

USAID/Sierra Leone Briefing Paper

Strategy

The USAID/Sierra Leone Mission strategy is based on the Sierra Leone experience that, in the absence of transparent governance, civil unrest emerges and is expressed in increasingly destructive ways. This risk increases where there are perceptions or realities of public corruption and inefficiency, where citizens' civil rights are denied and where actual or potential "spoilers" have continued access to financing. Furthermore, the lack of democratic governance leads to marginalization of citizens, who adopt behaviors injurious to peace, security and stability.

To address this situation, USAID's 2006-2008 program is designed around a single Strategic Objective: "Enhance Democratic Governance." This approach exposes the root cause of fragility, prioritizes and identifies opportunities to address it while presenting the best opportunity for USAID to exercise its leadership.

Major Program Areas

All activities will focus on increasing Sierra Leoneans' knowledge, expectations of and demand for good governance, as well as improving the responsiveness, transparency, political will and capacity of selected government institutions at all levels to deliver services.

In addition to democracy and governance activities, health, biodiversity, and livelihoods programs will focus on strengthening social institutions, public and private, in a manner that expands participation and incorporates principles of accountability, transparency and efficiency at the grassroots level. Communities will be encouraged to develop and implement plans that promote democratic governance, with emphasis on programs empowering women and youth.

Major Activities

Strengthen Democratic Governance: The new strategy seeks to broaden community-based political participation in a national dialogue through a variety of mutually reinforcing activities. Among these: enhancing the effectiveness and responsiveness of newly formed local government councils and civil-society organizations by promoting open debate, general capacity building, training in advocacy skills, and education of citizens on their rights and responsibilities. Additionally, training and mentoring programs for newly-elected local leaders, Paramount Chiefs, and Members of Parliament will enable and encourage informed dialogue.

USAID engages mass media to alter the way government, citizens, and civil society work and interact at all levels. Media programming will continue to be employed in a cross-cutting fashion to ensure that citizens have full access to information and are better able to voice their concerns and participate in the democratic process. USAID's assistance will advance the establishment of community radio stations and effective media networks, while developing radio

programming and other media materials designed to support the nascent ward committees and local councils and promote a national dialogue on good governance.

Transparent Elections: In support of free, fair, transparent and credible elections, USAID will leverage the resources of other donors to help fund the three-year Election Plan (presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007, local elections in 2008). The mission will amplify its impact by emphasizing good governance and empowering local communities, with specific emphasis on increasing women and youth's active participation and leadership in the political process, and through access to accurate unbiased information and youth employment.

LINKS/Youth Job Creation: LINKS (Promoting Linkages for Livelihood Security and Economic Development) consolidates unity and reconciliation, and improves communities by (re)building vital public infrastructure, stimulating economic activity and enabling socially marginalized young men and women to be gainfully employed through new or expanded economic activities. Isolated farm communities are integrated into the mainstream of society and participate in good governance practices through community-based organizations such as farm associations, cooperatives and field schools.

LINKS also builds on the foundation created by the Food for Peace (FFP) Development Relief Program (DRP) to improve the health status and establish agriculture-based livelihood activities, advancing from post-conflict humanitarian needs to longer term economic development through new or improved cash crop production, processing, marketing and sales. Access to new techniques, technologies and methodologies in addition to market prices is augmented through media outreach programs.

Activities include micro-credit lending to entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth, business skills development, and agro-processing enhancement, and strengthening linkages between the community and district and national input supply and produce markets. Beneficiaries include private sector entrepreneurs, public sector entities, local farmers' organizations, women's and youth groups or cooperatives, and small-scale businesses. This activity also promotes an interactive dialogue among different communities as well as among communities and the local leadership responsible for advocating for development and infrastructure projects.

Integrated Diamond Management: Civil society will be empowered to monitor the diamond sector and help direct equitable and transparent management and use of diamond resources. USAID supports efforts of the Kimberly Process and the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative to: further improve transparency and management, limit the potential for civil unrest, maximize respect for human rights, provide improved employment benefits and conditions to the diggers, and increase environmental protection and the constructive reclamation of mined out lands to be returned to the agricultural sector.

Nationally, USAID works with the relevant Ministries and senior government officials to promote management of the industry in a manner that encourages legitimate investment and reduces the opportunity and incentives for criminal exploitation (e.g., smuggling). USAID also supports the innovative Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF), which directs funds from diamond export taxes toward community development within diamond producing

chiefdoms. Locally, USAID builds the capacity of citizens, cooperatives and civic organizations to participate in the diamond market, and to demand fair treatment and payment for their labor and diamonds. USAID also supports sub-regional cooperation within the Mano River Union.

Other Program Areas

Presidential Africa Education Initiative and the Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program:

Through annual grants, these programs promote basic literacy and improve educational opportunities in order to build leadership capacity among women and youth, especially young girls.

The Ambassador's Fund for HIV/AIDS: The program focuses at the national level on the transparent management and implementation of the fund, and at the local level, ensures the proper functioning of the decentralized part of the system. This includes capacity building to ensure that local NGOs and councils have the skills and capacity to implement the programs effectively and equitably. Work will continue to be done in collaboration with the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Natural Resource Management/Chimpanzee Project: Funding goes towards the Chimpanzee Conservation and Sensitization Program that aims at creating an environment conducive for the conservation and protection of chimpanzees and their habitats. Activities are geared toward strengthening capacity for conservation and protection as well as increasing public awareness on the importance of conservation and of chimpanzees and chimpanzee habitat through the Jane Goodall Institute.

Child Survival: USAID strives to reduce child and maternal mortality through this program. Activities promote healthy behavior, advocate for favorable health policies, expand coverage for key health interventions such as preventive treatments and improve health delivery systems.

Polio: This program contributes to the largest public health initiative that provides routine immunization of young children as a strategy for global polio eradication.

Trade and Investment (AGOA- Agricultural Growth and Opportunity Act) Trade Hub: This is a multi-year trade capacity building initiative that promotes regional integration and regional cooperation by strengthening the ability of African countries and businesses to develop their export trade. Sierra Leone is a member of the West Africa Trade Hub (WATH). WATH supports country-based activities to facilitate national competitiveness in global markets. It strengthens capacity of member countries to increase international and intra-regional trades to spur economic development. It specifically helps countries to take advantage of AGOA through support for export development. WATH provides access to information on AGOA and global trade as well as strengthens networks of market information systems and traders' organizations. Technical assistance and other support services are also provided on AGOA procedural requirements.

NaWiPot: A consortium of three NGOs (IRC, CVT and Search for Common Ground) sponsored by USAID are engaged in supporting an integrated project geared towards addressing gender based violence (GBV), post-conflict psychotherapy, peace building radio programming and

trafficking in persons initiatives in the Kailahun axis of Sierra Leone, bordering Guinea and Liberia. The popular program named “NaWiPot” (It’s our pot) seeks to raise awareness of GBV, torture and mental health issues while providing access to quality mental health and psychosocial services to families affected by the war in Sierra Leone.

Centre for Victims of Torture (CVT): The Centre supports USG interventions in Sierra Leone to continue its mental health and torture treatment programs. The long-term objective of the current program in the Kono District is to simultaneously build awareness of torture and mental health issues, while training a corps of para-professionals skilled at dealing with many of the mental health issues associated with the 11-year civil war.

Global Development Alliances (GDA): In addition to leveraging the resources of other actors, USAID/Sierra Leone will engage the private sector in making the alluvial diamond mining sector more socially responsive, especially with regard to meeting the needs of youths. An alliance with UNDP will be further developed to support micro-enterprises for women and youth (currently through USAID/Sierra Leone’s agriculture/job creation initiative), and GDAs will be pursued with companies such as Kraft, Mars, Coca Cola or Nestlé to further address youth unemployment.

Food For Peace: Nearly 800 million people in the world are food insecure and many live in sub-Saharan Africa. Chronic poverty, the persistent lack of economic opportunity either to produce adequate amounts of food or to exchange labor for income needed to purchase food in adequate amounts, is the chief cause of food insecurity. The Office of Food for Peace, through funding provided by Public Law 480 Title II, makes commodity donations to cooperating sponsors to address the needs of food security through five-year development projects and emergency food assistance. In Sierra Leone, USAID is providing PL 480 emergency food commodities.

Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF): USAID supports a small grants program which provides assistance through indigenous organizations to implement small, short-term, highly targeted country-level activities in support of human rights and democratic institutions. In Sierra Leone, DHRF activities include support to a human rights clinic and efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence.

Special Self-Help (SSH) Fund: USAID funds a small grants program which provides assistance through local individuals and groups for community-based development initiatives that have an immediate development impact. In Sierra Leone, SSH activities include skills training and income-generating activities.

IRC Consortium: Centered chiefly in Kailahun District, activities of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Search for Common Grounds/Talking Drums Studio (SFG/TDS) and Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) combat corruption, gender-based violence and trafficking in persons. The consortium also offers psychosocial and trauma counseling and reintegration for victims of torture and a Radio Communication for Community Awareness program.

Catholic Relief Services/West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP): WANEP carries out peace building, conflict mitigation activities in communities and early-warning information sourcing and transmission for conflict prevention in the Mano River Union region.

Computer Frontiers International (CFI): The Ghana-based CFI works actively with implementing partners in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Its program focuses on computer connectivity to promote both intra- and inter-NGO information sharing. This process strengthens communications among civil society groups and bridges the gap between world information sources and urban and rural Sierra Leone on issues of governance, anti-corruption trafficking in persons, gender based-violence and reintegration of victims of torture. In Kailahun District, activities of IRC/NaWiPot and WANEP may benefit from the CFI program.

Helen Keller International (HKI) Vitamin A Distribution: With USAID/MOST funding, HKI provides mostly technical support to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, and NGOs for the implementation of nutrition programs. In collaboration with partners, HKI is institutionalizing micronutrient supplements, including semi-annual Vitamin A supplement for children 6-59 months old and for post-partum women, and integration into routine health care services, particularly for children aged 6-11 months. The MOST funding is in direct line with USAID objectives of increased access to health services through reconstruction of infrastructure and by increasing the capacities of health workers.