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E-mail: return@vluchtelingenwerk.be

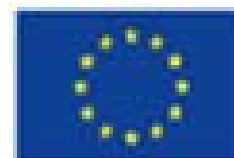
COUNTRY SHEET

SIERRA LEONE

BO and KONO District

August 2007

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Further information can be obtained at return@vluchtelingenwerk.be.

The Country Sheet Sierra Leone is a product of the CRI project.

CRI-country sheets are prepared mainly on the basis of publicly available information, completed with data gathered by local partners in the specific countries, and will be updated periodically.

Our local partners in Sierra Leone are:

- Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD): a non governmental organization with its main office in Freetown. NMJD works with government, non-government and private organizations, to enhance the capacity of civil society organizations engaging women, men, children, communities, government and other actors for the transformation of society.
- The Community Action for Rural Development an NGO with its main office in Koidu works at national and international level in areas such as advocacy, poverty reduction and social assessments, micro finance. with experience in training researches and counselling.

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Background note

The Italian Council for Refugees in collaboration with the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) and the Community Action for Rural Development (CARD) has gathered relevant and pertinent information on the Republic of Sierra Leone. The fact-finding missions started in February 2007 and ran until June 2007. They were primarily conducted by way of interviews, with the aid of questionnaires. In addition, secondary sources provided by some of the organizations were analyzed. The methodology for ascertaining the relevant interview partners included telephone surveys, personal interviews, content analysis of the proposed interview partner's mission and vision statements as well as the political and ideological contexts in which they operate. Researchers were recruited from 6 Non-Governmental Organizations (HEMDEF, CAVES, CAPE-SL, YDSL, WAGA, EPI).

This country sheet does not cover the whole of Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone is divided into four Provinces and 14 Districts:

- The Western Province comprising of two Districts, Western Urban and Western Rural;
- The Northern Province: Bombali, Kambia, Koinadugu, Port Loko, Tonkolili;
- The Southern Province: Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba, Pujehun;
- The Eastern Province: Kono, Kenema, Kailahun.

The Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) conducted the research/assessment on Country of Return Information (CRI) in 15 chiefdoms in the Bo District, the southern province of Sierra Leone.

The Card-SL conducted the research in both Bo District and Kono in the Eastern Province.

Due to the specific post-war situation of Sierra Leone - resulting in serious restraints on information gathering - the structure of this country sheet differs greatly from others in the same series.

Chapter 1

Access to territory (from country of asylum to return area)

1.1 Documentation

An entry visa is required for passengers not holding Sierra Leone or ECOWAS Member State passports.

Movement in the chiefdoms does not require any form of documentation. Even though it is not a condition, it is encouraged to have a national ID card for the purposes of official business transactions, or a voter registration card for election purposes.

Foreigners and citizens alike are free to move at any time of the day and night to wherever place they want to go.

1.1.1 Price of necessary documents

The price of an entry visa for Sierra Leone is around \$ 75,00.

1.2 Travel to country of origin

1.2.1 By air

Direct flights are available from London by Astraeus Airlines (Gatwick Airport) twice weekly and Bellview Airlines (Heathrow Airport) three times a week.

SN Brussels Airlines operates 3 times a week (Monday/Thursday and Sunday) and is the only full service IATA carrier operating between Europe and Sierra Leone. Visitors from other parts of the world can connect in Europe and some African cities to Freetown. Connections from other West African cities are available through Belleview and, Slok Airlines. New airline operations from Europe are also planned for the coming years¹.

Lungi International Airport is operated by Sierra Leone Airports Authority² and is located across the Sierra Leone River, 8 miles north of downtown Freetown.

All persons arriving in Sierra Leone are required to fill in a Customs Declaration Form C70. This form is given to passengers on board flights before landing and ensures quick processing of passengers.

On arrival, passengers proceed by bus (with ferry) to downtown Freetown.

Sierra Leone River separates Lungi International Airport from Freetown, the capital city. To cross the river passengers can use:

- Ferry service: the airport bus takes passengers to Tagrin Harbour to join the ferry service to Kissy Ferry Terminal, afterwards the bus continues to the Astraeus office on Rawdon Street;
- Hovercraft: the Diamond Hovercraft Service will in the near future operate a river crossing with departures from Maheru Beach (close to Lungi Airport) to Man 'o War (Aberdeen area);

¹ More info, including contact addresses can be found at the official site of the National Tourist Board;

www.welcometosierreleone.org

² For details on Airlines schedule and services contact: Sierra Leone Airports Authority, 15 Rawdon Street, Freetown, Tel: 232-22-223881/224660 (Head Office), Fax: 232-22-228133/224653, or Airports Information Freetown International Airport Lungi, Tel: 232-22-338307/430.

- Aircraft: there are plans for private airline companies to operate a flight from the airport to the capital, taking about 20 minutes.

Kono District has a traditional air field at Yengema, close to Koidu the capital of the District. There are regular flights from the domestic airport at Hastings near Freetown. The aircrafts are operated by a private airline company.

1.2.2 By land

Currently Sierra Leone can be accessed by road from Guinea (Conakry) Liberia (Monrovia). Special permits known as laissez-passer are required if transiting the boarder with a private vehicle. Private taxis, buses and trucks commute daily to and from Conakry/Freetown and Monrovia/Freetown.

1.2.3. By sea

Cargo and Passenger ships berth at the Queen Elizabeth II Quay, while some passenger/Cargo and private crafts can land at the Government Wharf in Central Freetown, arriving most times from Conakry and Banjul. Enquires should be made to Cargo Shipping Agencies³.

1.3 Impact of former acts and statutes upon the country

There are no known precedents or records to show whether individuals who illegally left the country or committed a crime outside the country have been brought to book, although the country has an INTERPOL department in the police force.

1.4 Access to return area

1.4.1 Practical obstacles

All travelling to and within the chiefdoms is by land. During the rainy season, or after heavy rainfall, the roads within the Districts are in bad condition, to the extent that remote areas become inaccessible.

Another obstacle to internal travel comes from the *poro* society (secret society) during the initiation season, when members are not allowed to move freely upon risk to be captured and forcefully initiated⁴. Successive governments have made little effort to change this picture either because the practice is so deeply embedded in the culture of the people or because politicians fear losing the votes of the people if they attempt to ban it, or both. Caution has to be taken during this season if you are a non-initiate.

³ Enquires should be made to: Sierra Leone Ports Authority, Queen Elizabeth II Quay, Cline Town, Freetown
Tel: 232-22-220029, Fax: 232-22-226443

⁴ All Mende boys start the initiation process into the Poro society upon reaching puberty. When inducted into this society Mende boys are initiated into manhood. Many of their rituals are parallel to those of the Sande society (for women).

1.4.2 Territories impossible or dangerous to approach

There is no mention of reported cases of landmines throughout the interviews conducted by our local partners.

And apart from traffic police checkpoints along the highways, roadblocks do not exist in any part of the Bo and Kono Districts.

1.4.3 Means of internal travel

The road transportation system is mainly private.

The government, however, has a bus service on a daily basis from and to Freetown.

There is no taxi service operational within the 2 Districts. Movement within the township and to nearby communities is organized by private motor cycle service and an association called motor bike riders/owners association.

Out-lying towns and villages are daily served by mini-buses and small cars.

Travelling passes by road on commercial motorbikes (called "Okada",) small vans and lorries. The cost of travelling from one place to another varies according to the distance and availability of transport means, but does not exceed \$ 0,50 (Le15, 000).

There are four main access roads in and out of the **Kono District**. These routes lead to the adjacent Districts in various directions: Kenema, Kailahun Koinadugu and Tonkolili District.

The best of these routes is the Kenema through Tongo Fields, a diamond mining town in the lower Bambara chiefdom in the Kenema District.

Also the one from the Tonkolili is very important. It is a paved road with a link between Kono and Matotoka in the Tonkolilie District.

The distance by road from Freetown to Kono is 212 miles (339 km). The section of the road from Freetown to Makeni, 115 miles (184 km), has just been resurfaced.

The link between Makeni and Matotoka is 23 miles (36 km) and it is still very good, with the surface still intact. It takes about 2 up to 2 ½ hours to reach Matotoka from Freetown, but it takes about 4 hours to reach Kono from Matotoka.

1.5 Transfer of personal property and belongings

1.5.1 Transportation of movable property

Transfer of personal property and belongings from abroad is most applicable in the capital city Freetown.

At the provincial level, all transfer of personal effects and belongings are transported by road. This means that if a returnee comes or sends his/her belongings to Sierra Leone, he/she will have to either transport them or request a clearing and forwarding agency to transfer them to the destination of his/her choice.

There are no restrictions for returnees to transfer their personal belongings and property to any place in the District. For entry into the country there are clearing and forwarding agencies that transport properties from one place to another within the country.

1.5.1.1 Contact list

Cargo Shipping Agencies

Sea and Land Services Cline Town Freetown Tel: 232-22-223453 E-mail: sals@slsa.com.sl	Sierra Leone Shipping Agencies Queen Elizabeth II Quay Cline Town Freetown Tel: 232-22-229855
Sierra Leone National Shipping Company 45 Cline Street, Cline Town Freetown Tel: 232-22-229287 Fax: 232-22-229513 E-mail: nsc@sierratel.sl	Sierra Leone Ports Authority Queen Elizabeth II Quay Cline Town, Freetown Tel: 232-22-220029 Fax: 232-22-226443

International Clearing and Forwarding Agencies

Name	Address	Telephone
International clearing and forwarding	9 Kissy road, Freetown	226238
Rapid clearing and forwarding	29 Wilberforce Street Freetown	076610301
N & S clearing and forwarding	8 Howe Street, Freetown	228213
Sanora forwarding and clearing	1 College road, Cline Town, Freetown	222034

1.5.2 Financial institutions

The following banks are present in Freetown: Barclays Bank of Sierra Leone, International Bank for Trade & Industry, National Cooperative Development Bank, Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, Standard Bank Sierra Leone⁵.

Commercial banks have branches in the Bo and Kono Districts: Union Trust Bank Limited; Standard Chartered Banks S/Leone LTD. Funds can be transferred or collected from and to any of these branches.

There exists no restrictions on the sum of money transported, neither on opening and operating a foreign currency account.

Funds can be transferred internationally, using the SWIFT ID code of each of the commercial banks.

⁵ For more details, you can contact the national bank : Bank of Sierra Leone , Siaka Stevens Street, Freetown, Tel: +232 22 226501, Fax: +232 22 224764, Email: info@bankofsierraleone-centralbank.org; website: <http://www.bankofsierraleone-centralbank.org/>

1.6 Communication system

Today, Sierra Leone has a lot of subscribers and numerous GSM service providers and their number is increasing daily. Sierra Leone has one of the largest mobile network services although seems to be the least developed country in the West African Sub-Region.

In rural areas few people have access to a mobile phone. Quite apart from the fact that most people cannot afford it, the main problem is that of poor coverage due to lack of network.

The Governmental telecommunication company SIERRATEL does not provide GSM services. The company only issues licenses to mobile companies operating in the country⁶.

Land lines go dead for months and years, so the people rely heavily on mobile phones. Currently, there are 6 mobile companies operating cellular networks in Sierra Leone: Mobitel, Celtel, Tigo, Africell, Datatell and Commiun. All the mobile companies are using the same system of prepaid cards. Currently one of the cell phone companies has free call services extended to all customers at a certain time during the off-peak period.

In addition, there are internet cafes operated by private business people at affordable cost (e.g. Kakua chiefdom). One of the cell phone companies also has an internet service which can be activated when the Sim pack is purchased for users of phones with blue tooth facilities.

Bo town is linked up to the national telephone company which has land line and fax services. There are several private internet cafes in both Bo and Koidu, the two District capitals.

⁶ AfricaNews; "Sierra Leone: Rapid growth for mobile sector" Bai-Bai Sesay, reporter in Freetown, posted 26th september 2007 http://www.africanews.com/site/list_messages/11804

Chapter 2

Physical security (in return area)

2.1 On going armed conflicts

There are no armed conflicts or arm rivalries in the chiefdoms of the country. In fact, arm robbery is not heard of in these communities, nor are there proliferations of arms. The chiefdoms are relatively peaceful.

2.2 Regions with high security risk

There are no security risks prevalent in all of the 15 chiefdoms.

2.3 Crime

2.3.1 Risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking/ forced prostitution

Trafficking in persons - particularly women and children - remains problematic. Numerous children are trafficked from the provinces to work in diamond mines, as commercial sex workers, and in street labour, both within Sierra Leone and to neighbouring countries (Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau).

There is also growing recognition of the problem of adoption fraud in which indigent parents are duped into terminating their parental rights⁷.

The Government of Sierra Leone does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking⁸. Sierra Leone prohibits all forms of trafficking through its 2005 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, which prescribes a maximum punishment of 10 years' imprisonment. This punishment is sufficiently stringent and commensurate with penalties for rape.

The Government of Sierra Leone took limited steps to protect victims over the past year. Although the government does not operate shelters for trafficking victims, police identified and referred an unknown number of victims to the Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW) for further referral to NGOs for care.

As for Bo City, in the Kakua chiefdom poverty with its related problems compels girls into prostitution.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Sierra Leone", World Report 2007 www.hrw.org, <http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/sierra14713.htm> , last accessed on 25 August 2007

⁸ US Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report" - June 12, 2007, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/82807.htm>

2.3.2 Effectiveness of protection

2.3.2.1 Police Force

The Sierra Leone Police Force is still corrupt⁹. Even though the police force has recently obtained additional funds, corruption is still manifest within its rank and file.

Bribery can easily subvert the cause of justice. This sometimes demotivates poor people from reporting cases. The Sierra Leone Police Force (SLP) has been recently restructured and is presently well equipped to handle crimes and riots. They have introduced a new form of policing that creates room for collaboration with the civil populace through the creation of community policing partnership boards. There has been an extension and expansion of policing with the setting-up of a police/community partnership board involving a community policing system with a civilian as the chairperson.

2.3.2.2 Military Presence

In Kono the 9th Battalion is stationed at a barracks some 6 km outside the township of Koidu, while the British Technical Unit (IMATT) has a military camp some 34 km east of Koidu and 28 km to a popular border crossing point where there is a military post.

The military takes regular border patrols to monitor security and this is coordinated by IMATT within the township. There are also night security patrols. The District council has a security committee which meets on a regular basis to supply security up-dates.

2.3.2.3 Judiciary

The judicial system consists of a Supreme Court, an Appeal Court and a High Court.

The judicial system is under phase of reconstruction, causing delays. Courts are also skewed to favour the rich and the well connected in society, especially since lawyers are expensive.

Today, human rights organizations are redirecting their focus onto the dispensation of justice. Community-based paralegals are trained and deployed in these communities.

According to the 2007 Human Rights Watch World Report¹⁰, striking defects within the judicial system remained evident throughout 2006, seriously undermining the rights of victims and the accused. These defects include extortion and bribe-taking by court officials; insufficient number of judges, magistrates and prosecuting attorneys; very little representation for the accused; absenteeism by court personnel; inadequate remuneration for judicial personnel and extended periods of pre-trial detention. Mismanagement and corruption within Sierra Leone's detention facilities resulted in sub-standard conditions, including overcrowding and lack of proper nutrition and health care, as well as numerous deaths in custody. The system of local courts controlled by traditional leaders and applying customary law, which is often discriminatory particularly against women, is the only legal system accessible to an estimated 70 percent of the population. Local court officials frequently abuse their powers by illegally detaining persons and charging high fines for minor offences, as well as by adjudicating criminal cases beyond their jurisdiction. The presence in each District of a resident magistrate, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), helped relieve the judicial backlog, as did the ongoing United Kingdom-funded Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP), which aims to update laws and procedures, refurbish court facilities and reduce the number of prisoners on remand.

⁹ See also: Transparency International, National Integrity Systems , Transparency International Country Study Report Sierra Leone, 2004, http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/nis/regional/by_country , last accessed on 25 August 2007

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Sierra Leone", World Report 2007 www.hrw.org, <http://hrw.org/englishwr2k7/docs/2007/01/11/sierra14713.htm> , last accessed on 25 August 2007

Chapter 3

Social security and reintegration

3.1 Regions with no reintegration and return and return opportunities

All the chiefdoms have reintegration and returnee opportunities. There are no threats of natural disasters or famine.

3.2 Housing/accommodation

To a large extent, accommodation depends on the depth of one's pocket. With money one can easily rent a house/apartment or even build a house. In some of the chiefdoms, however, it is not easy to gain accommodation even if one has enough money because the toll of the rebel war on housing was massive and people are still struggling to rebuild their homes. Classic examples are seen in Bumpah, Gbo and Valunia chiefdoms.

In general housing/accommodation problems have been aggravated by the rebel war that destroyed basic housing facilities in both rural and urban areas. In most local communities about 40-60% of the houses were burnt down. The Government of Sierra Leone has created a Ministry of Works, Housing and Technical Maintenance. This Ministry acts as the focal point for all housing matters, formulates and monitors the implementation of the National Housing Policy; does research on local building materials and monitors the construction of all houses.

The Sierra Leone Housing Corporation (SALHOC) is recognised as a parastatal (semi official) body that follows government housing policies. SALHOC provides housing services throughout the country, creates partnerships with the private sector, NGOs and the public sector. It also makes housing services accessible to all sectors of society, particularly the poor.

The Ministry of Works, Housing and Technical Maintenance has formulated a National Housing Policy framework document. The Ministry is also cooperating with shelter provision organisations, both national and international, including the National Commission for Social Action, Catholic Relief Services and Action Aid Sierra Leone. Currently, the government intends to design and construct model houses in all four provincial head quarters enhancing, through research, the use of local building materials to cut down on costs.

The newly established National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) is currently trying to engage in the building of houses all over the country for their clientele.

Action Aid Sierra Leone organises the "Youth-in-Crisis Project" and has constructed a total of 15 houses, ranging from 2 bedroom to 4 bedroom flats, that will be allocated to youths mainly in Freetown.

At the moment, local communities rely on mobilising mutual support in constructing and/or repairing their houses, mostly using local materials.

Alternatively, it would be possible to rent private dwelling houses, although these could be very expensive. At the onset few transit centres will be available for short-term stay whilst arrangements are concluded for drop-in centres.

3.2.1 Opportunities of building a house

3.2.1.1 Conditions of obtaining land property

If one wants to buy a piece of land he/she negotiates it from the landowners. This could be the head of a family (if it's a family property), community elders (if it's a community property) or individual land owners (if it's private property).

After acquiring the land, the documents are taken to the Ministry of Lands and Country Planning for registration and issuing the building permits, thereafter send to the Chief for his endorsement. In Kakua chiefdom, the sale of land is a business fraught with fraud and a high level of corruption involving Chiefs, courts and the police. So, one needs to be very careful when trying to acquire land.

3.2.1.2 Relevant approximate prices

In all chiefdoms, land is sold between Le 250,000 - Le 500,000 ; with the exception of Kakua chiefdom where prices range between Le 500,000 and Le 1,500,000.

Cost of building materials

Zinc	Le 200,000 per bundle of 20 sheets
Iron rods	Le 2,200,000 per tonne
Cement	Le 30,000 per bag
Nails	Le 5,000 per packet
Boards	Le 15,000 per leaf

3.2.2 Opportunities of buying real estate

3.2.2.1 Legal conditions

In chiefdoms the transactions to buy real estate first need the blessing of the Chief before they become legally binding.

In chiefdoms, buying real estate is uncommon. Land by law in the provinces is not for sale though this is largely honoured in the breach. People usually don't find it attractive to buy a house, simply because it is not a lucrative business and most people cannot afford it especially since the few houses were destroyed during the war.

Most of those who can afford to build only do so for their personal use and not with the intention to sell.

Where in chiefdoms, this transaction needs a written endorsement by the paramount Chief before it becomes legally binding, this is different for the city of Freetown. In Sierra Leone's capital, there is real estate for sale and the Ministry of Lands and Country Planning, and the courts or lawyers in private practice, can all facilitate acquiring real estate.

3.2.2.2 Obstacles for certain groups

Single women used to face serious obstacles when acquiring real estate because women are only considered important if they are married or attached to a man. Women themselves are regarded as properties by custom. They have no right to own or to acquire property. However, women groups across the country have been campaigning and advocating vigorously for a review of discriminating laws. These organized campaigns saw the recent domestication of the CEDAW which largely addresses the current imbalances faced by women. Women groups are also emerging with different agendas designed to address these situations. The 50/50 group and other organizations, for

instance, have been campaigning for a 30% representation of women in parliament. However, women captured only 16 out of 112 contested seats in parliament after the 2007 parliamentary elections.

3.2.2.3 Relevant approximate prices

Prices to obtain real estate start from 80 million Le and above in Freetown, and 50 million Le and above in the provinces/Districts/chiefdoms.

3.2.3 Opportunities for renting a house or apartment

3.2.3.1 Eventual obstacles for certain groups

Women are usually frowned on when they approach house owners to rent a house/apartment. They usually ask them to bring a man along to stand as guarantor for them. But this attitude is less common in Kakua chiefdom.

3.2.3.2 Relevant approximate prices ¹¹

Eastern Freetown	Western and Central Areas		Cost outside Freetown (Bo)
4 bedrooms house (yearly rent)	Le 1,500,000 - 2,500,000 (USD 507.00 - USD 845.00)	Le. 4,500,000 - Le. 6,000,000 (USD 1,520.00 - 2,027.00)	Le 800,000 - 1,000,000 (USD 270.00 - USD 338.00)

3.2.4 Temporary shelters

Except for refugee camps, which are almost extinct, there exists no structures ensuring temporary accommodation until long-term accommodation becomes available.

4.3 Livelihood

4.3.1 Employment

With the inflow of mining companies into Kono, there is an increasing demand for technical expertise with overseas training/qualifications. International development agencies as well as NGOs are looking for technical expertise coming from outside, resulting in a continuous demand for qualified skilled personnel.

The National Commission for Social Action, NaCSA¹² - that was established as a "Social Fund" in November 2001 by an Act of Parliament as the successor to the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) - gave rise to the public work sector which provides employment for unskilled youths.

¹¹ IOM, IRRICO, Information on return and reintegration in the countries of origin, Sierra Leone, 2007, to be contacted at: www.iom.int/irrico.

¹² More information is available on the website of NACSA <http://www.nacsa-sl.org/aboutnacsa.htm>.

There exists also a PADCO programme, (a programme for recruiting and placement of Sierra Leoneans willing to volunteer through the National Commission for Social Action upon building sustainable peace and development and reducing poverty) which provides employment for young graduates. This is a kind of volunteer work where youngsters are trained to work in the District councils all over the country. Volunteers are provided with lodging and monthly stipends of \$ 200.

3.3.1.1 Unemployment

Unemployment, both in the formal and informal sectors, is alarmingly high. Labour markets and labour conditions are lamentable. Most social commentators attribute this gloomy scenario to the unavailability of/poor electricity supply. There is, however, no discrimination on origin of degrees/qualifications for the few jobs that exist.

Private sector development is unexplored. All one needs to start up a business is capital. There are no fastidious conditions attached and there is relative security for businesses to boom.

There exists a social security insurance scheme called “the National Social Security Insurance Trust” (NASSIT)¹³, which is compulsory for every national worker. This scheme was enacted in 2002 on a retiring age of 60. Various pension schemes are available for individuals, depending on the length of membership of an organization.

3.3.1.2 Labour conditions

There is a huge unemployment rate in the country (Bo District included), largely due to the low involvement of the private sector in industry. The few people who are fortunate enough to be employed, especially in the formal sector, work under terrible conditions with long working hours, low wages and little or no job security.

At National level, the government of Sierra Leone is developing job creation programmes. These include the following¹⁴:

- Small and medium scale enterprises (SME) development: this programme encourages and helps unemployed Sierra Leonean young people, especially graduates, to set up and run their own business through loan schemes and training programmes. There is also a special loan scheme for job creation, in which loans can be granted to competent applicants through negotiation with the NaCSA Micro-Credit/Finance framework.
- The population of Sierra Leone comprises of about 40% under 15 years and 25% under 25 years. The majority of these young people seek entrance into the job market. However, most of them lack productive and marketable skills needed in the economy. For this reason, the government sets up youth development programmes which include trainings on self-evaluation, business identification, market research, feasibility and resource mobilisation to start a businesses, soliciting bank loans, managing a business enterprise, accounting and legal aspects of a business.
- Agricultural Sector Employment Programme: this programme is designed for the employment of youth interested in farming. It is meant to address rural-urban migration while providing income for rural youth to prevent them from migrating to cities and joining the crowd of unemployed urban youth. The programme will be implemented at District level, through the District Agricultural Programme Committee. It will recruit the participants and provide 300 hectares of farmland for the programme each year. The National Development Bank and the National Cooperative Development Bank will disburse the loans.

¹³ National Social Security Insurance Trust (NASSIT) head office: 35 Lightfoot Boston Street, Freetown. E-mail: publicaffairs@nassitsl.org. website: www.nassitsl.org

¹⁴ IMF, “Working Draft PRSP(Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) document”, June 2004; www.imf.org

- District Agro-based Industries: the District Agro-based Industries programme is intended to add value to agricultural products and for the manufacture of agricultural tools. The aim is to increase per capital income, encouraging each District to explore its comparative advantage in agricultural production. Oil palm production and processing will be centred in Port Loko, Kailahun, and Pujehun, while livestock production will be the focus in Port Loko and Koinadugu Districts.
- Disabled Work Scheme: Disabled people are trained to acquire appropriate skills and the provision of special facilities, which will lead to self-employment.

3.3.1.3 Practical and contact information

In Kakua (Bo city), there is access to job vacancy information through newspapers and the radio. There are no employment agencies except the Ministry of Labour which issues ID cards to unemployed people.

All newspapers are produced in the capital city Freetown - Awareness Times, Awoko, For di people, African Champion, Standard Times etc. There is only one newspaper outlet/vendor in the Bo District.

There are three community radio stations in the District, all based in Bo town. These include Kiss 104, Radio New Song and the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Station (SLBS). Both the newspapers and radio stations provide a wide range of information on employment issues including job vacancies

3.3.2 Recognition of degrees obtained/university semesters completed elsewhere

Degrees are accepted from other countries and no discrimination or favouritism is manifested as long as they are obtained from recognized learning institutions. There are no laid-down procedures for ascertaining the validity and authenticity of degrees. But where there is doubt as to the authenticity of such degrees, the common procedure is to contact the university where the degree was obtained.

3.3.3 Education and training programmes (and access to them)

Bo has now a university of its own with two constituent colleges. The curriculum ranges from agriculture, education, information, technology, basic sciences, agro-based engineering and economics, community development and environmental studies and community medicine and allied health sciences.

Kono on the other hand has only one technical institute which offers advanced studies in accounting and community development. However, the Institute of Education has a long-distance learning programme for teachers in the service. A three years study leads on to a higher teacher's certificate for secondary level teaching and a primary level teaching qualification.

There is a national education programme aimed at establishing at least one junior secondary school in every chiefdom. In Kono, eight out of the 14 chiefdoms already have secondary schools. Before, Bo had all the secondary school concentrated in Bo town but now over 75% of the chiefdoms have secondary schools.

Institutions like the Sierra Leone Opportunities Industrialisation Centre (SLOIC) in Bo have a self-employment assistance programme (SEAP) to assist in micro-financing and small enterprises development.

Local national NGOs like the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) are also involved in the training and encouragement of young people. They are engaging youths in training

skills so that they will be self-reliant and be able to take part in the democratic process. This will also enable them to associate and form cooperatives.

The Eastern Polytechnic in Kenema, Eastern province, for example, is introducing new programmes like medical laboratory technology, nursing schools and maintenance engineering. Though these provisions have been made, some of the composite fees for the enrolment to these institutions are high. Youths in the mineral rich areas like Kono District, prefer searching for diamonds and gold or become bike riders, rather than to enrol into these institutions.

3.3.3.1 By Government

The Government operates a formal education system called the 6.3.3.4 system and organizes/supports additional training according to its official needs. All the primary and secondary schools are either owned by the government or supported by it. There is a teacher training college in Kakua chiefdom (Bo), the only one in the whole District.

3.3.3.2 By international organizations or NGOs

NGOs and INGOs provide support to schools, especially primary schools, in the form of school feeding programmes, health delivery services, learning and teaching materials and furniture. Some NGOs such as NMJD, CARE and IRC provide agricultural materials like seedlings and fertilizers as well as training programmes on simple agricultural methodologies designed to empower beneficiaries to become self-sufficient.

The international NGO Action Aid Sierra Leone (AASL)¹⁵ runs the “Excel Programme for returnees’ self-employment” (youth enterprise development). This programme offers opportunities for returning youngsters to identify, set up and manage their own businesses. Currently this programme is being implemented in Sierra Leone. However, interested candidates/trainees can be selected from anywhere. AASL have trained and qualified Master Trainers who can be deployed all over Sierra Leone for the implementation of the Excel Training Programme. The programme is currently being adapted in order to target youths with low education. AASL is also prepared to collaborate with RAP programmes to promote the MSI/Entrepreneurship Workshop especially among youngsters returning to Sierra Leone. Youngsters graduating from this programme can be encouraged to obtain loans and they also benefit from regular follow-up sessions. In addition, the graduates are encouraged to established Small Business Associations (SBAs) that enhances their negotiating position as young entrepreneurs.

3.3.4 Starting a new business

3.3.4.1 Legal conditions

Most businesses in the chiefdoms are registered with the Local Administration and are expected to pay taxes. Small businesses are not registered and do not require payment of taxes.

A fee is paid to the relevant authority and a certificate issued which the entrepreneur will have to display at a conspicuous spot in their business places for inspectors to see when making routine checks. They are also expected to pay an annual tax ranging from Le 15,000 to Le 150,000.

Pharmacies are required to register with the national pharmacy board as a precondition for the issuance of the appropriate business registration papers.

¹⁵ Action Aid Sierra Leone; for contact details: see 3.3.6

Small businesses are not required to register before they operate, but they pay daily taxes (market dues) ranging from Le 500 to Le 1,000. Small businesses include vendors and hawkers selling second hand shoes, clothes, food-stuffs etc.

3.3.5 Social Security

Except for those working in the formal (administrative, municipalities) sector, mainly in big towns, social security is not available. People often know little or nothing about it. (There is however a national security scheme - National Social Security and Insurance Trust - run by the government). A National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) was established in 2002 by an Act of Parliament which is dedicated to entitling pensions/benefits to workers who have worked for over 15 years or to workers who become invalid but have worked for more than 5 years. Workers here include all government workers, NGO workers and private individuals who contribute to the scheme. This parastatal organization has offices all across the nation in every District.

3.3.6 Charity organizations

There are several charitable organizations in the country that provide different kinds of services. The table will only provide information on services relevant for CRI.

Name of organization	Services	Contact address
Network Movement for Justice and Development	training, logistical support, advocacy, paralegal issues, conflict resolution, agricultural support to rural communities	5 Jangah Street, Bo
Care Sierra Leone	relief, human rights training and logistical support	35 Wilkinson Road Freetown Tel: 23222234227
Action Aid Sierra Leone	agricultural support to rural communities	36A Freetown Road, Lumley, P.M.Bag 1058 Freetown, Tel: 232 22 231392 /234197; Fax: 232 22 232352 e-mail: aasl@sierratel.sl
Advent Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)	temporary and permanent structures for displaced and disabled persons	Dr. Johnson Street off Ngalu Road, Bo Tel: 23222233425
Methodist Church Sierra Leone	agricultural support to rural people in the south and eastern parts of the country	Methodist youth Center, Dambala Road, Bo
Christian Children’s Fund	child protection	132 wilkinson Road Tel: 23222223873
Finnish Refugee Council	shelter and support to agriculture	147 Wilkinson road Freetown Tel: 23222273291
MSF Holland	medical support to refugees, displaced persons and returnees	4 Ngobeh Drive, Cackle Bay Tel: 23222231272
Child Rescue Centre	Protection of children’s welfare	C/O UMC House Bo

3.3.6 Some data to calculate the cost of living

Petrol	Le 13,000.00
Kerosene	Le 13,000.00
Rice 50 kg bag	Le 60,000.00
Palm oil	Le 60,000.00
Onions	Le 150,000.00
Salad oil	Le 80,000.00
1 pound of meat	Le 5,000.00

3.4. Health

The Ministry of Health Care and Sanitation is responsible for reinforcing the health standards but they lack funds to do so.

Health services are limited in parts of the country. Access mainly depends on whether patients can afford to pay. Many hospitals lack proper financial structures and there is an acute shortage of qualified doctors and medical officials. The chiefdoms are serviced by dispensers, Community Health Officers (CHOs) and nurses who are ill-equipped to function properly.

There exist also a high corruption rate in health care services.

The 2004 Public Expenditure Tracking Survey, conducted by the government, states that out of the 1.7 billion Le worth of essential medicines transferred from the central government to District hospitals, only 96 million Leones worth of drugs were actually reported as being received at the District level. 94.3% of the drugs disappeared without any explanation. Another 1 billion Leones worth of essential medicines was nominally transferred to District medical officers for the purpose of distribution to peripheral health units in the rural areas. In this case, 90.6% of the drugs were missing at the District level. Of the remaining 9.4%, another 45% went missing in the transfer from District medical officers to the peripheral health units¹⁶.

3.4.1 General health situation by regions

The overall health situation in the chiefdoms is critical. There is an acute shortage of qualified doctors and medical officials. The chiefdoms are serviced by dispensaries, Community Health Officers (CHOs) and nurses who are ill-equipped to function properly.

Malaria is very common and typhoid fever occasionally hits communities, causing serious distress.

People with no knowledge of medicine have been reported travelling around treating unsuspecting people in villages and thereby causing them further complications and even loss of life.

¹⁶ Cited in Vivek Maru, "Between Law and Society: Paralegals and the Provision of Primary Justice Services in Sierra Leone and Worldwide", published by the World Bank; april 2006, last accessed 23.06.2007, <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/NutsBolts/Maru.doc>

3.4.2 Drinking water and sanitation by regional systems

Chiefdoms obtain drinking water from water wells which are either dug by private residents, NGOs or by the government through the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)'s rehabilitation programme, a government agency facilitating and coordinating post infrastructure development across the country.

In the city, the pipe borne water supply is grossly inadequate. The dam which was built in the sixties to cater for a few thousand people now caters for more than a million people. Sometimes the dam dries up causing stress to city dwellers. In fact this cannot be unconnected to the filth that has become a national outcry. Due to lack of maintenance most of the pipes are rusty and water from them is brown coloured with lots of particles. This situation is enriching several business people from the sale of imported water.

In the provinces/Districts/chiefdoms people rely on imported water or wells dug by NGOs or hand pumps provided by the NaCSA.

Pipe borne water and electricity are lacking in Kono. However, plastic bottle spring water is used for drinking and people use small portable standby generators for lighting.

In Bo District, people walk long distances to get water from the few protected wells. The situation is worse during the dry season. Bo town has electricity through a guide BKPS.

3.4.3 Health care system

3.4.3.1 Health care infrastructure by region (hospitals, equipment etc)

In all the chiefdoms in the District, there are health care centres either recently constructed or rehabilitated by NaCSA. They are, however, not properly equipped, and the few nurses work directly for their own benefit.

Although many government health centres are ill-equipped and inefficient, there are several health centres owned by private organizations that treat complicated diseases in the city.

Most diseases are treated by private hospitals in the country (in Freetown and Waterloo in the western urban area, Bo in the southern province and Mabasene and Massanga in the northern Province).

The table below shows the number of functioning public health units¹⁷:

District (Provinces)	PHUs 2006
Bo (S)	80
Kenema (E)	87
Moyamba (S)	61
Pork Loko (N)	72
Bombali (N)	65
Kailahun (E)	58
Koinadugu (N)	40
Kono (E)	70

¹⁷ IOM, IRRICO, Information on return and reintegration in the countries of origin, Sierra Leone, 2007, to be contacted at: www.iom.int/irrico.

The “Magbesene” Catholic hospital in Lunsar (northern Sierra Leone) treats patients with eye diseases and those suffering from leprosy.

The Bo and Kono District headquarter towns have government hospitals. In addition there are several private clinics operated by foreign agencies or private medical practitioners. Currently the Koidu government hospital (Kono District) is under reconstruction which will effect a massive extension of all facilities.

3.4.3.2 Eligibility criteria and access to health services

There are no eligibility criteria or discrimination in the health care delivery services system. Your economic power determines the kind and quality of service you receive.

Workers pay an Insurance premium to the National Insurance Company¹⁸. People who work for an employer have their premiums deducted directly from their salary. The unemployed and self-employed must make special arrangements with the Insurance Company.

Those who receive National insurance pension’s payments usually pay a standard minimal health insurance fee, which is deducted from the pension. The returning persons falls initially within the category of the un-employed¹⁹.

Requirement to benefit of national health insurance are:

- a registration form: approximately 1,30 euro (3682 Le.)
- a certificate of employment
- passport or identity card

3.4.3.3 Costs of health care

The cost of treatments is comparatively high and inaccessible to the poor. Even the cost recovery outlets attached to hospitals are only so in name; in practice essential drugs are sold on the black market.

Drugs and syringes are in principle free of import duties, but items such as condoms and X-ray film are subject to custom taxes the costs vary from town to town and are rather high²⁰.

Doctors charge astronomical fees as high as Le 600,000 to Le 1,500,000. They also operate private clinics and pharmacies where patients are referred to for drugs.

3.4.3.4 Discrimination in health care system

There is no discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and religion. But while rich people have access to private hospitals and better medical services, poor people depend on government hospitals and other public health centres that are poorly funded and badly run.

3.4.3.5 Services of non-state agents in health care

There are several hospitals run by NGOs who deliver expert health services to the populace, but these services are limited to big towns and in the urban chiefdoms.

For instance Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has a hospital in Waterloo; while an eye clinic in Lunsar is run by the United Methodist Church, and the Holy Mary Hospital of Bo by the Catholic Church.

¹⁸ Contact details: National insurance company, 18/20 Walpole Street, Freetown; tel.+232 22 225433.

¹⁹ See footnote 17

²⁰ idem

Several NGOs provide counselling services, palliative care and home based care for HIV/AIDS affected people²¹.

There also exists several Voluntary Confidential Counseling and Training (VCCT) sites, which can be contacted through :

Council of Churches Sierra Leone Compound (CCSL)
Kingharman Road
National Aids Secretariat (NAS)
Tel.: +232 22 241 943, +232 76 602 540
Email: nas@sierratel.sl

3.4.3.6 Supply of standard medicines

Standard medicines are sent to health centres. The problem has been safe delivery. Medicines are sold on the black market and at exorbitant prices that are way beyond the reach of the people in those places.

Surgery services like hernia, appendicitis etc. are only available in the city of Bo. Essential drugs like Amoxyllin, Ampicillin, Paracetamol, Aspirin, Gelusine, Zentel, Cloxacillin etc. are easier to find in a private clinic/pharmacy than in government hospitals.

There exists also briefcase pharmacists who sell medicine without professional qualification.

The Lakka Hospital is providing treatment for tuberculosis.

HIV/AIDS Anti-Retroviral-Drugs are available free of charge, provided by National AIDS Secretariat (NAS) under the Sierra Leone HIV/AIDS Response Project (SHARP) project. There is a group of private medical practitioners who provide free treatment to HIV+ patients under the National Aids Secretariat sponsored project. The group led by Dr. Willoughby is called SILTAG.

Drugs for the opportunistic infections and the attendant laboratory tests for those on Anti-retroviral -drugs are not free (cost to be discussed based on the situation).

3.4.3.7 Diseases which can not be effectively treated in the country ²²

Qualitative medical services are very limited in Freetown, and almost nonexistent for outside the capital.

This situation is most critical for persons with unstable chronic medical conditions that require on-going medical treatment or medications.

Inadequate diagnostic equipment, lack of medical resources and limited medical specialty personnel make complex diagnosis and treatment unavailable.

Both the supply and the quality of medications are inconsistent and counterfeit drugs remain a problem.

Medical facilities are scarce and for the most part basic or sub-standard. There is no ambulance service in Sierra Leone and also trauma care is extremely limited.

Many primary health care workers in rural areas lack adequate training, often resulting in misdiagnosis, improper treatment, and the administration of the wrong medication.

²¹ E.g. : Shepherd's Hospice, Gabriel Madiye Allen Town +232 22 263695 (land) and +232 76 620 441 (mobile)

²² US Department of State, Consular information sheet Sierra Leone, September 2007,
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1016.html

Annex 1

List of researchers recruited by NMJD				
No.	Name	Organization	Address	Phone No.
1	<i>Kenneth Amadu</i>	HEMDEF	1 Tucker Street Bo	076-757547
2	<i>Franciss Abu</i>	HEMDEF	1 Tucker Street Bo	033-505744
3	<i>Elizabeth Bundu</i>	HEMDEF	1 Tucker Street Bo	076-839983
4	<i>Prince B. Massaquoi</i>	CAPE-SL	15 Tikonko Road BO	033-561093
5	<i>Victoria Foray</i>	CAPE-SL	2 Kissy Town Road Bo	076-952007
6	<i>Clandines S. Squire</i>	WAGA	6 New Gerihun Road Bo	077-591139
7	<i>John Salia Maveh</i>	EPI	25 Tikonko Road Bo	076-653202
8	<i>Edward M. Blake</i>	YDSL	J 5 Njagboima Quarters-Bo	033-563657 077-225901

