The Impact of War Recovery Programmes: An Examination of the Humanitarian Value Programmes At the Sierra Leone Red Cross

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Abstract

Post-conflict reconstruction is an imposing undertaking in any country, and such country must be able to draw upon external and internal sources of support. Sierra Leone fought a violent and devastating civil war from 1991 to 2002, spanning a period of eleven years. The war caused wanton destruction of the communities’ social infrastructure and institutions. People were maimed and unknown numbers killed. A large proportion of the population fled for safe haven and sought safety in internally displaced camps while others moved across borders to seek refuge in foreign countries. If development is about change, about how we think things should be, then development programmes and recovery interventions should be the main focus of a post-conflict state development agenda.

In this research work, we seek to analyze the impact of war recovery programmes in Sierra Leone using Humanitarian Value indicators of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRC). The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) like many other humanitarian organizations intervened in the post war socio-economic recovery and peace consolidation processes.

Introduction

Post-conflict reconstruction is an imposing undertaking in any country, and such country must be able to draw upon external and internal sources of support. Sierra Leone fought a violent and devastating civil war from 1991 to 2002, spanning a period of eleven years. The war wreaked havoc on the country’s economy and its entire social fabric, exposing the citizenry to untold hardship and vulnerability. The war caused wanton destruction of the communities’ social infrastructure and institutions. People were maimed and unknown numbers killed. A large proportion of the population fled for safe haven and sought safety in internally displaced camps while others moved across borders to seek refuge in foreign countries. Community structures, traditions and cultural values that once acted as a cohesive force that kept the communities together crumbled. During this difficult period, the justice system collapsed, and so were the livelihood structures and strategies.

The move from conflict to reconstruction is complex and subject to delays, reversals and myriad unforeseen events. Addison (2003) identifies two key objectives for such a task. First, and logically, veritable peace must be present throughout the country. Secondly, the goal of “Broad-based recovery that improves that improves the incomes and human development indicators of the majority of people, especially the poor”. Most importantly, peace currently exists in Sierra Leone. January 2002 witnessed the completion of the disarmament process as well as the formal declaration that the civil war indeed was over. After nearly five years of operations, Sierra Leone’s National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) came to an official close on 31st March, 2004. A total of 72,490 combatants were disarmed as part of the NCDDR programmes and 71,043 were demobilized.1 The reintegration phase consisted of a choice of vocational training, formal schooling or receiving tools for various trades, as well as farming and 63,545 former combatants participated in the reintegration segment, including 6845 former child soldiers. Although these figures are impressive, some 9000 former combatants did not complete the entire programme. In other words, about one in eight ex-combatants (12.5%) did not make it to the reintegration phase.

1 UNOCHA,2004a.
Given its relative success, Sierra Leone’s NCDDR drew great interest from other African countries embarking on their own DDR and other post-war recovery programmes. Not only former combatants, but also the civilian population must experience an improvement in living conditions, livelihoods and employment prospects. Over the past decade, Sierra Leone has been consistently ranked near or at the very bottom of the human development index (HDI) rankings, which is no surprise since the country was embroiled in protracted civil conflict. In 2004, the UNDP report ranked Sierra Leone 177th out of 177 countries studied, with an HDI value of 0.273 (UNDP, 2004, p.142). In contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa received a score of 0.465. It is important to note that the 2004 HDI values are based on 2002 figures. Therefore, technically, the war had just come to an official end, and it is not unreasonable to assume some improvement in this dismal ranking.

Employment prospects are slim, especially for those lacking technical or knowledge-based skills. Even those in various professions, such as school and college teachers, often experience delays in receiving regular payment of wages. Casual employment opportunities may be found, though frequency varies considerably.

Development programmes and recovery interventions should be the main focus of a post-conflict state development agenda. Often when wars occur in a country, it is those innocent civilians who have very little or no stake in the national politics that suffers resulting into psychological effects, torture, rape, arbitrary imprisonment, terror, banishments, extra-judicial killings and other gross human rights violations.

The social and economic impacts of the 10-year civil conflict were devastating. The brutal attacks by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) that began in March 1991 and backed by cross sections of national armed forces left a trail of human tragedy. An estimated 20,000, people were killed and thousands more injured or maimed. Over 2 million people were displaced; 500,000 fled to neighboring Countries. There was a mass exodus of skilled professionals, to Freetown and out of the Country, leaving most of the Country drained of skilled manpower. The damage extended to significant loss of property and the abduction of women and children for sex, labour and combat. Most of the Country’s social, economic and physical infrastructure was destroyed.

Internally, the challenges of national recovery and reconstruction need to be addressed from economic, political social and national security perspectives. From the social dimension, the challenge facing the country is to address the poor state of human development. Therefore, there is the urgent need to improve on the quality and quantity of the country’s human resources, so that this valuable national asset can contribute meaningfully to the development process. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) in addition to its traditional roles in promoting humanitarian activities was seen throughout the war period reaching out to communities affected by the war, providing relief, food items, medical services transportation and other humanitarian assistance. The SLRCS worked in consultation with the Sierra Leone Government and in partnership with other sister organizations and funding organizations. Sister organizations with whom the SLRCS partnered included the Internal Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC). The roles played by the SLRCS during war and immediately after the war in providing humanitarian assistance and implementing community based projects cantered on humanitarian values have been tremendous.

In this research work, we seek to analyze the impact of war recovery programmes in Sierra Leone using Humanitarian Value indicators of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRC). The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) like many other humanitarian organizations intervened in the post war socio-economic recovery and peace consolidation processes. For over a decade (2000-present), the Society implemented a triad of programs dubbed the Humanitarian Values Program (HVP) with each of its components geared towards addressing felt needs unearthed by the pre-implementation needs assessment.
Cognizant of the fact that the program has been implemented without any mid-term review, it became imperative that a near end-term review that is holistic and systematic be done as an expression of the society’s commitment to being accountable and transparent to its partners and stakeholders. This Evaluation and Impact Assessment of the HVP intends to effectively assess the program and provide the various stakeholders with the unique opportunity to understand the entire spectrum of the program that is from conceptualization to its impending closure. Cognizant of the criticalness of presenting facts and evidences of impact and results the team remained as professional as possible always intellectualizing the issues and remaining focused.

At the same time, this report is envisioned to give a balanced scorecard which catalogues the actual impacts of the HVP across the spectra of program areas on not only individual beneficiaries but their communities as a whole. It is easy to notice that prior evaluations focused either on specific components of the program, or a particular program area. This report on the contrary made a conscious effort to interrogate a wide sample size evident by the fact that field visits were made across program areas using a mixture of techniques (Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews) to capture their perspective of the program and for proper programmatic impact assessment.

**Study Aim and Objectives**

Overall, this study on the impact evaluation of the Humanitarian Values Program proposes to investigate the relevance of the projects in the study areas that will provide information about the direction of the scale-up of the program there by forming part of the 2013 to 2018 program planning of the Society, taking into account the changing nature of the situation which will consider the investigation process. Specifically, the evaluation aims at the following objectives:

- **Identifying the extent to which the past evaluation recommendations were implemented and to learn about how changes were made to the programs and projects in the operational communities.**
- **Obtaining past evaluations reports to ascertain whether lessons learned and recommendations preferred have been implemented.**
- **Prepare a map of where the HV activities were implemented from 2000 to 2012, and where they can now be redirected in the country.**
- **Assessing how effectively and efficiently communities through the HV program can meet the program objectives, learning from the experience and introducing realistic changes.**
- **Assessing the effectiveness of the future programs taking into consideration its replication into other communities and districts.**

**Existing Literature**

Reliable longitudinal studies of post-war recovery processes are few, and the number of war-torn sites not yet subjected to formal analysis is large. Scanty academic literature is devoted to the postwar experience of communities in Asia, the Soviet Union, Greece, Spain after its Civil War, sub-Saharan Africa, or the Palestinian West Bank, to list only a few.

Up to the present there exists a chronic lack of research to facilitate change and improvement in the post-conflict relief system; studies tend to be overly technical, segmented, and short term. Results are rarely placed in a standard framework that would allow for translation from one post-war scenario to another, as noted by Cunny and others.**

**Urban risk**

Poor people everywhere, especially in urban areas, are most at risk. Most of the world’s poor live in densely populated squatter settlements, on the periphery of cities, which lack the basics of life, leaving many inhabitants caught in a spiral of increasing vulnerability. Demand for commercial and residential land in cities has led to use of unsuitable terrain prone to natural hazards. Many informal settlements are therefore located in dangerous or unsuitable areas, such as floodplains, unstable slopes or reclaimed land.

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the absence of security of tenure there is little reason for communities to invest in upgrading housing or infrastructure standards. Moreover, these cities are often unable to manage rapid population growth; poorly planned urbanization with increasing numbers of inadequately constructed and badly maintained buildings are further increasing the level of vulnerabilities in cities. Ironically, most of today’s largest cities are in areas where earthquakes, floods, landslides and other disasters are most likely to happen. Poverty alleviation must therefore be central to any plan to effectively mitigate and manage disasters. The movement of populations during and after disaster and conflict will have a major impact on the sustainable development of human settlements, and therefore on reconstruction activities. Unsupported urbanization will constrain sustainable development of cities, as well as hampering the well being of the inhabitants and increasing their vulnerability to future conflicts and disasters.

**From disasters towards sustainable settlements**

How does a community become sustainable? The concept of sustainability revolves around three key elements; economic, environmental and social equilibriums. It means that ‘community’ is a good, safe and healthy place for its members, offering a solid foundation for a prosperous life with equal opportunities to all - following the six established principles for enhancing community sustainability, i.e.: maintain and enhance quality of life; enhance economic vitality; ensure social and intergenerational equity; maintain and enhance environmental quality; incorporate disaster resilience and mitigation and use a consensus-building, participatory process when making decisions. By integrating the principles of sustainability from the earliest stages of recovery in human settlements, strategic investment during emergency stages can contribute significantly to building foundations for development - thus creating viable and less vulnerable communities able to cope with changes and events that time brings.

**Study Methodology**

Methodologically, this study employed a variety of strategies in collecting data relevant to achieving the objectives of the consultancy. The tools utilized included Participatory Rural Appraisals, Focus Group Discussions, Key informant interviews and stakeholders’ consultations among others. In view of the absence of a baseline data and the lack of a mid-term evaluation, these techniques were relevant in generating information aimed at understanding the dynamics of, behavior and attitudes of the HVP in relation to the perceptions of targeted beneficiaries including communities and stakeholders.

The impact evaluation study of the SLRCS Programmes was conducted in the HVP intervention districts of Bo, Pujehun and Moyamba in the South, Koinadugu, Kambia and Port Loko in the North, Kailahun in the East and Waterloo in the Western Urban Area. These locations are characterized by considerable diversity in terms of ethnicity, ecology, socioeconomic and socio-cultural features. Most of the study communities are impoverished with some of them having metropolitan traits. Even with the myriad of post- war interventions including the HVP, a number of these communities continue to lag behind in post war reconstruction, whilst others continue to grapple with the burning issues of very weak human capital, scant infrastructure, and low access to potable water and livelihood alternatives amongst others.

Data for the study was collected mainly through the use of two different types of survey templates designed by the Research consultant. These include the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) template consisting of 23 items and a Key Informant Interview (KII) Template consisting of 38 items. The FGD template was used to gather data from program beneficiaries on their perceptions, feelings, challenges and benefits of the program. The KII template was used to generate data from key stakeholders including SLRCS management, field staff, and district staff and community leaders.

**Approaches in Assessing the Impacts of the HV Programs**

For this study, three approaches will be adopted in assessing the impacts of the Humanitarian Values program implemented by the SLRCS concomitant with the study ToR and objectives. These include:

1. **The program Relevance**
2. **The program Effectiveness**
3. **The program Efficiency**

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3 Mileti, Dennis S., ‘Disasters by Design’ (1999), p. 31
**Presentation of Findings**

The overall purpose of this study has been to provide reliable and credible evidence of the impact of the HV program implemented by the SLRCS in the last decade. This section brings together findings emerging from the collation, analysis and interpretation of information gathered using various procedures including review of authoritative documents, Stakeholder and Key Informant interviews and Focus Group Discussion sessions. The data interpreted reveals a gulf of information that is presented in this section of this report.

**Type of HV project implemented by District:**

Analysis of data revealed that by far the CAR project was the most popular of the HV projects implemented. With the single exception of Pujehun, CAR was implemented in Bo, Moyamba, Kailahun, Koinadugu, Kambia and Port Loko. Bo and Pujehun implemented CAPS while YEP and CRDP was implemented in Koinadugu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Type of HVP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyamba</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pujehun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kailahun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koinadugu</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kambia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Loko</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Type of HV Projects Implemented by District**

**Type of Services offered to CAR beneficiaries**

The table below illustrates the range of CAR services offered to beneficiaries across program implementation areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HVP /CAR Program Area</th>
<th>TYPE OF SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literacy and Numeracy Skills training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Kailahun</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moyamba</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kambia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Port Loko</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kambia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Types of Services Offered by CAR/YEP**
Relevance of the HV Programmes

The first major concern of this study was to investigate whether or not the implementation of the HV program was at all relevant or appropriate. Meaning in essence that it tried to interrogate whether in fact the program was needed at all and whether it indeed responded to the felt needs of the target beneficiaries. In interrogating the relevance issue the following logical questions were posed: is the program needed at all, or is it important enough to require attention and what problem does it address? A new program such as is the case of the HV program is relevant to beneficiaries’ households if it responds to their needs. This means it must be beneficial to them and the community at large. There are a number of variables that determine the relevance of a new program including its social acceptability, profitability and benefits.

The extensiveness of the coverage of this program also underlines its relevance, because it covers 40 out of the 149 Chiefdoms (27%) constituting the rest of the Country outside the Capital Freetown.

Figure 2 shows the coverage of interventions by Chiefdoms

Figure 2: Map showing HVP intervention areas by Chiefdoms

Table 3: An outline of the HVP intervention areas by Chiefdoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHIEFDOM</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>CHIEFDOM</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jawie</td>
<td>Kailahun</td>
<td>Luawa</td>
<td>Kailahun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissi Kama</td>
<td>Kailahun</td>
<td>Mandu</td>
<td>Kailahun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissi Teng</td>
<td>Kailahun</td>
<td>Penguia</td>
<td>Kailahun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kissi Tongi</td>
<td>Kailahun</td>
<td>Bramaia</td>
<td>Kambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbinle Dixing</td>
<td>Kambia</td>
<td>Mongo</td>
<td>Koinadugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magbema</td>
<td>Kambia</td>
<td>Sengbe</td>
<td>Koinadugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mambolo</td>
<td>Kambia</td>
<td>Wara Wara Bafod</td>
<td>Koinadugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samu</td>
<td>Kambia</td>
<td>Wara Wara Yagal</td>
<td>Koinadugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonko Limba</td>
<td>Kambia</td>
<td>Fakunya</td>
<td>Moyamba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diang</td>
<td>Koinadugu</td>
<td>Kaiyamba</td>
<td>Moyamba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folosaba Dembel</td>
<td>Koinadugu</td>
<td>Kamajei</td>
<td>Moyamba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masungbala</td>
<td>Koinadugu</td>
<td>Kori</td>
<td>Moyamba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowa</td>
<td>Moyamba</td>
<td>Lokomasama</td>
<td>Port Loko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Banta</td>
<td>Moyamba</td>
<td>Maforki</td>
<td>Port Loko</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Timeliness and Community Support

Findings from this study reveal that the HVP was timely, very appropriate to the needs of the beneficiaries and community driven. A pre implementation needs assessment was done in all earmarked program areas and the felt needs of the prospective beneficiaries formed the hallmark of the program conceptualization/design. Nana Thoronka presently enrolled in the tailoring component of the CAR program in Moyamba stated that before CAR she was a fishmonger but as a result of skills gained and the post graduation start-up kits, she intends opening her own tailor shop.

Respondents in Kambia stated that before CAR, the district had no skills training program resulting in massive unemployment and underemployment amongst the youths which explains why most of them were engaged in social vices such as commercial sex work and criminal activities such as burglary and robbery. The story of CAR being a safety net and second chance project reverberates across intervention areas. As a consequence, the program benefited from a lot of community support evidenced by the fact that all land to erect CAR/CAPS/YEP centres were given as community contribution. The immense support the program enjoyed from its Community Staff Associations (CSAs) increased the programmatic impact of particularly the CAR project as it increased completion/graduation rates. All these are manifestations of its social acceptability and therefore its relevance. Similarly, the enthusiasm and devotion of Community Peace Consolidation Committees (CPCCs) in areas concerned were critical to ensuring that the community and family cohesion objectives of the CAPS component were achieved.

Beneficiary Enrolments Impact

Beneficiary enrolments into particularly the CAR component formed the core basis of analyzing the impact of the HVP from the relevance perspective. The various tables below give summary of the descriptive statistics highlighting enrolment figures in 2012 using the case of Kailahun, Moyamba and Port Loko districts as the basis. The very high figures of eligible applicants presented vis-à-vis the number of successful applicants tied to 150 shows the dire need for the project by the communities and therefore confirms the relevance of the project.

The need for the program is clearly noticeable and higher for Moyamba with 435 eligible applicants, and then Kailahun with 320 applicants and least for Port Loko with 310 eligible applicants, leaving one to deduce that those two locations have the greatest need.

Effectiveness of the HV Program

This approach measures the extent to which the HVP’s short or intermediate term or specific objectives are being achieved. The questions posed tried to investigate: whether the target beneficiaries were reached; whether they were satisfied with the project outputs; whether optimal programmatic impact was realised; whether the lives of the past and present beneficiaries are any better now as a result of the intervention? Using the Effectiveness approach, the impact of both the CAPS and CAR are analyzed thus.

The CAPS Impact Indicators

Indicators of Community cohesion/Family ties/Conflict resolution, Food Security, Increase Access to and use of clean water and improved hygiene practices and Building capacities were used to analyze impact. When asked whether the CAPS program created any impact, Chief Saffa of Sandeya in the Kailahun district made reference to the skills training in improved agricultural techniques, the dry floors constructed and the seedlings and money for the purchase of tools and other farming implements provided through the community support project.. Ensah a beneficiary in Sandeya, stated that they made Three Million Leones (Le. 3,000,000 ) after harvesting a variety of crops from their
community farm. He furthered that they opened a bank account with the money which they have ploughed back into expanding the community farm. He was happy to report that as a result of the financial wherewithal and training in improved farming techniques resulting from CAPS, they now have a cassava farm spanning ten acres- a claim the team verified with an on spot visit.

**Community cohesion/Family ties/Conflict resolution**

The study revealed that before the advent of CAPS project was community and family conflicts modulating from low grade to intense were rife. According to several respondents, these conflicts were so pervasive that they undermined traditional family ties and community cohesion to the extent that it had adverse ramifications on the overall pace consolidation efforts. Focus group Discussion (FGD) participants reported the various forms of conflicts regularly reported included: inter- family litigations for land or bush, leadership or chieftaincy struggle, disrespect for elders and authorities, youth marginalization and intimidation resulting in youth migration to cities for safe haven.

Conflict between crop farmers and owners of small ruminants such as goat owners were frequently reported. There were also reported cases of increase in court sittings, biased or unfair court decisions, levying of heavy fines and summary incarcerations. The situation was made worse with the outbreak of the war when lawlessness and gross violation of fundamental human rights were the order.

Following the end of the war, the CAPS project was implemented using different strategies to resolve community conflict and promote family ties and community cohesion.

Findings from study revealed that:

- In CAPS communities, annual Peace Festivals/carnival is organized that brings the community people together. Also, the numerous peace huts erected across intervention areas provided appropriate venue to settle disputes, manage/settle disputes between families and communities and usher in a sense of unity, peace and solidarity. The representative from the Office of National Security (ONS) in Kambia (name not disclosed) stated that as a result of CAR, crime rates dropped by an approximated 30 percent and the social vices such as stealing and burglary that were prevalent before CAR are no longer in vogue as the youths have been transformed from social deviants to social entrepreneurs and agents of positive change.

- The formation of the CPCCs  assisted by other structures including Human Right bodies that have been resolving conflicts in the communities that has resulted in the reduction of local court cases especially in the CAPS communities. Because of this there are now few cases of bush or land disputes, youth marginalization, disrespect for elders and authorities and respect for family members.

- Drama skits are periodically organized to disseminate peace messages within the communities and even beyond.

- Football or soccer gala competitions are organized on regular basis between communities or villages. Such competitions have done a lot to bridge the conflict gap and usher in community cohesion.

All in all, the study revealed that there is now increase awareness among family members and community groups in terms of each other’s right and their roles and responsibilities. There is now strong ties and bonds of fellowship among family members and community groups evidenced by the fact that they can now be seen sitting together, discussing together, eating together and attending meetings together.

**Access to Clean Water and Improved Hygiene practices**

As one of the indicators of CAPS impact assessment, the study investigated access of the communities to clean potable water and improved hygiene practices.

Analysis of data generated from FGD sessions revealed that before the implementation of the CAPS project the main sources of domestic water supply were Village streams, Rivers, Water from Swamps, Rain Water and unprotected dugout Wells. These sources were generally unprotected and untreated. When the issue of hygiene practices were discussed, it was revealed that in majority of the
communities community members used the Nearby Bush, Nearby Streams and open defecation. There were very few pit latrines owned by individual families and no community latrines available. It was also revealed that community people had little or no knowledge about the use of improved hygiene practices such as hand washing after using toilet. Most affirmed the use of plant leaves or water to clean up after toilet. After the implementation of the CAPS project, it was revealed that across most communities where CAPS was implemented there were hand dug wells fitted with lift pump provided by the project. The wells it was revealed were treated with chemical Chlorine periodically, with the SLRCS collaborating with the MoHS. Similarly, VIP latrines that are protected were constructed and are now being used by the communities. Community members are adequately sensitized on the practice of hand washing with soap and water. Some affirmed the use of Ash and water in the absence of soap after attending to toilet to prevent contracting diseases such as Diarrhoea or Cholera. The study revealed that periodically, health messages are disseminated by CAPS to promote community health. Community cleaning campaigns are carried out while health promotion in schools are also conducted.

**Food Security Promotion**

The study investigated CAPS promotion of Food Security in the CAPS project communities. Food Security essentially encompasses food production, distribution and consumption which collectively ensure that enough food in quality, quantity and variety is always available at individual, family and household levels. The degree of food security is measured in days, weeks, months or years (Abdullahi, 1999).

The study revealed that there was never adequate food to meet the food security needs of their household before the implementation of the CAPS project. During FGD sessions, participants overwhelmingly reported that before the HV/CAPS project was implemented in their communities the level of food production was low not enough to take them through six months. The size of the cultivated farm land was small; farmers used local and low yielding varieties and poor inefficient tools. The farming households were poor and cannot afford to buy enough food from the market to feed their households, or pay for hired labour to increase production or pay for agricultural chemicals such as fertilizers. After implementation of the CAPS project, the study from FGD and KII data generated revealed that level of food production in CAPS promotional communities increased substantially and as a result most beneficiaries in the FGD and other stakeholders reported that their rice (main staple dish) harvest lasted for about ten months in most of the cases and in few of the cases till the following planting season. This was made possible because of CAPS Food security strategies including encouraging Farmers to work in groups in turns to save labour thereby increasing area of land cultivated. Also another strategy was provision of chemical fertilizers on subsidies and credit by partners that cooperated with SLRCS. Farmers were also trained by extension personnel to adopt agricultural innovations and new technologies including the use of new crop varieties that are high yielding and early maturing. As a result, Sandeya in the Kailahun district can boast of community farm that spans over Ten (10) acres owing to the fact that they employ the new farming techniques and operate an unsophisticated, yet very effective corporative system with knowledge gained from GAPS program staff.

Data gathered revealed that overwhelming majority of beneficiary farmers cultivated Rice, Cassava and Groundnuts as sole Crop or in Mixture. Rice provided household food security in most of the cases; Groundnuts were sold for cash income while Cassava was partly consumed for household food security and partly processed with value addition in various forms including *Gari* and *Foo foo* fermented paste.

In addition to crop production, livestock production was also investigated. The study revealed that farmers rear chickens and small ruminants mainly Goats and Sheep. Through the HVP/CAPS intervention, small ruminants that were left to roam on the free range causing damage to farmers’ crops resulting in conflict between their owners and crop farmers have been resolved as the small
Ruminants are now housed in cages. On this issue a success story was narrated by one FGD participant, Amara Rogers. This was what he said:

“Our animals (Goats and Sheep) have been let loose on the free range not even tethered. They use to cause untold destructions to the crops of our colleague farmers resulting in farm losses and conflict. With the intervention of the CAPS/CPCC, bye-laws were enacted and also to further salvage the situation, Goat Pens and rice barns were constructed. Crops and other plants were protected and conflicts prevented. This has yielded a lot of payoff……………………………..” Amara Rogers, CAPS Pujehun.

Benefits, Challenges, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations related to CAPS.

Benefits:
Across program intervention areas FGD and KII respondents, underlined the under mentioned as core benefits of CAPS:

- The formation of the Community peace Consolidation committee (CPCC) enhanced access to justice as community disputes were settled without bias, and at no cost to the parties involved unlike the traditional local court system.
- There is increased human rights awareness and better handling of issues that have human rights ramifications at the community level than before as CAPS sensitizes citizens on human fundamental human rights.
- Youths and Women are now treated with dignity respect than before and feel like they partners in development
- Community hygiene practices have improved as a result of the community sensitization drives, which has resulted in increased use of improved hand washing techniques and have shifted from open defecation to defecation free systems
- Community health and well being has improved as hygiene practices have improved resulting in a concomitant reduction of illnesses such as diarrhoea and cholera.
- The construction of peace huts to settle conflicts rather than the use of the traditional court rooms, hence the communities are now relatively peaceful and calm. Institution of bye-laws, reduction of court cases and heavy fines.

Challenges:
During the survey, participants cited few challenges faced by CAPS. Challenges that were frequently cited included the following:

- The biggest challenge identified in the implementation of the HVP across implementation areas is that of transportation as participants’ walk long distances to get to the centres or use commercial motor bikes called Okada that are costly.
- Another concern raised was the problem of late remittance of project implementation funds which delayed the swift implementation of the project deliverables.
- The lack of training facilities for staff was repeated mentioned as one of the key challenges that stifled the realization of optimal programmatic impact
- Across program implementation areas, the late remittance of funds was highlighted as a key challenge by most respondents
- A number of respondents at the strategic level cited the lack of an exit strategy as one of the main challenges of the CAPS project.
- The Lack of office equipments such as computer, camera etc was frequently cited as being problematic for effect program delivery

Lessons Learnt

- An approximated 30% of the beneficiaries interviewed said the peace consolidation endeavours yielded dividend as family and community ties have strengthened and the communities are developing steadily as unity is strength.
Through the monitoring and evaluation and impact studies and a series of direct interaction with program beneficiaries, it came out clearly that group work yields better results than individual work. The fact that those engaged in communal farming derived higher yields and a stronger capital base, laid credence to the fact that indeed communal farms rather than individual farms should be supported.

CAPS has helped enhance family and community cohesion thereby making meaningful inputs to the peace consolidation process. Community led income generation activities has improved as a result of CAPS. There is a drastic reduction in family and community tensions due to the peace consolidation mechanisms employed by CAPS. There is increased recognition of women and youths as partners in development at the community level. The construction of peace huts provided much yearned for space to settle disputes at both the family and community levels, whilst serving as symbols of unity and peace. CAPS has helped improve the health and wellbeing of individuals in the community by promoting WATSAN activities and fostering a paradigm shift from Open Defecation to Open Defecation Free communities.

Before CAPS, beneficiary communities were largely engaged in very small scale backyard gardening mainly for subsistence purposes. After CAR, large scale agriculture and communal farming geared towards cash crop production is now the vogue thereby supporting the secure livelihood activities of the beneficiary communities. Given credence to this is a respondent who stated that the level of food production has dramatically increased with use of communal labour. He furthered that individuals that were previously engaged in small scale vegetable gardening now cultivate land spanning an approximated 10-50 acres.

**Recommendations**

A number of recommendations were proffered during the study. Those that were frequently mentioned by the participants included the following:

- Project designers to institute exit plans for the CAPS
- Timely disbursement of funds to facilitate implementation
- Construction of additional dry floors, barns, stores, agricultural tools, equipment and chemicals for increased agricultural productivity
- Provision of office equipment
- Provision of means of mobility, vehicles or motorbikes for project staff
- Scale up capacity building efforts by training CAPS staff and community members on the one hand and training farmers on new farming techniques on the other.

**The CAR Impact Indicators**

Indicators of skills training, promotion of psycho-social counselling, Community support to CAR, distribution of start-up kits, acquiring basic literacy and numeracy, sensitization on early marriage, health services for beneficiaries and babies of beneficiaries and community support through revolving loan were used to analyze impact.

**Skills Training Impact**

Analysis of data collected on the impacts of skills training under the CAR project through FGD and KII spanning all CAR communities revealed that the target beneficiaries were youths who had dropped out of school, or those with little or no basic education and those with no tech/voc skills and those that were affected by the war of either sex. They were unemployed or not employable and therefore with lacked livelihood security. Most idled and were involved in crime related activities such as taking drugs, prostitution, stealing. Few were engaged in seasonal hired labour on farms that did not pay much.

With the implementation of CAR they were provided with a year’s training in skills of their choice ranging from Carpentry, Tailoring and Embroidery, soap making, gara Tie Dying, Catering, Hair Dressing etc.
After implementation of the project, analysis of data generated revealed that because of the skill they have acquired, most of the graduates are now employed either self-employed or are employed in established organizations. Their lives are gradually being transformed from idle, unskilled and dependent individuals to small scale entrepreneurs. Some have business enterprises of their own and have also created job opportunities and apprenticeship for others thus promoting skills diffusion. All in all they are now livelihood secure.

FGD session held in Moyamba during this study revealed this success story narrated by Frances Issa. …..”There is a girl, Nancy who lived in Mano, Dasse Chieftdom, Moyamba District, about 45 miles from Moyamba Town. At a very tender age, Nancy lost her two parents during the war and had nobody to take up her responsibility. She couldn’t read nor write. She then enrolled in the CAR centre in Moyamba and studied Hair-dressing backed by basic literacy and numeracy. After graduation, she didn’t return to Mano but stayed in Moyamba to practice her vocation. She now owns her own business enterprise, a hair-dressing saloon in Moyamba Town where she is getting her livelihood and supporting other family members. At the same time she has recruited two girls who are undergoing apprenticeship in her saloon”……Frances Issa reports.

Community Participation and Support Impact
The principle of community participation and support enjoins that whatever program is implemented to improve the welfare of the people must endeavour to elicit the enthusiasm and total participation of such people if it is to create impact and above all sustainability.

The idea of community participation therefore implies that success and therefore impact is assured where the effort of the local community is supplemented. This type of participation eventually gives the people the pride of ownership in the completed project and claims it as “our project” etc.

Analysis of data collected during the study in FGD and KII revealed tremendous community participation and contribution to the implementation of the HVP. This was evident in Moyamba, Pujehun, Kailahun and Koinadugu. In these communities specific support given to the HVP that were impact creating included: allocation of land by the community for the implementation of HVP activities; provision of unskilled labour such as land clearing, field lay out; transporting sand, stones and bush sticks and fetching water. They also encouraged their children to take part in project work.

Acquisition of Basic Literacy Skills Impact
A major component of the CAR program implemented was teaching candidates basic literacy and numeracy at the centres. The study revealed that a good majority before enrolling into the CAR project couldn’t read, write and count. Their literacy and numeracy level was zero as most had not acquired any form of formal education.

Mustapha Sorie, a beneficiary in Kailahun confirmed this when he stated that before his enrolment in CAR he had no form of education and couldn’t even measure, but since measurement is part of the numeracy aspects of the carpentry component of the CAR program he is now conversant with using the tape rule to measure. According to Mr. Augustine Amara the Project Activist in Charge of the gara tie dying in Kailahun, a good number of students in his class stated they had zero formal education before enrolling in CAR and for the females, most of them were engaged in commercial sex work, but with the teaching of writing, numeracy, literacy , civil and moral education, environmental studies, spelling and reading aspects of the curriculum, a host of the beneficiaries graduate and proceed to further their education in the formal education sector. Mohamed Sesay a 2003 graduate of the tailoring component of CAR program in Port Loko who now owns his own tailoring shop stated that he is indebted to CAR for transforming his life from someone with no education, no hope and support system, to the man he now is: an entrepreneur who can read, write and speak English.

Psychosocial Counselling
After the war the communities were faced with serious psychosocial problems that did not exist prior to the war. Data from Focus Group Discussions and Interviews with Key Informants revealed an increase in social vices and crimes such alcoholism, taking of drugs mostly the locally grown Diamba, the local name for Cannabis sativa, alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, rape, early marriage etc. The CAR project as revealed by the study introduced psychosocial counselling in its program to heal these social vices.
As part of its strategies, a lot of community sensitization was conducted. The psychosocial counselling proved to be very effective especially in trauma healing. There is now considerable reduction in the community social vices.

**Benefits**

Benefits frequently cited by participants included:

- Availability of job opportunities for youths especially for those that have acquired skills in the labour market, with a consequent reduction in unemployment, idleness and indolence among youths.
- Provision of start-up kits as most graduates cannot afford to purchase these on their own.
- Livelihood securities are now available in terms of new skills acquired from training.
- Participants across all survey communities reported a drop in community crime and other social vices such as gambling, stealing, prostitution, fighting and drug abuse that was common among youths who are now better engaged in profitable ventures.
- Counterfactual communities adjoining the HVP communities were reported to be having a spill over effect through the diffusion of innovations process.
- The study revealed that a good number of past graduates who are products of the HVP are now self-employed in their communities, some have gained employment in other organizations while some have established small scale business enterprises as livelihood securities.
- There is now a preponderance of skill labour available in the HVP and adjoining communities that can contribute to the development of their communities.

**Challenges**

The programme duration is too short particularly for vocations such as carpentry, masonry and a host of others that have technical components that require more time for skills perfection and mastery. Mustapha Sorie a respondent in Kailahun underlined the fact that a good number of beneficiaries walk long distances, in his case from an adjoining village called Bunumbu to the CAR centre in Kailahun a distance he approximated at 14 miles to and from daily. This he stated has the attendant effect of causing lateness, fatigue in class, truancy and in extreme instances discontinuation of the program.

Respondents across program intervention areas highlighted weak monitoring and evaluation systems as a serious challenge to the program, as it undermined the quality of service delivery. A good number of beneficiaries and even CSA members interrogated expressed frustration and dissatisfaction over the way the contents and value of the Start-Up kits have been reduced and the sizable reduction in the portion sizes of the one meal a day offered at the centres. Equally important is the concern raised by several nannies of the various Day Care Centres that the feeding program for the children of the beneficiaries has dropped both in quality and quantity with accompanying adverse consequences to health and wellbeing of these babies.

When asked, many Program Activists and AOs mentioned very poor conditions of service. They referred to their remuneration as pittance considering the volume of work they undertake. This in no small measure affects their quality of service delivery and ultimately undermines recruitment and retention rates.

Beneficiary-Instructor ratios were also highlighted as a recurring challenge as some Program Activists had a class size of 70 students as in the case of the gara tie dying and soap making class in Kailahun. The overcrowding in the classes affects the quality and instruction and compromises the one-on-one touch most of these beneficiaries require considering the fact that most had no prior formal education. The marked disparity between the number of approved beneficiaries per cohort (150) and the number of equally or more eligible beneficiaries was repeatedly mention as a huge challenge. This reechoed by Chief Saffa Brima of Sandeya who stated that though the HVP has ameliorate their suffering particularly through the hybrid CAR and Community Support Projects, their greatest constraint is with the very few beneficiaries selected from his area. This concern is global as every Tribal Authority and
Stakeholder interacted with made mention of the limited geographical coverage which concomitantly limits number of beneficiaries.

Irregular and Insufficient budgetary allocations from HQ presented difficulties. Some respondents were of the view that this posed several challenges, first affected timely in service delivery, second it compromised quality of service delivery, third it disrupted particularly the feeding and healthcare aspects of the program and undermined the trust and confidence beneficiaries had in the program. Noting this point is an imperative considering the fact that most beneficiaries interrogated confessed that the feeding program and nanny services were core motivating factors for enrolment.

Respondents cited the lack of control over the retention and graduation rates of beneficiaries as a core challenge of the problem. A noticeable percentage of the Program Activists and Program Supervisors identified the volatile graduation rates of beneficiaries as problematic for optimal programmatic impact creation as it increased the variance between planned and achieved indicators. A survey of past beneficiaries that dropped out indicates that they were struggling through the program as they faced housing, food, healthcare and financial problems.

Arguably the biggest challenge identified in the implementation of the CAR program is the disconnect between the hugeness of the geographical scope of the program areas per district and the scantiness of the approved program intervention areas in accordance with the program design. Of equivalent concern was the shot-term nature of the more particularly the CAR, but generically speaking all components of the HVP- that one year is hardly long enough to make a serious difference and create appreciable levels of programmatic impact.

**Lessons Learnt**

On lessons learnt, study subjects who participated in the FGD and KII cited the following:

- Youths in the communities have now moved from being idle to active skilled skilled work seekers and as one participant from Kailahun posited....."Idleness leads to indolence and mischief making which is not good".
- Participants have come to the realization that achievement in education at any level is the key to success.
- Follow-ups on graduate progress is a good approach in maintaining both sustainability of the program and monitoring progress.
- In the villages skill training is good for the youths as it can help them improve their livelihood strategies and securities and be of assistance to their family members.
- That most youths get involved in crimes, social vices and conflicts is not because they are naturally evil or bad or discipline, but because they are idle. This corroborates the saying that: *An idle brain is a place for mischief*. The HVP therefore is a therapy for addressing idleness and make the beneficiaries useful members of their communities.
- Prosperity, respect and dignity do not solely knock at the doors of those who acquire academic achievements but to those who acquire tech/voc skills as well.
- Prosperity does not only come to those who attend formal education, skills training also can improve your lives as long as you concentrate on what you are doing.
- There is respect and dignity in trade than being idle. Individuals who were once dependants and social deviants have now been reformed and making meaningful contributions to the socio-economic development of their communities.
- CAR has increased the self-esteem of community members.
- From small humble beginnings great things can happen, like past beneficiaries of the carpentry and hair dressing programs have become entrepreneurs.
- A respondent in Kambia Ya Alimamay Jalloh a former Nanny of the CAR Centre stated rather authoritatively that if you are not motivated and reasonably remunerated for services provided, you will not be inclined to give off your best- a claim that was re-echoed across the program implementation areas.
- Community involvement in planning, monitoring and supervision is a key to success.
Summary of Recommendations and Conclusion

**Extend the program to other Chiefdoms:** Reliable data from the field, FDGs and KIIs indicate that there is a sizeable variance between Chiefdoms served and those in need. The analysis of the information garnered reveal that unless the geographical scope of the program is extended the problems related to its limited scope, most of which have been duly mentioned will persist with its accompanying adverse consequence on overall impact.

**Increase the number of in takes per cohort:** The variance between the number of eligible beneficiaries and actual/successful applicants is huge. It is important the space for skills training, economic empowerment and all the other program benefits so well enumerated be expanded to prevent the skewing of the outcomes of the intervention. This is even more the case when equally or more

**Increase the course duration:** A makeshift capacity needs assessment exercise done during the consultancy reveal two key things: first that most of these students have literally zero formal education with very little or no foundation and second, that most of these skills areas require more than 1 year even in normal circumstances. In the interest of skills mastery and programmatic impact, it is best that the program be extended to 2 years which is arguably more realistic.

**Provide mobility for Program Activists:** According to the program structure, Program Activists and AOs and other critical program implementation staff undertake psycho-social counselling and follow-up visits that span very long distances as most of the beneficiaries live outside the CAR centres.

**Improve conditions of service for Program implementation staff:** Across intervention areas, programme implementation staff mentioned poor conditions of service as a major impediment to effective program implementation. A respondent in Kailahun stated that though they are committed to impact knowledge and transfer skills, their salaries need to be augmented to incentivize them to give off their best.

**Invest in staff capacity strengthening:** Being a volunteer driven organization, SLRCS naturally taps into its volunteer base for critical program implementation staff. Whilst these staff may be willing, some are very weak instructors whilst others who are in very senior roles either have no programming experience or are at levels that are not appreciable.

**Consider constructing boarding facilities/dormitories:** Most respondents noted the fact that they were having difficulties with housing and either had to pay rents or do menial jobs for relatives in exchange for rent. Respondents in particularly Kailahun underlined the fact that this distracted them from their studies and in some instances made them vulnerable to abuse.

**In Conclusion, the benefits of HVP** amongst the myriad of benefits that effective external and internal 1 assessments provides to organizations or programs like the HVP, the most critical is it provides information vital to the triad of HVP’s ability to not only survive, but scale upwards. This assertion is based on the logical premise that organizations or programs cannot be truly effective in the long haul unless they have intimate knowledge of their strengths or weaknesses in relation to the opportunities and challenges it faces (pg.129 Bryson). The ability of the HVP holistically to underline its relevance in relation to its environment keeps it from being victimized by the present (threats to its survival). Rather, the HVP will have a basis for reasoned optimism, in that difficulties may be seen as specific rather than pervasive, temporary rather than permanent, and rather than seeing challenges as irremediable, they will be viewed as surmountable. It is hoped that as a consequence of this SWOC analysis, the CAR program will switch from fearing about its future to labouring to create it as it is doing at the moment (Humphrey, 1959/pg 129 Bryson). The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society like any other organization must manage the tensions among its capacities and intensions in relation to the opportunities and challenges it faces.

On Risk Management, it is generally agreed that even with the best risk mitigating strategies in place, risks associated with program implementation are inevitable. It is against this backdrop that a number of the risks envisioned are interrogated and modalities to effectively mitigate them underlined accordingly.