



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewee: Professor Harold Monger

Interviewer: Yoni Friedman

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FRIEDMAN: Good afternoon, it is Monday, June 27th 2011, the researcher is Yoni Friedman, thank you so much for joining me. Could you please introduce yourself?

MONGER: *My name is Harold Jonathan Monger. I am a graduate of the University of Southern California 1977. I am a graduate of Cuttington University in Liberia. My Bachelor's is in Science, General Science as a teacher of science and also as a pre-med student. So if I had gone my natural way I would have been in medical school but I switched to management and I did a Master's in Public Administration at USC. I have been working for the Office of the President in my earlier career as a policy analyst. I've also worked as the Director General of the General Service Agency up until 1980 at the time of the coup. Then I left that position. I also worked at the University of Liberia as an Assistant Professor and Associate Professor and later on as an adjunct professor at the University of Liberia.*

This is my third time at the Institute of Public Administration. My Master's study was a scholarship, through USAID (United States Agency for International Development) to work at the Institute of Public Administration. So I was sponsored by USAID as one of the project persons who was recruited to work in the starting of LIPA (Liberia Institute of Public Administration). But I didn't stay here very long—

FRIEDMAN: What year was that?

MONGER: *I left 1975 for the scholarship, I returned 1977. It was the end of the year and I spent two months at LIPA and was called back to the President's office. While working at the President's office, I was sent to the General Service Agency in charge of procurement logistics and maintenance of public buildings, and control of public property.*

I got back to the Institute in the '80s and I had two-three years follow-on at the Institute and went into the University. Since then I have been working as a consultant in Ghana during my refugee years. We had a fairly large consulting company. We delivered on a 45 million dollar project—USAID health project in Ghana for the Ghana government—through my consulting company.

I also worked with UNDP (United Nations Development Program) as a national project officer and I worked for UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) as a monitoring evaluation officer. I am back in the government on the invitation of the transitional government. When Mrs. (Ellen Johnson) Sirleaf came in she asked me to continue my stay here, although she wanted me to go someplace else, but I wanted to clean up some things I saw here at the Institute.

So I have had a rather basic background in consultancy. I call myself more of a consultant as opposed to anything else. This is kind of a natural thing I do the kinds of work I do here at the Institute is basically consulting. I do it for them in government or when I am out of government. That's about my background.

FRIEDMAN: So you returned to LIPA in 2004, 2005?

MONGER: 2004.

FRIEDMAN: So what were your—what challenges did you face and what challenges did LIPA face in 2004?

MONGER: We didn't have an office, we didn't have a training facility, we didn't have trainers, we had no budget. (Laughter). We had a budget of \$130,000. The first year I was here we only received \$33,000. That is what we were financed with. That included our salaries and everything.

FRIEDMAN: How many people were you?

MONGER: I met 70 persons, poorly paid, poorly motivated, so I reduced it to 30 and began to rehire. It was during the difficult years when there was so much protest, but no one protested because some of them had two jobs and some of them were not coming to work at all.

FRIEDMAN: Were most of these 70 were they mostly trainers or were they—?

MONGER: Just hanger's. Because we didn't have any training program when I came in, none. Not a single program going on.

FRIEDMAN: So what was LIPA doing?

MONGER: Nothing. We were trained to work at LIPA. The type of work that LIPA was engaged in was something I'm always engaged in: training and studies and things like that. So I felt that I could provide some support at the critical time we were there. So I began to call on friends to help. In fact, even the President was one of those who volunteered to train. She was at the Governance Commission at that particular point in time but she volunteered. We had one training room, which was in the basement of the Ministry of Finance just near the generator. (Laughter). So it was quite challenging.

FRIEDMAN: What did she train?

MONGER: We had a course on "women in development" and she was one of the trainers.

FRIEDMAN: What other friends did you—did you call friends from the university?

MONGER: Professional friends and friends from the university. I even called on one of my former professors who came and worked in the office for some time and some former ministers. One of them just retired. He was a Minister of State without Portfolio, an executive, he just retired from the office.

So that was the initial phase. Even for stationery I had to walk down to the Metro Stationery and spend \$350 to buy the first stationery to use in the office. It was just fairly difficult. We hardly had current; I had to take my generator from my house to provide current because the Ministry of Finance was stingy. They had current but they would cut us of.

FRIEDMAN: Why?

MONGER: I don't know. They would cut us off. They said the current was inadequate so they would cut us off. We had to get things done. I had to bring my small generator from my office until I felt, when the security began to give us difficulty, I said let me keep my generator at home. They would so say it was the government generator so I just stopped. We were able to buy a very small Tyler generator and then later on we bought a 1 kW generator, a 4-5 kW generator. That was big for us at that time. Where we came from to where we are now is millions of miles.

FRIEDMAN: So how did you get passed that stage?

MONGER: *The first thing I did, I had connections with the UN system and I began to get consulting contracts. We used the proceeds from the consulting contracts to finance government training.*

FRIEDMAN: LIPA received contracts?

MONGER: *Yes. We used the proceeds to finance government training because we had to get relevant in the government. We didn't have funding to do anything. So we used proceeds from—we got some private contracts, we got some contracts, from UNICEF and then later on UNDP provided us support to do civic education. Then we covered the thirteen counties with civic education training, this type of thing. We were now seen and our budget began to improve.*

Our budget got to \$500,000 at the first year of Mrs. Sirleaf's government and then we were able to get a little more things.

FRIEDMAN: So beyond civic education what sort of subjects did you train?

MONGER: *As I said to you, I am a consultant and can be responsive in many ways. We were taking end-users' requests. One was a financial management course, a project management course—different types of courses. Then we brought together the right expertise and delivered on it.*

FRIEDMAN: So did you recruit trainers based on whatever project was at hand or did you recruit a permanent staff of trainers?

MONGER: *We had a permanent staff of trainers but we used more of the external people on a short-term basis because we could not retain high-quality staff; we didn't have the budget for that. We had to hire people based on the job.*

FRIEDMAN: Is that still how you operate?

MONGER: *Yes, that is basically how we operate now, yes, although we have more staff but still not enough.*

FRIEDMAN: Is that one of the goals?

MONGER: *We are trying to benchmark with our staffing configuration with GIMPA (Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration).*

FRIEDMAN: Ghanaian?

MONGER: *Ghanaian. We are also looking at what can we learn from East Africa. My three deputies are now going to Nairobi for one week's study at the Kenya Institute of Management and Administration. We keep looking at others but the challenge is what you want to do and what resources you have. The only way I can balance the two is to be more entrepreneurial in the approach we take.*

So we have new training policy, civil service training development policy. That policy gives the responsibility for training and development to the individual ministries. We are asking them under that policy to have a management improvement plan, either one-year or two-year management improvement plan

and through that plan they will identify their trainees and identify training providers, including us but we are not the sole—we don't want to be the sole training provider. So that is happening now and they are paying for their training here.

So now we are running out of space because we're running more training courses now than we ever did in the history of this Institute.

FRIEDMAN: What are some of the other groups that can provide training?

MONGER: *We are using this in a generic way because other people, trainers come from other countries or whatever the case may be. We have very few consulting companies in country. The university is not that robust to respond to marketing demands. Not too much can come from local suppliers, but there is the World Bank Institute, there is GIMPA in Ghana. There are others who are training providers in the region.*

FRIEDMAN: To go back to 2005, 2004-2005, what were the—I understand LIPA had capacity restraints but what were the priorities of the government when it came to building capacity?

MONGER: *Since there was a—let's look at the management and functions of the ministries and agencies and let us re-engineer that. Then we will begin to look at recruitment—.*

FRIEDMAN: To match those?

MONGER: *To match that, and then we will look at training. I didn't figure that we would find new people. But that was not the understanding then. So we had difficulty selling ourselves at the early stage. So we were on the margin of things. The logic was that we should wait for training.*

FRIEDMAN: Did you play any role in recruitment of civil servants?

MONGER: *Civil servants? Civil Servants, recruited through the individual ministries. That was the involvement of ourselves in that case.*

FRIEDMAN: Thinking about certain programs, like the Senior Executive Service, which sought to attract Liberian ex-patriots into government positions, was that the government's preferred method of building capacity in the initial stages?

MONGER: *If you reviewed a civil service capacity building—civil service strategy—it talked about that, the SES, talked about TOKTEN (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals). There is limited emphasis on in-service training, but it was basically on the—. The SES had an intention that wasn't fully realized because many of the people from the diaspora did not easily connect. Their experiences were a little bit different. Some of the quality of jobs that they had didn't match the levels that they were put at. So that created problems. The final results that the figures show is that about 80% of those who were actually selected were selected locally because they had to train local people as opposed to those from the diaspora.*

FRIEDMAN: Why did that happen?

- MONGER: Because the quality—we lost staff. Those institutions that were building strength of their staff lost staff to those who had access to resources for the SES. So we didn't benefit from the SES. As a capacity-building institution I wish we had the benefit of the SES but we lost staff because we were aggressively training our staff. All of my deputies got their Masters while I was here.*
- FRIEDMAN: So you're saying because you trained your staff you no longer qualified for SES?
- MONGER: No, we're not qualified because we're not a priority. But then we lost staff to the SES because they had attractive salaries.*
- FRIEDMAN: That's interesting, was that a common occurrence for SES to be recruited from within government?
- MONGER: It happened when they faced a dilemma that they were not getting the right type of people so they opened their recruitment and people from within government began to apply.*
- FRIEDMAN: Initially was SES restricted? Were they not supposed to recruit from within government?
- MONGER: There was no statement to that but the recruitment was abroad. There was a recruitment agency so the recruitment was abroad. Later on the recruitment was opened, it was on the Internet and it was in the papers. So they could not restrict locals from applying and they became very competitive.*
- FRIEDMAN: Why do you think that the Liberians, the key Liberians they asked for did not respond to SES the way the government wanted?
- MONGER: For those of us who have stayed or lived outside and come back, the challenge of reintegration is difficult. Housing is a major challenge. There is no support to finance housing. After that housing was a major project for reintegration, but it is still not a big project. So people coming in, they would have to spend heavily for rent to be in the city. They could not bring their families and start life. Much of what they earned would be going out and then they themselves were just waiting with a ticket to fly out once the income dried up. So they didn't think about the livelihood issue of those who come. They figured the salary was \$4000 or whatever, it cannot sustain you to transfer your family. People used the word sacrifice and sacrifice is something you can do if you see down the road quickly. But for someone to just move out his family because he is making \$3000 or \$4000 is risky.*
- I think that is what jeopardized the opportunity for more people to come. I thought it would have been a generous thing for someone to begin to buy his house, pack up his car, put things in a container, drive to his house and have a generous welcome for Liberians. But we didn't think about that.*
- FRIEDMAN: Did this fit into—you mentioned that the government wanted to follow a plan of first redefining—.
- MONGER: The management functions.*
- FRIEDMAN: Right, rules and mandates and functions and then recruit the matching personnel and then train.

MONGER: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Was SES and TOKTEN, was this part of that process? Was this part of the recruitment process or was this—?

MONGER: *SES and TOKTEN were basically a stopgap. While this is happening you have this small group of highly qualified people coming in and supporting government operations to address the immediate capacity problem. That was the intention. There were successes you know with the SES and TOKTEN but the dream was not fully realized.*

FRIEDMAN: What sorts of—you mentioned that LIPA's activities have grown considerably, that you're training more now than you ever have since 2004. What sorts of skills are ministries asking you to focus on?

MONGER: *The ministries are not that proactive. What we are doing is we are more or less sensing their needs and putting on programs. One of the needs is the issue of financial management; financial management in terms of auditing, in terms of both auditing and internal auditing in terms of financial controls. The other issue is procurement. Procurement has been seen with different types of spectacles. Someone will see one problem and then they would make a noise about it and then another problem. But we have been having a lot of discussion, more than two and a half years with the Bank, the World Bank, on designing a procurement course. We just got exhausted with continuous discussion; we are already delivering procurement training because they are spending too much time on the act. So we are already delivering procurement training. This has a very large audience. Last week, we graduated more than 100 persons in procurement. There were three different courses they were coming from.*

Our current course we are starting in July is a large group of procurement students. They are coming from the UN system, they are coming from the NGOs, (nongovernment organization), they are coming from the private sector and they are coming from government.

We don't have the government ministries responding in the way we would like them to do to say "these are our needs." They are very slow. But they are responding in terms of submitting names of students to attend courses that we are offering. But we would like to design a program that meets their needs. Because they are being so slow at this; that is why we say, "keep your money." Then we will design programs and will try as best as possible to respond to market demand. We would have loved to see that the duties development program, the Institution Development Improvement Program, but they are not doing that.

We want to start the next fiscal period to probably help them, if they allow us, to develop these programs so that they can clearly see their trainees.

FRIEDMAN: From where do you recruit trainers for the procurement courses, for the financial management courses?

MONGER: *We have one consultant who had worked with the Liberian—the PPCC (Public Procurement and Concessions Commission) the procurement commission, for quite a long period of time. He initially got trained by the Bank, the World Bank. We also sent, through the support of the World Bank, three of our staff to Italy and they did their Masters in Science in Public Procurement. So we have four*

persons who have good training and they are constantly conducting studies on the issues of public procurement to strengthen their delivery. So we have the largest core of procurement professionals to deliver on this particular subject in country.

FRIEDMAN: You mentioned that the procurement course that they just—actually three courses—what were the three courses?

MONGER: *We have one which was designed by IBI and through our collaboration IBI handled part of the GEMAP (Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program) program and through the lessons learned they felt that certain things could be expanded through training. So they designed one of those courses. This is the last one that we're running, that we ran.*

We also have our own certificate in public procurement and that is the second course. A third one is a diploma in public procurement. The prerequisite for the diploma is the certificate, but we are even moving a little bit further because we are now a provider of training for the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply. They have six levels with in-depth courses like contracting. This is just one of the programs. So we have a series of them, it is six levels. Each level has several in-depth courses. So we move from our certificate to six diplomas but now we have only our certificate and the first diploma.

It is reaching out because many of the companies are sending their people because there are not too many procurement-expertise-persons are in the country. So they are finding that those who they send here make a difference.

FRIEDMAN: Does IBI still—did IBI run that training course or do you?

MONGER: *What IBI did, IBI provided this one person who was at the PPCC as a consultant to us. Then we provided one of our staff as a counterpart. When that program was going on our staff were also in Italy for their procurement training. The PPCC staff is still consultant to us. Many of our courses start at 4 o'clock to 8 o'clock especially for professionals. IBI collaboration with us is they provided a number of consultants and then we paired with our staff to deliver the courses that we offered with them.*

FRIEDMAN: Was the intention that your staff will later on run the course?

MONGER: *That was the intention; that has happened because they, like in auditing--internal auditing—we have staff doing that. In procurement our staff is doing that, so that program is over.*

FRIEDMAN: How many—how do you measure success for LIPA? What sorts of metrics do you use? Is it the number of people you trained or the types of training programs or students' effectiveness in their workplace after being trained?

MONGER: *Let me go a little further. How would I want to measure the success of LIPA? I would want to measure the success by the application of certain management practices in government. We don't have much control over that but I feel very sad that we couldn't do more in terms of benchmarking the government with best practices decision making, with setting systems and things like that. You find it coming more from the Ministry of Finance and most of the time it is incomplete.*

What I can measure now is the response to our service. We are targeting the general community; we are not targeting the government per se as we should. We are not seen as the major change agent. Usually as a short-term consultant dropping in and goes out and they have a report on the shelf. Sometimes I want it because I go out as a consultant to other countries. I'm not used as I should here. I'm hardly used and I have been doing this for a considerable length of time.

FRIEDMAN: Why is that the case? Is the government still in that sequence that you mentioned? Are they still in the recruitment phase? Why isn't LIPA relied on more?

MONGER: *No, there is a presumption of low capacity. For some ministers who know us, they have a better appreciation. Others just appear and they don't know a number of people. I don't push too much for these kinds of things. It is quick for them to go and pick up something; you don't want to be in the public making noise all the time. I don't bother because you need—to sustain our work in the ministries in a very rigorous way we need better budgetary support. Our current budget is under a million dollars. We try hard to retain our staff. Most of them are just passionate about the work they do. We try very hard to retain them. Most of our staff have double Masters and things like that, with good years of experience. If it wasn't for the way I treat them, they would find other jobs.*

For us to go out there and actively work it is sometimes frightening because there are a lot of things to do. Yet still there are many things that are done very poorly that we could have done much better in terms of installing a system. There is not uniformity in what we do from agency to agency. Procedures are mismatched. Even between close managers you have that kind of problem.

FRIEDMAN: What sorts of things are mismatched?

MONGER: *Employment and replacement. If you go to civil service the civil service would say you have to do a deletion before you send in a new name. Finance says if you do a deletion that means a new employment. So some worker will get kicked off the payroll because one ministry has a different sense of procedure, but none of them have it written. None of them have it written.*

Just to get the systems and procedures in place and have them written is such a thing that they should do for the whole of government but not much is written. So there are simple things—they look simple but they are major things that we are overlooking and instead, we tend to catch the big picture.

In the Ministry of Finance one wants to have synchrony between the budget department and the accounts department—general accounting—so that the budget that general accounting is using is the same budget that the budget department is using. Then the allotments that general accounting is using is the same allotment that the budget department actually gives, so that the balances in your account will be synchronized. We have difficulty each year finding out which is the right budget and what is the right balance in the account. So at the end of the year you don't know whether—because they will stop you from spending your money because they say you don't have it. The other side says you have it. These are very—.

FRIEDMAN: Is there a role here for LIPA in those—?

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- MONGER:** *We can clean that. A simple application can be used to put them on one database.*
- FRIEDMAN:** What are some of the ministries? You said there are a few ministries that do look to LIPA. What are some of the ministries that you have a closer relationship with?
- MONGER:** *We have a close relationship with the Ministry of Planning in terms of policy. We have a relationship with the Ministry of Public Works. They have been sending a lot of their staff here. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the three of them send a lot of their staff here.*
- FRIEDMAN:** You mentioned that in practice you cater somewhat to the private sector, to NGOs, not just to government and you mentioned why. In theory is your mandate to support government first?
- MONGER:** *It doesn't stop us; it doesn't say that we should not—because the broader definition for the public sector we look at those who provide services, who deliver public services. So we figure that we have a wider mandate than just the ministries and agencies.*
- FRIEDMAN:** Okay. Have you received any criticism about that? Any criticism from other parts of government that you're not focusing enough on building capacity within government?
- MONGER:** *No, we would like to be criticized. We are not receiving but we would like to be criticized because we want them to be concerned. If they're concerned about improvement then we'd be very happy.*
- FRIEDMAN:** So I didn't ask the question but I'm not sure if it is really relevant any more, I was going to ask if training government officials, if that makes them more attractive to employers in the private sector or in the NGOs. If that is perhaps a negative consequence of some of your training programs that civil servants might get plucked from the civil service and into better paying jobs in the private sector. Have you noticed any of that?
- MONGER:** *No-no-no. What is happening now is that at the early stage, 2004, 2005 you had more of the attractive jobs in the NGOs but then the NGOs' jobs were not secure, they were short-term contracts. You had a one-year contract and then you felt you had a job but that was the best you could get, usually it was six months or three months or whatever the case may be, but they were still more attractive. They were paid in US dollars and the government salaries were very meager in Liberian dollars. Sometimes it was just about \$20 or \$40 or \$50. So you found people moving to the NGOs and the private sector.*
- Now a lot of people are coming to the government because the salaries are secure; they are secure in the sense that they are coming monthly. Now the salaries are better. Here there is a two-tranche salary. There is a salary in Liberian dollars and then there is an allowance in US dollars. Some ministries provide only a few of the staff allowance but, for us, we give everyone allowance, we spread the allowance across the board. You have more people coming from the private sector now into the government.*
- There is always this talk about why train and the people leave. I was trained by USAID to work with LIPA. I worked with LIPA two months and I was taken away by the President's office because I started my career in the President's office and*

I left on a LIPA scholarship. When I got back I worked at LIPA, they said I should come back to the President's office. I worked there and this is my third time coming back to LIPA.

The second time I worked there we started our major consulting program in '80 and delivered on a very large program for the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning including the budget bureau: retraining analysts and account officers and things like that. But I couldn't stay because there were some deadweights in the institution. The more you work the more they hated you, so I just left. I left and joined the university but I was still in the system working for the government although I had a chance to start my private consulting practice. It was to make some money for myself.

Now I am back at the Institute from nearly 2004, I'm back at the institute. This is a very good time to make some good consulting money during this period.

FRIEDMAN: Are you working as a private consultant now as well?

MONGER: *No. Whether I am still a private consultant? I am still a private consultant.*

FRIEDMAN: You still do both.

MONGER: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Is there any conflict between the two? How does that work?

MONGER: *I'm here more than eight hours a day and I still work in the night as part of my work. There are a lot of services I can offer quickly. Sometimes I take off a few days because I don't really have leave time. I have gone to Sudan, I have gone to Gambia for a few days.*

FRIEDMAN: What kinds of things have you worked on Sudan and the Gambia?

MONGER: *I worked on job creation in Sudan. In The Gambia I worked on two projects, I worked on public works delivery—it is the same procurement problem with contractors. Then I worked on local government decentralization in The Gambia.*

FRIEDMAN: I just want to take a few more minutes, if I could ask you a bit about some of the GEMAP, LIPA's relationship with GEMAP and some of the programs that you've run together with GEMAP. How did LIPA first—was LIPA a part of GEMAP from the beginning?

MONGER: *No, we were a critic.*

FRIEDMAN: You were a critic of GEMAP?

MONGER: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Why was that?

MONGER: *We didn't see a capacity-building component in the program. They explained to us that that would be done through mentoring. We figured that was inadequate.*

FRIEDMAN: When did you have this discussion?

- MONGER: GEMAP—there was a lot of discussion in 2004, in 2003 in fact, then in 2004 with GEMAP. We kept raising our point on this because GEMAP was signed and then it took some time before it got off the ground. Gyude Bryant signed the GEMAP Accord.*
- FRIEDMAN: Were you part of the discussions about a capacity-building component of GEMAP?
- MONGER: No, the program was already designed then we just raised our issue about it at various meetings that we were present.*
- FRIEDMAN: So initially the only component of capacity-building was mentoring, there were no training courses, there was no—?
- MONGER: They probably did some training in-house but the broader strategy was mentoring system design and then mentoring.*
- FRIEDMAN: Do you know how that mentoring system worked or how the mentoring system was supposed to work?
- MONGER: You talked to (Alex) Cuffy, he was the supreme—basically what it is they have consultants and then these consultants would be working along with other Liberians and they would put the system in place. Then these two working together they would gain expertise in running the system. They were at the port, at the forestry—.*
- FRIEDMAN: The airport.
- MONGER: The airport where Alex was.*
- FRIEDMAN: Petroleum.
- MONGER: The refinery. The Ministry of Finance in fact you had to pass a GEMAP officer before anything could be done in the Ministry of Finance. Now you have a Liberian who is doing the same thing. But it is a challenge to have one person as a signatory because your eyes would tire and you wouldn't be able to catch all of the problems. In fact because there was only one person in the signature, so important is the e-signature that is easiest to get.*
- FRIEDMAN: Easiest to get?
- MONGER: Once a signature becomes that way in a system it becomes a problem.*
- FRIEDMAN: Why is that?
- MONGER: You see when you design a system you don't make one place, one point of control. It becomes a problem because you can easily find a way to trick that one point of control.*
- FRIEDMAN: People start to cater their activities to get a signature?
- MONGER: I'm not saying that that is what is done, or what was done, but it is a bad system to have one point of control. You have to have a system control.*

FRIEDMAN: So on the capacity-building side, when did—at what point did GEMAP, did the powers that be at GEMAP decide to expand beyond mentoring and into training.

MONGER: *We lost track of GEMAP. We didn't know—we just heard the news. At one point I got interested in them. I went on the site and tried to get some information. It wasn't too long, I don't know how they tracked me, because we are finding who visited the site, because I kept visiting their site to get additional—I think I was writing something. I wanted some information about them.*

So they came over, made a couple of visits about possible collaboration between—.

FRIEDMAN: Do you remember what year this was?

MONGER: *It was 2008. They made a couple of visits and then we had some general understanding—in fact, we—.*

FRIEDMAN: Do you remember who came to visit you?

MONGER: *It was Mr. Jacobs. Then before Jacobs there were two others, I have their names. I met also the head of IBI. There are a lot of people from IBI who came too, so we had a lot of discussion.*

I didn't care about the past. I felt that they had already worked—were exposed to a number of the problems. If we had a certain level of collaboration it would be useful for the country. So I was happy that they came because we could benefit from that type of collaboration. So I had nothing negative to say about them coming late.

We agreed in general terms that we should work together but it could have been harder, not to the detriment of the program but to the benefit of the institute. There are a lot of loose ends, which they were very tight about when we started to implement. So we felt that we could have benefited as an institution more from this collaboration but there was very little we were receiving in direct support from them.

FRIEDMAN: What did that collaboration lead to?

MONGER: *It up-scaled our training, which was the most significant benefit we had. Then we had—.*

FRIEDMAN: Up-scaled in what way?

MONGER: *We identified training that they marketed. They had posted marketing and training to their clients.*

FRIEDMAN: Their clients in government?

MONGER: *Yes, so that marketed LIPA and they paid for it. They also paid for post-training consultation by going to the ministries, agencies, to ask them about the performance of those who attended the training. That gave us more visibility and interaction. So people began to know more about LIPA and wanted to send their employees there for training. That was to me the most significant part.*

The other part was that they were able to document the materials and pass them over to us. Through the collaboration with our staff we had staff who could deliver on those courses.

FRIEDMAN: So IBI trained some of your trainers.

MONGER: *So to the same, more or less mentoring as well because they worked along with the IBI staff to deliver the training. IBI did not have the staff except for Cuffy, but they hired local trainers who did the same job.*

FRIEDMAN: Did IBI—if they were high-level trainers were they potentially hiring the people that you would have hired?

MONGER: *We could have hired them if we had the funds.*

FRIEDMAN: Okay, so the people that they identified are people that if you had the funds—

MONGER: *Would have hired and would have liked to come here. This is a preferred place than the university.*

FRIEDMAN: So as far as the content of training, you mentioned that one component of your procurement training was developed by IBI. Are there other examples of training courses that were developed through this collaboration?

MONGER: *Auditing, internal auditing, public sector management, internal controls, public sector financial management. We did a number of computer training.*

FRIEDMAN: Were all these courses created by IBI?

MONGER: *Created by IBI, yes.*

FRIEDMAN: So Alex Cuffy or by the people that Alex Cuffy hired.

MONGER: Yes.

FRIEDMAN: Were these courses created from scratch or were some of them already being given somewhere?

MONGER: *They accessed us to work with them. The initial content was provided by our staff and they reworked it.*

FRIEDMAN: Okay, so how did these—the collaboration—you mentioned one of the major benefits to LIPA of the collaboration was getting the LIPA name out there in the ministries and creating more market for what you offer. What were the goals of the collaboration from your perspective, from IBI's perspective and from the government's perspective and I guess from GEMAP's perspective?

MONGER: *It just seemed to me not a major government program per se because we grew to be seen to be significant but this was just IBI leadership speaking to me and we agreed to collaborate. Then we got a signal from the President's office that they liked the idea. But for financial management and accounting things we did we should have seen a signal from the Ministry of Finance.*

FRIEDMAN: But you didn't.

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- MONGER: *We didn't see it clearly.*
- FRIEDMAN: Did the Ministry of Finance participate?
- MONGER: *They participated, yes. They sent a lot of people here for computer training but they refused to pay—they paid for one of the courses and they didn't pay for four of them.*
- FRIEDMAN: Why is that?
- MONGER: *I just don't understand. It is not a matter of money; they refused to pay for four of the courses.*
- FRIEDMAN: What kind of feedback did you get from the ministries about the collaboration, about the training courses?
- MONGER: *The first year, the first group of courses we had a little over one hundred and the second group of courses we had almost 300 so we sustained that momentum from those courses.*
- FRIEDMAN: Is it ongoing the courses?
- MONGER: *Yes, we continued to carry them.*
- FRIEDMAN: So you're carrying the same courses with less of a role for IBI?
- MONGER: *We carried on the courses introduced by IBI along with other courses. But they put us in the swing. We just carried on because we're at a point where we were responding to individual demands. We're now having a kind of regular schedule. We are responding to individual demands but we have a regular schedule.*
- FRIEDMAN: When you announce to the ministries that you are starting a new round of procurement—?
- MONGER: *We send the brochure out and then they come and apply and pay their fees. We are having collection problems so we are asking that they pay half before they can sit and register. At the end of the week we are going to Buchanan to deliver a two-day course for the Ministry of Planning, they asked for it. It is a short thing on leadership and performance management. So we still have these kinds of specific requests from different ministries but we have our regular schedule.*
- FRIEDMAN: How long do most of the courses that were—?
- MONGER: *The new ones are from eight to twelve weeks but it is not daily, it is two days a week.*
- FRIEDMAN: Is it two days after work or is it—?
- MONGER: *It is from four o'clock.*
- FRIEDMAN: Four o'clock to eight o'clock?
- MONGER: *For some it is four to seven, some from four to eight. We also have a collaboration with the Liberia Institute of Certified Public Accounting and they are doing training here for sitting the Ghanaian ACCA. So they do the training here*

and then they sit for the ACC exam. They also sit for the accounting technician exam. The accounting technician exam is a West African certification. It is delivered by Ghana but the training is done here.

FRIEDMAN: I think I've used your time but maybe if I could just end with one or two brief questions. One is, in your opinion, what would you like to see happen? Given all the challenges the Liberian government faces in building capacity, what are one or two things that you would like to see, one or two changes that you would like to see to help this process along?

MONGER: *We should have one agenda and we should work in concert. There are too many duplications in terms of what we are trying to achieve, so that is the first thing. The second thing is the capacity issue is that on one side of the individual capacity problem, but the other side is how do you team to deliver on goals. There is a need for more collaboration. You need better processes for ministries to collaborate in terms of delivering on goals but most of them are working single-handedly and this exacerbates the whole capacity problem. Those are two things.*

There are other things like we are not properly housed. We are in a dwelling house. We just took the next building because we ran out of space. So we took a nice building. My deputy said we should take the next building also. We're not even equipped like a high school or elementary school that has six classrooms; we don't have six classrooms. We bought land and other things and we hope that the government will think seriously about having the institution as opposed to having us operate in this particular way.

FRIEDMAN: Okay, thank you very much.