



A catalyst and a bridge

An evaluation of UNHCR's community empowerment projects in Sierra Leone

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PDES/2012/01
January 2012

Policy Development and Evaluation Service

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Printed by UNHCR

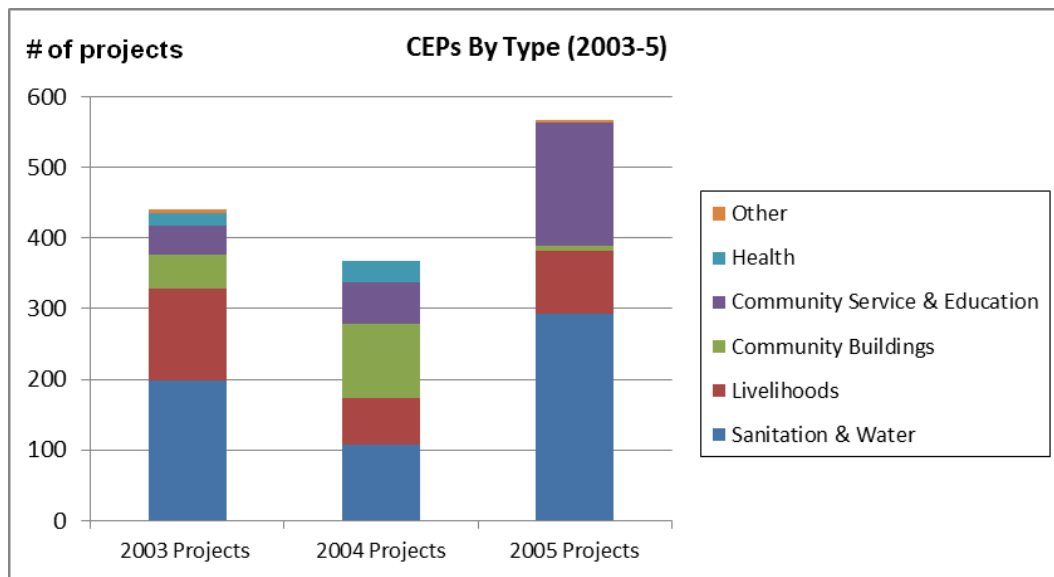
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Executive summary

1. This report provides a review of the Community Empowerment Projects (CEPs), an innovative method of securing sustainable reintegration sponsored by the UNHCR in Sierra Leone. From 2003 through 2005, the UNHCR conducted almost 1400 CEPs in five different districts of Sierra Leone. The largest number of projects were implemented in Kailahun (618), followed by Kono (496), Pujehan (157), Kenema (65), and Kambia (38). Most CEPs can be categorized within five main sectors: water and sanitation (44%), livelihoods (21%), education and community services (20%), community buildings (12%), and health (3%).



2. UNHCR also enacted a number of CEPs, primarily in the sectors of education and community services, health, and livelihoods, that specifically addressed gender issues facing women and girls within Sierra Leone.

3. The purpose of this review is to evaluate the overall strategy and goals of UNHCR in implementing the CEPs in Sierra Leone. This review will also rate the projects according to their contributions to peacebuilding, protection, productivity, and sustainability as well as their attention to vulnerable groups. In addition, the CEPs specifically designated as “gender projects” will be assessed.

4. This evaluation is based on site visits to about 150 CEPs in Sierra Leone, carried out between 2005 and 2011. The main findings of this report are as follows.

5. In selecting its strategy and goals of the community empowerment program, UNHCR correctly focused its efforts on two of the most damaged districts, Kono and Kailahun, and on the important border districts of Kambia, Kenema, and Pujehan. This strategy allowed UNHCR to maximize its impact without spreading its resources too thinly. UNHCR should have devoted some resources, however, on spontaneously resettled refugees in Koinadugu and in urban Freetown.

6. In implementing the CEPs, UNHCR’s drew on its field experience with emergencies to begin aid at an early stage, making it possible for other development agencies to follow their path. In the three years of reintegration, little evidence of duplication appears. Within the

districts that it operated, UNHCR integrated returning refugees and former internally displaced persons without discrimination and promoted community solidarity. UNHCR worked well with its IPs, particularly international NGOs, but its efforts to promote local partners had less success.

7. In terms of sectors, the education and community services sector had the highest overall ratings. In regard to specific types of projects, the five that garnered the highest ratings were secondary schools, GBV Centres, primary schools, water wells, and rice drying floors.

Sector	Type of CEP	Total Score
Education & Community Services	Secondary Schools	4.5
Education & Community Services	GBV Centres	4.0
Education & Community Services	Primary Schools	4.0
Water & Sanitation	Wells	4.0
Livelihoods	Rice Drying floor	4.0

8. As part of its CEP activities, UNHCR implemented a number of special gender projects which benefited women and proved to be remarkably sustainable. Over two-thirds of women's centres created are still functioning, either as originally designed or with a modified purpose and set of activities that benefits vulnerable groups in the community.

9. Following the official completion of reintegration programming in 2005, UNHCR planned an orderly transition through a special inter-agency team that ensured successful completion of its projects.

10. Overall, the CEP program had a direct and substantial impact on Sierra Leone. Through UNHCR's efforts, 20% of the destroyed schools in Kono and Kailahun district were quickly rebuilt and health and sanitation services improved. UNHCR's work, in turn, formed a bridge to other development activities, especially those by the World Bank/GOSL and UNICEF in the areas of education and child welfare.

11. The CEPs also acted as a catalyst for future community development, especially when this activity was supported by actions of the government of Sierra Leone or continued by international NGOs. UNHCR's catalytic role can be best seen in its sponsorship of entrepreneurial activities, agricultural productivity, and GBV centres for women and girls.

12. In future reintegration programs, UNHCR should continue to leverage its field experience and emergency culture to help returnees re-establish themselves as soon as possible. UNHCR should continue to look for opportunities to implement projects that other agencies have avoided or neglected, even if this means implementing in remote communities. UNHCR should avoid beginning projects, such as microfinance, that require on-going assistance and training provisions, unless this can be secured for the future.

13. In order to enhance its role as a catalyst, UNHCR should take targeted actions to add to the sustainability of select CEPs, sponsor additional entrepreneurial activities, and facilitate more systematically the preparation of its national staff for future roles in peacebuilding.

Methodology

14. This evaluation is based on a survey of UNHCR sponsored projects in five districts of Sierra Leone, carried out over a five year period, with site visits taking place in 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2011. In total, investigations were made about over 150 CEPs in four districts, including Kono (75), Kailahun (61), Kambia (13), and Kenema (3).

15. Documentary information about the CEPs was garnered from internal documents provided by UNHCR in 2005 and 2006, UNHCR's global reports on Sierra Leone¹, a review of reintegration conducted in 2005,² and a survey of additional primary and secondary literature.

16. In selecting locations for site visits, several factors were taken into account. Given the wide variety of activities sponsored by the UNHCR, every attempt was made to visit some projects of every type, and then to compare similar ones in different locations. Site visits focused on Kono and Kailahun, the two districts that hosted the largest number of CEPs; 15% of projects in Kono and 10% of those in Kailahun were investigated for this study, as were 30% of those in Kambia (see Annex F).

17. In Kono, site visits were made in both the diamond (Sandor, Kamara, Nimikoro, Tankoro, Gbense, Nimiyama) and agricultural (Gorama Kono, Fiama, and Soa) chiefdoms, and in Kailahun, projects were assessed in chiefdoms in the northeast (Kissi Teng, Kissi Tongi, Kissi Kama), the central area (Luawa, Upper Bambara, Jawei) and the western area (Kpeje West). A limitation of the study is that some of the more remote and inaccessible projects were not visited, largely due to poor road conditions. In addition, political disturbances prevented an additional visit to Kailahun district in September 2007.

18. In selecting project types, the highest priority was given to education and community service CEPS, especially gender-focused projects. Overall, 21% of CEPS in this sector were investigated, including 80% of the gender ones, following by 13% in the livelihoods sector, 12% of the community buildings projects, 10% of the health projects, and 5% of water and sanitation ones. As an important study of water and sanitation projects in eastern Sierra Leone has been completed,³ site visits to CEPs in this sector were a lower priority for this review.

19. Given the time that had lapsed since their implementation, it was not possible to include all the service, training, or capacity building programs in this study. However, where education and training programs were implemented in conjunction with a CEP that left a physical presence, such as a school or clinic, these programs were investigated.

20. Every attempt was made to ensure an independent evaluation process. In 2006, most sites were visited in the company of a staff member of the UNHCR, TST, or the implementing partner for the project. This was necessary because, at the time, projects were

¹ UNHCR, *Global Report: Sierra Leone, 2000-2006*.

² Stefan Sperl and Machtelt de Vriese, "From emergency evacuation to community empowerment: Review of the repatriation and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone," February 2005, EPAU/2005/01. [referred to as 2005 Review].

³ John Magrath, "Toward Sustainable Water-Supply Solutions in Rural Sierra Leone," Oxfam Research Report in collaboration with WaterAid, April 2006.

still on-going. Subsequent site visits were made with only the assistance of a research team, and where necessary, local translators.

21. At each CEP site, efforts were made to make the visit follow a uniform pattern. In a particular community, local leaders were contacted first, and whenever possible, members of the project management team or current individuals involved with the project were identified. Beneficiaries of the projects, including women and youth, were included in discussions about the projects. Information from participants was gathered using a list of standard questions, modified to fit the particulars of a given project.

22. If possible, return site visits were made to the same projects or general location. Difficult road conditions, weather patterns, and vehicle breakdowns particularly hampered site visits in Kailahun district. For instance, flooding around Kpandebu prevented a return visit there in July 2011.

23. In addition to the site surveys, this study included over 100 interviews with a wide variety of actors involved in post-conflict peacebuilding and reintegration, including UNHCR staff in Freetown and the field offices of Kenema, Kono, Zimmi, and Kailahun. Officials from the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and the interagency TST were interviewed, as were members of the donor community, including government officials from the US, UK, and Japan. Numerous INGOs and NNGOs were contacted, and interviews were conducted with all the leading IPs, including the IRC, GTZ, WVI, BPDA, and PWJ.

24. Political leaders within Sierra Leone, including national officials and members of key development ministries, were also interviewed as were elected district officials and NaCSA staff, and leaders at the village level. Research visits to areas of the country not served by formal UNHCR programs, particularly Bonthe and Koinadugu district, were also made (see Annex E).

UNHCR in Sierra Leone

25. As a result of a prolonged and brutal civil war that began in 1991, a substantial portion of Sierra Leone's population was uprooted. By the end of 1999, Sierra Leone had produced the largest refugee population in Africa; an estimated 460,000 people, including 371,000 in Guinea and 96,000 in Liberia,⁴ had fled the country, and 500,000 were internally displaced.⁵ After the signing of the Lome Peace agreement in July 1999 and subsequent deployment of a peacekeeping force, UNAMSIL, in November 1999, Sierra Leone began the long road back to normalcy.

26. Although the security climate began to improve in 2000, the kidnapping of 500 peacekeepers in May prompted British intervention and heightened uncertainty. It wasn't until further deployments to UNAMSIL created a force of 17,500 that greater stability was achieved. Conflict continued in select areas in 2001, but the demobilization and disarmament process of RUF fighters preceded, and the entire country was eventually secured. By January 2002, the war was officially declared to be over, paving the way for the both presidential and parliamentary elections in May.⁶

Refugees and repatriation

27. Despite the difficult security environment in Sierra Leone, refugees began spontaneously returning to the country as early as 2000. Over 40,000 returned,⁷ largely in response to violence in Guinea, even though areas of the country were still controlled by the rebels.⁸ As the country stabilized, UNHCR began to facilitate repatriation. From 2001 through June 2004, when formal repatriation ended, about 280,000 refugees had returned home, including 180,000 with the direct assistance of UNHCR.⁹ Among the refugees and returnees were thousands of people with special needs, such as former child soldiers, orphans, amputees, and victims of sexual abuse.

28. Once in Sierra Leone again, refugees faced severe challenges. The country they returned to was badly damaged, with an estimated 300,000 homes and 80% of all schools having been destroyed.¹⁰ Under any circumstances, the task of reintegrating so many people would have been difficult. In the case of Sierra Leone, the country given the lowest ranking on the Human Development Index for 2004, it was particularly daunting.¹¹ With an annual per capita income of less than \$150, a life expectancy of less than 35 years of age, and a literacy rate of just 20%, the people of Sierra Leone faced huge obstacles. In addition, Sierra Leone also hosted over 65,000 Liberian refugees, who had been driven out by conflict in this neighbouring country.

⁴UNHCR *Global Report: 1999*, p. 119.

⁵2005 UNHCR *Statistical Yearbook*, p. 486.

⁶Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, Lynne Rienner: 2008, p. 139.

⁷UNHCR *Global Report: 2000*, p. 201.

⁸Interview, UNHCR official, Freetown, 2/06.

⁹UNHCR *Global Appeal: 2005*, p. 175.

¹⁰U.S. Committee for Refugees, *World Refugee Survey 2003*, p. 89.

¹¹Sierra Leone was ranked 177 out of 177 on the Human Development Index. See UNDP, *Human Development Report 2004*.

Quick Impact Projects

29. Having first established a role in Sierra Leone in 1978, UNHCR had the advantage of an early presence in the country. In response to both the influx from Liberia and the return of Sierra Leoneans, UNHCR expanded its offices in 2001-02. Using Freetown as a base, UNHCR started an office in Kenema in April 2000 and then added field offices in Kambia, Kailahun, Zimmi, and Koidu by 2002. UNHCR's expansion paved a path for other agencies. After UNAMSIL, the UNHCR was the next major organisation to operate in Koidu, Kono. UNHCR staff first set up an office in a tent in what had become a "ghost town" and then later built a cement block structure.

30. The renewal of deadly violence in December 2001 forced UNHCR staff to evacuate while the area was once again secured, but they returned in February 2002. They conducted a needs assessment of refugees and established an "on the ground" relationships with government personnel and the staff of the major relief NGOs.¹² UNHCR took advantage of its "field presence" throughout Sierra Leone to combine activities and logistical support for both the incoming and returning refugees. This had the added benefit of aiding other humanitarian actors, such as the NGOs which relied on radio transmissions from the Kenema office.¹³

31. It was in this early post-emergency phase that UNHCR first launched its Quick Impact Program (QIPS) to focus on "the most urgent needs in health, sanitation, water, shelter, education and income-generation" for returnees, including those with special needs.¹⁴ These interventions, of which UNHCR sponsored over 500 during 2001 and 2002, aimed at meeting the immediate needs of refugee communities. The projects were carried out in nine districts and every region of the country (Northern: Kambia and Port Loko; Southern: Moyamba, Pujehan and Bo; Eastern: Kenema, Kailahun, and Kono; Western region: Freetown).

32. These UNHCR-financed projects ranged widely from the building of schools in Port Loko, to providing family tracing services in Pujehan, to tree planting in Bo, to building wells and latrines in Kailahun, to constructing a UNHCR guest house in Koidu. Through the QIPs, UNHCR attempted to meet the most pressing needs of returnees as defined by its own surveys and those of its implementing partners. Some of these projects were intended to be short-term solutions to pressing problems, but a significant number of wells, schools, and clinics are still in operation ten years later.

33. The scale of the return to Sierra Leone, coupled with the great needs of the displaced population, led UNHCR to move beyond speedy, ad hoc measures. For the QIPs, UNHCR and its IPs stayed in the driver's seat, selecting and implementing projects. Beginning in 2003, and continuing through 2005, UNHCR implemented what has been called "an altogether different approach" to reintegration, an approach that encouraged communities to define their own needs in community empowerment projects.¹⁵

¹² Interview, UNHCR official, Kenema, 3/06.

¹³ Interview, NGO official, Kenema, 3/06.

¹⁴ *UNHCR Mid-Year Report: 2000* [for Sierra Leone], p. 101.

¹⁵ Interview, UNHCR official, Freetown, 3/06.

Reintegration and community empowerment

34. Community Empowerment Projects or CEPS should be seen as an outgrowth of UNHCR's broader efforts at promoting sustainable reintegration. Sustainable reintegration emerged as an official goal of the UNHCR in the mid-1990s, when executive leadership began to discuss it at a high level, emphasizing reintegration as a way to bridge the gap between relief and development.¹⁶

35. As Jeff Crisp has pointed out, although there have been criticisms of UNHCR's initiatives in this area, there is value in helping refugees "contribute to the development of the areas where they have settled."¹⁷ UNHCR's emphasis on reintegration can be viewed as an attempt to meet both the protection and material needs of returning refugees, and, in turn, to promote a lasting or sustainable peace for an entire country and region.

Sustainable reintegration

36. According to UNHCR's 2008 policy framework, "supporting the sustainability of return and reintegration is an integral part of the Office's responsibility for the promotion of durable solutions" and this commitment applies to both returning refugees and IDPs.¹⁸ It further defines reintegration as "the progressive establishment of conditions which enable returnees and their communities to exercise their social, economic, civil, political and cultural rights, and on that basis to enjoy peaceful, productive, and dignified lives."¹⁹

37. Reintegration policy also sets within a broader framework for peacebuilding which identifies reintegration "an important component of the reconciliation and peacebuilding process."²⁰ One main component of this process, statebuilding, can be seen in UNHCR's emphasis on supporting local governments in areas of return and in its commitment to restoring services to returnee populations. A second key component, democracy building, is reflected in UNHCR's respect for the establishment of the rule of law and its active promotion of gender equality; this, in turn, flows from its protection functions and special mission to protect the dignity and rights of refugees and other returnees.

38. UNHCR's official support for gender equality has been particularly pronounced. In 2004, Ruud Lubbers, then United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, emphasized that "the success of all these [i.e. repatriation and reintegration] depends on women's full participation."²¹ In 2008, the policy framework stressed that "the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality will be" central to reintegration and peacebuilding.²²

¹⁶ "Assistance policies and strategies for the promotion of durable solutions: achieving sustainable reintegration," 22 January 1995, EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.4, available at www.unhcr.org.

¹⁷ Jeff Crisp, "Mind the gap! UNHCR, humanitarian assistance and the development process," *New Issues in Refugee Research*, No. 43, May 2001, p. 19.

¹⁸ UNHCR, "UNHCR's Role in Support of the Return and Reintegration of Displaced Populations: Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy," February 2008, para 4, p. 5 [EC/59/SC/CRP.5].

¹⁹ EC/59/SC/CRP.5, para 7, p. 6.

²⁰ EC/59/SC/CRP.5, para 8, p. 6.

²¹ Ruud Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Dialogue on Voluntary Repatriation and Sustainable Reintegration in Africa," Geneva, 8 March 2004, www.unhcr.org

²² EC/59/CRP.5, para 40, p. 11.

39. In formulating its reintegration policy, UNHCR has highlighted the need for inter-agency cooperation. In a 1995 policy statement, UNHCR stressed the need to cooperate with other development actors and that “if the returnee-impacted areas are not included in the broader development efforts of their country in the aftermath of conflict, the sustainability of reintegration may be jeopardized.”²³ Toward this end, a joint UNHCR-UNDP working group met as early as 1995, and the UNHCR engaged in a dialogue with the World Bank, known as the “Brookings Process,” to increase co-operation among agencies and avoid duplication in post-conflict settings. Refugee reintegration in Sierra Leone and elsewhere was initially conceptualized as part of this process.

40. The advance of UNHCR into areas by the formal development agencies been justified by its “value added” as an organization. For instance, UNHCR can “draw on its extensive field presence, its close links with and knowledge of refugee and IDP communities,” as well as close links with governmental and non-governmental partners, and its ability to adopt a regional approach. It will be shown below that UNHCR’s ability to act quickly, before other actors mobilized, was extremely important to reintegration in Sierra Leone. Moreover, the fact the agency has a compatible organisational mode with NGOs, especially international emergency ones, and a record of trust with refugees had a significant impact on refugee reintegration and community empowerment efforts in Sierra Leone.²⁴

Community empowerment as a path to reintegration

41. Community Empowerment Projects provided an important means to achieve the goal of sustainable reintegration of refugees and their communities. According to the CEP Guidelines utilized by UNHCR in Sierra Leone, the main purpose of the community empowerment program was nothing less than to “make a significant contribution to the reintegration of Sierra Leonean returnees.”²⁵ Although projects were concluded in both urban and rural areas, they focused on rural ones; this was appropriate given the neglect of these areas before the war.²⁶

42. The CEPs reflect ideas about participatory development as they were to encourage the participation of returnees in their own development while meeting objective needs. Under the auspices of a CEP, three main actors – the UNHCR, an Implementing Partner, and the village inhabitants – would work together on the selection and implementation of a project to cost no more than 15 million leones (or \$5000). These would be implemented in five broad fields that had been prioritized in needs surveys already done: agriculture, health, water, sanitation, and education and community services. At the village level, the participation of all would be welcome, including returning refugees, former displaced people, new members, and those who had never moved.

43. In its official guidelines, UNHCR stresses a successful CEP requires both a process and a product. In terms of the former, the process is to be “transparent, inclusive and participatory,” and especially utilize the often-neglected talents of women and youth. More than this, the process is to change the traditional foundation of the donor-recipient relationship, by returning power to the community level and even “disempowering the actors that ‘traditionally’ control” aid. Put frankly, the CEP process requires that “rather

²³ EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.4.

²⁴ EC/59/CRP.5, paras. 30-33, p. 10.

²⁵ UNHCR – Freetown, Community Empowerment Project Guidelines, p. 2.

²⁶ 2005 Review, para 100, p. 43.

than treating people as passive recipients – ‘beneficiaries’ of predetermined handouts – these people will decide what their priorities are and how to drive their own recovery process.”²⁷

44. In carrying out the CEPs, UNHCR was uniquely advantaged to work with returnees. One of the first casualties of state failure is trust – trust between and among individuals and trust between citizens and their government. Because UNHCR had a history of working with many of the returning refugees, they had a legacy on which to build. In the words of one former UNHCR official engaged in reintegration: “People who left violence don’t trust their government – but they do trust UNHCR.”²⁸

45. A further element of the CEP process was the promotion of choice by the communities engaged in them. According to the guidelines, “Communities will choose their own priorities” without sector preferences imposed by either the UNHCR or implementing partners. The guidelines, however, do put significant constraints on these choices, including that they (1) will not be projects planned by other large assistance programs; (2) be “environmentally sound”; (3) be sustainable, both economically and technologically; (3) “maximize participation of different community groups,” especially women and youth; (4) give “maximum benefits especially for women, children, adolescents, disabled and older people; (5) make use of local labour and skills; (6) combat HIV/AIDs; (7) cost not more than 15,000,000 Leones (or about \$5000.00).²⁹

46. Although many of the activities funded as CEPs seem to simply be necessary services for refugee return, they also support the three main goals of reintegration: returning people to lives of peace, productivity, and dignity. While any particular CEP, such as construction of a water point, might seem ordinary enough, such a project could enhance economic development, improve health, and protect women and girls who might otherwise have to gather swamp water in a remote spot.

47. Though innovative and potentially transformational, the concept underlying the CEPs also contained contradictions. While ambitiously promoting a more democratic process, they also recognized the need to involve “traditional chieftdom authorities.” In practice, this might mean that the chief and elders, generally male in gender, would be heavily involved in the projects and perhaps necessary for their sustainability.³⁰

48. Another issue with the CEPs concerns their desirable but ambitious goals. Given their number, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for any particular project, even any general category of project, to meet all of them. For instance, the requirement that CEPs be both sustainable on economic and technological grounds might potentially undermine the emphasis in the guidelines on immediate improvements to productivity, which often require an outside input such as imported materials.

49. In theory, CEPs represent a significant change in the way UNHCR operates with NGOs and communities. While UNHCR was to be responsible for developing the concept and for selecting the geographic locations for projects, NGOs would take on an enhanced role in project design, implementation, and oversight. Communities would take the lead in selecting the nature of the project, although within constraints on the type of project that could be delivered by the NGO. In practice, the ability of any individual NGO to implement

²⁷ CEP Guidelines, p. 2.

²⁸ Interview, UNHCR official, Freetown, 3/08.

²⁹ CEP Guidelines, pp. 3-4.

³⁰ The 2005 Review notes that “real power” rests with Paramount Chiefs in rural communities. Para 118, p. 49.

a particular kind of project was limited by the resources and capabilities of that agency; in implementing CEPS in 2003 and 2004, these limitations sometimes proved to be problematic. As a result of this, in 2005, UNHCR modified its policy and directed NGOs to complete projects in defined sectors, such as water and sanitation. While this maximized the expertise of the IPs, it did move away from the aspiration ideas in the CEP guidelines. Nevertheless, even when UNHCR adopted a sector approach, the CEPs continued to place emphasis on participation of rural communities, perhaps the most important element of this reintegration program.

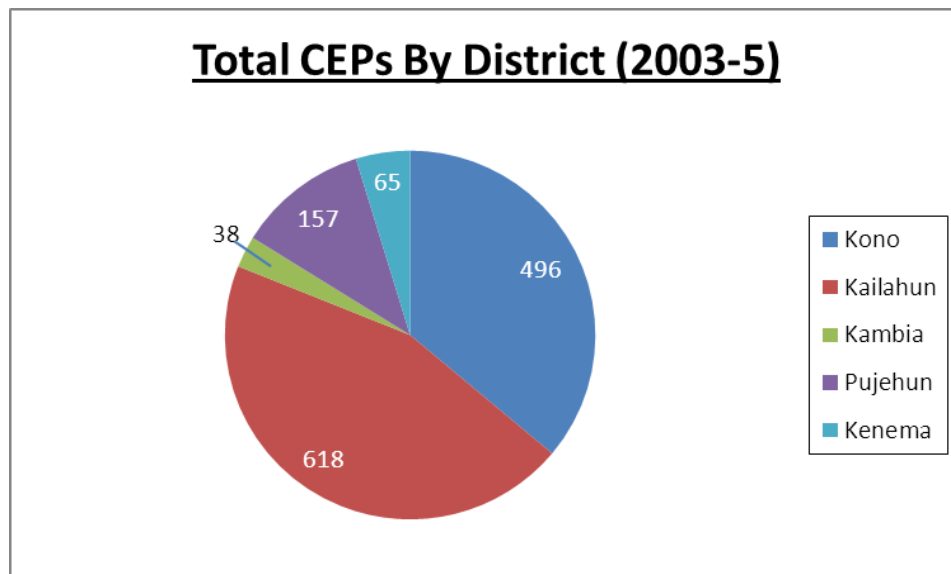
- CEPs represent an innovative way of achieving reintegration, especially in rural communities.
- CEPS sought to maximize the participation of women and youth.
- CEPs offered a potential way to break the donor-recipient relationship and to empower individuals and communities.
- CEP guidelines have potential contradictions within them, particularly concerning the sustainability of projects.

Programme strategy and goals

50. In designing its reintegration program for Sierra Leone, UNHCR faced a number of difficult choices relating to three strategic questions: (1) Where should it operate within Sierra Leone?; (2) How could its activities best complement and avoid duplication with other development actors?; (3) How could it assist returning refugees, internally displaced persons, and their communities?; (4) What organisations should it select as IPs? As a UN agency operating within Sierra Leone on a limited budget, UNHCR officials had to carefully allocate their resources. Of the \$13 million contained in the 2005 budget for repatriation and reintegration activities, only 16% was dedicated for the CEPs.³¹

Areas of operation

51. UNHCR rejected the idea of working in all areas in the country and decided instead to concentrate its resources. While QIPs had been implemented in nine districts, UNHCR promoted CEPs in five districts, with the largest number being placed in Kailahun (45%) and Kono (36%), Pujehun (11%), Kenema (5%), and Kambia (3%).



52. Selection of these districts reflected three main considerations: the damage rating of a particular district; the number of returnees assisted by UNHCR in a district; the location of that district vis-à-vis an international boundary. In choosing Kono and Kailahun, UNHCR selected two of the most damaged districts in the country. While their other districts of operation had lower damage ratings, they also bordered at least one neighbouring country.

³¹ UNHCR- Freetown, "UNHCR Sierra Leone Briefing Paper: January 2006," p. 4. Total expenditure for 2005 was \$21 million. *UNHCR Global Report: 2005*, p. 245.

Damage Rating	District	International Border	Assisted Returns
1	Kono	Guinea	35,211
2	Koinadugu	Guinea	319
3	Kailahan	Guinea/Liberia	63,760
4	Bombali	Guinea	1,925
5	Tonkolili	None	727
6	Pujehun	Liberia	20,334
7	Port Loko	None	5,228
8	Kenema	Liberia	23,673
9	Moyamba	None	331
10	Western-rural	None	4,946
11	Bonthe	None	215
12	Kambia	Guinea	11,732
13	Bo	None	3,683
14	Western-urban	None	***
Damage Ratings by District: Source: <i>Sierra Leone Encyclopedia: 2005</i> ; Location of Assisted Return, NaCSA/HCR/23 Jan. 2006, data for 2001-2005. [**included in Western rural.]			

53. Perhaps most importantly, UNHCR prioritized areas where there were high numbers of officially assisted refugee returns. For instance, in 2004, the top five districts of refugee return were Kailahun (63,000), Kono (35,000), Kenema (23,000), Pujehun (20,000), and Kambia (12,000), the same five districts selected for the CEPs.³²

54. In choosing Kailahun as a main area of operation, UNHCR moved to a devastated area. According to a 2002 survey, “of all the districts in Sierra Leone, Kailahun sustained by far the highest levels of displacement, with over 25% of its population (just over 87,000) displaced, either within or outside of Sierra Leone. This district was also where the war started and the last to undergo disarmament. In the course of the war, approximately 80% of all dwellings were destroyed, as were 97% of all schools.³³ UNHCR achieved broad coverage within the district, operating within all 14 chiefdoms.

55. In Kono, UNHCR found perhaps the most difficult region of the country in which to operate. Rated first in the damage ratings, Kono had a displaced population of at least 54,000 or 15% of its total population. In addition, 94% of the dwellings were destroyed and its people produced only 21% of its cereal needs.³⁴ The most diamond rich part of Sierra Leone, continued fighting and struggles over the mines and destroyed its wealth. Despite the poor road conditions in the district, UNHCR implemented CEPs in all 14 chiefdoms.

56. UNHCR’s choice of Kambia is largely explained by the high levels of returns there and the district’s special role as a transit path to Freetown and other districts. Operations in Kambia, home to the Temne and Susu, balanced UNHCR’s activities in the Mende speaking south and east. Although Kenema and Pujehun both had mid-level damage ratings, they shared an important border with Liberia and served as both transit and destination

³² UNHCR- Sierra Leone, *UNHCR Update*, 2004, newsletter, p. 1.

³³ OCHA, *Datapack: Kailahun District*, February 2003, pp. 1-2.

³⁴ Sierra Leone Information System, Development Assistance Coordination Office, Data Pack: Kono District, October 2004, p. 1.

districts for returning refugees. In addition, both districts hosts Liberian refugees, making it relatively easy for programs to be operated from offices in Bo and Kenema, which also ran the refugee camps, and taking advantage of UNHCR's regional position.

57. Clearly, UNHCR did not have the budget and resources to operate in all areas of Sierra Leone. While a case could be made for operating anywhere in the country, the omission that stands out is really Koinadugu, a large district in north-eastern Sierra Leone, principally populated by Limba and Koranko. The war devastated much of Koinadugu, leaving it with no functioning primary schools and only one operational secondary school.

58. UNHCR's neglect of Koinadugu may have been due to the fact that there were relatively few official returns of refugees to this district, as few as 1000³⁵It was widely recognized, however, that a significant number of people from this district had simply crossed the border on their own and also returned unassisted. Thus, it would have been appropriate for UNHCR to have supported some CEPs or their equivalent in this large district.³⁶

59. A second neglected area was that of urban Freetown. Although the city and surrounding areas were not as damaged by the war as the interior regions, Freetown had become a source of considerable secondary displacement. As this displaced population generally lived in very marginal conditions, UNHCR's assistance could have benefited them. UNHCR's strategy to focus its limited resources on select districts allowed it to maximize its impact and avoid the problem of being spreading its resources too thinly.

- UNHCR's selection of Kono and Kailahun was highly appropriate given its strategy of focusing on the most damaged, border regions that experiences high rates of return and had great educational, medical, and other basic needs.
- UNHCR's selection of Kambia, Kenema, and Pujehan as areas of operation was appropriate given its strategy of focusing on border regions with high rates of returnees.
- UNHCR should have devoted part of its reintegration resources to helping spontaneously settled refugees in Koinadugu and in urban Freetown.

Complementing other UN-agencies

60. Throughout 2000-2005, UNHCR worked closely with the other UN agencies. Its overall role was closely tied to the co-ordinated activities of the UN country team and the Development Assistance Framework implemented from 2004 through 2007. UNHCR was highly involved in three of the areas of the framework: (1) poverty reduction and reintegration and (2) human rights and reconciliation, (3) good governance. In terms of

³⁵Sierra Leone Information System, Development Assistance Coordination Office, *Data Pack: Koinadugu District*, October 2004, p. 4.

³⁶ This affirms the recommendation in the *2005 Review* that "the number and location of spontaneous returnees should be included" in decisions about operational areas for UNHCR. Para #75, pp. 35-36.

agency dollars committed to Sierra Leone's development, UNHCR was the fourth biggest spender in the country, following UNICEF, WFP, and UNDP.³⁷

61. UNHCR's efforts to avoid duplication of efforts with other UN agencies can be seen at the district and community level. In Koidu, Kono, for example, agencies combined to assist the government hospital, with WHO contributing new equipment for the operating theatre, and USAID addressing the rehabilitation of the hospital itself. UNHCR funded a community well outside the hospital, a well that was still being used on a daily basis in July 2011.³⁸ Another example can be found in Masundu, Sandor where the UNHCR, through IRC, funded the construction of a GBV centre and the World Bank, through NaCSA, set up a women's clinic³⁹

62. UNHCR also contributed to the UNCT by paving the way for other agencies. After UNAMSIL secured Kono, for instance, UNHCR staff member arrived first and set up office buildings for its own use and later by other agencies. In Kambia, UNHCR as an agency pulled out at the end of 2003, allowing the Japanese development agency, JICA, to take to utilize its offices.

63. UNHCR also modified its project selection to take into account the strengths and programs of other aid agencies. Although a few projects focused on shelter, in general UNHCR avoided spending on this type of project. In part, the reasons were philosophical in nature. The emphasis on "community" projects conflicted with the reality that the provision of shelter would benefit some more than others. In a practical sense, refugees returning on their own often met their own shelter needs right away, before the "official" repatriation of those in the community. In terms of division of labour, NaCSA identified shelter as "one of the greatest immediate needs" in Sierra Leone and had created a \$2 million dollar shelter program, in part funded by the World Bank.⁴⁰

- UNHCR's drew on its field experience with emergencies to begin assistance to returnees quickly, making it possible for other development agencies to follow.
- UNHCR avoided duplication of efforts and projects with other agencies through active use of inter-agency planning and discussions.
- UNHCR made the correct decision to include shelter among the list of projects that it financed, as many other development actors addressed this problem.

Choice of beneficiaries

64. As mentioned above, UNHCR was most active in districts with a high number of formally assisted refugees. With this limitation put aside, the CEP projects as a whole, however, were open to all members of the community without discrimination, including returning refugees. Districts where the UNHCR operated had high rates of internal displacement as well. Nearly half of all CEPs were done in Kailahun district, which had the highest rate of displacement of any district. The CEP projects also emphasized the entire

³⁷ United Nations Country Team, *Sierra Leone: Peace, Recovery, Development, UN Development Assistance Framework (2004-2007)*, March 2003.

³⁸ *Datapack: Kono*, p. 2 and site visit, 7/11.

³⁹ Site visit, Masundu, Sandor, Kono, 7/11.

⁴⁰ NaCSA, "Sierra Leone Resettlement Strategy," October 2001, p. 17.

community and, indeed, they helped to bring that community together to construct schools, health centres, and local government buildings.

65. One of the most controversial aspects of UNHCR's policy was that it accepted the parameters of the Sierra Leone resettlement strategy, which gave both returnees and IDPs a two-month food ration upon return; this was subsequently increased to four months, but this was still lower than the more typical six months used in reintegration programs. While this ensured equality between the two groups, it meant that UNHCR actually reduced the rations given to former refugees.⁴¹ In an ideal world, the rations of the internally displaced would have been increased. But, in the communities of return, equality between refugees and former IDPs helped provide a basis for community solidarity.

66. Five years after the formal end of the CEP program, one finds little evidence of strong distinctions between former refugees and IDPs. Interviews with community members consistently said that "some went here, some went there" but everyone had returned to the same place. In general, villages located near the borders had a higher percentage of the inhabitants leave directly for another country while those more "inland" sought safety elsewhere in Sierra Leone. For instance, in Kissi Kama, virtually all villagers had fled to Guinea while in Jokibu, Kailahun, many had fled west, first to Kenema and then to Bo district.

- Within the districts that it worked, UNHCR integrated returning refugees and former internally displaced persons without discrimination and promoted community improvement.

Implementing partners

67. Another important part of the design concerns UNHCR's choice of IPs. The CEP guidelines themselves seem to suggest that UNHCR should have worked on an equal basis with both international and national agencies as IPs. In practice, UNHCR created its longest and most substantive partnership with international NGOs. Over time, the number of NNGOs selected as IPs diminished.

68. While the community empowerment process envisions active participation from community members and direction from UNHCR, the official CEP guidelines suggest that IPs should serve as intermediaries between the grassroots and higher officials. They are to "help communities identify, prioritize lists of projects and facilitate the designing of a project," to submit this to information to UNHCR for approval, and then take on role of supervising funds to ensure accountability, monitoring and evaluating the project, and providing technical expertise.⁴²

69. This list of functions reflects the strengths of NGOs in general but stresses the strengths of international actors, especially technical expertise and financial expertise, to a greater degree than it focuses on the strengths of national ones. Typically NNGOS have a

⁴¹2005 Review, paras #63 and #64, p. 30.

⁴² CEP Guidelines, "Responsibilities of Implementing Partners," p. 5.

strong knowledge of local customs and cultures and close connections to communities, as well as lower overhead and salary charges than their international counterparts.⁴³

70. In Sierra Leone, numerous problems hampered UNHCR's efforts to work with national NGOs, including a lack of staff training within the organisations, lack of transparency and accounting standards acceptable to UNHCR, and a lack of technical capacity.⁴⁴ Despite considerable discussion within UNHCR-Freetown at the end of 2003, an executive decision was made to work primarily with INGOs in future. Under these circumstances, GTZ took on partnerships with some national NGOs, but even these relationships proved problematic.⁴⁵ Only BPDA, a national NGO, had extensive contracts with UNHCR as an IP in 2004 and 2005, and its projects had technical short-comings.⁴⁶

71. In retrospect, UNHCR was correct in its desire to support national organisations from Sierra Leone. Its expectations of them, particularly that they would manage funds of the same size and have the same technical expertise as international NGOs, were unrealistic. Almost all national NGOs had much more limited financial capacity than even the smallest INGOs. This meant that managing an UNHCR contract could create difficult challenges for them. BPDA, for instance, had difficulty with the year-to-year nature of UNHCR contracts, and the agency had to let over 300 employees go rather abruptly when it finished its contract as it had no other provisions for them.⁴⁷

72. In theory, treating INGOs and NNGOs very similarly might seem to be most appropriate but, in actuality, UNHCR needs to adapt different methods for working with much smaller national agencies as IPs. For example, modifying UNHCR's operating procedures so that contracts were longer than one year would benefit partnerships with small, national NGOs, even if smaller sums were dispersed per year.

73. Overall, UNHCR's choice of IPs produced positive results. In site surveys, communities had a highly favorable opinion of their IPs. This seemed to be particularly true when the IP had also worked with members of the community during their exile. One Kono villager described the situation this way: "They came with us," implying a sense of trust and solidarity between the communities and the villagers that crossed national boundaries.

- UNHCR's decision to work with IPs that had previous experience working with returning refugees facilitated trust between communities and the IPs.
- UNHCR's efforts to promote NNGOs had only moderate success.
- Modifying UNHCR's operating procedures and contract length would facilitate partnerships with national IPs.

⁴³ Interview, UNHCR official, Freetown, 3/08.

⁴⁴ Interviews, UNHCR officials, 3/06 and 3/08; *2005 Review*, para. #120, p. 50.

⁴⁵ Interview, UNHCR official, 3/06.

⁴⁶ Wells initially constructed by BPDA tended to run dry and some had to be redone by Oxfam.

⁴⁷ Interview, BPDA staff member, 7/07.

Ratings by sector and project type

74. For this study, all the main types of CEPs were rated according to how much they contributed to peacebuilding, protection, productivity, sustainability, and the extent to which they benefited vulnerable groups. These criteria are derived from UNHCR's reintegration policy (2008), which stresses the need to return people to lives of peace, productivity, and dignity. They are also a reflection of the CEP guidelines, which indicate that projects be sustainable, both economically and technically, and that they benefit vulnerable groups, defined as "women, children, adolescents, disabled and older people."⁴⁸

75. At a deeper level, these five areas are embedded in UNHCR's legal mandate in the 1951 Refugee Convention, which calls upon the organization to provide for the protection of refugees, one of the world's most vulnerable groups. Finally, fulfilment of these five elements are compatible with the UN's wider mission in Sierra Leone, as stated in Resolution 1181 and other UNSC resolutions.

76. This study does not evaluate individual CEPs but rather particular types, such as schools or court barriers, within one of five sectors: community building, education and community services, health, livelihoods, and water and sanitation.⁴⁹ In addition, gender projects from various sectors were considered together. Each type of CEP was given a rating of "high," "medium," or "low" depending on how well the project met the requirements of each of the five areas, and then a corresponding numerical score [high = 1, medium = .5, low = 0]. In assessing the extent to which any given type of project met the five criteria, the following questions were considered:

Peacebuilding: To what extent did the project contribute to peacebuilding by providing a symbol of a newly functioning community or supplying an essential service associated with a functioning state?

Protection: To what extent did the project contribute to the physical, emotional, and legal safety of community members?

Productivity: To what extent did the project provide an immediate benefit to its beneficiaries by providing income or material goods in the short term (1-2 years) or investments for the longer term (beyond 3 years)?

Vulnerability: To what extent did the project benefit the particular needs of a vulnerable group, especially women, children, youth, the disabled, and the elderly? [Note: if the project specifically focused on a vulnerable group, it was given the rating of "high"; if the project indirectly focused on a vulnerable group; it was rated "medium"; if the project did not address a vulnerable group, it was rated "low."]

⁴⁸ CEP guidelines, "Scope and Community Empowerment Projects Criteria," #5, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Individual and unique CEPs were excluded from consideration, as were types that had less than four examples.

Sustainability: To what extent was the project lasting and replicable by the community?

[Note: If the project lasted only 1-2 years, it was rated “low;” if it lasted 3-4 years, it was rated “medium;” if the project lasted 5 or more years and was likely to continue in the future, it was rated “high.”]

77. Two other areas were considered for inclusion in the rating system. CEP guidelines stress that local material and labour should be a part of the project, but given the passage of time and lack of detailed records on labour contributions, assessing this dimension was not possible. In addition, CEP guidelines suggest all projects minimize their environmental impact, but this analysis is beyond the scope of this study. The guidelines also recommend an emphasis on HIV/AIDs prevention, but this applied almost exclusively in the health sector and so was rejected as a general consideration for assessment.

78. Of the five main sectors, projects in the education and community services area received the highest ratings. Virtually every type of project in this category contributed to peacebuilding by providing an important symbol of a newly functioning state and by supplying an essential service, such as education. Beyond this, they contributed to the protection of community members by safeguarding their physical and emotional wellbeing. Schools and skills training programs reduced the vulnerability of one or more groups, especially children, girls, youth, and women.

79. In addition, some projects in this sector, such as skills training programs, made immediate contributions to increasing productivity, while all others laid a foundation for development in the future. Most types of projects in the education category, especially secondary and primary schools, were highly sustainable in that the project lasted more than five years and was likely to do so in the future. This sustainability depended in large part on the continued commitment of other national and international actors, in particular the desire and ability of the GOSL to pay for teachers and school supplies.

80. Of the individual projects, the five that received the highest ratings were: secondary schools, Gender Based Violence Centres, primary schools, rice drying floors, and water wells. Of these, the first three were all part of the education and community service sectors, and they scored well in all five areas. Rice drying floors, a livelihoods sector project that increased agricultural productivity, enhanced physical protection for women because they are placed in central locations, also proved to be highly sustainable by even the most remote returnee communities.

81. Water wells greatly contributed to productivity by facilitating the collection of a valuable resource; they also increased protection and reduced vulnerability by eliminating the need for women and girls to collect swamp water in solitary locations. Although water wells did not prove to be highly sustainable, they were rated highly because of their contributions in other areas (see Annex D).

Community buildings

82. During Sierra Leone's long war, community buildings sustained heavy damage, especially in the eastern region of the country. The court barriers in every chiefdom of Kailahun, Kenema, and Kono were seriously damaged or destroyed during the war.⁵⁰ In response to community demands, in 2003 and 2004 a wave of court barrier construction took place as CEPs. A total of 127 court barriers were constructed, including 96 in Kailahun alone. In addition to court barriers, CEPs also allowed the creation of guest houses, community markets, and youth centres.

Community Buildings	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects (Court Barriers)	20 (6)	29 (26)	0	0	0	49
2004 Projects (Court Barriers)	20 (18)	79 (70)	0	5 (3)	0	104
2005 Projects (Court Barriers)	2	1	0	0	4 (4)	7
Total Projects	42 (24)	109 (96)	0	5 (3)	4 (4)	160 (127)

83. A typical court barrier takes pride of place in the center of a village or town. A large and imposing structure, the barrier usually has an open pavilion with two enclosed rooms at the back. One of these rooms serves as an office for the chief and the other as a meeting room for village elders. Court barriers proved to be highly sustainable projects that made a strong contribution to peacebuilding and a modest one to protection and productivity. The area of weakness for this CEP came from its lack of attention to vulnerable groups.

Community Buildings	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
Court Barrier	☐	●	☐	○	●	3
Community Market	○	☐	☐	☐	☐	2
Guest Houses	○	○	☐	☐	●	2

84. Given that a court barrier stands at the center of a town or village in Sierra Leone, the construction of these buildings had a great symbolic value for a community. The barrier in Moidema, Fiama,⁵¹ for instance, sits in the middle of the community and is highly visible from the main road. Serving as both the "house" of the local chief, the court for traditional justice, and a gathering place for village celebration, the court barrier is a central part of any rural village or town. During the war itself, invading forces singled out chiefs and elders, who were often being abused, tortured, and killed.⁵² Consequently, the reconstruction of a court barrier holds deep meaning both for the traditional rulers and other community members.

85. In selecting the project of the court barrier, communities prioritized the re-establishment of community order and justice over other desires, such as attention to better health or educational facilities. Often the choice of the barrier was influenced by the local chiefs, most typically older men from a "ruling family" who had been elected to their position for a life term, giving them considerable influence on decision making. As a court barrier is associated with a community's chief and elders, they had a particular interest in

⁵⁰ SLIS Map, Code 1051, 3 Nov. 2004, "Court Barriers: Building Damage," Map.

⁵¹ Site visit, Moidema, Fiama, Kono, 3/06 and 12/10.

⁵² *Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission*, Vol. 3A, p. 509.

their reconstruction. According to one UNHCR official, nearly 40% of all requests in the eastern region were for a court barrie.⁵³

86. An additional reason for the choice of barrie as a project was because of the fairly widespread belief that having an imposing structure would promote economic development. For example, one elder in the Kpandebu commented that it was important for the town to have a large court barrie because when people see a fine building, “they will choose this place” for development.⁵⁴

87. Court barriers proved to be highly sustainable projects in terms of both physical structures and process. Community members in Walima, Njaluahun, reported that the barrie served as a meeting place and was in good condition four years after it was constructed.⁵⁵ The town and section chief of Maloma, Njaluahun reported the importance of the barrie for social meetings and activities, especially as no other UN agencies had as yet brought other projects to the town.⁵⁶

88. Though the primary choice of community elders, the large number of CEPs devoted to court barriers in 2003 and 2004 generated criticisms both within UNHCR and outside of it. To many, the court barrie was a highly “male-oriented” project. Moreover, while the court was a place of justice, this justice reflected traditional values and norms that usually did not address such issues as gender -based violence. In response to these criticisms, UNHCR rightly made a renewed effort to incorporate a broader range of projects as CEPs and to empower more members of vulnerable groups, especially women. As a result, in 2005, no court barriers were constructed as CEPs in Kono, Kailahun, Kambia, or Pujehan.

89. Though small in terms of number, the other community buildings constructed as CEPs made a modest contribution to their communities. Headquarter towns in Gorama Kono, Kissi Teng and Kissi Tongi chiefdoms are all benefiting from guest houses built as CEPs while other communities are utilizing market structures.⁵⁷ An exception to this was the market constructed in Koidu, Gbense, which became a “white elephant” because it was never really used for that purpose, being rather small and not centrally located.⁵⁸

- Court barriers contributed to post-conflict peacebuilding by providing a highly visible symbol of a renewed community.
- Court barriers proved to be highly sustainable.
- Construction of court barriers did not specifically benefit vulnerable groups.

⁵³ Interview, UNHCR official, Kenema, 3/06.

⁵⁴ Site visit, Kpandebu, Luawa, Kailahun, 3/06.

⁵⁵ Site visit, Walima, Njaluahun, Kailahun, 3/08.

⁵⁶ Site visit, Maloma, Njaluahun, Kailahun, 3/08.

⁵⁷ Site visits, Kangama, Gorama Kono, Kono, 7/11; Koindu, Kissi Teng, Kailahun, 9/06 and 7/11; Buedu, Kissi Tongi, Kailahun, 7/11.

⁵⁸ Interview, TST official, Koidu, 3/6, and site visit, 7/11.



Court Barrie, Chief and Elders, Kpandebu, Luawa, Kailahun a 2004 CEP constructed by GTZ/PACE. [photo by C. Skran]

Education and community services

90. Making up the third largest category of CEP, education and community service activities constituted about 20% of the total number of projects. This category encompassed a variety of activities, including the rehabilitation and/or construction of primary and secondary schools, skills training centres, and playgrounds and the provision of school supplies, teaching materials, sports equipment, and adult literacy programs. UNHCR also placed Gender Based Violence (GBV) Centres, which will be discussed separately in the next section, into this category.

Community Service & Education	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	22	10	4	4	0	40
2004 Projects	13	25	16	5	0	59
2005 Projects	59	79	0	24	14	176
Total Projects	94	114	20	33	14	275

91. By key measures, the education projects were the most successful of all CEPs, contributing to peacebuilding, protection, and productivity, as well as projects reducing vulnerability and being highly sustainable.

Education & Community Service	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
Secondary Schools	◐	●	●	●	●	4.5
GBV Centres	●	●	◐	●	◐	4.0
Primary Schools	◐	●	◐	●	●	4.0
Skills Training	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	3.0
Playgrounds	◐	◐	○	●	●	3.0

92. The schools constructed or rehabilitated as CEPs made a significant contribution to peacebuilding. Following the civil war, restoring and improving education was one of the greatest priorities for Sierra Leoneans. As a result of the war, net primary enrollment level had declined from 52% to just 42% as reported in 2001.⁵⁹ Infrastructure damage to educational facilities was also heavy, reaching as high as 97% percent in Kailahun district. During the war itself, schools and teachers were frequent targets of the rebels because they were seen as representatives of authority in the pre-war system. Moreover, various warring factions used the schools as a location for their headquarters, often gradually stripping the buildings of any and everything of value.

93. For returnees, reconstruction of community schools was often a high, sometimes the highest priority for the community. A functioning school meant a return to normalcy and the restoration of an important government service. Beyond this, it provided a visible symbol of peace; the schools were a public statement about the value of youth and children, the neglect of which had contributed to the conflict. The construction of skills training programs and playgrounds had a similar impact, but a more moderate one because their location and functions were typically not as central to community life.

94. In selecting the type of activity for a CEP, focus group discussion with community members often identified education, youth, and children as a high priorities.⁶⁰ Without exception, in communities visited for this study, students, parents, and community members expressed high levels of satisfaction with the efforts rebuilding their schools.

95. The construction of schools by the CEPs had a high impact on the protection of children and young people because it provided them with a safer environment for learning and playing. The schools, by nature focused on children and youth, reduced the vulnerability of these groups. While not a complete solution, the restoration of schools contributed to programming for youth, including former child soldiers. “The acute need to youth targeted interventions” was identified as “perhaps one of the largest challenges at the community level” by the UN Transitional Appeal for 2004.⁶¹

96. In addition, the emphasis on girls’ education adopted by many schools also meant that reconstruction contributed to creating greater gender equality, an important element in

⁵⁹ UNDAF, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Interview, former UNHCR staff member, Koidu, Kono, 7/11.

⁶¹ *United Nations Transitional Appeal for Relief & Recovery – Sierra Leone 2004*, p. 9.

reducing the vulnerability of women and girls in areas where there was little tradition of formal education for females.

97. The reconstruction of schools through CEPs added to productivity because it constituted an investment in the future of young people and the regions in which they lived. In Kono district, nearly 2/3 of all primary schools had been destroyed (95 out of 148) and all 17 primary schools were in need of either rebuilding or rehabilitation.⁶² Teacher training also posed a significant problem: over 70% of the teachers were rated as unqualified while the student to teacher ratio was 93:1.⁶³ In this district, UNHCR funded the construction or rehabilitation of 21 primary schools and two secondary schools, bringing 20% of the damaged schools back to life. By any measure, this single UN agency profoundly impacted future productivity in the region through its quick action.

98. In Kailahun district, damage to schools was even greater, with only 7 primary schools out of 206 in operation and with none of the 22 secondary schools functioning at all.⁶⁴ As a result of the CEPs, 34 schools were rehabilitated or constructed almost 18 % of the number of damaged schools in Kailahun. In the third year of the CEP, UNHCR funded “soft” activities that supported schools, such as teaching and learning materials, adult literacy, and training for teachers. The small efforts at teacher training were especially important given that 65% of teachers in the district were initially unqualified.⁶⁵

99. Investments in schools proved to be highly sustainable. Support for education continued to be a priority of the GOSL and the MEST. The World Bank, through its Sababu project, continued to provide funds for the construction of schools, particularly at the junior secondary level. In addition, UNICEF retained its focus on educating the girl child and on enhancing the qualifications of the large number of under-trained teachers.

100. In contrast to primary and secondary schools, CEPs involving skills training, especially for youths, did not prove to be as sustainable. Although CEPs created skills training programs in Kono, Kailahun, and Kambia, most had faltered by 2011. These centres did not directly benefit from additional government support. Moreover, skills training requires continued supplies of kits as well as trained teachers. An exception to this general rule was the skills training centre/sewing store in Kambia, which has been operating more than five years.

101. In reviews conducted in 2010-11, every school visited for this study was functioning and conditions had improved dramatically. During site visits in 2005-06, many teachers reported going long periods without pay. By 2010-11, this situation dramatically improved as support for schools became a higher priority for the government of Sierra Leone. After the elections of 2007, additional support for teacher salaries was put into place.

102. UNHCR’s role in building and equipping schools and training teachers did not duplicate the work of other UN agencies or NGOs. At national interagency meetings, UNHCR collaborated with other organizations to avoid duplication of efforts. In addition, UNHCR worked in conjunction with MEST and UNICEF to restore some schools outside the QIPs and CEP program.

⁶²Data Pack: Kono, p. 18.

⁶³Data Pack: Kono, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁴Data Pack: Kailahun, p. 2.

⁶⁵SLIS Map, “Percent of Unqualified Teachers,” Code 0158, 10 Nov. 2004.

103. In addition to avoiding duplication, UNHCR provided added value through the speed of its work. In the words of one former UNHCR staff member: “the people were in dire needs of projects – they wanted immediate action.”⁶⁶ Although the World Bank’s Sababu project officially started in 2003, the majority of its schools were not constructed until after 2007, and many not until 2010. This left an important space for UNHCR to fill with its CEPs. In Kailahun district, for instance, the Sababu Project constructed 48 primary schools and 12 junior secondary schools.

104. Of these 60 schools, only 14 (or 25%) were completed by Dec. 2006; the rest had a much later completion date: 22 in 2007, 20 in 2008, and 4 in 2009-10. It was not until 2007 that the first 15 Sababu schools were completed in Kono district, while the rest were finished between 2008 through 2010.⁶⁷ Without UNHCR’s quick response provided a much needed catalyst for school enrolments and improvements, even as it served as a bridge to a larger, interagency efforts in the educational sector.

A School Transformed

Ahmadiyya Secondary School in Tombodu, Karama Chiefdom, Kono represents the type of transformation created by a CEP. Originally established in 1974, the school was badly damaged during the war; even its roof was vandalized and removed. As the result of a CEP, the school was rehabilitated with the assistance of WVI. By 2010, the number of pupils at the schools had grown to 400, including 161 girls, and the staff had increased to 12 paid teachers and 2 unpaid volunteers. The school had received continued support from the IRC, which provided teaching and learning materials, and WVI, which had donated books to the library. Teachers at the school were encouraged to take advantage of distance learning opportunities and earn more qualifications. The students have high levels of achievement; in the last national exams, 50 of 57 students had passed the national exams, including 21 girls.

- UNHCR rebuilt at least 20% of the damaged schools in Kono and Kailahun districts.
- UNHCR added value by addressing educational needs much faster than other agencies.
- Investments in primary and secondary schools proved to be highly sustainable.
- CEPs in skills training provided immediate enhancements to productivity but lacked sustainability.
- Other CEPs, such as the creation of playgrounds and the provision of sports equipment, had an immediate impact but only moderate sustainability.

⁶⁶ Interview, former UNHCR staff member, Koidu, Kono, 7/11.

⁶⁷ Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Education Science and Technology, “Sababu Education Project: Project Implementation Completion Report,” (December 2010) p. 43, pp. 63-64.

Gender

105. Given the widespread abuse of women and girls during the war, it is appropriate that CEPs in multiple sectors specifically addressed their needs. The CEP selection and management process itself also encouraged input from women, regardless of the type of activity. UNHCR also sponsored special gender projects, including Gender Based Violence Centres (13 in 4 districts) and women's centres (4 in Kono), that protected women's rights and promoted economic independence. Both the CEP process and gender projects addressed the same fundamental problem: the persistence of inequality and discrimination against women before, during, and after the war.

106. Few people suffered more in Sierra Leone's long war than women and girls. According to the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "women and girls became particular targets of malice and violence during the conflict," suffering from abduction, exploitation, rape, sexual slavery, mutilation, and kidnapping by multiple factions in the war. As a result, many females became displaced.

107. The most common human rights violation made against women was forced displacement, which affected about 24% of women but only 19% of men.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, many women and girls were later victimized by humanitarian workers, both within and outside Sierra Leone.⁶⁹ Given the position of women in Sierra Leone, it is evident that any serious attempt to create a more democratic society would have to address their access to education, medical care, and other services, protection under the law, and economic opportunities. CEPs that focused on gender, though part of a broader initiative, should be commended for attempting to achieve this.

108. GBV Centres made an important contribution to peacebuilding by creating a dramatic symbol of a new Sierra Leone. Some of the GBV centres constructed had a design similar to that of a court barrie, including a covered, pavilion suitable for meetings or public gatherings,⁷⁰ while others had a large, fully enclosed meeting hall.⁷¹ In either case, the GBV centres contained two interior rooms, one of which was typically used as an office and the other as a "safe room" for women and children who had been abused.

109. Some GBV centres also included a separate "counseling hut" and facilities for agricultural activities. The location of GBV centres within any given community varied, although most were placed away from the center of a town or village. In almost all cases, the implementing partner for the center was an international NGO, most frequently the IRC or GTZ. In a number of cases, CEP funds were also allocated to skills training for women and adult literacy, programs which IPs conducted in the GBV centres.

110. GBV Centres enhanced the protection of human rights for women and girls. Simply starting the centres required more than cement as communities had to be encouraged to discuss gender and sexual abuse. According to one UNHCR official, it took several visits to a community for members to even to begin to talk about the issue.⁷² Once in existence, GBV centres provided a safe meeting place for women where they could engage in productive activities, discuss community needs, or celebrate important events. GBV centres became a

⁶⁸ TRC, Vol. 3B, "Women and Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone," p. 86 and 136.

⁶⁹ TRC, Vol. 3B, "Women and Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone," p. 86; UNHCR-SCF-UK, "Sexual Violence & Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone," Feb. 2002.

⁷⁰ Examples can be found in Kayima, Koinkordu, Masundu in Kono or Joru and Ggebwema in Kenema.

⁷¹ Examples can be found in Buedu, Koindu, and Pendembu, Kailahun.

⁷² Interview, UNHCR official, Freetown, 2/06.

locus for other civil society actors, such as national NGOs, the local police, and medical staff. They further provided an institutional structure for advocacy on behalf of women's rights. Leaders at the GBV Centre in Pendembu, Upper Bambara, identified the problems of teenage pregnancy, forced marriage, FGM, domestic violence, and rape as all issues that affected women and girls in the community.⁷³ At the Bewondoo ("Patient") Centre in Buedu, women at the centre helped victims to document their cases and, if necessary, go to court with them.⁷⁴

111. GBV centres and women's centres also contributed to productivity. The CEPs for several GBV and women's centres included additional funding for skills training, adult literacy programs, and agricultural activities. Women interviewed often highlighted the importance of income generating activities, especially for widows. At the GBV Centre in Masundu, the IRC had helped the women's group plant cassava and provide materials for skills training in gara tie-dye and soap making.⁷⁵ At the centre in Koindu, a women's cooperative is still functioning, growing rice and other foods.⁷⁶ At the Training Centre for War Affected Women and Girls in Sewafe, courses in tailoring, catering, gara tie-dye, soap making, and baking were offered to about 70 young women in 2006.⁷⁷

112. In order to assess the sustainability of gender projects, over 80% of the GBV and women's centres were investigated, including seven in Kono, four in Kailahun, and two in Kenema. Of these 14 CEPs, over two-thirds were still functioning as women's centres, either as originally designed (5) or with a modified purpose and set of activities (5); about one-third have been closed or converted to a completely different purpose.

113. A core group of characteristics defines the four GBV centres and one women's skills training centre that continued as originally designed. Each of these centres is located in a significant town, rather than a village, and is on or near a well-travelled road. All of the centres have the support of traditional rulers and an active management committee, although the composition and size of this committee varies. At the Buedu Centre, for instance, the Executive Committee is composed of 12 members, all women.

114. At one time, men also participated in the management of the centre, but the women found that they tried to dominate its activities, so the structure was changed.⁷⁸ In contrast, the Executive Committee at the GBV Centre in Pendembu includes six members, including both women and men.⁷⁹ Finally, all these CEPs benefited from on-going support from the IRC, which has maintained active gender programming, especially in Kailahun district. IRC also repaired some of the physical facilities, including that for the Women's Skills Training Centre in Yengema and the GBV centre in Masundu.

115. In contrast to the first group, the centres that modified their activities did not enjoy the on-going support of an international NGO for the entire time period. Led by an active management committee or a strong individual, all of them developed the economic aspects of their centre as a way to sustain the centres. The GBV centres location in Luawa chiefdom constructed by GTZ became markets about one year after their completion. As a result of

⁷³ Interview with IRC staff member and women leaders at Ngoyia Nyanga GBV Centre, Pendembu, Upper Bambara, Kailahun, 9/06.

⁷⁴ Site visit, Bewondoo GBV Centre, Buedu, Kissi Tongi, Kailahun, 7/11.

⁷⁵ Site visit, GBV Centre, Masundu, Sandor, Kono, 7/11.

⁷⁶ Site Visit, GBV Centre, Koindu, Kissi Teng, Kailahun, 7/11.

⁷⁷ Site Visit, Training Centre for War Affected Women and Girls, Sewafe, Nimiya, Kono, 3/06.

⁷⁸ Site visit, Bewondoo GBV Centre, Buedu, Kissi Tongi, Kailahun, 7/11.

⁷⁹ Site visit to Ngoyia Nyanga Women's GBV Centre, Pendembu, Upper Bambara, Kailahun, 7/11.

this transition, they diminished their protection role but continued to support local women by providing a safe location for market activities.⁸⁰ The Sewafe skills training centre for women modified its training spaces and programs to that it could include a primary school. According to the director, this is in keeping with their original function as the female trainees needed a place for their children while they underwent training.⁸¹

116. Although the exact circumstances of the five CEPs that ceased to function as women's centres varies, they share a common problem: lack of support or active opposition from the community. Here, paramount chiefs played an important role, as their opposition to a women's centre could result in its closure or hinder its modification to a self-sustainable centre. In Kainkordu, Soa, for instance, the GBV centre has not adapted to the departure of the IRC in 2009. The centre is poorly located because the previous chief had been unwilling to allocate a better piece of land for the centre. Though the structure is potentially useful as a market or meeting place, its placement at the bottom of a steep hill a long walk from the town above makes this use undesirable.

117. The sustainability of the GBV centres appears to have been aided by the on-going support of an international NGO. IRC's activities at four women's centres in Kailahun, which include 200 group members, are part of its larger programming to combat GBV. IRC works with policy units, trains staff, advocates with the minister of health, and helps to provide temporary shelter for women who have been abused.⁸² In essence, these centres perform functions utilized by the state elsewhere and are new to Sierra Leone. The success of women's projects overall, seems to have been carried out by the women in the community. Here the UNHCR was clearly a catalyst for future activity and the women's groups have benefited from the start and have now modified the projects to a purpose that suits them, making the CEP a success both as a process and a project.

⁸⁰ Site visits, Sandiyallu and Bandajuma Sinneh, Luawa, Kailahun, 7/11.

⁸¹ Site visits, Training Centre for War Affect Women and Girls, Sewafe, Nimiyama, Kono, 3/06 and 12/10.

⁸² Interviews with IRC staff members, Freetown and Koidu, 12/10 and 7/11.

Sustainability of GBV and women's centres

Centre/Project	Kono	Kailahan	Kenema
<p>Functioning - GBV/women's centres (IP-CEP year)</p> <p>All of these centres received additional support from the IRC through 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBV Centre, Masundu, Sandor (IRC-2005) • Women's skills training Centre, Yengema, Nimikoro (IRC-2003) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bewondoo Women's Centre, Buedu, Kissi Tongi (GTZ-2005) • Diom Piloor GBV centre, Koindu, Kissi Teng (GTZ-2005) • Ngoyia Nyanga GBV Centre, Pendembu, Upper Bambara (GTZ-2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
<p>Modified - purpose and activities changed by community (IP - CEP year)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Centre for War Affected Women and Girls, Sewafe, Nimiya (WVI - 2004) school added • Benkoma Skills Training Centre, Bendu II, Kamara (WVI- 2003) Converted to a primary school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandiyallu, Luawa (GTZ-2005) • Bandajuma Sinneh, Luawa (GTZ-2005) <p>Markets in use by women/GBV functions dropped</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBV Centre, Juro, Gaura (GTZ-2005) In use as a school and church
<p>Not Functioning (IP - CEP year)</p> <p>Centre is closed, vacant, or used for a completely different purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBV Centre, Kayima, Sandor (IRC-2005) Converted to storage facility • GBV Centre, Kainkordu, Soa (IRC-2005) vacant and in disrepair • Njagbwema, Fiama, Women's Centre (IRC-2003) closed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBV Centre, Gegbema, Tunkia (GTZ- 2005) Not in use but physically maintained

Note: This study only includes CEPs that supported skills training if a permanent centre for women was created. This survey includes 80% (14 of 17) GBV/women's centres; it excludes only 3: Gbegbekor, Mafindor, Kono (IRC-2005) and Fairo, Soro Gbema, Pujehan (GTZ-2005) and Zimmi Pewa, Makpele, Pujehan (GTZ-2005).

Success story – Pendembu Centre

Pendembu is run by an active women's committee, receives support from the prominent chair lady, and is accepted by the paramount chief. At the GBV Centre in Pendembu, support was provided for women on an on-going basis. Women involved with the centre stress that the privacy of the GBV centre reduced shame for victims of GBV and the opportunity for medical care, paid for by the IRC. The centre served females of all ages, from age 14 or 15 to the elderly. More than five years after its construction, the GBV Centre in Pendembu still has an active program. The centre frequently hosts workshops and engages in a variety of activities, and the very first woman to be elected as a member of the District councils for the areas has been a member of the Project Management committee.



GBV Centre and staff at Pendembu, Kailahun
[photo by Kyu-po Pyun]

- GBV Centres contributed to peacebuilding by providing an important symbol of women's rights.
- Gender projects contributed to protection of women through support and advocacy of abused women and girls.
- Both GBV centres and skills training added to productivity.
- The protection functions of GBV Centres required the ongoing support of an NGO in order to be sustainable.
- Communities successfully modified their so that their activities could be maintained in about two-thirds of cases.
- The creation of GBV centres served as a catalyst for gender programming by other actors.

Health

118. Health projects composed only about three percent of the total number of CEPs. This is perhaps unusual given the poor quality of health care in the regions of highest returns. Before and after the war in Sierra Leone, one of the greatest needs, especially in rural areas, was for medical care. In Kono and Kailahun, there were only two doctors per district, and also a large number of people per PHU. For instance, a 2002 survey of Kailahun district indicated that for the estimated population of 349,000 (2001), the district had only 22 functioning health units, making the estimated population per unit at nearly 16,000.⁸³

119. CEPs devoted to health included the construction of PHUs and maternity health posts, as well as the provision of staff quarters for health care workers and traditional birth attendants. In addition, community sensitization about HIV/AIDs was funded under this category. A typical PHU generally includes one main room, which serves as a waiting area and meeting space, and two additional rooms, one for sick people and the other for a medical office. Typically the clinics and maternity health posts were outfitted with supplies at the time of their construction.

Health	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	1	11	5	1	0	18
2004 Projects	17	13	0	0	0	30
2005 Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Projects	18	24	5	1	0	48

Compared to other sectors, health CEPs fell into the middle category, scoring high in the areas of protection and attention to vulnerable groups, but more modestly in other categories.

Health	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
PHU	●	◐	◐	●	◐	3.5
TBA	●	◐	◐	●	○	3

⁸³Data Pack: Kailahun, p. 1.

120. While not strictly a “gender” project, health projects women often selected them as their first choice. Although not as dramatic a symbol as an imposing court barrie or bustling school, the existence of a functioning health facility symbolized peace and wellbeing, and provided a government service directly to the people. Health centres almost by definition were constructed to focus on vulnerable groups, including the elderly, women, and children, while the maternity post specifically benefited women and their infants. By providing a safer space for these vulnerable groups, the health clinics contributed to the physical protection of returnees.

121. The degree to which health CEPs contributed to enhancing productivity, however, was modest because of the very limited resources and staff of these clinics. Although the clinics were initially staffed with medical supplies, in many cases these had run out and had never been replaced. Increases in staffing at PHU had not been forthcoming. For instance, in 2011, both Kono and Kailahun still had only two doctors, the same number that they had in 2002! One area of expansion concerns the capacity to provide vaccinations, courtesy of a UNICEF’s initiative.

122. An example of a health post can be found in Gbieka, the headquarter town for Njaluahun chiefdom, and the site of two CEPs: a court barrie and a maternity health clinic. Five years after its construction, the health clinic still functioned, having been stocked with a solar-power refrigerator for vaccines and the possessing two bicycles to facilitate administration. The clinic served the returning population, the majority of whom were internally displaced in Bo or Kenema during the war.⁸⁴

123. The CEPs that provided housing for traditional birth attendants proved to be less sustainable. Five years after its construction, the TBA’s hut in Kigbai, Kpeje West is still standing, but the original bedding, blankets and medical supplies had been used. The TBA at the centre said that the last medical kits had been received came in 2005, three years prior to the visit. Typically, the attendant delivers one to two children each week. Water for the facility came from the nearby swamp as there was no ready access to clean water. Additional supplies and services from the GOSL or international actors had not been forthcoming.⁸⁵

124. Community members voiced more dissatisfaction with health facilities than with any other type of project. Both women and men noted the lack of supplies and materials, the great distances between health facilities, and the lack of trained personnel. Community members thought that by selecting the construction of a clinic they would achieve better health, but this was not necessarily the case.

125. Unlike the construction of schools, government sponsored medics had not flowed into these clinics. Amnesty International has called attention to the continuing high rates of maternal mortality within Sierra Leone, noting staff shortages, especially in remote areas, low or late pay, a lack of emergency care, and inadequate drugs and medical supplies as reasons for poor care.⁸⁶ The medical clinics provided a small step toward better health, but without inputs did not improve and extend services or even sustain the ones they originally offered.

⁸⁴ Site visit, Gbieka, Njaluahun, Kailahun, 3/08.

⁸⁵ Site visit, Kigbai, Kpeje West, Kailahun, 3/08.

⁸⁶ Amnesty International, *Out of Reach: The Cost of Maternal Health in Sierra Leone*, September 2009.

- Health CEPs focused on vulnerable groups, especially women, the elderly, and children.
- Health services provided by CEPs declined after initial supplies ran out.
- Community members expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with health facilities.
- Investments in health facilitated the later work of other development actors, particularly UNICEF.
- Given the great health needs facing Sierra Leoneans, it is unfortunate that there were no CEPs devoted to health in 2005.

Livelihoods

126. The second largest number of CEPs promoted livelihoods, covering a wide range of activities, including construction of rice drying floors, provision of rice mills, creation of vegetable-cooperatives, restocking of goats and sheep, introduction of cattle rearing, assistance to small businesses, and financing of microcredit. These projects made up about a third of the CEPs in Kambia, Kenema and Pujehun, about a quarter of the CEPs in Kono, and 13% of those in Kailahun.

Livelihoods	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	83	27	8	11	0	128
2004 Projects	16	31	5	14	0	66
2005 Projects	19	21	0	27	21	88
Total Projects	118	79	13	52	21	283

127. All the CEPs in this category addressed the great need of people to live productive lives. They also contributed to reducing vulnerability, especially among women engaged in agriculture and income generating activities. CEPs in this category added to protection by providing safer locations for women to work, either as individuals or as a group. In addition, the mechanical rice mills made contributions to peacebuilding by providing a visible symbol of a renewed community. Sustainability for these projects varied considerably, with the drying floor and agricultural support being highly sustainable but other projects less so.

Livelihoods	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
Drying floor	●	○	●	●	●	4.0
Sheep, goats restocking	○	○	●	●	●	3.0
Agricultural Support	◐	○	●	◐	●	3.0
Rice Hauler	○	◐	●	◐	◐	2.5
Small Business	◐	○	●	◐	◐	2.5
Cattle Restocking	○	○	●	○	○	1.0

128. All the CEPs that promoted agricultural cooperatives and other activities supplemented the aid provided to returnees and addressed the very important task of helping people to rebuild productive lives. This was a pressing need in all regions. In Kono district, for instance, production met only 21% of the population's needs and the district included almost 14,000 vulnerable farm families, the third highest number in the country.

129. Although Kono is known for its diamond mining, in fact over 70% of its population before the war was actually engaged in agriculture, producing rice, cassava, groundnuts, and vegetables as well as having palm plantations and coffee and cocoa production. The heavy fighting and neglect of agriculture during the war, left many abandoned fields and area.⁸⁷ Similarly, in Kailahun, the district produced only 34% of cereal needs and it hosted more vulnerable farm families than any other district.

130. Before the war, Kailahun district actually led the country in the production of cash crops, such as coffee, cocoa, and palm oil, but as a result to the war, this had collapsed. In both districts, prior to the CEP programs, most agriculture support consisted only of food aid and seed distribution rather than full-scale agricultural development projects.⁸⁸ In Kenema district, a survey of needs identified a lack of "agricultural inputs and lack of credit facilities for farmers" as an urgent and common problem.⁸⁹

131. The single most successful single project according to the rating system was the rice drying floor, a rather modest cement floor usually placed in an easily accessible location in a rural village or towns. As women and children are almost always the people involved in processing agricultural products, the drying floor provided a clean, open, public location for this work. Rice drying floors also proved to be highly sustainable, even by the most remote communities, as they can be maintained by a community without the addition of fuel, equipment, or highly skilled personnel. A village rice drying floor has the added advantage in that it contributes to health by making food processing more hygienic than the main alternative, drying seeds directly on the ground.

132. An example of the small but positive difference that a drying floor can make in a small community can be found in Kodibu, Kpeje West where UNHCR sponsored a community store and drying floor. Community members, who had largely fled to Liberia and Guinea during the war, had returned to a devastated community on their own without return packages from any international agency.

133. Five years after its construction, the community still had a store management committee, composed of three men and two women, to oversee the use of the store and floor. Though the community had access to only one well, and villagers walked nine miles to the nearest medical facility, the drying floor and store helped the women, who typically planted potatoes, groundnuts, and cocoa, consuming some locally and taking others to nearby towns.

134. CEPs that involved the provision of rice mills, sometimes in conjunction with drying floors or community stores, offered the possibility of being a catalyst for significant economic growth. For instance, in Tuiyor, Fiama, enhanced production from a rice mill generated surplus revenues that allowed major expansion of rice cultivation. Even in highly remote areas, such as Kpondu, Kissi Teng, the installation of a rice hauler had an immediate

⁸⁷DataPack: Kono, p. 3.

⁸⁸Datapack: Kailahun, p. 3.

⁸⁹ Sierra Leone Encyclopedia: 2005, "Kenema District."

impact on the community, especially the women, who used it to significantly reduce the time used to process rice. An active PMC, which included 12 members including 5 women, oversaw the use of the hauler and kept it in a locked facility.⁹⁰

135. A disadvantage of this project, which relies on imported materials and can require on-going inputs of fuel, is technical sustainability. In Ngo, Nimiyama, the rice hauler worked well for three years, and then broke down. Three years later, the machine was still awaiting repair.⁹¹ Similarly, the rice mill in Dia, Luawa worked for three years, and once broken, the community lacked funds to repair it.⁹²

A CEP Success Story: Tuiyor, Fiama, Kono

In Tuiyor, Fiame, the provision of a rice mill and drying floor project from a 2005 CEP provided major benefits for two women's cooperatives and the community as a whole. Using the faster production methods, the Musuya and the Chendemyma's Farmer's Association had produced a surplus for sale in nearby Koidu and brought additional land under cultivation. The cooperatives, which received assistance from both COOPI and WVI, planted upland and lowland rice, cassava, potato, cocoa, peppers, and garden eggs. Produce from the cooperative was used for household consumption, future seeds, and external sale. More than thirty women in the community belonged to the cooperatives, and they included both married women and widows, ages 18 to 35. The rice hauler was kept in a locked storage building which stands in the centre of Tuiyor, near the drying floor which is frequently used by village women, and was kept in good condition by a village mechanic.

⁹⁰ Site visit to Kpondu, Kissi Teng, Kailahun, 3/06.

⁹¹ Site visit to Ngo Town, Nimiyama, Kono, 10/10.

⁹² Site visit, Dia, Kailahun, 7/11.



Woman on a rice drying floor in Tuiyor, Fiama, Kono [photo by C. Skran]

136. The provision of livestock, particularly sheep and goats, through CEPs had a lasting impact on communities. UNHCR staff involved in the CEPs considered this to be one of the most successful projects.⁹³ As a result of conflict, virtually all farm animals had disappeared. Seven communities in Kailahun elected livestock restocking as their CEP while 40 communities in Kono did so.

137. In agricultural chiefdoms of Kono, this project proved to be highly sustainable, with communities having both the incentives and skills to ensure the multiplication of herds. In Bandasuma, Fiama, for instance, the flock of sheep and goats has grown and multiplied, helping to meet the needs of this small village in a primarily agricultural chiefdom of Kono.⁹⁴

138. Restocking of livestock, especially goats, was much less successful in the mining chiefdoms of Kono, possibly because goats are frequently sacrificed before the opening of a new mining operation. CEPs that supported cattle rearing, which is usually done by males, appear not to have reduced vulnerability or been even moderately sustainable. Many of the communities that adopted this option for their CEP had limited experience with raising

⁹³ Interviews, UNHCR official – Kenema, 3/06 and former UNHCR official, Kono, 7/11.

⁹⁴ Site visit, Bandasuma, Fiama, Kono, 7/11.

cattle. For instance, one villager in Maima, Sandor, explained that the community members did not know how to care for the cattle, and they became sick and died.⁹⁵

139. At the time of the 2005 review, many of the microfinance and income-generating schemes were judged to be not as successful as the other types of projects, largely because their success required the continued involvement of an external actors. Moreover, one UNHCR official pointed out that stability required for the success of microcredit schemes had not yet come to the returning refugees.⁹⁶

140. While microfinance may have been problematic for returnee communities, CEPs that supported small business had a much greater impact. In Torkpombu, Gorama Kono, the Selokoma Small Business Project helped community members to manage their production. As part of the CEP, they learned to write proposal and explain their problems, which community members indicated had been highly valuable. As a community aided by a long term WVI program, they needed for continual interface with representatives of donor agencies.⁹⁷

141. In Kambia district, CEPs financed four different small business ventures, three of which continued in operation seven years after their creation: Kambia Youth Carpentry Association,⁹⁸ the Kambia Women's Entertainment Centre, and a Welding Machine Shop in Kambia II. Although some of them had shifted into private ownership, such a shift helped to ensure sustainability.

142. The Women's Entertainment Centre has been described this way: "Originally funded by UNHCR and still going strong today, with restaurant tables and a constant stream of hungry customers, serving the usual *plasses*, soups, fried fish, salad and pepper chicken."⁹⁹ At the Welding Centre, located on the main highway in Kambia 2 (New Town) about 10 of the original 30 men who formed the business are still alive and run a busy, industrial shop.¹⁰⁰

143. While the number of these projects is small (4), the success rate (75%) is above that typically experienced by small business start-ups in developed countries, suggesting that this approach to promoting economic growth and development should be examined further. It may be particularly appropriate in urban or semi-urban settings.

- CEPS that involved rice drying floors, community stores, rice mills, and livestock helped returnees become more successful and productive even in isolated locations.
- The provision of rice mills has a high productive potential but technological sustainability is a recurrent problem.
- The successful introduction of cattle rearing among communities that have not been previously exposed to it may require a longer training period.

⁹⁵ Site visit, Maima, Sandor, Kono, 7/11. Note: This study was not able to investigate the cattle rearing projects in Mafindor, Lei, and Soa chiefdoms of Kono.

⁹⁶ Interview, UNHCR official, Freetown, 3/06.

⁹⁷ Site visit to Torkpombu, Gorama Kono, Kono, 7/11.

⁹⁸ GTZ reported in 2004 that the association had ceased to function as a community project. A site visit in 2011 indicated that the building is being used by individual carpenters to complete and sell projects. Although its form has modified, the carpentry project still continues. GTZ Sierra Leone, "Assessment of and Recommendations for Community Empowerment Projects in Kambia District," Draft report, 26 May, 2005.

⁹⁹ Katrina Manson and James Knight, *Sierra Leone: the Bradt Travel Guide*, Globe Pequot Press, 2009, p. 292. Site visit 7/11.

¹⁰⁰ Site visit, Welding Centre, Kambia II, 7/11.

- The success of CEP support for small business start-ups in Kambia suggests that this is a positive way to promote entrepreneurship, economic development, and growth in urban and semi-urban settings.

Water and sanitation

144. Through CEPs that created water points and sanitation facilities, UNHCR addressed one of the most pressing problems facing returnees. The 2004 Transitional Appeal defined “Watsan Interventions” as “critical to improve access to safe water and sanitation,” and consistently under-funded.

145. Typical projects in this category included the rehabilitation of existing wells and construction of hand dug wells, borehole wells, gravity fed systems, and VIP latrines. Water and sanitation projects were conducted in every district except Kambia, and they composed a full 60% of the CEPs in Kailahun, as well as 44% of those in Kono, and 37% of those in Pujehun and Kenema. A number of partners specialized in implementing this CEP, particularly PWJ in Kono and Oxfam in Kailahun.

Water & Sanitation	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	50	149	0	0	0	199
2004 Projects	48	55	0	5	0	108
2005 Projects Visited	125	86	0	56	26	293
Total Projects	223	290	0	61	26	600

146. Water wells of all types were among the most highly rated projects as they provided an essential service, contributed to protection for women and children, and enhanced productivity. Although they varied in terms of their longevity, most wells functioned for at least the medium term (3-4 years) and many much longer. CEPs that constructed latrines also provided protection and moderate contributions to health and productivity, even though most communities lacked the technical abilities to repair or replicate them.

Water & Sanitation	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
Wells	●	◐	●	●	◐	4
Latrines	●	○	◐	◐	◐	2.5

147. CEPs in the area of water and sanitation had a particular impact on Kailahun district. At the end of the war, acute human needs in the area of water and sanitation existed; less than 5% of the population had access to safe drinking water while the remaining 95% used unimproved and polluted water sources.¹⁰¹ Sanitation facilities had also declined and, in 2002, only 10% of pit latrines were estimated to be intact. Even by 2004, three years after the war’s conclusion, only about 25% of Kailahun’s population had access to safe drinking water, as compared to a national figure of about 35%.¹⁰² From 2003 through 2005, almost 300

¹⁰¹ DataPack: Kailahun.

¹⁰² UNDAF, p. 18.

separate CEPs provided 151 wells, including 25% boreholes, and VIP latrines to about 140 communities.¹⁰³

148. In Kono district, CEPs resulted in the construction or rehabilitation of 139 wells, 55% of which were borehole wells. Though more costly than traditional hand dug wells, borehole technology allows drilling as deep as 30 meters into granite, enabling them to tap cleaner water sources. PWJ implemented the construction of borehole wells in 9 chiefdoms, mostly ones off the main roads; they estimated that they helped 17,500 people directly, and many others indirectly. ¹⁰⁴Well waters, especially that provided by the boreholes, improved water quality and contributed to health, thus reducing the risk of typhoid, one of the most common illnesses after malaria in the northern region.

149. In addressing problems of water and sanitation, UNHCR approached them as connected to health and protection. For many women and young girls, the alternative to drawing water from a well is walking to collect river or stream water, where they might be vulnerable to sexual attack. Virtually all the wells dug as part of Casper placed in central locations which both increased protection and reduced work load.

150. Construction of latrines helped to improve sanitation, prevent disease, and reduced the need for “bush toilets.”¹⁰⁵ Many of the returnees who had been in refugee camps in Guinea had grown accustomed to using toilet facilities and wanted them on their return to their villages.

151. Judged in terms of sustainability, wells and latrines constructed as part of a CEP typically had moderate longevity, lasting three to four years, or in the case of boreholes, even longer. As the number of projects investigated in this sectors was relatively low (5%), the finding from the site visits are only suggestive. Nevertheless, it was clear that borehole wells, particularly those drilled by PWJ, had met high technical standards and were, in many cases, still working beyond a five year horizon. Site visits to hand dug wells and spring boxes in Kailahun indicated that the wells were maintained by a caretaker or local community, reflecting the careful attention to training given by Oxfam as an organization.¹⁰⁶

152. A detailed study of water points in Kailahun district completed in April 2006 indicated that local communities were not capable of the mechanical repair of existing wells of any type.¹⁰⁷ Site visits confirmed this finding in both Kono and Kailahun; the only successful repairs of water wells had been done by international NGOs, especially Oxfam and World Vision. Oxfam Sierra Leone is currently working with the relevant government ministries to create a repair shop in Kailahun that will have a spare parts store and mechanical help.¹⁰⁸

153. Site visits to CEPs that resulted in the construction of VIP latrines indicated that about half had lasted five or more years, but communities did not replace them, possibly because their construction requires zinc sheets, cement, and other outside inputs. For instance, in Ngo Town, Nimiyama, PWJ built four, three-seater latrines in 2005; five years later,

¹⁰³ UNHCR *Global Report: 2005*, p. 243, reports 350 sanitation projects. This higher figure may count an individual latrine as a CEP project, even though most CEPs included the construction of multiple latrines in a community is a 15 million leon funding envelop.

¹⁰⁴ Interviews, PWJ staff members, Koidu and Freetown, 3/06.

¹⁰⁵ Interviews, WVI staff member, Koidu, Kono, 3/06

¹⁰⁶ Interview, Oxfam staff members, Kailahun, 3/08.

¹⁰⁷ John Magrath, “Toward sustainable Water-supply Solutions in Rural Sierra Leone,” Oxfam Research Report in collaboration with WaterAid, April 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, Oxfam staff member, Freetown, 7/11.

- CEP projects helped to reduce the number of people in Kono and Kailahun districts without clean water.
- Water wells in placed in central locations added to the protection of women and girls.
- Water wells improved productivity and health for communities.
- The technical sustainability of water wells depended on international NGOs for maintenance.
- VIP latrines contributed to production and productivity but were not replicable projects by the communities themselves.

community members still used two but the others had filled. The community then dismantled the walls and used the cement blocks in other building projects.¹⁰⁹



Community members at a Borehole well in Kono [photo by Kyu-po Pyun.]

¹⁰⁹ Site visit, Ngo Town, Nimiyama Chiefdom, Kono, 12/10.

UNHCR as a catalyst and bridge

154. The end of 2005 marked the official end of UNHCR's CEP program. This date had additional meaning because in the same month UNAMSIL forces departed from Sierra Leone, to be replaced by the much smaller United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) as specified in UN Security Council Resolution 1620. In considering how to handle the transition, UNHCR's staff in Freetown and the field office puzzled about how to "hand over" the projects both at the interagency, national, and community levels. UNHCR sought collaboration with other members of the UNCT, especially the World Bank and UNDP, and to a lesser degree UNICEF, as way to enhance the sustainability of the CEPs.¹¹⁰ These efforts resulted in the creation of a Transition Support Team (TST) which was to be housed in UNDP but partially financed by UNHCR.

155. For UNHCR staff engaged in planning their exit strategy, 2005 was to be the key phase-out year, even though the largest number of CEPs were implemented that year. UNHCR put its efforts into a District Programme Team (DPT) which included representatives from UNHCR, NaCSA, TST, IPs, and District Councils.¹¹¹ Given the relative weakness of line ministries, especially outside the areas of education and health, and the inexperience of the newly elected District Councils, the transition process would heavily depend on international actors, both non-governmental and intergovernmental.

156. In May 2005, for instance, group meetings were held in Kono, Kailahun, Kenema, and Pujehun districts to make plans for CEPs funded by UNHCR and to be implemented by GTZ, one of the major IPs. Although all stakeholders attended the meetings, GTZ noted that "the support of long-term development stakeholders such as UNDP will be paramount to enhance the impact of past achievements and push the process beyond its emergency framework towards longer-term development."¹¹²

157. Throughout 2006, UNHCR tried to consolidate its projects at the field level,¹¹³ but their plans did not always go smoothly on the ground. In March 2006, no real accomplishments had come from the District Planning team in Kailahun and, even as late as September 2006, there was no real plan in place about how to maintain the water wells or rice haulers.¹¹⁴ Part of the problem was that the TST was not an operational agency, such as UNHCR or UNDP, but more of a coordinating mechanism for a number of stakeholders, both national and international.¹¹⁵

158. UNHCR's reliance on the TST, however, did ensure the completion of projects, especially in the water and sanitation area. Before its conclusion in December 2007, staff assigned to the TST took over some of UNHCR's role as intermediaries between community members and other actors, often conducting negotiations about labour contributions or material allocations. This was particularly an issue in Kono, where community members did not want to provide a local labour contribution to CEPs, possibly because mining offered a

¹¹⁰ UNHCR, *UNHCR Sierra Leone Briefing Paper, January 2006*, p. 4 [internal document].

¹¹¹ UNHCR *Sierra Leone Briefing Paper, January 2006*, p. 4.

¹¹² GTZ, *Perspectives (Sierra Leone)*, December 2005, p. 2.

¹¹³ Interview, UNHCR official, Kenema, 3/06.

¹¹⁴ Interview, TST official, 9/06.

¹¹⁵ Interview, UNHCR official, Freetown, 3/08.

more lucrative alternative.¹¹⁶Beyond the completion of existing projects, the TST continued the CEP process through its connection to the project management committees in each community. Inevitably though, the turn-over to the project to the “community” might in effect mean the transfer of the project to the local chief, who then would have a strong influence over the continuation of the project. This was especially true in Kono where chiefs played an important role in determining the final status of a project.¹¹⁷

159. Overall the UNHCR’s effort toward reintegration provided a bridge to the development activities of other UN agencies, especially in the education sector. Following the CEP program, the World Bank and its national partners in the education ministry continued to build schools throughout the country as part of Sababu program. World Bank officials and national government officials in Freetown understood UNHCR’s contribution and complemented it by selecting other districts for when locating primary and secondary schools.¹¹⁸ In addition, UNICEF augmented CEPs and helped ensure their sustainability when they outfitted health clinics built by UNHCR as they pursued a nation-wide campaign to increase vaccination rates across the country.

160. Although UNHCR provided a bridge to other development actors, in some areas its foundational work was not extended. In Kambia, for instance, there was an expectation that other agencies would continue to work with the skills training programs there, an expectation that appears not to have been met.¹¹⁹ As a result, most of the skills training projects that were viable in 2005 had collapsed by 2011, largely because they required more on-going support and materials.¹²⁰ Even in this case, however, UNHCR played an important role as a bridge, where, according to local government officials, it filled an important funding gap between the emergency and the development phases.¹²¹

161. In rural districts of Sierra Leone, international NGOs, especially Oxfam, World Vision, and the IRC, proved to be absolutely crucial in continuing both the process and products generated by a CEP. Although these agencies all had different funding bases and priorities, they shared a similar, grassroots approach to development and continued active programs in areas where CEPs had been implemented. In Kono, for instance, WVI has made a long term commitment to improve agricultural production, health, and sanitation in six chiefdoms, offering farmer field schools, seed rice, and other efforts that built on already existing CEPs.¹²² In Kailahun district, Oxfam has continued to expand water and sanitation services, sometimes building on existing CEPs and also extending beyond them.¹²³

162. In some cases, UNHCR’s efforts in the CEPs provided not simply a bridge for other development actors but acted as a catalyst, providing an alternative path to success and accelerating change. This catalytic role can clearly be seen if one considers the contributions of CEPs to faster agricultural development. UNHCR’s assistance went well beyond the provision of return packages, seed rice, and small animal restocking, even though materials

¹¹⁶ Interview, JICA official, Freetown, 3/08.

¹¹⁷ Interview, UNHCR official, Kenema, 3/06.

¹¹⁸ Interview, World Bank Country Manager, Freetown, 9/08.

¹¹⁹ Interview, District Council staff member, Kambia, 7/11.

¹²⁰ GTZ Sierra Leone, “Assessment of and Recommendations for Community Empowerment Projects in Kambia District,” Draft Report, 26 May 2005. GTZ estimated that 21 or 29 projects or 72% were viable, that is they had the “positive potential to continue in a form that was beneficial to community members” and recommended continuing support for them.

¹²¹ Interview, Kambia District Council, Kambia Town, 7/11.

¹²² Interview, WVI staff member, Koidu, Kono, 12/10.

¹²³ Interview, Oxfam staff members, Freetown, 3/08 and 7/11.

elements had importance. What magnified their impact was the ability of UNHCR, through both its reintegration and camp management activities, to add an additional social ingredient that sparked faster progress. For instance, UNHCR's support of women's agricultural cooperatives in the Guinea refugee camps greatly enhanced productivity upon return, as shown in Tuiyor, Fiama. Similarly, CEPs that cultivated project management skills or financed small business endeavours set in motion a stronger recovery process.

163. UNHCR investments seemed to have maximum effect when they served as part of a larger chain of investments, both physical and social. For instance, in Kangama, the prosperous headquarter town of Gorama Kono Chiefdom, CEP projects, including bread baking and petty trading ventures, were concluded here relatively early (2003), with a community guest house being added in 2005. This primarily agricultural chiefdom then benefited from additional support and activity from Action Aid, which later built 100 houses, Bio-United, which arranged a coca cooperative, Wateraid, which aided in the construction of a dam, and WVI, which has made a long-term commitment to the chiefdom.¹²⁴

164. Another example of UNHCR's catalytic role relates to the place of women's and gender issues in community empowerment. UNHCR's willingness to cultivate community members desirous of social change opened up an alternative path to greater gender equality, and consequently speeded up the process by incorporating more women into peacebuilding. In creating GBV centres, CEPs then provided a platform for gender advocates and for other actors, including international NGOs, to further gender programming. Since UNHCR's departure, the IRC and active management committees, for instance, have expanded the initiatives started by UNHCR in order to further enhance gender equality throughout the country.

165. A less obvious but very meaningful example of UNHCR's catalytic role can concerns its own role as an employer and trainer of its own national staff. Between 2003 and 2005, UNHCR employed an average of over 170 Sierra Leoneans per year, who worked in repatriation, repatriation, and refugee assistance programs.¹²⁵ After UNHCR's gradual drawdown due to the increased stabilization of the region, end of reintegration programs, and repatriation of Liberian refugees, members of its national staff moved on to positions with other UN agencies, NGOs, governmental offices, and even the private sector.

166. In addition to providing valuable employment experience for the nationals, many of whom had been refugees themselves, UNHCR helped retiring nationals to find new positions through both formal mechanisms and informal networks. As a result, former staff members can be found in positions of authority throughout Sierra Leone, bringing with them UNHCR's method and philosophy, including its emphasis on community participation and gender equality, to their new positions. It should not be underestimated how this has contributed in a deep and meaningful sense to capacity building in numerous institutions within Sierra Leone, which ultimately will help provide a source of lasting peace for the country.

¹²⁴ Site visit, Koroma Kono, 7/11.

¹²⁵ UNHCR *Global Reports, Sierra Leone, 2003-2005*.

- UNHCR's creation of a transition team helped to secure prompt completion of CEPS and encouraged the continuation of community participation in development.
- UNHCR provided a bridge to the work of the World Bank and UNICEF in the education and health sectors, and to UNDP in the area of agricultural development.
- International NGOS, especially the IRC, WVI, and Oxfam, helped to make many of the CEPs sustainable after the official pull-out of UNHCR.
- UNHCR acted as a catalyst, opening up new pathways to change and accelerating efforts to promote productivity, facilitate gender equality, and add capacity to national institutions.

Conclusion

167. Ten years after the conclusion of Sierra Leone's long war, much has changed in Sierra Leone. No longer at the bottom of the Human Development index,¹²⁶ the country experienced economic growth of nearly 5% per annum in 2010.¹²⁷ Having successfully elected Ernest Bai Koroma as president in 2007, the country is now preparing for another round of elections in 2012. While education and health standards have risen by a number of measures, much remains to be accomplished.

168. For instance, the number of children in primary school has increased to over 85%, but the number of secondary school students still hovers at just 25%. While about 25% of one year olds lack basic immunisations, the under-five mortality rate, at 192 per 1000, is still one of the highest in the world.¹²⁸ Clearly, Sierra Leoneans still face significant challenges, especially in the important area of health.

169. Although UNHCR's reintegration activities concluded at the end of 2005, there are still important lessons from Sierra Leone experience that can be drawn for other reintegration programs in Africa and elsewhere. These lessons fall into three main categories: policies that should be continued; policies that should be avoided; and policies that should be enhanced.

Policies to continue

170. UNHCR should continue to draw on its role as an emergency provider to provide value added and leverage to bring about the swift provisions of services. In Sierra Leone, reintegration efforts benefited from UNHCR's position as an emergency provider of assistance, its role in repatriation, its presence in Guinea and Liberia as well as in Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, the CEPs made the strongest impact on the educational sector, where UNHCR rebuilt over 20% of the schools in Kono and Kailahun, two of the most severely damaged areas in the country. That this reconstruction took place quickly and with community support is all a testimony to the benefits of an "emergency culture" utilized in a post-conflict setting.

171. UNHCR should continue to have a strong gender focus and to contribute to democracy building in this way. The gender focus of UNHCR's programming was most notable in the third year of the projects, but nevertheless provided protection and increased productivity for women and girls, two of the most vulnerable groups. The willingness of UNHCR staff members and of the IPs to incorporate gender issues went beyond the superficial and left a lasting impact, as can be seen in the sustainability of the CEPs that focused on women and gender issues.

172. UNHCR should continue to work in remote areas, even if no other development actors are likely to quickly follow them. CEPs were placed in every chiefdom of Kailahun and Kono, including some extremely remote communities. Remote communities may be most in need of UNHCR's skills and expertise, as well as in need of community building. UNHCR

¹²⁶UNDP, *Human Development Index for 2011*, ranked Sierra Leone 180 out of 187.

¹²⁷World Bank, 2011.

¹²⁸ UNDP, *Human Development Index for 2011*, Table 9, "Education and Health."

also has the capacity to implement sustainable projects, such as livestock restocking and rice drying floors that can be maintained by the communities without outside assistance.

173. UNHCR should continue to provide services that contributed to productivity and protection as long as they have high longevity, even if they are not replicable by the communities themselves. A case in point is water wells, which provided a high quality source of water for an extended period of time and lasted up to ten years, even though the communities lacked the skills and materials to replace them on their own. While sustainability is important in any project, it is not always the single most important element of a successful reintegration project as it must be balanced with consideration of what any given project contributes in other areas, such as protection or attention to vulnerable groups, as well.

174. UNHCR should continue to focus on community CEPs, involving all members of a returning community, including former IDPs and refugees. In fact, one of the greatest successes of the CEPs in Sierra Leone was that they both accepted different kinds of participants and became a vehicle for greater community solidarity.

175. UNHCR should continue to plan for a transition after its withdrawal, and be open to working with those actors that seem best able to continue its work. Reflecting on the Sierra Leonean experience, it is clear that UNHCR can work effectively with other UN agencies and that, in many cases, international NGOs are well placed to continue its participatory approach to development.

Areas to avoid

176. Given the existence of urban and self-settled refugees, UNHCR should avoid neglecting them in their reintegration programs. Very few urban refugees benefited from CEPs and regions that had higher numbers of self-settled refugees were also neglected.

177. UNHCR should avoid involvement in CEPs that introduce new skills or methods or that require on-going inputs unless the agency is willing to make a longer term commitment to their support. This is especially true if the projects have a relatively low impact, lack long-term longevity, or are not replicable by the community.

178. UNHCR should avoid the temptation to withdraw from reintegration quickly or abruptly. One of the reasons for the success of CEPs in Sierra Leone was due to the lessons learned in the first and second years of the program. While UNHCR needs to plan on eventually withdrawing, promoting sustainable return needs to be its highest priority.

179. UNHCR needs to avoid administrative policies that make collaboration with national NGOs difficult. Administrative policies that may work well for large, international NGOs can, in fact, be difficult for smaller, national organisations to manage successfully. None the less, these national agencies still have much to offer the reintegration process.

Areas to enhance

180. In order to increase the sustainability of CEPs, UNHCR should consider a targeted transition policy. In the Sierra Leone case, UNHCR was able to secure a smooth transition for its projects in general, but what would have been additionally beneficial was planning for specific CEPs that required ongoing support. In the case of the GBV centres in Kailahun,

the continuing support of the IRC provided reinforced the community empowerment process, thus creating social institutions that were new, progressive, and sustainable.

181. For other types of CEPs, including some skills training centres and rice milling operations, on-going arrangements were not put into place and, as a result, the projects lacked longevity, a key element of sustainability. A targeted transition policy need not be complicated or expensive, but would simply require more focused plan to support the transitions.

182. In Sierra Leone, UNHCR sponsored a small number of small business or entrepreneurial projects. The high success rate of these projects, over 75%, indicates that this model should be further explored and developed. Projects of this kind would seem to be appropriate in urban or semi-urban settings as well as in headquarter towns of rural areas. Moreover, since they can be utilized by both official and spontaneous returns, sponsoring more such activities would broaden UNHCR's impact. Finally, they enable greater contribution to building the private sector, something desperately needed in a post-conflict, aid dependent economy such as that of Sierra Leone and similar countries.

183. UNHCR's employment of national staff has the potential to greatly contribute to any country in which it works. While UNHCR currently does much to train its national staff, its work in this area could be enhanced. After a successful repatriation or reintegration efforts, national staff might be ideal candidates to work elsewhere for the UN but this requires, in most cases, knowledge of French. UNHCR should consider, where appropriate, working to equip its national staff with language skills that would help develop their long-term careers.

184. In addition, while UNHCR offices currently help national staff to find positions through job postings and references.¹²⁹ UNHCR could do more in this area, both in preparing highly qualified staff members for international positions through language training, and by more systematically documenting its referral services. UNHCR could also do more to keep track of the career paths of its national staff members, thus being able to document its longer term impact on a recovering state.

¹²⁹ Interview with NaCSA and UNHCR staff members, Kailahun, 9/06.

Annex A: Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of the PDES small grants program in conducting the final stages of this research in July 2011. Funding from Lawrence University made possible a research trip in 2010, and the Associated Colleges of the Midwest provided funding for site visits in 2008. Initial assistance was garnered from the Fulbright Program, which financed the first stages of this research in 2005-2006 in Sierra Leone. While in Sierra Leone, I also benefited from the assistance of the British Council and Sierra Leone - Opportunities Industrialization Center (SL-OIC).

The hard work and diligence of research assistants and translators proved invaluable in preparing this project. The following people served as crucial members of the team: Rhea Alert, Leah Drilias, Momodu Maligi, and Fredline McCormick (all in 2006), Edwin Owusu (2008), Angela Ting (2010), and Kyu-po Pyun (2011). In addition, Abu Marah contributed as a translator and navigator throughout the project. Special thanks are also due to Robert Furlong, who initially compiled data on the CEPs, and to Amy Henderson, who helped in the preparation of the final report.

I would like to thank the people of Sierra Leone for their warm welcome and hospitality. I am especially appreciative of my family in Wisconsin for their continuing support during my travels to Africa.

Finally, this report is dedicated to the memory of Edwin Owusu, a young graduate of the Peace and Conflict Studies program at the University of Sierra Leone, who passed away suddenly in September 2011.

Claudena Skran

The author completed her M.Phil and D.Phil in International Relations at Oxford University. She is currently Professor of Government and the Edwin and Ruth West Professor of Economics and Society at Lawrence University in Appleton, WI.

Annex B: Abbreviations

BPDA	Bo-Pujehan Development Association
CEP	Community Empowerment Project
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GTZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
IP	Implementing Partner
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
MSI	Management Systems International
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NNGO	National Non-governmental Organisation
OIC	Opportunities Industrialization Centers
PHU	Peripheral Health Unit
PWJ	Peace Winds Japan
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
QIP	Quick Impact Project
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SCF	Safe the Children UK
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TST	Transitional Support Team
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office for Sierra Leone
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Program
WVI	World Vision International

Annex C: Map of Sierra Leone



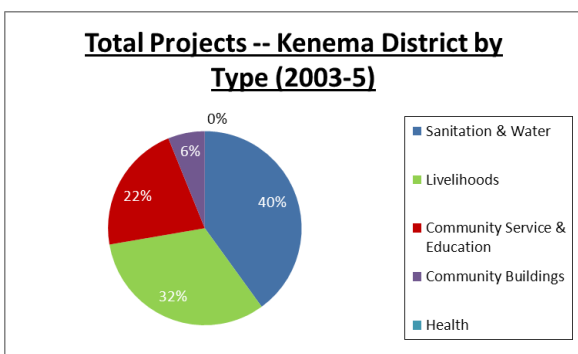
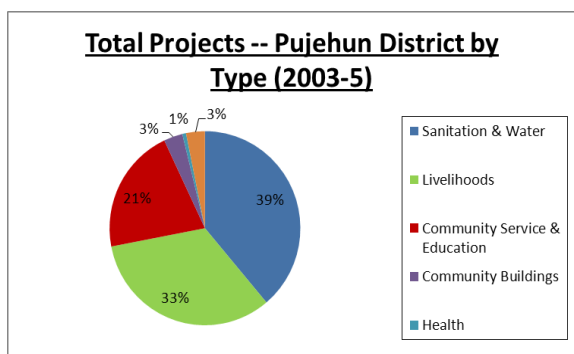
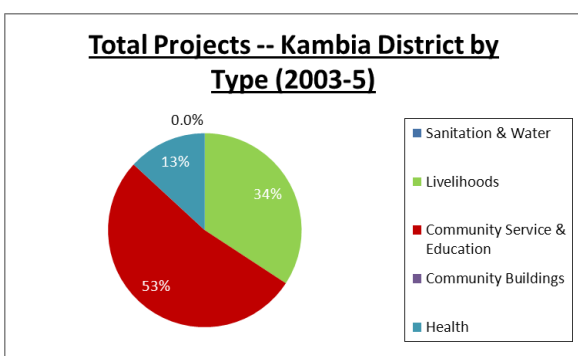
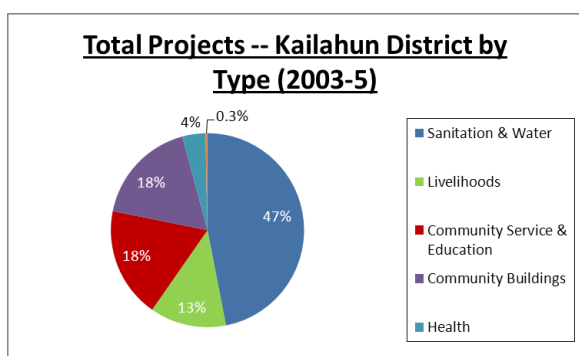
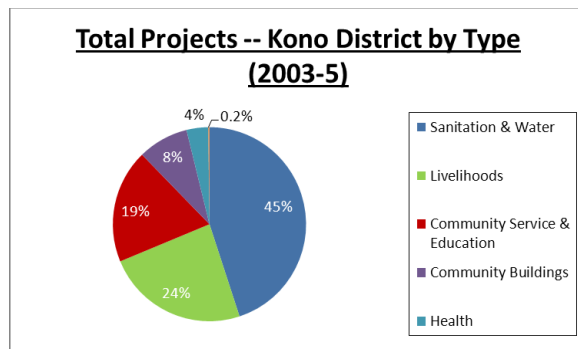
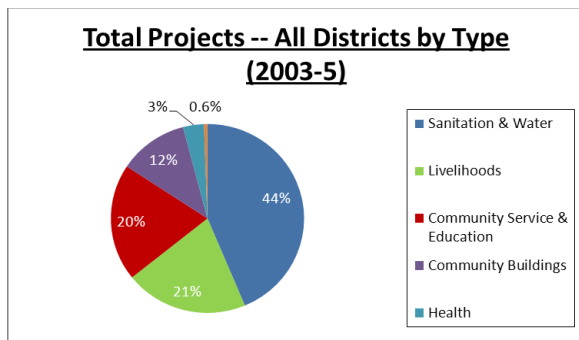
Sierra Leone Atlas Map

As of September 2004

GIMU / PGDS
Geographic Information and Mapping Unit
Population and Geographic Data Section
[Email: mail@gimupgds.org](mailto:mail@gimupgds.org)



Annex D: CEPS by district



Annex E: CEPs by type

Livelihoods	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	83	27	8	11	0	129
2004 Projects	16	31	5	14	0	66
2005 Projects	19	21	0	27	21	88
Totals	118	79	13	52	21	283

Community Service & Education	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	22	10	4	4	0	40
2004 Projects	13	25	16	5	0	59
2005 Projects	59	79	0	24	14	176
Totals	94	114	20	33	14	275

Health	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	1	11	5	1	0	18
2004 Projects	17	13	0	0	0	30
2005 Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	18	24	5	1	0	48

Sanitation & Water	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	50	149	0	0	0	199
2004 Projects	48	55	0	5	0	108
2005 Projects	125	86	0	56	26	293
Totals	223	290	0	61	26	600

Community Buildings	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	20	29	0	0	0	49
2004 Projects	20	79	0	5	0	104
2005 Projects	2	1	0	0	4	7
Totals	42	109	0	5	4	160

Other	Kono	Kailahun	Kambia	Pujehun	Kenema	Totals
2003 Projects	0	0	0	5	0	5
2004 Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005 Projects	1	2	0	0	0	3
Totals	1	2	0	5	0	8

Annex F: CEPs: Ratings by project type

Community Buildings	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
Court Barrie	◐	●	◐	○	●	3.0
Community Market	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	2.0
Guest Houses	○	○	◐	◐	●	2.0

Education & Community Service	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
Secondary Schools	◐	●	●	●	●	4.5
GBV Centres	●	●	◐	●	◐	4.0
Primary Schools	◐	●	◐	●	●	4.0
Skills Training	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	3.0
Playgrounds	◐	◐	○	●	●	3.0

Health	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
PHU	●	◐	◐	●	◐	3.5
TBA	●	◐	◐	●	○	3.0

Livelihoods	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
Drying floor	●	○	●	●	●	4.0
Sheep, goats restocking	○	○	●	●	●	3.0
Agricultural Support	◐	○	●	◐	◐	2.5
Rice Hauler	○	◐	●	◐	◐	2.5
Small Business	◐	○	●	◐	◐	2.5
Cattle Restocking	○	○	●	○	○	1.0

Water & Sanitation	Protection	Peace	Productivity	Vulnerable Groups	Sustainability	Totals
Wells	●	◐	●	●	◐	4.0
Latrines	●	○	◐	◐	◐	2.5

Annex G: List of interviews

Name	Agency	Location
2005		
Victoria Averill	Right to Play	Freetown
John Connelly	World Relief	West Africa Regional Coordinator
Eric Jumo	GOSL: Ministry of Development and Economic Planning	Freetown
Abdul Manaff Kemokai	DCI-SL	Freetown
Dr. Samuel Maligi	SL-OIC	Freetown
P.C. Almamy Yembeh Mansaray III	Wara-Wara Yagala Chiefdom	Koinadugu
Rebecca Simson	IRC	Freetown
Joseph Sinnah	IRC	Freetown
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Nicole S. Balliette	Catholic Relief Service - Sierra Leone	Freetown
Solomon Berewa	GOSL: Vice-President:	Freetown
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Paula Connolly	CONCERN	Freetown
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Charlie Cox	SCF-UK	Kailahun
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Rachel Doherty	US Embassy	Freetown
Miho Fukui	PWJ	Freetown
Peter Ganda	NaCSA	Kailahun
Dr. John Gbla	University of Sierra Leone	Freetown
Fabio Germano	GTZ	Freetown
Rachel Goldstein-Rodriquez	UNHCR	Freetown
Lucy Foray Gondor	Women's Centre	Pendembu, Kailahun
P. C. Cyril Foray Gondor II	Upper Bambara Chiefdom	Pendembu, Kailahun
Sheku Senesie Gondor	District Council	Pendembu, Kailahun
Myles Harrison	World Vision	Freetown
Jane Hobson	DFID - UK	Freetown
Ambassador Thomas Hull	US Embassy	Freetown
Brima M. Kaikai	NaCSA	Kailahun
Ruth Ada Kamara	World Relief	Makeni
Santigie K. Kanu	World Relief	Makpele Chiefdom
Abdul Kemoh	IRC	Kenema
Quinton Mustapha Koroma	World Relief	Freetown
Sheik Kuyateh	SL-OIC	Freetown
John Lahai	CARE	Freetown
Rene Lako	Mercy Ships	Freetown
Cecilia Agnes Lansana	World Relief	Zimmi
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Tetsuya Myojo	Peace Winds Japan	Freetown
Mioh Nemoto	UNICEF	Freetown
Janet Nickel	World Relief, World Hope International	Freetown
Nelson Gaviria Pérez	Oxfam	Freetown
Virginia Perez	SCF- UK	Freetown
John Perry	CARE	Freetown
Momoh Rogers	TST	Kailahun
James Sackey	World Bank	Freetown
Linus Sarkor	UNHCR	Freetown
Donald Robert Shaw	UNICEF	Freetown
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Gavin Simpson	Witness	Freetown
Islika Sisay	UNDP/TST	Kono
Mohamed S. Turay	US Embassy	Freetown
Thomas B. Turay	Caritas Makeni	Freetown
Bauke van Weringh	UNDP/TST	Freetown
Garth Van't Hul	CARE	Freetown
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Nick Webber	CARE	Freetown
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Yvonne Harding M. D.	Marie Stopes Sierra Leone	Freetown
Ambrose James	Search for Common Ground	Freetown
Francis Johnston	MSI	Freetown
Ernest Bai Koroma	GOSL: President	Freetown
Harriett Turay (Mrs)	50/50 Group Sierra Leone	Freetown
Christine Wilson	50/50 Group Sierra Leone	Freetown

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Lucy Foray Gondor	Women's Centre	Pendembu, Kailahun
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Amie Kandeh	IRC	Freetown
Alusane Kpulun	IRC	Kono
Bockarie Kallon	UNHCR	Kenema
Irene Kargo	50/50 Group Sierra Leone	Freetown
Diana Konomanyi	District Council	Koidu, Kono
Ali Mahamat	UNHCR	Freetown
Ken Idrissa Saffa	World Vision International	Kono
P.C. Paul Saquee V	Tankoro Chiefdom	Kono
Linus Sarkor	UNHCR	Freetown
Peter Senesie	Network Movement	Kono
Mohammed Sheriff	JAM (Joint Aid Management)	Freetown
Joe Williams	Network Movement	Kono

Annex H: Projects visited

Kono District

Chiefdom	Town	Project Description	Implementing Year
Fiama	Bandasuma	Construction of staff quarters	2004
Fiama	Bandasuma	Livestock Restocking	2005
Fiama	Gbetema, Foar	Construction of 15 VIP latrines in 4 villages	2004
Fiama	Kondor	Agriculture & Community Store Construction	2003
Fiama	Kondor	Chingimaa Agriculture Development Project	2003
Fiama	Moindema	Construction of a Community Barry	2004
Fiama	Moindema	Construction of Hand dug well	2005
Fiama	Njagbema	Construction of 1 3-seater latrine	2004
Fiama	Njagbema	Provision of Sport Equipment	2005
Fiama	Njagbwema	Agriculture Development Project	2003
Fiama	Njagbwema	Women's Multipurpose Centre Construction Project	2003
Fiama	Tuiyor	Construction of Rice mill & drying floor	2005
Gbense	Bendu III	Livestock Restocking	2005
Gbense	Boroma	Bassama Agriculture Development Project	2003
Gbense	Boroma	Rehabilitation of Hand dug wells	2003
Gbense	Govt. Hospital	Construction of Borehole well	2003
Gbense	Kaidu	Construction of Community primary school	2004
Gbense	Kissi Town	Construction of Hand dug well	2005
Gbense	Samadu	Construction of Hand dug well	2005
Gbense	Taasanbdaya	Construction of Community primary school	2004
Gbense	Yardu	Moindekor Kweadondorya Development Project	2003
Gorama Kono	Kangama	Construction of Kangama Community Guest House	2004
Gorama Kono	Kangama	Kangama Agriculture Farmers Project II	2003
Gorama Kono	Kangama	Gorama Kono Capacity Building Project	2003
Gorama Kono	Kangama	Kangama Bread Baking Project	2003
Gorama Kono	Kangama	Kangama Petty Trading Project	2003
Gorama Kono	Torkpombu	Selokoma Agriculture Development Project	2003
Gorama Kono	Torkpombu	Selokoma Small Business Project	2003
Gorama Kono	Vaama	Selokoma Agriculture & Store Construction Project	2003
Kamara	Bendu II	Rehabilitation of Benkoma Skills Training Centre	2003
Kamara	Bendu II	Rehabilitation of Benkoma Skills Training Centre II	2003
Kamara	Tombodu	Partial Rehab of Ahmadiyya Sec. School	2004
Kamara	Tombodu	Construction of Primary Schools	2005
Nimikoro	Bendu III	Borehole well	2003
Nimikoro	Jaiama Town	Construction of Main School Hall	2004
Nimikoro	Njagbwema	Construction of Njagbwema Community market	2004
Nimikoro	Nyamundu	Borehole well	2003
Nimikoro	Yengema II	Borehole well	2003
Nimikoro	Yengema Town	Borehole well	2003
NimiKoro	Yengema Town	Construction of Community Market	2005
Nimiyama	Ngo Town	Construction of Rice mill & drying floor	2005
Nimiyama	Ngo Town	Construction of 4 3-seater Latrine	2005
Nimiyama	Sewafe	Construction of training Centre for War affected Women and Girls	2004
Nimiyama	Sewafe	Third Phase rehab. Of Sewafe Sec. School	2004
Nimiyama	Sewafe (Jaama)	Partial Rehabilitation of Sewafe Secondary School	2003
Nimiyama	Sewafe (Jaama)	Rehabilitation of Sewafe Secondary School II	2003
Nimiyama	Sewafe (Jaama)	Provision of Furniture for Sewafe Secondary School	2003

Kono District			
Chiefdom	Town	Project Description	Implementing Year
Nimiyama	Sewafe (Jaama)	Skills Training in Gara-Tie-Dying & Tailoring	2003
Sandor	Bagbema	Construction of 5 2-seater Latrine	2005
Sandor	Chendeya	Borehole well	2004
Sandor	Fenima	Construction of 3 3-seater Latrine	2005
Sandor	Kaminkondu	Construction of Borehold well	2005
Sandor	Kayima	Animal Restocking	2003
Sandor	Kayima	Construction of GBV Centre	2005
Sandor	Kayima	GBV Awareness Training	2005
Sandor	Kayima	Support to Adult Literacy	2005
Sandor	Maima	Livestock Restocking	2005
Sandor	Maima	Construction of Borehole well - 18m	2005
Sandor	Masundu	Construction of GBV Centre	2005
Sandor	Masundu	GBV Awareness Training	2005
Sandor	Masundu	Support to Adult Literacy	2005
Sandor	Mbaoma II	Construction of Borehole well	2005
Sandor	Sengbeja	Construction of 1 3-seater Latrine	2005
Sandor	Tefaya	Rehabilitation of Court Barry & Community Centre	2003
Sandor	Waidala	Construction of 5 classroom building	2004
Sandor	Yormadu	Mbemayanda Skills Training in Gara Tie & Soap Making	2003
Sandor	Yormadu	Additional Support to Mbemayanda Training Centre	2003
Soa	Kainkordu	Construction of GBV Centre	2005
Soa	Kainkordu	GBV Awareness Training	2005
Soa	Kainkordu	Support to Adult Literacy	2005
Soa	Kainkordu	Provision of Sport Equipment	2005
Soa	Kainkordu	Construction of sports facility(playground)	2005
Soa	Kainkordu	Construction of Gravity-fed system	2005
Kailahan District			
Chiefdom	Town	Project Description	Implementing Year
Jawei	Daru	Construction of football field	2005
Jawei	Daru Town	Reconstruction of 3 classrooms building	2003
Kissi Kama	Dia	Animal Restocking	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Rice Processing Unit	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Women's Vegetable	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Women's Cooperative	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Construction of football field	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Equipment for Centre and Playground	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Special Support to Reunified Children	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Sporting Equipment for Youths	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Community Youth Centre	2005
Kissi Kama	Dia	Construction of rice mill and drying floor	2003
Kissi Teng	Bayama	Construction of Multi-Purpose Barry	2003
Kissi Teng	Buedu	Construct borehole wells equipped with hand pumps	2002
Kissi Teng	Koindu	Construction of Women's/GBV Action Centres	2005
Kissi Teng	Koindu	Support to Diom piloor centre in Koindu	2005
Kissi Teng	Koindu	Construction of 6-rooms Guest House	2004
Kissi Teng	Kpondu	Rice mill	
Kissi Tongi	Buedu	Construction of Women's/GBV Action Centres	2005
Kissi Tongi	Buedu	Support to Bewondoo Women Centre	2005
Kissi Tongi	Buedu	Construction of 6-rooms Guest House	2004
Kissi Tongi	Buedu	Borehole Installation - A	2003
Kissi Tongi	Buedu	Rehabilitation of dug-wells	2003

Kailahan District

Chiefdom	Town	Project Description	Implementing Year
Kissi Tongi	Buedu	Borehole Installation - B	2003
Kpeje Bongre	Pujehun	Construction of community store and drying floor	2003
Kpeje West	Bunumbu	Mechanical Rice Cultivation	2003
Kpeje West	Jokibu	Rice and Palm Oil retailing	2004
Kpeje West	Jokibu	Rice and Palm Oil retailing	2003
Kpeje West	Kigbai	Construction of TBA House	2004
Kpeje West	Kigbai	construction of TBA house	2003
Kpeje West	Kodibu	Construction of community store	2003
Luawa	Bandajuma	Borehole Installation	2003
Luawa	Bandajuma Sinneh	Construction of Women's/GBV Action Centres	2005
Luawa	Bandajuma Sinneh	GBV income generating centre	2005
Luawa	Kailahun	Shelter Support to Women in Action Skills Training Centre	2005
Luawa	Kpandebu	Construction of Community Barry	2004
Luawa	Kpandebu	Borehole Installation	2003
Luawa	Mende -Buima	Construction of Community Barry	2004
Luawa	Mumakor	Springbox construction	2003
Luawa	Sandiyallu	GBV income generating centre	2005
Luawa	Sandiyallu	Construction of GBV/IGA Centres (Market)	2005
Malema	Salina	Construction of Community Barry	2004
Mandu	Mobai	Micro-finance and skills training	2004
Njaluahun	Gbeika	Construction of Maternity health post (TBA)	2003
Njaluahun	Gbieka	Construction of Maternity Health Post (TBA)	2004
Njaluahun	Maloma	Reconstruction of Town Barry	2004
Njaluahun	Maloma	Reconstruction of town barry	2003
Upper Bambara		Support to teacher training	2005
U Bambara	Pendembu	Support to Ngoyia Nyanga Women (GBV Centre)	2005
U Bambara	Pendembu	Support to Ngoyia Nyanga Women's association	2005
U Bambara	Pendembu	Rice retailing	2004
U Bambara	Pendembu	Income Generation	2003
U Bambara	Pendembu	Borehole Installation	2003
U Bambara	Pendembu Ngebla	Construction of community pit latrines and well	2002
U Bambara	Pendembu(Vamma)	Borehole Installation - A	2003
U Bambara	Pendembu(Vamma)	Borehole Installation - B	2003
Yawei	Malema	Rice and Salt retailing	2004

Kambia District

Chiefdom	Town	Project Description	Implementing Year
Magbema	Kambia I	Sierra Leone Red Cross Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation	2004
Magbema	Kambia I	Women entertainment centre for Kambia and Massama	2004
Magbema	Kambia I	Skill trainings Kambia Women Progressive Development Association	2004
Magbema	Kambia I	Office space and equipment for adult literacy and numeracy for women	2004
Magbema	Kambia I	Office space and equipment for adult literacy and numeracy for women	2003
Magbema	Kambia I	Construction of store for rice milling machine and drying floor	2003
Magbema	Kambia II	Women in cloth weaving and hair dressing skills training	2004
Magbema	Kambia II	Cosy Sisters store and goods for petty trade	2004
Samu	Bubuya	Bubuya Lumour Maragiry Women skills training	2004
Samu	Bubuya	Bubuya Lumour Maragiry Women skills training	2003
Magbema	Kambia II	Welding Project	2003

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