investment and commitment to my education. I also dedicate this thesis to my mother Mrs. Johnetta Smith Colnoe, my brothers (John, Hilary, and Blojay) and sister (Sayda) for their prayers and support throughout my studies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tradition demands and I am morally obliged to appropriately place various degrees of gratitude where they fittingly belong. According to T. A. Haines, “gratitude is a painful pleasure, felt and expressed by none but noble souls”.

I am fore mostly grateful to the almighty GOD for his divine protection and countenance bestowed upon me through my stormy academic journey. I am sincerely indebted in terms of gratitude to Dr. Essuman Johnson (my local supervisor) for all the guidance and support during my field work. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Deola Naibakelao and Dr. Moses Zinnah of Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE).

A special mention should be made of the following for their encouragement:

1. Dr. George Klay Kieh Sr
2. Miss. Florence Kromah
3. Pastor and Mrs. Alf Kavli
4. Mr and Mrs. Oyvind Lorentzen

I remained indebted to my supervisor, Professor N. Shanmugaratnam. Words are inadequate to express my gratitude, for without your persistent advice and guidance, this thesis would not have been completed.
ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to find out how Liberian refugees in Gomoa- Buduburam Ghana have been able to survive in the absence of emergency assistance from the international community (UNHCR). Buduburam refugee camp which is approximately 32 kilometres west of the capital, Accra, consists of the largest concentration of Liberian refugees in Ghana. The field study for this thesis commenced on October 1, to December 31, 2006. One hundred heads of households were interviewed in order to obtain a general view about the livelihood strategies devised for survival. Focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and secondary sources of information were methods I use to collect relevant data.

The relationship that exists among livelihood security, assets, strategies and outcomes, depends on the ability of households and individuals to transform those livelihood securities into meaningful strategies for survival. The availability of assets could determine what livelihood strategy a particular household would seek to pursue.

During the assistance phase, livelihood secured by the UNHCR for the refugees took the form of food, cooking utensils, health services, education, counseling, legal services, and job seeking. All of these affected their livelihood in a way when emergency assistance was withdrawn. Liberian refugees had to now depend on their own effort and skills to secure their livelihoods. Despite the withdrawal of assistance, Liberian refugees has being able to construct their livelihoods in diverse ways, thereby showing how they vary in their ability for self-reliance.

In spite of other professional and social activities, petty trading is the main activity employed by the refugees for survival. In their quest for survival, Liberian refugees did face some problems; ranging from the unavailability of job opportunities, to robbery and perceived hatred.

Liberian refugees have shown that they have the potential for self-reliance, when the need arises. In spite of the predicament of resettlement and repatriation, they all have but one desire; and that is to return to their country of origin at a certain point in time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Action by churches together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADRA</td>
<td>Adventists Development and Relief Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Cooperative for assistance and relief everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDI</td>
<td>National Currency of Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAFI</td>
<td>Albert Einstein Academic Refugee Initiative Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDI</td>
<td>Norwegian Directorate of Immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>419</td>
<td>A West African numerical term use to defraud people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

Declaration I  
Dedication II  
Acknowledgement III  
Abstract IV  
Abbreviation V  
Table of contents VI  
List of tables VII  
List of figures VII

## Chapter 1: Problem Statement 1

1.1 Objectives of the study 3  
1.2 Overall objectives of the study 3  
1.3 Specific objectives 3  
1.4 Research questions 3  
1.5 Relevance of the study 3  
1.6 The study area 4  
1.7 Methods 5  
1.8 Sampling 6  
1.9 Sources of data 7  
1.10 Data analysis 9  
1.11 Livelihood model 10  
1.12 Limitations of the study 11  
1.13 Ethical considerations 12  
1.14 Organization of the thesis 13

## Chapter 2: Part 1: Literature review 14

2.1 What is emergency assistance 14  
2.2 Emergency assistance and the perceived dependency syndrome 15  
2.3 The distinction between actual and perceived dependence 17  
2.4 How long is a refugee a refugee; the UNHCR perspective 18  
2.5 Remaining refugees and resisting repatriation 19  
2.6 The livelihood approach 20  
2.7 Part 2: Emergency assistance- The role of the UNHCR and other agencies. 22  
2.7.1 The UNHCR assistance to Liberian refugees 22  
2.7.2 Assistance to Liberia refugees- the government of Ghana 24  
2.7.3 The camp structure 25  
2.7.4 Ghana red cross society 26  
2.7.5 National catholic secretariat 26  
2.7.6 Christian council of Ghana 26  
2.7.7 World vision international 26  
2.8 Educational assistance 27  
2.9 Other humanitarian programs 29  
2.9.1 Assemblies of God 29  
2.9.2 The Salvation Army 30
2.9.3 Kristo Asafo

Chapter 3 Findings and Discussions

3.1 Introduction 33
3.2 The nature of Liberian influx into Ghana 33
3.3 Emergency assistance phase- Livelihood security 34
3.4 The provision of social and other services 35
3.5 Assets 37
3.6 Refugees and host community members social relations 39
3.7 The withdrawal of assistance 40
3.8 Livelihood strategies in the absence of UNHCR assistance package 40
  3.8.1 Petty trading 42
  3.8.2 Teaching 44
  3.8.3 ‘Nothing’ 46
3.9 The 419 scam 47
3.10 Traditional Ghanaian food as a strategy for survival 48
  The role of the church in livelihood security 49
3.11 Problems affecting the livelihood of Liberian refugees 51
  3.11.1 lack of job opportunities 52
  3.11.2 Robbery 53
  3.11.3 Xenophobic feelings! How real? 53
3.12 Cultural shocks 54
3.13 Repatriation or Resettlement- the dilemma 55

Chapter 4

Conclusion 57
References 60

List of Figures

Map 1 Map of Gomoa Buduburam 4
Figure 1 Livelihood model 10

List of Tables

Table 1 Physical assets 38
Table 2 Diverse livelihood 41
Table 3 Ghanaian food 49
Table 4 Problems of livelihood 51
CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

1.0: On 24 December 1989, a group of dissident forces led by one Charles Taylor launched an armed incursion into Liberia via the republic of Cote d’Ivoire. He claimed that his ultimate aim was to overthrow the government of President Samuel k. Doe; thereby liberating Liberians from fear, brutality and blood tyranny. All of these were far from reality when indiscriminate killings, wanton destruction of lives and properties became the order of the day. Due to the intensity of the fighting in Liberia, there were many internally displaced Liberians who later became refugees in the West African sub-region. These Liberians sought refuge into neighboring Guinea, Sierra Leone, Cote d’ Ivoire and as far as Nigeria and Ghana.

The first refugee camp to be established in Ghana is at Gomoa Buduburam, some 32 kilometers west of the capital Accra. It is located in the central region of Ghana. This was the direct result of the evacuation of Ghanaians fleeing the war in Liberia. The Ghanaian vessels were forced by humanitarian circumstances to bring all nationals stranded at the Freeport of Monrovia. Upon arrival at the Tema harbor in Ghana, the Ghanaians were sent to their respective hometowns. It was due to the circumstances of catering for the Liberian refugees that led to the establishment of the camp at Gomoa Buduburam.

The government of Ghana granted refugee status to the influx of refugees from Liberia as a result of the civil war in 1989. Humanitarian Relief programs for Liberian refugees in Buduburam camp were put into operation from august 1990 onwards as an Emergency Assistance measure requested by the government of Ghana. The entire operation was government managed, while the International Community through the local United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees office provided relief items, funds and monitoring services. From mid 1996-1998, the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees and the government of Ghana adopted a new approach. Their policy was re-directed towards self-reliance. Pilot income generating activities and vocational training.
Programs were identified and implemented; all geared towards providing skills and self-employment for the refugees.

In June 2000, the United Nation High Commissioner for refugees formally withdrew Emergency Assistance in all forms from Liberian refugees in Ghana and the entire sub-region of West Africa. Since then, Liberian refugees at camp Buduburam have been left to fend for themselves. During the emergency assistance phase, the survival of Liberian refugees that was guaranteed through the amalgamated effort of churches, humanitarians and other charitable organizations also came to an abrupt halt. Moreover, members of the host community of who have been very receptive to the refugees upon arrival could not do much at that period because their capacity for philanthropy had also been overstretched. The locals are also people who lack adequate resources and are less privileged. Having lived on food ration and other material assistance for a protracted period, Liberian refugees had to now depend on their own capacity and ingenuity for survival. This became a turning point in the lives of the refugees as they had to devise ways to meet their basic needs and sustain themselves.

However, despite the withdrawal of assistance packages, most of the refugees have been quite resilient in ensuring their survival by pursuing both short and long-term livelihood strategies. How the refugees have been able to construct and implement such livelihood mechanisms seem interesting to arouse this study.
1.1: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1.2: OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

The study seeks to find out how the Liberian refugees in Gomoa- Buduburam have been able to sustain themselves, since the withdrawal of United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees Assistance in 1999.

1.3: The Following are The Specific Objectives:

A. To describe the nature and contents of assistance provided the Liberian refugees.
B. To map the processes of livelihood recovery by the refugees with reference to their capacity for self-reliance.

1.4: The Key Research Questions are:

A. how have the refugees been able to sustain themselves?
B. what kinds of assistance packages were provided the refugees and how Beneficial were they?
B. how do the refugees and the local population interact in socio-economic terms?

1.5: RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY:

The study is intended to show how host countries, the international community, and refugees might gain from taking into consideration at an early stage the longer-term implications of self-reliance .Secondly, the study seeks to demonstrate that refugees have potentials and can be an asset to host countries than a burden.
1.6: THE STUDY AREA:

The study area is called Gomoa Buduburam. It lies about 32 kilometers on the Accra Winneba highway. It is in the central region of Ghana and forms part of the Gomoa District with its capital at Apam. Gomoa Buduburam is traditionally administered under the chief of Gomoa Fetteh. The local people are ethnically Gomoas and their main occupation is farming and fishing. Gomoa Buduburam has a secondary school and a hospital. The foremost attraction is an ancient castle constructed by the Portuguese settlers called “Fort Patience”. The people of Gomoa celebrate annually a festival called “Akwanbo” festival in remembrance of their forefathers escape from slavery in the gold coast to the present capital Apam. Mrs. Joyce Aidoo is the Gomoa district Chief executive officer. Gomoa Buduburam consists of 891 square kilometers of area land and has a population of 194,789 (2002 national census). Average annual temperature is approximately 79 degrees Fahrenheit. Between October and December the period of my field work, the weather was warm and comparatively dry.
The Buduburam refugee camp formerly served as a church compound and was known as Ekwakrom, after the founder of the church Rev. Ekwam. However, according to village sources, there arose some misunderstandings between the church and the Buduburam community members, resulting into a fight and the government of Ghana stepped in and disbanded the church in early 1990. Coincidentally, it was the same year that the Liberian refugees started arriving into Ghana. The place, which already had a few buildings, was virtually empty. It then became the new home for the Liberian refugees.

The study will be limited to the Gomoa Buduburam area. Gomoa Buduburam refugee camp was chosen for the study because it consists of the largest concentration of Liberian refugees in Ghana and it is the re-creation of the state of Liberia in Ghana. The Buduburam refugee camp presently play host to about 34,350 Liberian refugees (UNHCR: 2006).

1.7: METHODS:

This section provides a synopsis of the various methods used to obtain the relevant data in relation to my topic, the objectives and the key research questions of my research work. The concepts of emergency assistance and self-reliance are highly elusive concepts. They are concepts that are so difficult to describe their actual meaning and scope. Emergency assistance and self-reliance in contemporary times are extremely diverse in nature and it takes different shapes and forms. Hence, it is prudent to select a method that is suitable and adequate for this research work. I opted for a qualitative approach. Such approach is flexible in the sense that data collected can be modified depending on the situation unfolding within the field. It comprises a process of appraising, expanding, and collecting further information as necessary.

Most importantly, the qualitative approach is suitable for my research, since it permits me to get closer to the research environment and obtained the social reality of livelihood and to capture the dynamics of livelihood as experienced by the respondents. This qualitative approach takes the form of semi-structured and unstructured interviews, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and informal conversation and focus groups discussions.
1.8: SAMPLING:

HOUSEHOLDS INTERVIEW
Given the nature of this study, a ‘household’ is defined as an agglomeration of individuals living together in the same home (Collins: 1999:388). This definition provided by Collins clearly mention elements characterizing a household, but does not revealed further how they contribute individually according to sex and age, and who bargain on their behalf. In order to obtain an overview of the resources and assets, social relations and livelihood strategies of the refugees, I chose 100 households out of a total of 500 households for the survey.

I targeted the head of the household for the interviews conducted. The heads of each households were identified by simply asking members of the households who their heads were. All of the interviews took place at the various homes and at morning hours agreed upon by the head of households. I initially wanted to sample the same number of female and male household heads but this was not possible as there were more male household heads than female. Reason is, in the Liberian cultural context, males are destined to be heads of a household despite their inability to provide for the household. Women can only become a head of a household provided she is single or have divorce her husband.

All members of the household are lodging in some kind of permanent structures constructed with mud bricks or zinc sheets. The houses in camp Buduburam are numbered and this facilitated the quick identification of households for interview.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

After the general households survey, I further conducted in-depth interview with some households. I selected those households because in my opinion, they could provide detailed information relevant to the research questions. The interview was
unstructured and flexible in order to allow the respondents to feel relax and openly express their opinions regarding the research questions and topic. I continuously developed questions that could best suit the interview situation. Each of the in-depth interviews conducted lasted for more than an hour and was concluded in two sessions.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

Focus group discussions were held with cross sections of the refugee population in order to capture various opinions, trends, and views of the respondents regarding the strategies devise for survival in the absence of emergency assistance. After residing in the camp from the month of September to the end of October 2006, I was able to select the participants for the focus group discussions based on the perception I had gathered about them and felt that they could be suitable for my study. A total of four focus group discussions were conducted at the Buduburam refugee camp in environment chosen by the participants themselves during the month of November 2006, with four persons taking part in each group. The various focus group discussions lasted for an hour and 30 minutes each. And the composition of the groups was as follows:

- Group one consisted of members of the religious council of the Buduburam refugee community.
- Group two consisted of young men from the refugee community between the ages of 25-36 years.
- Group three consisted of young women from the refugee community between the ages of 25-36 years.
- Group four consisted of elders from both sexes (2 males/2 females) of the refugee community and the host community between the ages of 37-47 years.

1.9: SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION:

Use was made of different qualitative methods in collecting relevant data for the study. I employed unstructured and semi-structured interviews as a means of gaining in-depth insights of the kinds of assistance provided the refugees and the process of service delivery. Interviews with key UNHCR staff, staff of implementing partners and other agencies, Buduburam camp authorities, and other key informants were
conducted. At the end of the interviews, a bulk of satisfactory information was obtained from the various sources. Each of the various interviews conducted lasted for two hours and ended in a cordial atmosphere.

In order to understand the livelihood activities as constructed in by the refugees, I had to go and live among the refugees during the last two months of my research work. At this juncture, participant observation as a tool of qualitative research became necessary. This afforded me the opportunity to interact and communicate with the refugees on a daily basis. I frequently visited social gatherings such as soccer and basketball matches, drinking bars and discos, restaurants, video clubs, hatai shops (places where certain Chinese herb are boiled and sold as a drink) and church services and evening prayers at the mosques. Throughout this process, I took on the role as an investigative observer. Since I was known by most of the refugees, the issue of trust and confidence was a bit easier to handle.

Focus group discussions are most often conducted in diverse ways. The steps varied from three to six or more steps (Lamnek: 1988). All of the focus group discussion was conducted using semi-structure questionnaires. My research assistant introduced the topic for discussion through a statement generating-question. Under the circumstances, I took the role as a facilitator, guiding rather than controlling the discussion. As I intimated in the earlier section, I was known by most of the participants and therefore I was able to build a rapport that smoothen the group discussions. While the discussions were being held, I manually recorded the issues discussed with the help of my research assistant because the discussions were intensive and too big a task for me alone.

In addition to the focus group discussions, I administered questionnaires to households in Buduburam aimed at obtaining data from respondents with less interference on my part as a researcher. All of my participants and respondents spoke and understood English quite well. Hence, I encountered no language barrier during the exercise.
I made used of secondary data which enabled me to ascertain vital information of issues on Liberian refugees. The secondary sources included published articles on Liberian refugees, UNHCR annual reports on Liberian refugees, Ghana refugee board annual reports and the Ghana refugee law document.

1.10: DATA ANALYSIS:

The data obtained from my field work was subjected to qualitative analysis. I regularly met with my research assistant to check consistency, discuss the findings and compare notes. At this juncture, the collected data was coded, conceptually organized and evaluated with the help of my local supervisor. Upon my arrival in Norway, I employed the data reduction and interpretation process and relevant conclusions drawn that satisfactorily answered the research objectives and questions.

I adopted a simplified version of the CARE group livelihood model as a basis for analyzing the data collected on Liberian refugees’ livelihood strategies. Livelihood framework was developed for conducting work on poverty reduction. It seeks to capture not just the strategies in making a living but the resources that provide them with the potential to live a satisfactory life, and the possible hazards that need to be taken into account while controlling resources.
1.11. CARE GROUP LIVELIHOOD MODEL (Simplified Version).

Care livelihood model is one of the sustainable livelihood models based on Chambers and Conway practical concept of livelihood. The positive effect of this approach lies in the relationship between the livelihood security of households and basic needs, taking into account the potential of individual members of a household (Chambers and Conway: 1991).

I chose the above model because it catalogues key aspects that are essential for livelihood security. Namely, “the possession of human capabilities (food, nutrition, water, personal safety, education, skills, health, etc), access to tangible and intangible assets, and the existence of economic activities.” The nature of relationship existing among the above resources could determine the kind of livelihood strategy a particular household would seek to adopt for survival (Care: 2002-2003).
According to Carney and Scoones, resources are referred to as ‘assets’ and are often classified into five or more different types that could be possessed by members of a particular family. Even though they admitted that such assets can be very productive, they also agree that not all the productive resources employ by people to earn their livelihood neatly fit such a purpose. In spite of this, their classification does serve a useful purpose in showing the different types of assets that have different relationship to the policy environment (Carney and Scoones: 1998).

The dynamics of a livelihood approach should seek to ‘identify what the poor have rather than what they do not have’ and should aim at strengthening peoples particular inventive solutions, other than replacing them with something that could prove very disruptive. Livelihood approach in this sense seeks to be people centre and could provide an all-embracing perception on the dynamics of earning a living. This can be buttress by developing the institutional and environmental conditions of the poor (Carney and Bebbington: 1998).

The livelihood approach has shown a lot of advantages, especially in recognizing the following:

- “The multiple and diverse character of livelihoods.
- The prevalence of institutionalized blockages to improving livelihoods;
- The social as well as economic character of livelihood strategies;
- The principal factors implicated in rising or diminishing vulnerability; and
- The micro-macro links that connect livelihoods to policies structures”.

1.12: LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The study has some limitations. First, it was difficult collecting data from among the refugees since they have been the focus of several studies of which according to them “nothing good ever come back to us”. Secondly, the refugees were suspicious that the Disclosure of potential self-reliance information could hinder future assistance program to them.
The unwillingness of both UNHCR and staff of implementing partners to make available quantitative information on the assistance packages provided the refugees do limit this study. The study could contain some personal bias because I was once a refugee in camp Buduburam. One of the practical problems encountered during my research was the continuous appeal for financial and material resources by the refugees. All of the refugees perceived Norway as the land of ‘Milk’ and ‘Honey’.

Given that I was once a refugee in camp Buduburam and was from Norway, most of the refugees knew me and wanted some assistance from me in cash or kind. Some of those who came to me were people I have known over the years, and it was difficult to resist giving. I exhausted almost all of my research allowance before the actual process commenced. I came back to Norway without most of the things I took to Africa because; I was in empathy with the refugees.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

All social research consists of a process comprising of researchers and respondents interaction. This relationship must be characterized by confidentiality and cooperation (Sarantakos: 1998). This suggests that I had to employ ethical standards throughout my field work. In order to allay fear of discomfort, I firstly identified myself and ensured my respondents that all information provided would be confidential and used only by me and for academic purposes. I then explained my research objectives in simple and understandable terms to my respondents. However, freedom was given to the respondents to ask any questions about my methods and aim of the research work, and they were made to understand that it was their right to leave the process at any time without any malice held against them. Equally important, I ensured that appropriate acknowledgement is given to individuals and groups who work was used in my study and avoided falsifying data. With the exception of UNHCR staff and staff of implementing partners, all other respondents were ever willing to contribute to my research work.
1.14: ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS:

This thesis is organized into four chapters as follows:
Chapter one presents the problem statement of the study and the research design.
Chapter two consists of two parts. Part one is devoted to the literature review; while part two shows the kind of assistance provided the refugees by the UNHCR and the role played by the implementing partners and other agencies. Chapter three contains the research findings and discussions. The conclusions are presented in chapter four of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0: INTRODUCTION.

This chapter consists of two parts. Part 1 is devoted to the review of literature relevant to the study. It addresses issues on the definition of Emergency Assistance and the Perceive dependency Syndrome, the distinction between Actual and Perceive dependence of refugees, how long is a refugee a refugee, remaining in Camps and resisting repatriation, and The Livelihood approach. Part 2 show the assistance provided the Liberian refugees and the role-played by the UNHCR and other agencies.

PART: 1.

To begin with, it is prudent to establish conclusively in this context the meaning of Emergency Assistance.

2.1: WHAT IS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE?

Emergency Assistance in today’s world is highly diverse in nature, and encompasses a variety of meanings and it takes various shapes and forms. According to the Australian aid program (2005), emergency assistance is primarily involved with the essential element of urgent humanitarian action. “The provision of basics necessities, subsistence, healthcare, the protection of life and physical security”.

The Collins dictionary defines Emergency as help or support provided during situation of unforeseen or sudden circumstances especially of danger demanding immediate action (CD: 1999:40: 257).

The international action by churches together (Act), provided an all-inclusive definition of the word ‘Emergency’ as, “an extraordinary event that causes destruction to people, property and structures to such an extent as to exceed the capacity of the affected community to cope with the situation relying solely on its own resources. It
requires external action which is immediate, appropriate and limited in time, and
which will enable the affected community or group of people to cope with the
emergency and begin to return to normal life” (ACT: 1998).

We live in a world characterized both by man-made and natural disasters. These
disasters occur on a daily basis and result in emergencies requiring intervention. It is
estimated that there are approximately 27 million refugees in the world today and 30
million people are internally displaced (UNHCR: 2006).

According to a world development report, it is also estimated that given the period
1990 to 1999, approximately two billion people have suffered affliction and
approximately nine million of them have been affected by death, lifetime injuries and
family separation as a result of various types of disasters and emergencies. Namely,
epidemics, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, famine, typhoons, floods, civil war
(genocide, massacre), and armed incursion (WDR: 2001).

By its definition and the circumstances enumerated above, ACT places no condition
on the type of emergencies evolving. Assistance is provided in these situations
without taking into consideration political affiliation, religion, race, ethnic identity,
and creed (ACT: 1998). However, the United Nation High Commissioner for
Refugees is the prominent organization given the mandate by the united nation
general assembly to look after refugees during crisis situations and provide
emergency assistance.

2.2: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND THE PERCEIVED DEPENDENCY
SYNDROME.

In refugees’ situation, it has become a norm that most, if not all hosts governments
carved out places called settlements or camps and put refugees in them upon arrival.
Host governments (in the south) are most often not prepared financially to take care of
the refugees and are therefore obliged to solicit help from the local UNHCR office.
The UNHCR by its protocol is a chief collector and is to coordinate and fund
assistance packages for the refugees through its implementing partners.
According to Richard Black, despite negative perceptions and consequences in placing refugees in camps or settlements, host governments, local NGOs, and international agencies see the encampment of refugees as the best alternative. He asserts that, the world over, Africa in particular, large arrival or entry of refugees constitutes an overwhelming force that can get the better of the capacity of the local population and their infrastructure, thereby causing informal chaos, and pressure on the surroundings and socio-economic system (Black: 1998:4-7).

Black goes on to mention that the encampment of refugees provides a number of ‘practical advantages’, such as easier and prompt service delivery, accountability, proper identification, physical access to the refugees and refugees can be easily controlled. It is also believed that keeping them in the camp will create a situation for the effective and efficient delivery of relief packages and services (Black: 1998).

According to Voutira and Harrell-Bond, despite of some negatives consequences associated with the encampment of refugees, they perceive the socio-cultural encampment of refugees as the most efficient way of delivering aid to a group of people located in a specific area. This suggests that emergency assistance package is best administered to refugees in camps because they can easily be identified and accessed (Voutira and Harrell-Bond: 1995:210).

Key actors of the humanitarian aid regime may disagree with this inference by indicating that where refugees encamp is not within their mandate but rather the protection of such refugees is what concerns them.

It is widely believed by donors and workers providing assistance packages and services to refugees, that such packages do create a kind of lackadaisical attitude on the part of the refugees to give up assistance packages, leave the camp and return home.

Against this ill-considered notion, numerous studies have clearly shown that although exile is difficult and most of the refugees depend on food rations and other material assistance, they all have but one desire and that is to return home. Their persistent
refusal to return home at a specific point in time is not due to the benefits of assistance packages and hand-outs but rather due to security and life threatening situation in their country of origin (Green: 2000).

In the case of southern Sudanese refugee’s continuous applaud of UNHCR as their ‘parents’, depicting that their livelihood and existence solely lie in the hands of the refugee organization was an action in disguise. Harrell-Bond mention that refugees were not completely dependent on UNHCR but the dispensation under which the assistance packages were administered to the refugees warranted their action of flourishing praises at UHNCR despite their preparedness to become self-reliant. In her book “Imposing Aid”, Harrell- Bond reveals that those refugees who were not covered by the aid ‘umbrella’ seemed to be better off than those dependent on relief assistance. According to her, this was evident in the Sudan. For example, when trucks could not get food to refugees in camps in the Sudan due to bad roads conditions, refugees who left the camp and had settle among the locals were feeding those refugees still living in the camps. (Bond: 1986).

2.3: THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ACTUAL AND PERCEIVED DEPENDENCE.

Given the purpose of the study, is prudent to differentiate between ‘dependence’ as over-reliance on individuals or on a substance as being perceived by key actors of the humanitarian aid regime (Unhcr, host governments and other humanitarian agencies), and dependency existing in reality.

Kibreab statements of results on Somali refugees provide added emphasis on these two interesting concepts. He observes that the inclination of refugees in the camps to work frequently for extremely small wages whenever it was possible was also characterized by the tendency not to fore-go their rights to assistance packages. He mentions that though refugees from Somalia portrayed feelings of dependency and poverty, it cannot be seen as an image of actual dependency but rather a reality of the insignificant levels of wages, they earned from the menial jobs done. Hence, claiming food rations in addition was a reasonable strategy for augmenting their livelihood in exile. It is therefore not prudent to classify such refugees as dependent on assistance
packages but rather it appears that assistance workers have become dependent on the dependency of refugees (Kibreab: 1993:332).

“The competent authorities rarely concede that the helpless refugees they met on arrival gradually acquire some power of their own, and that they integrated into the society. The organizations try to hold unto their powers and to treat their wards for as long as ‘refugees’ thus denying them such basic rights of mobility, work, education, and housing” (Emmanuel: 1990:198, as quoted in Dick).

A similar understanding of the dynamics of the refugee community is what Harrell-Bond term “a set of chessmen deployed across the board”. Refugees are noted for changing their roles and breaking up into smaller units, so as to exploit opportunities that may become available for them to sustain themselves other than what assistance packages can provide. They are ever prepared to surrender their rights to assistance packages and go after those available opportunities (Harrell-Bond: 1986:119-122).

2.4: HOW LONG IS A REFUGEE A REFUGEE; THE UNHCR PERSPECTIVE.

By virtue of international convention and protocol, the definition of the term ‘Refugee’, is limited in outlook. Rather than defining the term in accordance with its mandate; which is to protect every person that is compelled to leave his country and seek refuge outside his country of nationality, the mandate has been reduced to providing mere material assistance. This becomes a reality specifically in Africa, that whenever material assistance runs out due to donor fatigue, actors of the humanitarian aid regime most often abandon refugees in camps. The concept refugee is embedded on the UN protocol of non-refoulment, which forbids member and non-member states not to return refugees to their country of origin against their will (Godwin-Gill: 1999:221).

Given the perspective of the UNHCR, persons qualified for such protection as a refugee, is someone who has “a well founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion,
outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable to avail his or herself to their country of origin”. It then becomes evident that persons who satisfy the non-refoulment criteria should maintain their status as a refugee and not material assistance as the defining criteria for maintaining one status as a refugee (UNHCR: 1951).

In synopsis, a refugee should always be a refugee until they no longer owe “a well founded fear of persecution”. Some African countries for example Ghana; have begun an individual refugee status determining process. This is based on the expanding parameters of the UN definition of refugees by the then OAU.

2.5: REMAINING REFUGEES AND RESISTING REPATRIATION:

It is perceived that refugees may prefer the option of not going home and remained ‘refugees’ in order to explore other opportunities for survival. This is evident in a study on refugees from Greece (Zetter: 1991:7-39).

Green also mentions several reasons why refugees may choose to be refugees than to take advantage of voluntary repatriation. According to him, the decision not to go home entails a whole range of issues from political to socio-economic considerations. He asserts that returning home is not the issue but starting a new life and the means of sustaining it is quite perturbing. Most of the refugees in camps have lost their dignity as individuals; as well as their means of livelihood and assets in their country of origin. Therefore, returning home without any means of livelihood security is tantamount to been a refugee in their own country of origin (Green: 2000).

Importantly, it might be noted that some refugees may wish to remain refugees and reject the option of repatriation due to the fact that they actively participated in the wanton destruction of lives and properties of innocent civilians and cannot risks the act of reprisals that could surface upon their return. Most of them would prefer to even ‘die’ in the camps than to voluntarily be repatriated home. Again, Green reiterates that the perceived opportunities or lack of opportunities in the refugee’s country of origin is a determining factor on whether to return home or not to return.
home. These contribute to the political dynamics of repatriation and remaining in refugee camps (Green: 2000).

2.6: THE LIVELIHOOD APPROACH.
Refugees in the south are a result of conflict and warfare occurring in developing countries. Their exodus is most often to neighboring countries where there are little or no material comforts and opportunities for refugees to earn a decent life. Assistance provided is only for a short period, even though their stay may be protracted in nature. When assistance packages dwindle and subsequently run out, they are then left to fend for themselves. Ultimately, they have to devise and make use of meaningful strategies for survival.

According to Kari Goeldner, livelihood in this context refers to “those things (material and social), that allows a person to live well. It includes clean water, shelter, access to health care, access to education, freedom from abuse, access to credit facilities, and virtually anything that would contribute to a quality life” (Goeldner: 2003).

This approach takes into account the preferences, coping mechanisms, opportunities and challenges faced by individuals and communities. It is important to intimate that even though the livelihood approach entails the ability of individuals to attain resources and opportunities, the resources gained must not be used in ways that will impede the ability of others to lead a decent life.

According to Robert chambers, people living in a state of distress tend to view poverty in ways completely different from those claiming to be poverty reduction experts. He argues that the poor engage in series of strategies with the aim of not only obtaining ‘income’ for survival but to also be able to cope with unforeseen challenges that pop up during the process of livelihood recovery (Chambers: 1995).

One of the challenges of this approach is how to devise a program that will assist and buttress the survival strategies already put in place by individuals and communities prior to the intervention approach (Goeldner: 2003).
According to Ellis, the collective and assorted nature of livelihoods stipulates that individuals do not often cleaved to economic policies that are of importance to development policies but on the opposite, the livelihoods of people consists of dynamic features for remaining out of poverty or making better the standard of living (Ellis: 1998:2000).

Ellis and Freeman research results from eastern and southern Africa reveals that income generated by rural households had the bulk of their income from activities other than farming. They were cognizant that the suitable outcome of different kinds of livelihood strategies needs an adjustable process that will not make problematic the established framework in which it is to be slowly developed (Ellis and Freeman: 2004).

Ultimately, the livelihood framework is not a panacea for poverty reduction program in all low income countries or in all refugees livelihood recovery situation. However, it shows the way forward that can be helpful in mapping appropriate policies and strategies in improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable.
PART: 2.

2.7: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE- THE ROLE OF THE UNHCR AND OTHER AGENCIES.

INTRODUCTION.

When large numbers of people seek refuge in neighboring countries as a result of civil war, many arrive in a state of destitution, completely without the means to meet basic and essential needs. Host governments often react swiftly by providing relief items out of their own resources and subsequently calling upon the International Community for immediate action to provide medicine, shelter, food and clothing. Emergency assistance packages are launched to meet the pressing needs of the target population. In some countries, the responsibility for refugees is assigned to a particular Ministry of government. For example, the Prisons department administers refugees in Hong Kong. In Ethiopia, the government established the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission to be in charge of all relief programs for refugees and in Norway, refugees are look after by the department of immigration (UDI) and the various kommunes. However, Harrell-Bond indicates that, most African governments have adopted a laissez faire approach, handing over responsibility and implementation of assistance program to the UNHCR, or to an International Voluntary Agency.

2.7.1: THE UNHCR ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIAN REFUGEES:

The United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) was established primarily to protect the human rights of refugees and to serve as the channel for multilateral donations. By its policy, UNHCR does not itself implement assistance programs; this is done by its implementing partner; non-governmental organizations. The UNHCR assists refugees under the terms of the mandate guiding its activities. According to the statute of the UNHCR, a refugee is a person either already recognized as a refugee by earlier international agreements or,

“All person owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion, is outside the country of his
nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country of his former habitual residence or is unwilling to return to it".

This definition of a refugee as provided under the 1951 convention did not make it easy for the High Commissioner to provide assistance to all refugees because of the clause “As a result of events occurring before 1st January 1951”. To deal with the problem of providing assistance to refugees not falling wholly within the mandate of the 1951 convention, the UN General Assembly adopted an easier approach. A procedure known as “Good Offices” which allows the UNHCR to assists people who are considered not to be within the competence of the United Nations. A further Resolution extended the use of good offices to all the competence of the United Nations. For example, when refugees from Angola flooded Zaire, the UN General Assembly requested the High Commissioner for refugees in that country to lend his good offices, in seeking appropriate solutions for such refugees. Also, a person has to meet certain legal criteria before he or she could qualify to be called a refugee. However, in the determination of refugee status, there are quite often contradictory interpretations that are both restrictive and liberal, of the convention.

In an effort to find a more practical response to the realities of social, political and economic turmoil’s that continue to pervade the African Continent since the 1950s and early 1960s, the OAU in 1969 adopted a convention which made a realistic extension of the definition of “refugees” beyond that of the 1951 united nation convention to include;

“Every person who owing to external aggression occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality”

This provision recognized that within the African context, it was not only the individuals of” well-founded fear of persecution” which created refugees, but that the mass exodus of people could be the result of factors of a more general nature, essential to circumstances in the country in question. Most importantly, it recognizes persons seeking refuge from the wider consequences of Coups d’état, civil wars and
political unrest. For example, the convention made no distinction between persons fleeing from independent African states and those that were still under white minority rule as the case was with Rhodesia, the Portuguese colonies and South Africa at that time. Significantly, freedom fighters therefore fell within the boundary of the OAU convention on refugees. The convention stresses that granting asylum, “shall not be regarded as an unfriendly act”. Moreover; it also has provisions on non-refoulment. This is one of the important principles of international refuge protection. It is against these backgrounds that I moved to discuss the Actual Assistance packages provided the Liberian Refugees in camp Buduburam.

2.7.2: ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIAN REFUGEES- THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA

Before the Liberian crisis, Ghana had no experience with hosting refugees in a camp. The country had not hosted a large number of refugees before and refugee numbers in the country had not previously warranted a camp being set up. Hence, there was no government agency with the expertise to handle such a situation. It was also not clear to various NGOs whether the Liberians could in actual fact be called refugees. This was due to the manner by which they arrived in Ghana. Notwithstanding, the response to the arrival of Liberians was very positive.

When the first batch of Liberians arrived on their own in Ghana in May 1990, they settled on their own among Ghanaians friends and compatriots from Liberia. They were assisted by the UNHCR, which got the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to assist them with food parcels. At that time, the UNHCR Local Office was due to be closed down in December 1990 and it was therefore not sure of its continued operation.

The government of Ghana, however, set up an adhoc Committee on Returnees and Refugees from Liberia. The committee established a task force to set up a reception camp at the Afienya training school in the eastern region of Ghana. The committee was made up of the National Disaster Relief Committee, National Mobilization Program, National Catholic Secretariat, UNHCR, Catholic Relief Services, Ghana Civil Aviation Authority, Ghana Red Cross, National Youth Organizing Committee, Christian Council of Ghana, The Civil Defense Organization, Department of Social Welfare, Ghana Ports and Harbors Authority, Immigration Service, Ministry of
Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Interior. Problems of infrastructure at the Afienya Camp prompted a decision to use the abandoned church premises at Gomoa Buduburam. The first batch of Liberian Refugees to be sent to the camp was 29 persons in August of 1990. By December 1990, records show that the refugee population was 6,748 persons.

The break down was as follows:

MALES: 1,683  
FEMALES: 2,034  
CHILDREN: 3031  

TOTAL: 6,748 (UNHCR: 1990).

However, the population of the camp keeps fluctuating up to present. Neither the Government of Ghana nor the UNHCR can give you an exact figure regarding the number of refugees in Buduburam at present. Several attempts has been made by the UNHCR in collaboration with the government of Ghana to conduct a census at camp Buduburam but all attempts have not realized its objective. The unsuccessful nature of the census could be attributed to the fact that, Liberian refugees depended on the food ration for meeting other socio-economic needs. Hence, the tendency to be counted twice was necessary and inevitable in order to get more food ration. For each time a census was conducted, the number would increase in geometric proportion.

2.7.3: THE CAMP STRUCTURE

During the Assistance phase, the camp was managed by a number of bodies with specified functions. The overall Administration of the camp was under the National Mobilization Program, which provided the camp its commandant and two assistants. There was and still a Camp Management Committee which sees to the day-to-day management of the camp. The committee is made up of the Camp Commandant, the representative of the Ghana Police Force, Ghana Red Cross, National Catholic Secretariat, and the Christian Council of Ghana, World Vision International, the World Food Program, the UNHCR and the Liberian Welfare Council which consists
of representatives of the refugees. The Liberian welfare council was and is still the link between Liberian Refugees, the government of Ghana and the UNHCR.

On 1st December 1990, the UNHCR assumed full responsibility for the refugees at the camp. The UNHCR entered into agreements with four implementing partners, namely Ghana Red Cross, National Catholic Secretariat, world vision international and the Christian Council of Ghana. Under the agreements, the following tasks and responsibilities were been assigned:

2.7.4: GHANA RED CROSS SOCIETY - was responsible for Refugee shelter; the construction and maintenance of more permanent refugee shelters. Sanitation, the construction and maintenance of toilets and general cleaning of the camp. The construction and management of a clinic, supplying of drugs and the implementation of supplementary feeding program.

2.7.5: NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT – was tasked with the overall responsibility for the supply of food to the refugees from the world food program. It consisted of basic and complementary foodstuffs and their storage, inland transportation, preparation and the distribution of food ration to the refugees.

2.7.6: CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA – the construction and management of schools on the camp. The provision of social services namely, counseling services and organization of recreational activities. They also administered scholarships program made available by the UNHCR and other charitable organizations.

2.7.7: WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL – had the responsibility for water supply; such as the transportation, storage and distribution of water to the refugees. Also, World Vision International was to organize income-generating activities in the field of agriculture and programs for women. The UNHCR provided the financial support for the budgets of each of the implementing partners. According to Mrs. Olga
Tetteh UNHCR field officer in Accra, funds provided were used to support the operational programs of these implementing partners at the camp.

The responsibilities assigned to these implementing partners made the provision of assistance to the Liberian Refugees somehow effective. The Ghana Red Cross for example, provided an initial $50,000 for the support of the Liberians in July 1990. This amount was used to purchase assorted drugs, 425 blankets and 105 bales of second hand clothes for the refugees. The Red Cross also provided bags of sorghum and wheat Soya for the upkeep of the refugees. By the end of 1990, the Ghana Red Cross Society has spent €100 million in their Relief operation. The Ghana Red Cross Society ran the clinic at the camp but the Catholic Bishops Conference is presently running it. A retired medical officer headed it, with the assistance of two nurses from the government hospital in the district of Winneba. The refugees provided additional support staff for the clinic.

Following a Ghana Government appeal for assistance to the refugees and returnees in October 1990, the National Catholic Secretariat was made responsible for implementing a three months European Economic Community Emergency Aid of €133.5million. This was used in providing food, essential drugs and clothing for the refugees at the camp with assistance from his Holiness, the late Pope John Paul II. The National Catholic Secretariat constructed a twenty bedrooms housing unit, to accommodate vulnerable nursing mothers and the aged. It costs approximately €16.3million at the time.

The National Catholic Secretariat expenditure on the refugee assistance program covered feeding, clothing, medical care, shelter, logistics, labor and other miscellaneous items.

2.8: EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The provision of educational assistance to Liberian refugees was the responsibility of the Christian Council of Ghana. The Christian Council operated a school from kindergarten to Senior Secondary level at the camp. The school is known as the Buduburam Refugee School. The school began in October 1990 at the kindergarten level. It was upgraded to a primary and Junior Secondary level in January 1991.
However, UNHCR initially did not assist refugees worldwide at the secondary school level. This occurred only in Ghana. Sadako Ogata (Former head of UNHCR), Geneva, in 1996 won the Houphouet Boingy peace prize award. It was around this same time that a vessel name “THE BULK CHALLENGE” carrying Liberian Refugees arrived at the port of Takoradi in the central region of Ghana. Sadako Ogata then donated the award to the Liberian refugee’s youth. It was this award that started secondary school education for Liberian refugees in Ghana. Since then, Liberian Refugees have enrolled in over 20 secondary schools in Ghana. The teaching staff at camp buduburam was about 95 percent Liberian, four percent Sudanese (all of whom have been resettled to the U.S.A) and one percent Ghanaian. Those Sudanese who left were been replaced with Liberian teachers. As a form of motivation, the Christian Council gives the teachers an allowance at the end of every month.

Besides the camp school, the Christian Council of Ghana also assisted in the education of Liberians at the tertiary level. The UNHCR through the Christian Council sponsored students at the following Ghanaian universities:

1. University of Ghana (Legon)
2. University of Science and Technology now (KNUST)
3. University of Cape Coast
4. University College of Winneba

The total number of Liberian refugee students at the tertiary level that benefited from the UNHCR educational assistance program was 156 in the period between 1993 and 2000. The funds were provided to UNHCR by the government of Germany through the Albert Einstein Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (DAFI). The majority of the beneficiaries were males and out of the 156 scholarship students, 16 dropped out of the program due to two main reasons. Some of the students drop out due to not being able to cope with the academic standards at the various Ghanaian universities, while others left for resettlement to the United States of America, Canada, and Europe.

The UNHCR educational officer further mentioned that problems encountered by the Liberian refugee students was about the low nature of the monthly stipend provided them saying, “the money could not sustain them for a month”, and they were not
content with the “mode of examination evaluation” at the various Ghanaian tertiary institutions.

According to Mrs. Frimpongmaa Vowoter; those Liberians students who were still in school up to the withdrawal of UNHCR assistance were allowed to complete their programs at the various institutions of higher learning. The last batch of students completed their education in June 2003.

This marked the end of UNHCR educational assistance to Liberian refugees in Ghana. However, some refugees have been able to enter and sustain themselves at various institutions of learning in Ghana up to present date.

2.9: OTHER HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS.

2.9.1 ASSEMBLIES OF GOD:
Activities by the Assemblies of God church in assisting the Liberian refugees on arrival at Tema Harbor were based purely on religious and humanitarian grounds.

The Assemblies of God church later became an implementing partner to the UNHCR after the Ghana Red Cross Society had pulled out due to internal problems.

According to Mr. Ernest Asigri, the Relief Coordinator, they were responsible for the daily administration of the clinic, recruited staff, as well as supply drugs to the camp clinic. They also settled medical bills for refugees that were transferred to the medically advanced hospitals in the country; such as Korle-bu hospital, Winneba hospital, 37 Military Hospital, etc. A nursery school to educate the refugee children and to take care of children, whom mothers were engaged in other meaningful activities like schooling, business enterprise etc, was also established.

However, the major activity of the assemblies of God church was to be in charge of waste management. Cleanliness of the camp was their responsibility, which characterizes the hiring of trucks to suck and dispose of the sewage whenever the toilets were filled and to provide sanitation guidance for the camp in general.

The Assemblies of God relief services also assisted the Liberian Refugees with micro-economic enterprise activities and skills training. The basic skills training included

1. Carpentry
2. Masonry
3. Dress-making
4. Tye-dyeing
5. Soap making etc,

Students that emerge outstanding from the skills Training program were sent to the various Polytechnics in Ghana for advanced Training. Those that remain in Buduburana after the completion of the skills training program were provided with tools and other basic logistics in order to put to practice what they have learned and thereby become self-reliant.

Money was provided to refugees on a loan basis to those who qualified for the credit facilities. This was done in order to instill in them the culture of saving and self sufficiency for their future benefits and not to see the money as mere relief funds. The loan was to be paid back within a given period.

2.9.2 THE SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army is a religious group that also provided a lot of assistance to the Liberian refugees. The organization provided food as a supplement to the food supplied by the world food program. According to Mr. John Bediako, field coordinator of the Salvation Army, the organization took pregnant refugees women to their camp at Begoro in the eastern region of Ghana, fed them and took care of them until after giving birth before been brought back to join their families at the refugee camp.

2.9.3: KRISTO ASAFO

The Kristo Asafo mission is a religious group that provided a lot of assistance to the Liberian refugees. They provided the largest share of food for the thousands of starving refugees upon their arrival at Tema harbor in the early 90’s. The Kristo-Asafo mission regularly assisted the refugees with basic food stuffs at the camp. They worship with them at the camp every Sunday and provided counseling for the refugees population as a whole.

The ultimate aim of international assistance favoring refugees is to provide them with protection and assistance and in collaboration with Governments and Organizations concerned, seek lasting solutions to their problems, so that they can cease being
refugees as soon as possible and be able to live a normal and dignified life, once again.

This in simplified terms is the mandate, which the UN General Assembly entrusted to the UNHCR in 1951. This mandate was discharged normally for the first two decades. But, from the 70s, crisis situations and regional conflicts began to increase and intensify, creating even larger numbers of refugees, with no foreseeable solutions to their problems. In 1996, the International Community which can provide the United Nation High Commissioner for refugees with the means to perform its function was beginning to show signs of weariness in face of constantly expanding and apparently never ending assistance programs. According to Mr. Tepe Mensah, head of social services UNHCR Ghana, “one of the factors responsible for the withdrawal of Assistance from Liberian Refugees was the proliferation of Liberian refugees in the Sub-region on a daily basis due to the ‘protracted Nature’ of the Liberian civil war led to a situation of donor fatigue”. Moreover, the UNHCR had other pressing Refugee situations at hand than the Liberian conflict. For example, the alarming influx of Sierra Leonean and Togolese Refugees in the sub-region needed immediate action. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva, Switzerland took a final decision that assistance provided Liberian Refugees in the sub-region be withdrawn.

In June 2000, the UNHCR finally withdrew all assistance to Liberian refugees in the form of food, water supply, health care, education, and other basic social services. One implementing partner of the UNHCR said that “we also pulled out because if the recognized world organization for refugees can openly withdraw, who will give you funding to carry out your programs”.

The provision of assistance to Liberian refugees was of great significance. It did provide them with the opportunity to have a normal sense of livelihood and restore hope to the refugee’s population as a whole. Although, having lived on relief for a protracted period, and been used to handouts and charity, most of the refugees did not take advantage of a lot of specific assistance programs like education, skills training,
etc. Nevertheless, they manage to sustain themselves to a large extent in the absence of emergency assistance. The next chapter set out to determine how Liberian refugees have survived in the absence of UNHCR assistance.
CHAPTER THREE:

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.

3.1 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter is devoted to the findings and discussions of the field study conducted in Ghana at the Bududuram refugee camp from October 1, to December 31, 2006. During the stipulated period, I collected data from diverse sources through focus group discussions, questionnaires administered to households, structured and unstructured interviews, and participant observation. My findings consist of descriptive analysis.

My ultimate objective was to find out the kind of assistance provided the Liberian refugees and subsequently show ways in which Liberian refugees have been able to ensure their survival since the withdrawal of UNHCR assistance package in June 2000.

3.2: The Nature of Liberians Influx into Ghana.

The first batch of Liberians arrived in Ghana in August of 1990 on board a Ghanaian vessel called “Tano River”. They were 500 in number. This was the result of the evacuation of Ghanaians fleeing the war in Liberia. The Ghanaian vessel was compelled under humanitarian circumstances to bring Liberians stranded at the Freeport of Monrovia.

From 1993 to 1994, large numbers of Liberians fluxed into Ghana by road as a result of the “operation octopus” attack on the capital Monrovia. Operation octopus was an armed attack by the National Patriotic Forces led by one Charles Taylor (presently in The Hague awaiting trial for offences committed during the Liberian civil war). In 1996, due to a counter offensive by the government forces on rebel forces in and around the capital Monrovia, another wave of Liberians arrived in Ghana on board a Nigerian vessel called “MV Bulk Challenge”. This vessel was en route to the West
African country of Nigeria but was allowed to dock at the Takoradi harbor in western Ghana because it was not sea worthy. Initially, the government of Ghana had refused entry to the vessel but later allowed it to dock after pressure from the international community and other humanitarians that the vessel was absorbing water and urgently need to be rescued. The international community also assured the government of Ghana of assistance for the refugees on board the vessel.

From 1998 up to present, Liberians have been arriving in Ghana by means of land, air, and sea primarily to take advantage of the resettlement program at camp Buduburam.

3.3: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PHASE- LIVELIHOOD SECURITY:
Upon arrival in Ghana, the UNHCR through its implementing partners provided the following items and services to the Liberian refugees. According to its mandate, it is obliged to secure the livelihood of refugees fleeing conflict and warfare.

**Food:**
Rice, Beans, Oil, Oats, Maize flour, Onions, Bulgur wheat, and Canned fish.

**Cooking Utensils:**
Pots, Plastic plates, and Spoons, Buckets, and Coal pots.

The World Food Program, Lutheran World Service and the World Catholic Relief Service provided UNHCR Ghana the food items. These items contain high protein contents and were distributed to the refugees on a monthly basis. The international Red Cross Organization provided the cooking and eating utensils. Unlike the food items, the utensils were distributed every four months. This afforded refugees with worn out utensils the opportunity to replace them.

Importantly, not all the items mention above were provided continuously prior to the withdrawal of assistance. It was revealed that rice and canned fish were withdrawn due to the unavailability of the commodity by the donors.
Health Services:
The availability of drugs and laboratory services to the refugees and the donation of an ambulance to dispatched refugees to hospitals in cases of urgent referrals, made it possible for the sick to receive treatment on time. The Buduburam refugee clinic was provided two Ghanaian resident doctors from the central government korle-bu hospital. Six physician assistants and ten nurses from the refugee community assisted them. It was revealed that the physician assistants and nurses were periodically trained at the korle-bu teaching hospital before and while performing their duties.

Educational Assistance:
Sponsorship was provided to refugee’s students at the following levels:
- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Tertiary level (polytechnic and university education).

A skill and practical training center was constructed at camp Buduburam for the refugees. Skills were provided refugees who did not have formal education and those who preferred to acquire practical training. Ghanaian instructors from the Accra polytechnic institution were hired to conduct the skill-training program. Certificates were awarded the participants at the end of a program. Some of the refugees use the education and skills acquired to earn a living in Ghana, while others went back to Liberia after the completion of their program.

It was revealed that those who went back to Liberia felt convicted that with the level of skills acquired; they could better rebuild their livelihoods back home than remaining in Ghana.

3.4: THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL AND OTHER SERVICES:
A counseling program was put in place to advice and guide refugees who had been traumatized by the Liberian civil war. The task was performed by ten social workers from the Ghanaian ministry of social welfare and the counseling program was conducted twice a week. Young men and women were selected from the refugee community and trained to assist as peer counselors. The inclusion of peer counselors
was quite helpful because it allow the refugees going through the counseling to feel relax and confident in sharing their thoughts and experiences from the war.

Legal services was provided refugees who were imprisoned and subsequently send to court for various offences committed. UNHCR Ghana had an agreement with the Ghana National Bar Association, which provided lawyers when legal services were required. The UNHCR administrative officer facilitated the process.

Job opportunities were pursued for refugees who had professional background and experience. For example, Doctors and Nurses. The UNHCR social welfare officer was tasked with this responsibility. During the assistance period, only one Liberian doctor and two nurses gain employment at the Apam hospital in the central region of Ghana. It was revealed that the doctor and two nurses had been trained in Ghana prior to the Liberian civil war.

Used Clothing was provided the refugees on a periodic basis and the regular supply of water. The British High Commissioner in Ghana donated a water truck to the refugees. Reservoirs and tanks were constructed at strategic locations on the camp by UNHCR Ghana. The truck and the construction of water storage facilities made it easier for the refugees to access water in Buduburam.

Initially, food provided the refugees were “wet”. The food was cooked and served at various places designated at the camp. The tendency for one to eat more than once was inevitable, since there was no meal card to show if a person had eaten or not.

However, in early 1991, most of the refugees complained to the camp authorities about the poor condition under which their meals were being prepared. It was in an attempt to remedy the situation, which led to the introduction and distribution of “Dry” ration to the refugees. This suggests that refugees could now prepare their own food and under whatever condition they felt comfortable with.
3.5: ASSETS:

When people are fleeing conflict and warfare, they most often arrived without physical assets. According to Dasgupta (1993:474), “all that a person without assets own is his ability to work and nothing more” (as cited in Shanmugaratnam: 2006).

This was not the case with most of the Liberian refugees. The first batch of them came to Ghana with items including (generators, tape recorders, freezers, car parts, etc), some of which was looted from Liberia during the civil war. They connived with the captain of the Ghanaian vessel to bring the goods to Ghana. The items were then sold, thereby accumulating financial capital to begin life with at the camp. This enable some of the refugees to reinvest the funds obtain from the items sold into other businesses they felt comfortable with. Such as the purchasing of rations from fellow refugees and selling them to Ghanaian marketers for profit. Also, some Ghanaian businessmen and women made use of some refugees as middlemen for purchasing ration from the refugees. They provided them with cash to purchase food ration for them and paid them wages for their services. The proxy for Ghanaian businessmen by Liberian refugees made it possible for Ghanaians to obtain food ration at a cheap price. Liberian refugees, who knew that some of the ration bought was for Ghanaian businessmen, hiked the prices.

There were some refugees who sold portion of their monthly food ration in order to procure items not provided by the UNHCR. These refugees sold their bulgur wheat in order to purchase rice and other essentials. Individual ration cards were given to fellow refugees as collateral, in order to obtain cash for consumption purposes. These transactions were characteristic of refugees who were distress and needed some essentials for life in the camp. As Harrell bond et al, puts it, refugees possesses the resourcefulness to “transform material assistance into currency to acquire the other essentials and non-essentials of life” (bond et al, 1992:210).

The research revealed that assets acquired by the refugees were not only from the assistance packages provided them because some of the refugees had acquired substantial financial capital from the sale of looted items brought with them from Liberia. Others acquired financial capital through remittances from friends and family members overseas and through the ‘419’ scam. Those refugees, who had friends and
relatives residing in the United States and other parts of Europe, receive money on a periodic basis as support for survival. Some individual refugees got as much as more than $500.00 dollars a month through remittances. Some of these refugees transform the cash into physical assets as a way to sustaining themselves. The table below shows physical assets acquired by some Liberian refugees in Gomoa-Buduburam.

Table: 1. PHYSICAL ASSETS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shoe repairing shop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot of land</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poly tank for water</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local NGO</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buses</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night club</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty salon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video club</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone booth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non response</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the above table, the majority of respondents acquired plots of land. The research revealed that land asset was use to produce crops for sale at the camp market. Those that obtain buses use it to earn cash by transporting refugees and Ghanaians commuting between the camp and the capital, Accra.
3.6: REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS

When Liberians first arrived at camp Buduburam, the host community members were very receptive to the refugees. They provided physical and psychological support to the refugees. Refugees periodically got produce from the farms of members of the host community. The locals made available their only source of water supply; a little creek called “Nyen” to the refugees in order for them to fetch water and was constantly assuring them that they were all but ‘one’ family. They the locals should be seen as a replacement for their relatives and families either lost or left home due to the civil war. They taught the refugees their local language and the refugees taught members of the host community pidgin. Pidgin is a colloquial language widely spoken in Liberia.

According to one woman from the local community,

“No one can take away the English we have learned from the refugees and any thing we take to the refugees, they buy”

Given that some of the Liberian refugees were accumulating financial capital from the sale of relief items, they could purchase goods and other commodities from host community members. As I intimated earlier in my discussion on assets, Liberians appropriating financial capital were those who had cash either from the sale of goods brought from Liberia or through remittances from their relations in the developed world with the ultimate aim of purchasing food ration not for consumption, but for profit making from fellow refugees who were in dire need of cash.

Liberian female refugees braided Liberian hair styles on the heads of host community girls and women, without asking for cash or kind. Movement of refugees and locals from the camp to the Buduburam village and from the village to the camp was never restricted. A cordial atmosphere existed between the two groups during this period.
3.7: THE WITHDRAWAL OF ASSISTANCE:

According to Zetter, there is no specific routine to decide as to when an emergency assistance phase is transformed into a ‘care and maintenance’ phase. He mentioned that the withdrawal of assistance packages couldn’t be avoided due to weariness on the part of donors and the nature by which a particular crisis fades away from the international agenda (Zetter: 1995).

In June 2000, the UNHCR formally withdrew assistance in all forms from Liberian refugees in camp Buduburam. Two main reasons were given for the withdrawal.

1. The protracted nature of the Liberian civil war did lead to fatigue on the part of donors.
2. Due to resource constraints, there were new waves of refugees that had emerged and needed urgent assistance than the Liberian refugees.

The UNHCR decision to withdraw assistance led to a situation of dissent from the Liberian refugees’ community.

One Liberian refugee said:

Liberia is a founding member of the United Nation Organization and our country has been paying dues to the UN. It is now time for us to enjoy but the UN have neglected us. This is not fair.

Several of the Liberians refugees interviewed intimated, that there is presently and had been other civil wars on the African continent lasting longer than the Liberian civil war. They claimed that refugees produced by those civil wars are still be catered for by the UNHCR. Therefore, reasons provided for the withdrawal of assistance to them by the UNHCR was not genuine and cannot be justifiably perpetrated under any disguise.

3.8: LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES BY LIBERIAN REFUGEES IN THE ABSENCE OF UNHCR ASSISTANCE PACKAGE:

Given the nature of assistance phase in refugee situation, UNHCR perception regarding the potential of refugees is highly negative. The international body assumed
that refugees appropriate several kinds of dispositions and actions, which tend to hinder them from becoming self-sufficient (Waldron: 1987).

However, Harrell bond et al argued that refugees do have the potential to devise meaningful livelihood strategies to sustain themselves other than what emergency assistance packages can afford. They mentioned that refugees by their very nature are ever prepared to construct strategies for survival, even if the need to forego their rights to UNHCR assistance is required (Bond et al: 1992; 211).

Table two below illustrates how Liberian refugees have devised and employed multifarious livelihood strategies to access resources for survival.

**Table: 2. THE DIVERSE STRATEGIES OF LIVELIHOOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty trading</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing a restaurant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing a night club</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survive on family income</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair braiding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication booth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle repairing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church assistance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directing a typing school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video recording</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale from bricks building</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelizing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.8.1: PETTY TRADING

According to the above table, the majority of Liberian refugees do engage in petty trading as a means for survival. Petty trading in this context refers to the establishment of small business activities or enterprise as a means for survival. The tendency to engage in a particular petty business is based on the amount of financial capital available at the time of setting up the business or a business one perceive as more profitable to invest in.

The study revealed that petty trading includes, the sale of assorted food and other items such as, rice, fish, beans, phone cards, cooking oil, buckets, spoons, used clothing, mattresses, and anything that is necessary for daily consumption and usage.

It is evident that the petty business ensured the availability of either the identical or similar items that was provided during the assistance phase.

One main reason provided for the high percentage of petty trading according to one respondent was,

“you do not need much amount of money to start with, any little amount of money will do and regardless of the amount of people doing the same or similar business, you will still earn profit on a daily basis”(Petty Trader).

In-depth interviews of four cases of petty traders revealed how they devised and implemented their livelihood strategies for survival at camp Buduburam.

Case one:
Rebecca a female trader has her parents residing in the United States of America and they remitted money to her every month for her welfare. She sometimes got $ 200.00 to $300.00 a month. After the September 2001 attack on the world trade center, her parents lost their jobs and could no longer afford to remit money to her monthly. She suggested to them that she wanted to do some kind of petty trading that could sustain her. Her parents sent six barrels of assorted items through a shipment company in the capital Accra. Namely, under pants for women, children and men, body spray, tooth paste, soap and canned beef. According to her, she initially took the items around the camp in a wheel barrow for sale. She said “now, most of the people know me, they
come to my house to purchase the goods from me”. She mentioned that after a considerable sale, money is transfer to her parents in the United States of America to purchase more goods and she uses the profit from the sale to sustain herself. According to her, some of her friends in dire need of cash often borrow money from her without value added.

Case two.
Maxim a male petty trader was grateful to God for what has taken place in his life. He came to camp Buduburam without a ‘penny’ and claimed not to have a friend or a relative in the United States of America or Europe. He started by selling ‘cassava leaves’. This leaf is from the ‘cassava’ plant and it is a delicacy for Liberians. Prior to the coming of the refugees, it was a ‘worthless’ commodity because Ghanaians do not eat it. He was able to identify the commodity and convinced a Ghanaian farmer to have the leaves sold to his fellow refugees. The farmer consented and he got into business. According to him, the venture was quite lucrative. He at least earned $25.00 to $30.00 daily. After few months, he had earned enough and started selling fish in addition. According to him, “today my condition has improved and I am much better financially than those who get monthly remittance for the United States of America”.
He intimated that fellow refugees often credited money from him, while others go to beg for assistance.

Case three:
Boima Fahnbulleh is a petty trader who along with his family sold portion of their food ration during the assistance phase in order to purchase some items they needed and invested the remaining cash into ‘Susu’ business. Susu is a kind of cooperatives usually practiced among marketers and peasants. After few months, he obtained credit from the cooperative and began selling ice blocks and ice water in plastic bags. According to him, “you can see for yourself. I have being able to build a shop, pay back the money I credited and I am now selling beer, Guinness and whisky. I will not tell you how much I get from my business but this is my success story”.

Case four:
“I will tell you my story but please do not mention my name”. This female trader often visited the capital Accra at night in search of men with the aim of obtaining cash
for survival. On one of her night routines, she met a British national at a disco and was offered a drink. The gentleman asked her what was she doing for living? She replied ‘nothing’. He shook his head at her and decided to assist her provided she opts never to visit the disco again. She immediately consented and was given £200.00 pound sterling and his complementary card. She decided to invest the money in to trading. She went to the neighboring country of Togo and purchased necklaces, body lotion and weaved on caps for ladies and had since being selling them. She said, “My life has turned around for the better and I am now independent. I have being able to earned my own money and I am presently in the position to refund the £200.00 pound sterling I got from the British man. I lost his contact address; and hope to see him someday” (petty trader).

One can infer that petty trading seems to be one of the fastest ways of earning financial resources for survival among the Liberian refugees. Moreover, the diverse nature of livelihood strategies pursued by the refugees as seen in the above table is an indication of increasing their resilience to shock and unforeseen circumstances that could pop up to impaired their quest for survival.

3.8.2: TEACHING:

The results show that Liberian refugees who have benefited from the UNHCR educational assistance package subsequently took up teaching jobs at various Ghanaians secondary schools in the central region of Ghana, and are paid a salary at the end of every month according to standard set by the ministry of education in Ghana. Others return to take up teaching positions at the Buduburam refugee secondary school. Refugees students were now paying tuition fees and this enable the teachers to receive an honorarium at the end of every month.

Teaching also took the form of tutoring refugees who were to sit for a resettlement interview. A family tree was drafted and each member of the family was tutored as to how they are related to the head of the family. This process made it smooth for passing a resettlement interview. Families benefiting from such tutorship were obliged to pay the tutor a substantial amount of money based on mutual agreement. In the absence of cash payment, a slot on the document was awarded the resettlement tutor as compensation for his services and the tutor in-turned sell the slot to any
available person in need of resettlement opportunity. Such persons purchasing the resettlement slot need not be a Liberian refugee.

One resettlement teacher mention:

The tutoring of family for resettlement is a lucrative business. I earned more than $500.00 from the sale of one slot awarded me for tutoring a family. This is how I am able to sustain myself and family (Resettlement Teacher).

Below are two cases of teaching as a means to access resources for survival.

Case one:
Ross is a Liberian teacher who obtained his education at the University of Ghana. He was one of the students sponsored by the United Nations. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and English. According to him, after completing his studies, he returns to take up a teaching position at the Buduburam Secondary School and get a salary every month. In addition, he tutors individuals and families who are sitting resettlement program and get compensated for his services. Through teaching and tutoring, he has being able to sustain himself and his family at the camp.

Case two:
Martha is a Liberian female teacher trained in Liberia and has 10 years of experience prior to the civil war in 1990. According to her, due to her inability to gain employment in Ghana, she established a study class for refugees’ children. The classes run from grade one to six. The classes take place at the Liberia interdenominational church compound after their normal classes at school. She, along with two other teachers tutored the children and helped them with their class assignments. The parents of the children pay her some money based on mutual agreement at the end of every month. This is how she takes care of herself at the camp.

The research further revealed that not all the resettlement teachers are those who benefited from the UNHCR educational package. Some of the teachers are those who got their education from Liberia, while others were volunteers from camp based organizations.
Teaching seems to form an integral part of the livelihood of some Liberian refugees in camp Buduburam. Due to the large sum of money paid for tutoring a family sitting resettlement, many teachers in Buduburam opted to tutor people on the resettlement program than to teach at the Buduburam refugee secondary school.

3.8.3: ‘NOTHING’:
Despite the frantic efforts being made by most Liberian refugees in devising meaningful livelihood strategies, some of the refugees claimed to be doing, ‘nothing’ for survival. This statement prompted the need for further inquiry because one cannot survive by doing ‘nothing’.

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with cross section of the refugee community revealed that those who claimed to be doing ‘nothing’ for survival falls in one of the following categories:

- Prostitution (going to the capital, Accra at night and engaging in sex for money as a means for survival).
- Robbery (the act of illegally breaking into homes and shops of fellow refugees, and making away with cash or kind as a means for survival).
- Drug peddling (the illegal sale of narcotics to fellow refugees as a means for survival).

Refugees who were identify as belonging into one of the above groups, decline to comment on their activities. However, one respondent who was willing to be interview said,

“I have nobody to look after me. I need to eat daily, buy soap and other personal effects. Sitting here on the camp will not do me any good. Everybody who I asked for help want to have sex with me before they can give me something. I have to agree or go to Accra at night to be able to sustain myself. It is not a good thing to do but I have no choice” (Liberian prostitute).

Given that some refugees find themselves in these socially unacceptable practices, could be reasons why they claim to be doing ‘nothing’ for survival. It may not
augur well for them should they openly expose their activities. They could be arrested and prosecuted under the laws of Ghana.

The research further revealed that those who claimed to be doing ‘nothing’ for survival, are not only people engaged in practices seen as illegal or socially unacceptable but refugees who have business enterprises. Some of them are petty traders but according to them, revealing their livelihood strategies and status, could hinder future assistance to them.

3.9: THE 4-1-9 SCAM:

The numbers 4-1-9 is a code given to a group of fraudsters in West Africa. This code originated in the West African country of Nigeria and later spread throughout the entire sub-region of West Africa. It was designed to duped “Oyebo” people of their resources. “Oyebo” in Nigerian local language means (white man).

Focus group discussions held at camp Buduburam revealed that the group existed among the refugee community and is very active.

One respondent narrated:

They go to the internet café and began chatting with somebody from the United States of America, as a Liberian female or male wanting to schooled and get married afterwards. They send photos on the Internet of a beautiful girl or boy who they don’t even know. The person overseas gets interested and remit money to them every month for their upkeep. when the person overseas decides to come down to Africa, they realize that the person who they have been sending money to does not exist in reality. This is termed ‘4-1-9’.

From the focus group discussion, it was further revealed that a group of male and female refugees engage in the printing of fake United States dollar notes. The goal is to delude the victim into believing that the fake notes are genuine bank notes looted from the national bank of Liberia during the civil war. The victim is then asked to provide a large sum of money in order to purchase certain chemical called ‘mercury’ that will be used to convert the blank notes to the standard fit for legal tender purposes.
When the victim becomes confident after seeing a sample displayed, he provides a large sum of money requested by the fraudsters for the venture. Subsequently, the refugee’s fraudsters abscond with the money provided by the victim. They later meet at a designated spot, shared the money and part ways. They used the money for survival but recklessly. They moved out of the camp to live at expensive hostels, going on excessive drinking spree, and womanizing.

3.10: TRADITIONAL GHANAIAN FOOD AS A SRATEGY FOR SURVIVAL:
In the absence of food ration, most of the refugees opted to survive on the local Ghanaian food. The local Ghanaian food is believed to be of high nutritional status, contains a lot of protein diet, and is quite affordable. Most refugees could purchase a bag of “Banku” at the cost of 100.00 cedis ($20.00), compared to a bag of American parboiled rice sold at 450.000 cedis ($ 50.00).

“Banku” has a semblance to a widely eaten traditional Liberian food called “Dipa”. Most of the Liberians prefer it to any other traditional Ghanaian food not only due to its’ affordability but it is also palatable. However, most of the refugees survived on a combination of other types of traditional Ghanaian food. The table below shows the various kind of Ghanaian food on which Liberians survive on.
Table: 3. GHANAIAN FOOD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ghanaian FOOD</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fufu</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yam</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banku</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ken key</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koko</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuo zafi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>99.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can infer that traditional Ghanaian food seems cost effective for the refugees and it do play an important role in the livelihood strategies of Liberian refugees. It is evident from the above table that some of the refugees survive on more than one traditional Ghanaian food.

**3.11: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN LIVELIHOOD SECURITY.**

Prior to the coming of American missionaries to Liberia in 1850, Christianity had been and is still the main religion practiced in Liberia. Approximately, 95 percent of Liberians are “Christians” (1984, national census).

In Ghana, Liberian refugees were allowed to practice their religion without fear or harassment from the host community members. This led to the establishments of 25 churches in camp Buduburam. Most of the churches existed in Liberia, prior to their coming into exile.

In an interview with members of the refugee religious council, it was revealed that when emergency assistance was withdrawn, some churches of the refugee community were convinced that as an organization obliged to restore faith to the ‘faithless’ and
hope to the ‘hopeless’, needed to do something about the situation prevailing at the time of assistance withdrawal.

Ultimately, projects were identified and funds solicited from humanitarian and church organizations both in Ghana and overseas; as well as members of the church who had been blessed by God to be resettled to the United States of America. Funds received were used to undertake projects such as the construction of schools and a clinic. The completed projects created job opportunities for Liberian refugees, some of whom are not church members.

The Liberian interdenominational church at Buduburam through one Bishop named Augustus B. Marwiah of the independent churches of Africa, negotiated a World Bank grant from world vision international and constructed a vocational training center for the refugees. As of December 2006, more than 5000 refugee students have benefited from the project and approximately 70 persons from the refugee and host community are employed with the institution.

The church has also being very instrumental in imparting positive virtues in the lives of the refugees. A counseling hour called ‘Jericho hour’ was allocated at the Liberia interdenominational church every Wednesday for refugees experiencing hardship and any kind of problems. The term ‘Jericho hour’ meant ‘giant’ problems for ‘giant’ solutions. Refugees engaging in socially unaccepted practices are expected to desist from those habits after being counseled and become more involved in pro-social activities, such as voluntary cleaning of the camp school premises and the general streets of the camp.

Pastors of churches frequently visited the Awutu and Winneba prisons and spread the gospel of Christianity to the refugees who had being convicted for various offences. Most of the refugees return to the camp after serving their terms prison terms and become baptize into churches and become actively involved in pro-community activities. The Buduburam church council also established a mediation committee to resolve conflict occurring among refugees rather than allowing such conflicts to be handled by the Ghanaian police at the camp. The churches at Buduburam also leased more than 50 acres of land from the chief of the host community for refugees who
were considered ‘most vulnerable’ to plant crops and have it sold in order to sustain themselves. Seedlings were both purchased and solicited from humanitarian organizations in the capital Accra for the refugees.

There is a Christian belief that whenever a person willingly give to God tithes and offerings, that person or group of persons will receive more than what was given to God as a sign of blessing. This inspiration comes from (Malachi Chapter 3:1) in the holy bible. Against this, refugee flux churches on Sundays to give tithes and offering to God in order to receive more money. One pastor said, “If you give God, he will give you more but if you mean him, he will surely mean you and if you don’t have it to give, God understands” (Refugee Pastor).

One can conclude that the collection of offerings and morning prayers held at all churches, schools, clinics, and the offices of the Liberian refugee welfare council at camp Buduburam underscores the way of evoking God’s blessings to provide for the refugees survival. The ‘rebirth’ of quite a number of Liberian refugees could be reason why there are proliferations of more than 40 churches at camp Buduburam presently.

3.12: PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE LIVELIHOOD OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems of Livelihood</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenophobic feelings for the locals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of jobs opportunities</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination from the transport union</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of fertilizers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of logistical support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Liberian refugees at camp Buduburam do encounter several problems in their quest for survival. According to the above table, these problems include lack of job opportunities, robbery and ‘xenophobic feelings’ among others. Xenophobic feelings for the purpose of this study refer to hatred or fear for strangers.

3.12.1: Lack of job opportunities:
The majority of respondents, which were heads of households I interviewed, intimated that employment opportunities, which would have afforded them to augment their income status, were difficult.

Respondents revealed that even when few menial jobs were available in Accra or other nearby cities, the employers would prefer a Ghanaian to a Liberian refugee. Moreover, situation in which a Liberian was privileged to be recruited for such jobs, they were being paid lower than their Ghanaian counterparts.

In-depth interview conducted as to ascertain the facts of the actual situation, further revealed that the lack of job opportunities for the refugees is not due to prejudices or social exclusion; rather it is a national problem. Unemployment rate in Ghana is very high and the meager amount paid as wages, is due to the fact that there are many people joining the labor force. Therefore, it is quite difficult for one to obtain a job, irrespective of being a refugee or not. On the other hand, it is imperative that every Ghanaian speak either ‘Twi’ or ‘Ga’ apart from their local language. These two local languages are national traditional languages and are widely spoken by Ghanaian employers with workers during and after working hours. The failure of a Liberian refugee to speak either one of the national traditional languages could make it difficult to gain employment.

The difficulty in securing a job and the low wages associated with it could be one reason why most Liberian prefers to engage in petty trading than to seek for a job in Ghana.
3.12.2: Robbery

It was revealed from the focus group discussions that some of the refugees are in the constant habit of stealing from shops and other business centers. The robbers break into shops and homes under the cover of darkness and make away with assorted goods and cash. This tends to frustrate the efforts of petty traders and other business minded individuals. The robbers who are refugees are also stealing produce from the local’s farms.

However, the presence of the Ghanaian police at the camp has helped to minimize the incidence of crime related cases in the camp and the host community. Host community members have also been restrained from taking the law into their hands against refugees who are caught stealing from their farms.

The routine burglary and theft at night, drug peddling, and the 4-1-9 scam, are evidence for the substantial number of Liberian refugees languishing behind prison bars in Ghana. Some of them are sentenced to prison for up to 10 years, while others are parole.

3.12.3: Xenophobic feelings! How real?

The cordial relationship that earlier existed between the Liberian refugees and members of the host community upon their arrival has dwindled. Liberians who are not based in the Buduburam village are no longer welcomed in the village after 8pm local time. The creek which was made available to them for the sole purpose of fetching water has been denied them.

Interview with a cross section of members of the host community and the refugee community produced contrasting results. Refugees claimed that members of the host community are holding them liable for not convincing UNHCR to extending the assistance package to cover them. Moreover, the refugees revealed that members of the host community accused them of refusing to assist them with slots on their resettlement program.
On the other hand, members of the host community claimed that the refugees are no longer law abiding and therefore needed to be held in check to ensure that they conformed to customs and traditions of Gomoa Buduburam village. Moreover, host community members mentioned that the refugees have been at Buduburam for a protracted period and it is hard time for the refugees to see themselves as members of the host community and no longer as refugees. Refugees should now contribute to the welfare of the community just as they the locals are doing.

Investigation revealed that the host community members have not openly expressed xenophobic feelings against the refugees but rather their capacity for philanthropy has been overstretched. Resources that were placed at the disposal of the refugees without incentives are now to be paid for. Further investigation attested that this is a measure put in placed to ensure the sustainability of the host community resource based and not be seen as a signal of xenophobia.

In order to continuously have free access to the host community resource base, some of the refugees have established social networks with host community members. This takes the form of marriages and joint business ventures.

3.13: CULTURAL SHOCKS:
Liberia was established by group of freed slaves from the United States of America. When the slaves returned to Liberia, they brought with them the western culture and life styles. Liberians who they met upon return also became acculturated. This style of western civilization created problems for Liberian refugees in exile.

At camp Buduburam, a Liberian would greet a Ghanaian with any of his or her hands but this was tantamount to disrespect by the host community members. Greeting or receiving things with your left hand from an elderly person is a sign of insult in the Ghanaian cultural context.

On the other hand, the name “Charlie” means a stupid person in the Liberian society, while it means “My Friend” in the Ghanaian society. Host community members greeted Liberian refugees by calling them “Charlie” and the refugees became angry
by the name. However, the both groups later learned to be tolerant of each other by adjusting to the various culture shocks. Liberians can now greet and received things from the locals with any of their hands and the locals can now called a Liberian refugee “Charlie”. These interactions are carried out on a daily basis without any confrontation.

The research revealed that during and after the assistance phase, the host community members did not openly expressed xenophobic feelings for the refugees. The refusal of the locals to compromise their principles and values was misconstrued as a sign of hatred.

3.14: REPATRIATION OR RESETTLEMENT-THE DILEMMA:
The signing of a comprehensive peace agreement in Accra, Ghana by all parties and stake holders to the Liberian civil war in 2003 paved the way for multiparty democracy in Liberia. National elections were held in October 2005 with Liberia producing the first ever African female elected president. The successful nature of the elections, give an impression to the international community(UNHCR) that the political situation that engulfed the country in 1999 was now stable and that humanitarian conditions were much better for Liberians in exile to return home.

The UNHCR which is the chief international organization responsible for refugees, feels that since it can no longer cater for the refugees and given the situation that has unfolded in Liberia (successful elections), the best option is to provide means for Liberian refugees to return home voluntarily. Interestingly, resettlement of refugees to a third country through the same UNHCR office is currently taking place in Accra, Ghana.

However, questionnaires administered to a sample of 100 refugees revealed that 71 percent of them are willing to return home despite the destruction caused by the civil war but as to when they would leave seems out of the question. Twenty nine percent of the refugees are refusing to go home, indicating that they ought to benefit from resettlement program rather than repatriation program. One respondent said,
“Repatriation to where? I have no where to live when I get back to Liberia and no family to welcome me back home. I have lived in this refugee camp for 15 years and the UNHCR laws qualify me for resettlement to a third country. Why should I forgo my rights to resettlement! I prefer to die here in Buduburam camp than to go back to Liberia”. (A Liberian refugee).

According to the UNHCR field officer, voluntary repatriation for Liberian refugees in the entire sub region of West Africa would end in September 2007. Those Liberian refugees who will not take advantage of the present repatriation program would be responsible to transport themselves back home after September 2007. This warning is was made at the same time when interview for resettlement to the United States, Canada, and some countries in Europe was being conducted at the UNHCR compound in the capital Accra.

From the focus group discussions and the semi structured interview conducted, it was revealed that the majority of Liberian refugees who claimed to be ready to return home have not registered for repatriation because of the desire to take advantage of the present resettlement program. While those refugees, who uprightly rejected the repatriation program from the onset, are either ex-combatants who indiscriminately killed innocent civilians during the civil war or refugees who lost their families and properties during the conflict. It was learnt that during the Liberian civil war, an entire family was massacred and homes and villages razed to the ground.

Inference can be made that the ex-combatants are afraid to take the risk of being repatriated due to possible reprisals that awaits them upon their return to Liberia, while refugees who lost their families and properties do not foresee the possibilities of coping with the irreparable loss of their families and the hardship that they will have to undergo in reconstructing and rebuilding their livelihood in Liberia. Therefore, the two groups see resettlement as the best possible option than repatriation.

Life in the south as a refugee is tortuous and difficult. Refugees lived on pious hope and vague promises from friends, relatives, and section of the international community that is most often never a reality. They (refugees) all have but one desire and that is to return home at a specific point in time and live a dignify life once again.
CHAPTER 4:

CONCLUSION

In this study, I have being able to find out and subsequently show ways in which Liberian refugees have gone through the transition from emergency assistance to self-reliance. I have discussed the kind of assistance provided the refugees by the international community, their assets and the transformation of those assets into strategies for survival, their social relations with members of the host community and reasons for the withdrawal of assistance. Emphasis has also being placed on the diverse nature of their livelihood and the problems affecting their livelihoods.

The withdrawal of assistance from the refugees did create a situation of dissent and uncertainty from the onset, especially for refugees who lack financial and other essential assets. These refugees who livelihood was secured through the assistance provided by the international community and other humanitarian organizations became disappointed with the UNHCR decision of assistance withdrawal and felt abandoned. Moreover, having lack essential assets to begin a new life, these refugees were now at the ‘cross road’ and needed to do something of their own for survival. However, the situation did not hinder them from securing their livelihood but rather serve as motivation for the construction and implementation of the kind of livelihood strategies pursued in meeting their basic needs.

The livelihood strategies devised by the refugees is diverse in nature and this show that they differ in their ability for self-reliance. Liberian refugees primarily survive by means of petty trading or some kind of informal business, through church activities, social networking, agriculture activities and a particular profession. The informal business activities tended to be an easier way for the refugees to access resources for survival because the study revealed that those with a particular profession are also engaged in informal business activities. The involvement in more than one activity for survival does ensure the security of livelihood for some refugees in situation of shocks and unforeseen circumstances that may tend to hinder a particular livelihood strategy.
Apart from informal activities, remittances do play a significant role in Liberian refugees’ quest for survival. It was revealed that some of the refugees, who relations reside in the developed world, do support them at the camp. This is done by means of monthly remittance of cash and the shipment of food stuffs and other essentials to their relations at the camp. In spite of other sources of income generation by the refugees for survival, the informal economy is the primary source of income generation. The study also shows no apparent link between income and the level of education because refugee teachers, nurses and other professionals were also engaged in petty trading. Petty trading seems a lucrative activity among the refugees provided it is well managed.

In the absence of rice which is the staple food for Liberian refugees, the local Ghanaian food has helped the Liberian refugees to survive. They have survived on a variety of them depending on the local Ghanaian food one feels comfortable with.

Although the mass presence of refugees can have some negative and disruptive effects on host communities, Liberian refugees to a considerable extent have remain peaceful and law abiding. Despite some of the refugees have engaged in socio-cultural practices that are unacceptable and which contravenes the norms and traditions of the host community and the laws of Ghana, the social network establish with the locals through joint business ventures and the 16 years of stayed in Buduburam do underscore some degree of peaceful co-existence. Some of the Liberians have married members of the host community and members of the host community have married Liberian refugees and this remains a continuous activity. The presence of the police has being very helpful in this regard.

The livelihood strategies employ by Liberian refugees do encounter some problems. These problems include robbery, the unavailability of jobs, and perceive signs of hatred among others. Robbery and the unavailability of jobs are acute problems that refugees faced in Ghana. The issue of xenophobia appears to be a figment of the refugees’ own imagination. The perception develop by the refugees is due to the refusal of the locals to compromise their principles and values.
Irrespective of the stealing, robbery, prostitution and the ‘419’ scam, some of the refugees have been quite resilient and industrious. These refugees have shown positive results by devising meaningful strategies, which catalogue their potential for self-reliance. The investment in productive assets and businesses, and involvement in pro-social activities at the camp are clues that refugees are agents of ‘change’ for the better.

Emergency assistance provided Liberian refugees in Ghana were a collaborative exercise. In its early phase, it appears to have constituted a major challenge for both the government of Ghana and the international community. Where to settle the refugees, what the immediate needs were, and how to go about meeting those needs, constituted the challenges. Ultimately, its objective was to help meet the urgent needs and to solve the acute problems of the refugees. Despite not being able to find durable solution to their problems, to a large extent, they have being able to protect and look after the refugees for a protracted period. However, a situation has evolved in which Liberian refugees are no more dependent on emergency assistance. They have moved from the reliance on handouts and charity to providing for themselves.

In the south, refugees are most often considered as people totally dependant on humanitarian relief, perceived as beggars, and people lacking the potential for self-reliance. This mistaken identity has created a misconception about them among donors and other charitable organizations; such that key actors of the humanitarian aid regime fail to relate to these refugees in their specific context but rather relate to them in ways that are different from their mandate.

Refugees (in the south), are not people lacking the ability to become self reliant. They are people who possessed the resources needed to become active and productive members of their host communities and societies. They constitute valuable assets which should never be overlooked. It is important above all, never to lose sight that refugees’ only leaved their country of origin for irresistible reasons. They all have but one desire, to ceased being refugees and live a normal and noble life once again.
REFERENCES

Action by Churches Together: www.act-intl.org


UNHCR. (1951), The Convention Relating to The Status of Refugees, Geneva, Switzerland.


