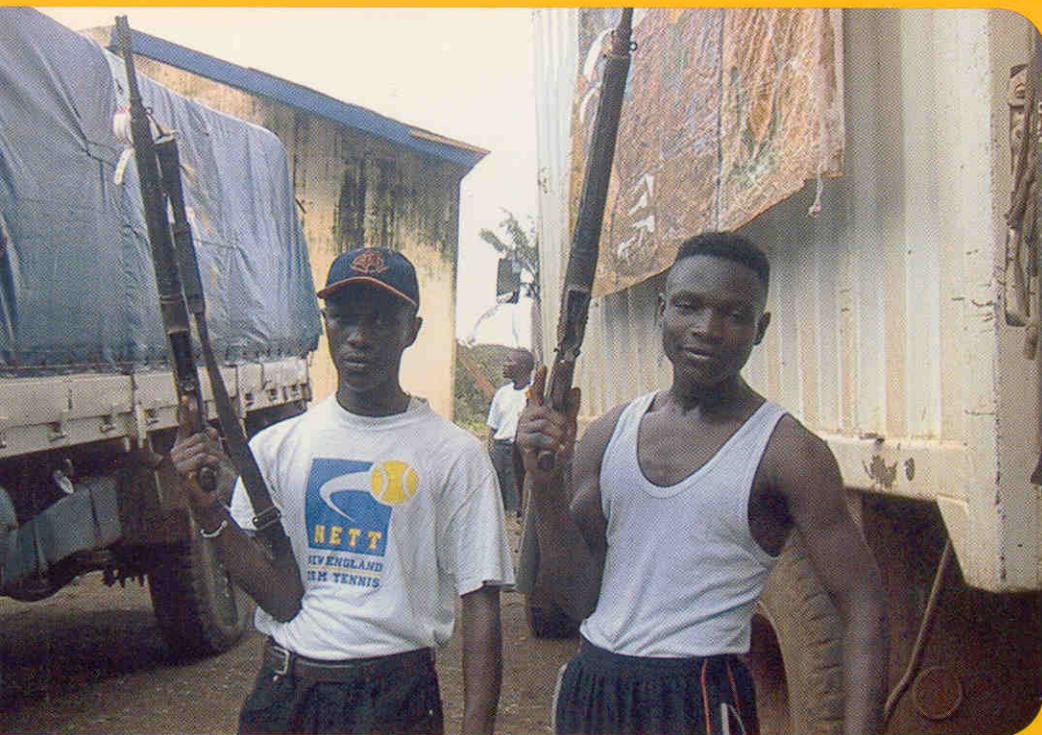


Review of the GTZ Reintegration Programme in War-Affected Rural Communities in Sierra Leone



HUMBOLDT – UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN

Landwirtschaftlich – Gärtnerische Fakultät

Schriftenreihe des Seminars für Ländliche Entwicklung



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Berlin / Freetown, Januar 2002

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Executive summary

Sierra Leone has emerged from a ten years war in the beginning of 2000, which left vast material destruction, hundred thousands of refugees, mainly in Guinea and Liberia, a large number of internally displaced persons, many mutilated war victims and a large number of highly traumatised people. The different warring fractions to a large extent used child soldiers, who often had been induced into the war by the use of drugs and various methods of pressure. A result of the war is thus, that a large number of young people have not had any schooling and only learnt to fight. This factor together with the large number of unemployed youth without any perspective of professional training presents a major threat for the development of the country.

With the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord (LPA) United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and British troops were sent to Sierra Leone to ensure disarmament and the transfer of the country from war to peace until general elections. When the Peace Accord was signed about 40 % of the country were still under control of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which were to be disarmed and reintegrated into civil life following an agreed time schedule and in equal number as the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), including Kamajors, who had been supporting the government.

One of the main obstacles for an overall disarmament and peace was and is the interest in controlling the diamond digging and marketing, which is mainly concentrated in the northern and eastern part of the country. Disarmament in 2001 is an ongoing process, but slower than expected. Disarmament is also one of the main conditions for GTZ interventions.

GTZ can build on a deeply rooted confidence within the Sierra Leone society and government circles, based on experience from a former GTZ-project in the country. It is, however, confronted with a number of serious constraints within the emergency context, such as short-term donor funding and donor requirements and the need for quick response.

GTZ started working in Sierra Leone in 2000, at first providing shelter in suburbs of the capital Freetown. During previous experience in Guinea and Liberia GTZ developed a concept to working in crisis situations, which was applied in Sierra Leone. This ReAct-concept is a multi-sectoral approach to crisis situations, aim-

ing at quick impacts for war-affected communities and a high visibility to create confidence. The multi-sectoral approach of GTZ includes skills training, construction, income generating activities, agriculture and community services. The reintegration programme ReAct aims at long-term impacts mainly through capacity building measures and in-built peace-building activities. The main target groups are returnees (refugees and internally displaced persons), ex-combatants and the respective host communities. GTZ co-operates with two implementing partners, namely Bo/Pujehun Development Associates (BPDA) and Counterparts for Rehabilitation and Development Sierra Leone (CORD-SL).

This study on , which was commissioned by GTZ, aims at reviewing the GTZ reintegration programme ReAct and offering recommendations for further development of the programme. The results of this review result in a new concept paper. The findings are based on research conducted in four project sites, which are communities with former or ongoing project interventions, on interviews with GTZ-staff and management, and on information collected from different institutions and programmes at different levels. During the three months in Sierra Leone the SLE-Team organised, facilitated and evaluated two workshops, which offered some valuable information.

The institutional framework for reconstruction, reconciliation and reintegration programmes

The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which was first deployed in 1999, in September 2001 was extended for another six months, because the disarmament was delayed. In November a consolidated interagency appeal (formed by Canada, European Commission, UNOCHA, European Union, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States) asked for US \$88.6 million for emergency assistance. Sierra Leone is still considered in a state of emergency: A large number of refugees and IDPs have not yet been resettled, but are still living in camps in and outside the country. Ex-combatants still have to be reintegrated into civilian life.

The major players in this state of emergency for reintegration activities alongside UNHCR, working with refugees, are the two national co-ordination bodies NCDDR and NCRRR. While NCDDR together with UNAMSIL is responsible for demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants and former child-soldiers (actual disarmament and destruction of weapons is carried out by UNAMSIL, or sometimes international partners like GTZ, whereas NCDDR is re-

sponsible for sensitisation, registration and screening) while NCRRR is mandated to co-ordinate emergency and medium term recovery efforts in Sierra Leone. It is the umbrella body for all activities of INGOs in the country, but it also works through national implementing partners. NCRRR works on the community level, giving special attention to the resettlement of IDPs and refugees. When ex-combatants and their dependants resettle in communities, NCRRR takes over from NCDDR.

NCDDR as NCRRR mainly rely on external funding, especially from the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, UNDP and UNHCR. An important programme run under NCRRR is the Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme with the Emergency Recovery Support Fund (ERSF). NCDDR is closely co-ordinating with UNAMSIL: the

All bodies concerned with resettlement and reconstruction activities have formed the joint Resettlement Planning Committee, comprising representatives of NCDDR, NCRRR, UNOCHA, UNHCR and implementing partners. GTZ in Sierra Leone is one of the important implementing partners for UNHCR, for NCDDR and NCRRR.

The Government of Sierra Leone and the respective line ministries (the most important one being the Ministry of Development and Planning) are considered rather weak. Institutional strengthening for government entities is an ongoing process.

Formal structures for local authorities exist in the accessible areas, but are not always very effective. Altogether the country is divided into 13 provinces with 150 chiefdoms. The acceptance of the local chiefs depends to a large extent on their attitude during the war. Some of the local chiefs are members of the National Parliament and reside more time in Freetown than in their chiefdoms.

Funding for emergency assistance is mostly short-term, normally between six and twelve months, as well as contracts of aid workers very often are short term. A Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) administered by the World Bank is at present and until declaration of end of emergency co-ordinating all donor funding.

The situation in war-affected communities

In the Western and Southern Area, accessible since 1999, the main destructions during the war occurred in the villages and in Freetown, but not so much in the regional centres of Bo and Kenema, which built up a strong defence against RUF. The level of physical destruction varies, according to interagency assessments. There are areas, in which 90% of the houses, all schools and health facilities had been destroyed. Access to villages is often difficult because of bad road conditions. Drinking water is often a problem, because there are no wells, or wells have been destroyed or neglected.

Agriculture always has been the main occupation, absorbing about 2/3 of the working-age population, traditionally concentrating on rice production (upland rice and IVS), groundnuts, cassava, sweet potatoes, oil palms and cattle. As a result of the war cattle had almost completely disappeared, a large part of the agricultural areas neglected or devastated. Food production is one of the important issues.

The main diamond mining areas are mainly in the Eastern and Northern Province, where the control of diamond mining and marketing has been one of the reasons for the prolongation of war, but diamonds are also to be found in other parts of the country. Some communities in the Southern and Western Province are engaged in diamond mining. Sometimes this leads a neglect of agricultural activities, absorbing especially the work force of young men.

Out of an estimated population of 4.5 million inhabitants more than 1 million fled to country to go to Guinea or Liberia, and about half of the (rest) population were internally displaced. No exact data is available concerning the number of refugees still living in camps outside the country, the interagency consolidated appeal 2002 for Sierra Leone (November 2001) stated 247.590 IDPs still in camps. The situation in Guinea and Liberia influences the resettling process directly, refugees moving forth and back over the borders.

An immediately visible result of the war is the large number of mutilated persons. A more invisible result is a highly traumatised and uprooted population. The official slogan of "All Sierra Leoneans love each other" does not necessarily foster awareness building about consequences of traumata.

Assessment, conclusions and recommendations

Emergency situations especially crises after armed wars, develop specific dynamics and require adequate approaches: Any emergency aid aiming at a middle or long term effect for the population, has to take into consideration, that not only the physical destruction need repair, that it needs input for economic recovery, but in order re-establish social structures damaged by the war and to heal wounds it also needs social reconstruction and peace building.

GTZ through the reintegration programme ReAct seeks to combine these different components in a multi-sectoral and community-based approach, which includes the revival of agricultural activities, physical reconstruction and rehabilitation of community infrastructures, basic improvements in water and sanitation infrastructure, road maintenance and the development of income generating activities. As the organisation is operating mainly with short-term funding assessments of needs are often done by rapid appraisals, which are not in all cases representing a consensus of the major needs. To get a clearer picture of the different vulnerabilities and capacities within the communities, and ensure a gender sensitive approach, it would be advisable to use the more comprehensive inter-agency appraisal as basic data for the planning and organise a participatory assessment within the communities by the introduction of VCA and CAP. Such an approach may need more time before starting the project activities, but save time during implementation, because a larger part of monitoring the process is situated within the communities.

Staff is living in the communities for the complete project cycle implementing the activities together with community counterparts, who acquire new technical skills, which should help the community to take over responsibility after the end of project interventions. Normally the community based project activities in different communities within a distance up to 20 km are grouped around an epicentre. This epicentre normally is the place, where a Skills Training Centre is established, training community members and returnees (refugees, IDPs and ex-combatants) for nine months. Part of the training is taking place on construction sites within the villages, where trainees work together with community counterparts. To co-ordinate the different project activities and the participation of the community is a difficult task, because the project activities depend on funding and on planning within the different sections, whereas the rural population is following their own rhythm, which largely depends on the agricultural calendar.

Closer consultation with the community members and more coherence between the different sector activities would be needed to avoid frictions between conflicting interests.

The fact, however, that the staff permanently lives and works within the community is a model, which should be followed by other agencies. Although it is not always easy for the staff, because communication is often difficult, they are important for the forging of models of integration. Their attitude and the signals they send to the host community is an important factor in a society, where role models of social behaviour have largely been affected by the war. The organisation could further strengthen the positive impact of staff, by enhancing a code of conduct, which promotes such positive attitudes.

Community Services section is the first to move into project communities and normally the last one to move out. It has an important function in servicing the other sections, by motivating the community members for their own participation in project activities, and by promoting the establishment or rehabilitation of CDCs. These committees are to represent all groups within the community, including the returnees, should establish new democratic bodies for decision-making and should ensure the follow-up of activities after GTZ has pulled out. Of course the creation of CDCs does not automatically solve all problems of inequality within the communities. The process of establishing a CDC should be based on a careful assessment of the different groups existing within the community and "give a voice to the voiceless" such as women or part of the reintegrating population.

Peace building in war-affected communities is a process, which needs to consider the specific experiences of the different groups. The Community Services section has the leading role in peace building activities within the communities and within STCs. Sensitisation workshops, sports events, promotion of cultural groups or youth groups as well as integrating of opposed groups are important instruments to open dialogues, to reduce prejudices and to discover common ground. In a situation like Sierra Leone, which is post-war, but not yet stabilised peace, it is certainly important to reduce the potential of future conflict by neutralising the conflict potential represented by ex-combatants. Offering civil alternatives like skills training or integration into the community (groups) is therefore an important measure within the project activities. The danger, especially in a country like Sierra Leone, where officially everybody is already reconciled, may also be traced at the victims side, if there voice is not heard. Traumatic experiences

which find no space to express themselves, may create attitudes of defence or revenge, or may result in violent actions against others. The fact, that domestic violence in Sierra Leone apparently is growing, may be an indicator. To continue with peace building activities, work on reconciliation should therefore be continued. It should, however, help to rebuild social communal life and sustainable peace even more, if space be created for both sides to talk about experiences.

A complex programme like the reintegration programme ReAct is different from other programmes within emergency aid, which normally concentrate on one specific area. The project activities need to be planned, co-ordinated and monitored to ensure, that adaptations can take place without causing too much extra work on the management side. Flexibility is certainly an important factor in emergency situations in order to enable rapid responses. It may however reduce stress at different levels to rely on planning processes, which facilitate amendments where necessary, especially in an organisation, which is quickly growing in terms of personnel and budgets and related project activities.

Programmes like the reintegration programmes of GTZ in Sierra Leone show that even within an emergency context it is possible to develop activities in a way, which may lead towards sustainable development. The question which remains is, however, how far the lessons learned from former experiences and from this experience reach the donor's ears: As long as short-term funding for this kind of activities is prevalent, the discussion about bridging the gap between emergency and sustainable development and peace will remain theoretical.