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SUSTAINING A CIVIL SOCIETY CAMPAIGN AROUND THE CHIEFTAINCY REFORM PROCESS IN SIERRA LEONE

FINAL REPORT FROM SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

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Introduction

For the first time in the history of Sierra Leone, the procedures for electing and appointing Paramount Chiefs and sub-chiefs have been set out in the Draft Chieftaincy Act 2008. The Draft Chieftaincy Act presents a historic opportunity for reform and a platform for civil society to engage bringing in diverse voices, opinions, interests and positions.

The need for a comprehensive review and reform of chieftom governance should not be overemphasized as it promotes the consolidation of peace and stability, and even more can strengthen our democratic values, systems and structures. The case for reform is not a case against tradition. It is, rather, a case for the continued relevance of chieftaincy in a country that yearns for better governance, fairer justice systems, socio-economic development and greater accountability.

Many Sierra Leoneans argue that the balance between chiefs' service to the government and service to the community has shifted too far in favour of government and national political parties. In the past, chiefs often served as political enforcers, sometimes actively suppressing free speech and political association. Chiefs who enjoyed the patronage of the politically powerful also tended to abuse their authority for private gain, exploiting their people in that process. There have been worrying signs of a return to this kind of behaviour in the post-war era. Reform of the mechanisms for appointing chiefs and the terms and conditions of chiefs' service needs to be undertaken to ensure chiefs' primary loyalty is to their people and not governing parties, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report recommends.¹

PICOT, a coalition supported by Christian Aid, has engaged in a number of advocacy events that includes meetings with the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, press releases, district meetings, TV and radio programmes etc. However, due to the sensitive nature of this reform process and the various vested interests by a number of stakeholders and politicians, unfortunately the Draft Chieftaincy Bill 2008 was enacted by Members of Parliament without much adherence to the concerns raised by the CCG/PICOT led CSO coalition. Thus the problems are still glaring. Four critical aspects have been recurrent in the debate and these continue to inform the position of coalition partners in the campaign that include politicization, tradition, corruption and democracy but also the issue of overlapping roles of District Councils and Chieftom councils and the implications for development and resource allocation. The campaign will also target three critical Bills / Acts currently being enacted or revised: Local Government Act, Chieftaincy Bill 2009, and Local Courts Bill 2008 and the campaign will focus on raising Civil Society's issues and contributions to these Acts and how they will contribute to positively impacting on people's lives before they are enacted.

SFCG has been working on with PICOT to support its media strategy in the advocacy campaign for reform of the chieftaincy system. The project worked towards the overall objective of providing a national platform for debate on chieftaincy reform whilst influencing policy to ensure that the reform is consistent with national aspirations during its 6 month life span.

The project's specific objectives were:

- To promote basic understanding amongst civil society and communities about the need for chieftaincy reform and how it supports democratic values and principles;
- To stimulate discussion and national debate on the role chiefs should play in a democracy vis-a-vis the decentralized local government (district councils)

¹ <http://trcsierraleone.org/drwebsite/publish/v2c3.shtml>

- To ensure civil society's position on the Draft Chieftaincy Act is taken into consideration in the discussions leading to the final enactment.

The project targeted all 12 districts in the country and focused on national and local policy makers, women, youth and civil society actors with the expectation that:

- Communities, national and local leaders are mobilised to ensure their concerns are incorporated in the Draft Chieftaincy Act;
- Sierra Leonean citizens have increased awareness of the key provisions contained in the Draft Chieftaincy Act;
- Sustained engagement with wider communities that include every shade of opinion is developed so as to generate legitimacy; and
- Increased awareness and support amongst policy and decision makers for the need of a participatory chieftaincy reform process.

However the government rushed the bill through parliament with flawed provisions and embarked upon elections of about 40 vacant paramount chiefs' seats across the country.

Consequently the PICOT (Partners in Conflict

Transformation) partners in a meeting reviewed the

advocacy strategy to focus on the elections whilst taking onboard some of the recommendations of the Chieftaincy Reform Report to analyze and explain the flaws in the process and the Chieftaincy Act.

Immediately after the elections attention was shifted to the recommendations in the report. The

process was smeared by political interference, discrimination against women and youth and widespread corruption

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

a. Programming Review Meetings

Outcome1 Civil society recommendations on chieftaincy Reform incorporated into chieftaindom Governance and Tribal Administration Policy and Act: Output 1.1.2 radio discussion Indicator1.1.1

At the beginning of the project activities, SFCG was able to hold one review meeting with PICOT partners in Freetown. The meeting focussed on the prioritization of the recommendations from the chieftaincy reform report to be handled by SFCG and feedback from PICOT partners from the field, and to review and discuss the format of the radio programmes.

IMPACT STORY 1

Aspirant denied to run for election because He claimed the rights from his mother

Henry Mafindoh was a paramount chieftaincy aspirant in the Gbaneh chiefdom, Kono District who was denied the right to contest the elections.

The aspirant ran to SFCG for help, apparently he had heard the 'Nyu Barray' on air. It was clear in his discussions with the producer that he didn't know what else to do after he was refused the right to contest the elections because, according to the Internal Affairs Ministry, he was claiming the throne from his maternal side which they claim is untraditional. The Ministry wasn't particularly interested in discussing his situation as SFCG realised from an interview with the Minister, Dauda Kamara.

The 'Nyu Barray' programming content took time to focus on the specifics of that situation and backed with a law suit from the aspirant, the Ministry was forced to postpone the election and re-run the

Owing to busy schedules and logistical issues particularly as other PICOT members were based upcountry, SFCG then decided to hold two review meetings in Freetown and Bo (October 2009 and January 2010 respectively) with its production staff to ensure the chieftaincy reform campaign is mainstreamed into SFCG country objectives. These meetings were critical for SFCG staff to understand the issues and be positioned to produce programmes that were consistent to the overall objectives of PICOT

To complement the two intensive reviews SFCG producers met and discussed emerging issues and trends in relation to the objectives of the chieftaincy campaign through their weekly regular production meetings. In these weekly production meetings producers looked into newspaper articles, various radio programmes, reports and interviews from across the country from SFCG correspondents, PICOT partners and NEW. These weekly reviews framed the direction of the programming for upcoming weeks.

IMPACT STORY 2

Woman denied the right to run for elections

Elizabeth Torto was a legitimate daughter of the deceased paramount chief of Nemeyama Chiefdom in the Kono district. The traditionalists in the community said she could not contest the vacant seat of her father. The fight was among herself and other family members who feared her popularity and sought to use the traditional card to oust her.

SFCG was among the first institutions she ran to for help having heard SFCG programming on radio with messages focused on PICOT's objective to eradicate discrimination against women in the process. Radio packages focus on the various angles of the issues with interviews from members of her family, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and CSO's to highlight her plight and hone in the message of underdevelopment without women and the right of women to participate. Armed with the confidence provided by the information we helped her with, she launched her advocacy at a national and International level, drawing debates and splitting opinion on the issue across the country. This escalation helped women candidates in places like Gbo Chiefdom, with similar traditions and customs win amidst three male candidates for the first time.

Apart from the internal weekly reviews done by SFCG, the project team participated in other PICOT meetings that were held in Freetown to streamline the research report and identify the core campaign issues, strategies and entry points for advocacy. These meetings also provided the SFCG media team the direction and focus of the campaign but more so strengthening the relationship between PICOT and SFCG staff.

In April 2010, SFCG held a review meeting with its Playwright and script writers for the soap opera Atunda Ayenda. The team invited the Christian Aid Senior Programme Officer – Human Rights and Democratisation who was instrumental in briefing the team about the campaign and its key advocacy strands. The briefing followed question and answer session and the outcome of the meeting was the development of a six month storyline with issues of the chieftaincy campaign identified that is currently being used in the daily productions.

Other Programming Meetings - Contributed to Output ***1.2.5 effective CSO engagement***

1. Launch of the report

SFCG attended the programme. Interviews were conducted with speakers and stakeholders and then packaged into the first and second edition of the magazine programme – the Nyu Barray

2. Roundtable on the report

The producer of the Nyu Barray and the SFCG focal person attended the roundtable and took part in the discussion. The partners suggested a follow up discussion on radio stations. SFCG identified the station and panellists but are waiting

on the partners to give the go ahead and support the process

3. MOU development

SFCG Country Director and Public Information Campaign Coordinator attended meetings and took part in the deliberations to define the work of the partners and the various strategic and operational structures within the coalition

b. National Bi-Weekly Radio Series

Contributing to outcome 2: 2.1.1(Talking Drum Studio publicise critical issues identified during elections in radio programmes) and output 2.3(Increased community engagement with councillors and chiefs on the chieftaincy elections process)

Contributing to Outcome 3 Awareness and civil society demand on enacting Local court Bill Output4.1(Effective CSO engagement with the ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Justice and parliament on passing the Local Court Act) and 4.2 (Effective media campaign on the issues

As part of its media framework, SFCG/TDS produced a national bi weekly series called the Nyu Barray. The programme was aimed at raising public awareness amongst policy makers at national and district levels around the need for reform and the inherent challenges facing the advocacy campaign. It was also designed to showcase the link between reform and development. A total of 14 thirty minutes radio magazines were produced during the project cycle that were aired on 27 radio stations given a total of 11,340 minutes or 189 hours of programming across the country during the project period. See table that summarizes the content of the various productions below.

Nyu Barray Bi Weekly Radio Magazine Programmes	
Edition	Issues
001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination against woman aspirant • PICOT report and recommendations
002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The undemocratic nature of selecting the TAs • Problems surrounding the revision of the TA list
003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rules of tradition in the declaration process • How aspirants are evicted from the process by undemocratic traditions
004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption in the local government elections • The Ministry of Internal Affairs response to the issues
005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An aspirant was denied the right to contest by the Ministry • The effects of political interference in the process
006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for the Ministry of Internal Affairs to exclude itself in the process • Youth participation in the process
007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indifference in the declaration threatens conflict in Safrokoh chieftdom • How the traditions are discriminating in the process
008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Elections Watch reported corruption, political

	interference and inconsistencies in the process
009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implication of the National Elections Watch Report on political interference • The ministry of Internal Affairs response to the allegations of political interference and the case for reform
010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical look into the role the Traditional Authorities play to elect the Paramount and ask if the role is democratic.
011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Local government is directly accused of influencing the process.
012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical look into the role of the paramount chief in the communities and asks if that role is relevant and needs reforming.
013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continued look at the role of the paramount chief from a civil society and paramount chief perspective.
014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A look at the history of the institution and tradition

Key Issues from the National Bi Weekly Programme

The paramount chieftaincy (PC) elections rolled out on three processes; the revision of the Tribal Authorities (TA) list, the declaration of rights to the throne, and the polling. The initial two processes are the most important and are decisive in the outcome of the entire process. There was an opportunity to focus on the chieftaincy elections as a way to put to test the new Paramount Chieftaincy Act 2009. Therefore in as much as the programmes brought to the fore the issues and recommendations from the research report, these were linked to ongoing chieftaincy elections. These were as follows:

a. Revision of TA List

The revision of the tribal authority's list was the most corrupt aspect of the entire process. Interviews conducted from communities, PICOT partners and NEW and used in the national Bi weekly programmes pointed to massive corruption and meddling by aspirants in an attempt to determine the outcome of the process. Aspirants were involved in paying huge local taxes because buying the taxes gets them to choose their Tribal Authorities (TA's) and will have them directly vote for them. The rush to buy more taxes during the process led to delays in the revision of the TA list that also adversely affect NEC's timeframe. This point to one of the core campaign issues of universal adult suffrage to be used in chieftaincy elections, instead of an electoral college of TA's.

b. Conflicting roles

There was confusion between NEC and the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development (MLGCD) as to assigned roles and control of aspects of the process. The Ministry was entirely in control of the revision of the TA list whilst NEC was responsible to just ascertain the number of voters in the chieftaincy. This meant that the ministry officials had total control without NEC's oversight in the process and leading to inflated and flawed TA lists. In some chieftaincy such as Kolifa Rowala in the Tonkolili District, the number of TAs outnumbered the population of the chieftaincy by the 19-1 system. There were lots of discrepancies in the gazettes published by the Ministry of Local Government, legitimate names were deleted and claims of unknown names been include in the list were also made. NEC was also charged with the responsibility just to conduct the elections and no role in processes leading to vetting

candidates, or verifying Electoral College lists. The SFCG radio programmes pursued these issues in line with the campaign to ensure clear cut roles and accountability and transparency.

c. The declaration process

The declaration process was also troubling in many of the chiefdoms, foremost among them was the process in the Safrokoh Limba chiefdom in the Bombali District when an aspirant was denied the right to contest when an old woman stood up in the meeting and alleged the aspirant was born out of wedlock. This situation created conflict in the community. Eventually, the courts ordered a re-declaration where the candidate lost by a vote observers claimed was political and undemocratic. Some candidates were given 'boxes' by the community but were rescinded by the Ministry. Allegations of bribery were also highlighted where Ministry officials received bribes and favoured candidates. These issues point to a lot of inconsistencies in the interpretation of the Act and another strong campaign issue. In one of the SFCG programmes, the Minister of Local Government Dauda Kamara accepted that the act is imperfect but that they are working with an instrument provided by the parliament.

d. Participation

Participation was very low especially among youth and women. Attempts were made to get a handful of young people replace dead Traditional Authorities in some chiefdoms such as Kolifa Rowala in the Tonkolili District but that number is far below the huge youth population in the country. The radio program succeeded in raising considerable attention and awareness that stimulated youths across the country demanding the right to participate and questioning the process.

Women participation was equally low but the increased education and information SFCG provided enabled some women to challenge the process. In Kono district a woman stood up and challenged traditional beliefs that barred her from contesting the elections and at the law courts she won the right to participate. With the denial of the Nemeyama chiefdom in the Kono district to allow the daughter, Elizabeth Torto, of the deceased paramount chief to contest the seat of her father, SFCG radio programme was among the first to provide her with a public voice and portray her story. In our investigations, SFCG found out that she was a legitimate daughter of the late paramount chief Torto but that other family members contesting the seat were putting up a fight to oust her from the race using a provision in the act that require the chiefdom by tradition to decide if a woman is eligible to contest for the position of paramount chief. She doesn't believe tradition hold sway in her case as women have ascended to the position of paramount chief in other chiefdoms in the district before.

She strongly believes she has a right to stand. Women's right activists we spoke to such as the 50-50 Group President, Hariet Turay believes the tradition is unfair and undemocratic and is simply meant to keep women out of the political process. She called for a review of the paramount chieftaincy act to fall in line with democratic principles and structures in the country. The Deputy Minister of Local Government, Raymond Kabia said there is nothing they can do as a government to change the situation because they fear a backlash from the community. He believes the change should come from the people themselves and so civil society should take the advocacy to the community people even though the traditions contravene constitutional provisions such as the right to participate. Eventually the matter went to court. Women in other regions were not so lucky, because the contexts are different and made complicated by an

inexplicit Chieftaincy Act. However, the continued programming made them aware of their rights and triggered debates in the communities.

e. Political Interference

Government's insistence to control and lead the process and certain provisions in the Chieftaincy Act enabled and encouraged some politicians to interfere with the process. A parliamentarian in Debia, Port Loko district openly forced a candidate into a declaration meeting even after that candidate was reluctantly declared ineligible by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Political interference cut across all of the processes leading to the polling day and it purposely changed the outcomes of some of the elections. Political antics and tactics were implored by some candidates and their supporters to gain advantages in the process. In some chiefdoms, opposing candidates would join forces to eliminate a superior or popular candidate using the unscientific method of assessing the eligibility of a candidate which again is due to the Acts stipulation.

The 'Nyu Barray' program raised issues related to political participation and fused them with democratic principles with the intent to get people to understand the need for reform. The advocacy objective is to get the Act reformed allowing NEC to solely lead the process.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs conceded that there is political interference in the process but insisted it was not on a wide scale or organised at a political party level. The Minister insisted that the interference was done at an individual level. He agreed that there is a need to reform the Act allowing the process to run freely. The National Electoral Commission also recognised this need and singled out the role of the Ministry as an impediment to the smooth running of the process. The radio program pushed the need to get a review of the Act in order to have a smooth election reflecting democratic principles.

f. Tradition as an impediment

Tradition continues to play a decisive role in the paramount chieftaincy electoral process. The amount of influence tradition exerted in the process was highlighted in the radio program with the view to getting people to understand the changes needed for a free democratic process.

The 'nyu barray' radio magazine program focused on the history of the current traditional practices and ask questions about their relevance in the current political, economic and social

IMPACT STORY 3

Youth showed their anger for not been allowed to partake in the process

The Tribal Authorities are a set of people allowed through an electoral college to elect the Paramount Chief. However, the Electoral College is dominated by old people who in the past cloak the process in fear and prejudice discouraging young people or not even selecting them to vote as Tribal Authorities.

SFCG's media campaign changed the opinion of most young people some of whom are very angry that after paying their taxes as required, they are still sidelined for selection as TAs. In Binkoloh, a group of young "okada"(commercial motor cycle) riders and farmers were angry that they were not included and claim they've heard information on radio that they have the right to participate as long as they've paid their taxes.

In Bo, the young traders SFCG spoke to said they only get to hear about the process through SFCG programming on radio and demand participation. These cries with appeals from PICOT and NEW forced the Ministry of Internal affairs to include more youth and women in the process as TAs as one newly selected young TA in Kolifa Rowala chiefdom in the Tonkolili District boasted to SFCG.

situation Sierra Leone finds itself. The program gets communities to think about some of their traditional beliefs and how they affect their progress in the communities. The debate is wide as some people believe traditional practices should be maintained and others believe there should be modifications to allow greater participation in the process especially for women. Experts from both the traditional and academic level voiced their opinions on this topic and stressed the need for change.

In total the campaign focused instead on every individual's right to participate in the process. 'Nyu Barray' productions were focused on participation, political interference, roles and responsibilities, declaration and issues related to tradition, revision of TA List

c. Reinforcing key messages of the campaign through Jingles

Contributing to outcome 2: 2.1.1(Talking Drum Studio publicise critical issues identified during elections in radio programmes) and output 2.3(Increased community engagement with councillors and chiefs on the chieftaincy elections process)

Contributing to Outcome 3 Awareness and civil society demand on enacting Local court Bill Output4.1(Effective CSO engagement with the ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Justice and parliament on passing the Local Court Act) and 4.2 (Effective media campaign on the issues

As a part of the SFCG media strategy, jingles were produced to reinforce the campaign messages. In producing the jingles, SFCG and PICOT partners identified key issues that required clarity and education for the communities to be able to make informed choices and judgment. Five (5) Jingles were produced and broadcasted twice daily and sixty slots monthly. The messages from the jingles focused on the following:

- Women participation – The tradition that stops women from becoming paramount chiefs in Sierra Leone contravenes democracy. The country is a democracy and women should have the right to run for any political office as guaranteed by the constitution but the 2009 Chieftaincy Act undermines this democratic right and there must be reviewed. The method of election by small number of councillors marginalises women and inhibits development. Why can women be chiefs in some districts and not in others? Women must be involved in the decision making process.
- The consultative process on chieftaincy governance reform – This jingle informs and encourages everybody to follow up the consultative processes to review the traditional authorities and develop a policy. People must add their voices to reform the 2009 Chieftaincy act
- The traditional debate - The voices: male and female sought to explain that most of the practices emanates from the colonial period. There were kings and queens in Africa and not chiefs. Women can be MPs, councillors and ministers in the democratic state so chieftaincy must conform to the democratic framework by allowing women to become paramount chiefs. Therefore the act must be reviewed to expunge the inhibitory clause on customs targeting women.

- Corruption in the electoral process - NEW, PICOT and civil society observed that the process of electing paramount chief elections is corrupt because the rich buy votes and decides who run for chieftaincy. The MPs and politicians interfere with the process. Everybody in the community must take part in the voting process in order to stop manipulation of TA lists.
- Roles and responsibilities of NEC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs: NEC must take over the conduct of the entire process as in other democratic elections conducted in the country.

The role of the chief is to serve as mediator and not to summon court and levy heavy fines. The role of the chief must be respected and the councillor's role must be clarified to avoid conflict in the chieftdoms. Therefore everybody must add their voices to the reform of the traditional administration policy.

d. Mainstreaming Chieftaincy Reform into SFCG Soap Opera

Contributing to outcome 2: 2.1.1(Talking Drum Studio publicise critical issues identified during elections in radio programmes) and output 2.3(Increased community engagement with councillors and chiefs on the chieftaincy elections process)

Contributing to Outcome 3 Awareness and civil society demand on enacting Local court Bill Output4.1(Effective CSO engagement with the ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Justice and parliament on passing the Local Court Act) and 4.2 (Effective media campaign on the issues)

Atunda Ayenda is a radio soap opera broadcast on 24 radio stations across Sierra Leone and through the internet. In the Mandingo language, Atunda Ayenda means Lost and found. Atunda Ayenda was created to address issues around the country's ten year civil war, more importantly to foster trust and commitment among the citizenry and former fighters to make the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process a success and promote peace and reconciliation.

However the objective of the programme has shifted to strengthening democratic governance. Currently, the storyline reflects contemporary issues occurring around the country. Set in a fictitious country called Tikonko (Sierra Leone) the plot revolves around young people and their experiences of the Sierra Leone's civil war and reconstruction after the war. Individual story-arcs address contemporary issues such as Health, Chieftaincy Reform, Gender Based Violence, Maternal Mortality, Corruption, Governance, Food Security, Quality Education, Decentralization, and Women & Youth.

Characters in the Soap opera with focus on the chieftaincy campaign

Sesay – He is the school teacher that ensures smooth running of school system to enhance quality education and advocate for chieftaincy reform.

Jhango -The master farmer who wants the country to attain food security and advocates for chieftaincy reform

Bolingo – He is an independent councillor with no political party allegiance who through tough challenges becomes the chairman of a local council and advocate for chieftaincy reform

Saffie - She is a female police officer and an activist for women's rights and against gender based violence. She joined other women to express solidarity and support for women aspirants in the chieftaincy elections

IMPACT STORY 4
Corruption, inconsistencies and politicization

The high profiling of corruption, inconsistencies and politicization in the process by SFCG using PICOT observations and NEW reports has led to the postponement and petition of several processes in the elections. Currently, 12 elections are on hold indefinitely, as a review of several complaints and petitions are looked into. Even elections, that have been organised face questioning and petitions.

Allegations of political interference as highlighted by SFCG was reported in almost all of the elections but prominent among them are those in Kissi Teng and Masimera in the Kailahun and Port Loko Districts respectively. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was forced to reschedule both elections after reports of political interference.

Aired five days a week, Monday to Friday, Atunda Ayenda is one of the most popular radio shows in the country with a wide listener ship across the country and outside judging from the feedback from the public and the requests from other organizations or individuals to incorporate their issues into the story line because as they put it.. “as long as it is on Atunda Ayenda, people will get to hear and take it into good part” .

The soap opera modelled four characters to roll out messages in the chieftaincy advocacy campaign and primarily focus on issues around the paramount chieftaincy elections, the 2009 Chieftaincy Act and chieftaincy reform. Seventy five (75) episodes covered chieftaincy issues that were aired on partner radio stations across the country.

Sesay and Django carried the storyline on political interference dramatizing the MP’s behaviour in Debia and bringing out incidences of the sacking of the regent chief in Moyamba, disregard for elected persons, the use of government resources to support candidates in places like

Kailahun etc. They quoted extensively from the Local Government Ministers statement of zero tolerance to political interference.

The two reasoned that reform is necessary because if the daughter of a chief is kept out of the race it follows that if a chief has only daughters as children the family automatically lost the right to contest in the future.

Safie takes on advocacy role for women’s participation in chieftaincy election. She was steadfast the issue of Madam Elizabeth Torto in kono who was refused a “box” because of alleged tradition –not being a member of the male secret society, the poro. This was portrayed as both violation of the right of a woman on the one hand and the discrimination caused by tradition in violation of the constitution of Sierra Leone. This issue was handled for some time because of the unfolding development when the lady took the issue to court and it was thrown out which spurred Makuta and Fanta to put on black dresses and join other women to accompany the aspirant up to the point where they were violently stopped from entering her village. Atunda Ayenda also show case the contradiction in the country where in some areas women can opt for chieftaincy while in some others they are barred to expose the weak argument of Bolingo in support of tradition. The question was asked repeatedly: the Chieftaincy Act, the constitution or tradition which is supreme?

Other issues dealt with in the storyline include universal adult suffrage, problems and corruption in the declaration process, revision of TA Lists, participation of the youth and the role of the National Electoral Commission.

The drama team has identified the following key advocacy issues for the next six months:

- Advocate for chieftaincy elections to be democratic: (people should vote as in general elections)
- Advocate for voices of women and youth who are excluded in the process.
- How can the councillors’ list respect the interest of the people.

- Chiefs are there to serve the interests of their people and not the government.
- Review and reform of the chieftaincy bill/act and Local court bill 2008 (3rd law).

e. Support Regional Round Table

This relates to Outcome 1: 1.1.2 (Media work, press releases, radio discussions) and indicator 1.1.1 & 1.1.2

SFCG support this output by providing training on moderation skills and providing air support on three radio stations in Bombali, Bo and Kenema districts the regional headquarters.

Airtime support

The partners were provided with one-hour bi-weekly airtime at Radio Mankneh, Radio New Song and Eastern Radio. Each programme has a phone in component to feedback into the discourse and get reactions from all sides of the arguments. This information was conveyed to PICOT.

Moderation Training for Partners

SFCG in collaboration with PICOT organized two-day training on moderation skills for six partners: 2 from Makeni; 2 from Bo; and 2 from Kenema. The stations that provide air time for the discussions are Radio Mankneh, Radio New Song and Eastern Radio. The following areas were dealt with during the training.

Production Skills

The session started off with an illustration by the facilitator who asked for two volunteers from the group. One of the volunteers was asked to go outside while the other was asked to watch and redraw a structure drawn on the board by the facilitator. He was then asked to direct the other volunteer draw the same structure. The outcome was a completely different structure from the original structure.

Participants agreed that the factors responsible for the difference in the structures are as follows:

- Misunderstanding
- Misinformation
- Error in communication
- Inaudibility
- Misinterpretation
- Different perceptions

They get to realise that the factors listed above in response to the illustration are occurrences in radio discussions if the message is unclear, not tailored appropriately for the target audience and the message is complicated.

A presentation on production skills then followed to acquaint participants on the routines of production and skills to get the best intended results from radio discussions.

Questions and comments

What do you mean by painting the picture?

This question is related to one of the steps of production that to create an impact, an example or experience around the topic is necessary. People should be able to see the picture.

Talk Shows

Participants were asked to outline what is not a talk show, their responses are as follows:

- News
- Documentary
- Adverts and jingles
- Radio magazines

What then is a talk show? The following are their responses:

- Panel discussions
- Phone in programs
- Round table discussions
- Face to face

Work plan

The participants designed three months work plan for each of the regions. *(See appendix 8)*

Recommendations

- Young people want greater participation in the process because they pay more taxes. They would also want a universal adult suffrage in the election of paramount chiefs
- The women want the act to be clear on participation and restore the right of women to participate in paramount chieftaincy elections as provided for in the constitution.
- Observers would want the role of NEC to be made clear and NEC should take over the entire process to ensure transparency and accountability.
- CBOs would want a time limit on the payment of taxes and the names of tax payers be recorded to ensure transparency and accountability
- Civil society would want an election for the TAs, were everybody over 18 in the chiefdom would vote for a TA. This way greater participation would be ensured.

Challenges

- The issue of coordination was challenging as the project focal persons of partners operate from different locations in the country. NMJD is based in Bo, MCSL in Mattru, SFCG, CA, CGG in Freetown and PICOT platforms mostly in the provinces. It means most times they have difficulties in attending meetings and feeding back into the SFCG programmes by way of comments or interviews. For instance SFCG was unable to hold review twice because of this. Also, too many meetings were called on short notice which could not be attended by SFCG staff because they already had appointments with other activities.
- The coalition continuously shifted the focus of the campaign creating some confusion and ill preparation in the media campaign. Media campaign has to be focussed and sustained in order to yield the desired impact. At one point we have to break the election coverage to take on the Chiefdom and Tribal Administration Reform consultation, though sometimes we were also overtaken by events due to the rashness of government.
- Partners have different stance on the recommendation of the chieftaincy reform report. Some PICOT members to take on some radical approach the electoral process that hindered the winning of allies with the desired speed. Some were for expansion of the ratio of TA to tax

payers whilst others were all in for universal adult suffrage. Some want radical implementation whilst others looked out for gradual implementation.

- After the training of PICOT partners on media techniques, it was difficult for SFCG to follow up on monitoring the roundtable discussions that were held by the various partners in the district. It is important for monitoring to ensure partners are able to put into practice what they learnt from the training but more also to identify follow up trainings.
- It is essential to build in holistic M&E plan for the entire campaign and support M&E activities within the budget. Within the SFCG funded project, there was no funding for M&E which puts SFCG into a difficult position to report on specific request from Christian Aid.
- Advocacy campaigns particularly sensitive ones like chieftaincy reform needs to be sustained. There were a lot of high and low points during the project especially when proactive action was needed and times when there were opportunities for the coalition to make an impact on the process

Recommendations

- The partners continue to organise platforms and do more public information and education. The approach must be gradual and partners must try to win more supporters of the advocacy in government, among chiefs and political parties.
- The campaign partners should try to identify 3 or 4 issues that they will want to focus on and organise a sustained campaign on these issues in a consistent manner
- PICOT should be able to get a buy in from all the partners about the direction and focus of the campaign. It is essential for all the partners to have the same understanding about what the campaign is about and how it should be pursued
- Effective Coordination is vital for the success of the campaign and coordination itself is an investment that is time consuming. PICOT and especially CCG should invest some time in ensuring coordination efforts are yielding dividends.