A Desk Review for Search for Common Ground on The Worst Forms of Violence Against Children in Sierra Leone

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Executive Summary

From the TORs: Executive summary (3 – 5 pages), including: context, methodology, main findings, main recommendations

The Executive Summary will be written to include input and feedback from SFCG in response to the first draft of this report.
Concepts
A few concepts used frequently in the context of child protection work are defined. This is drawn from the assessment of the Child Protection System in Sierra Leone that was undertaken for UNICEF by Child Frontiers Ltd, 2010. (Child Frontiers Ltd 2010) ¹

Child: Consistent with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989, a child is a person under the age of 18.

Family: The term ‘family’ is used to refer to those within the caring circle of a child. This caring circle varies according to culture and circumstance; thus, the use of the term ‘family’ recognises that in many societies the care environment of a child is broader than the immediate family and includes the extended family. The term also recognises that in some circumstances, children are primary caregivers. However, it is important to clarify that individuals from the community or service providers who are not providing daily emotional, physical and psychological care to children would not be considered family.

Child and Family Welfare System: The child and family welfare system refers to those aspects nested within the social welfare system (or social protection system where applicable) that are aimed at promoting children’s well-being and protection, while enhancing the capacity of families and communities to fulfil their responsibilities. UNICEF understands a ‘child protection system consisting of a set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – as well as community and faith-based groups and other private service providers. It is part of social protection, and also extends beyond it.’ This research focuses primarily on the child and family welfare system while still exploring connections with other sectors relevant to child protection, and how those sectors influence or determine the actual shape of the child and family welfare system.

Child Protection: Strives to prevent, respond and resolve the abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence experienced by children in all settings. It is often a specialist policy and service sector but of necessity works very closely and is sometimes integrated with other sectors.

Family Support Unit (FSU) – a structure within the Sierra Leone Police dedicated to combating violence against children and women.

¹ For Agency specific definitions, see: UNICEF: www.unicef.org/protection/files/What_is_Child_Protection.pdf; Save the Children Alliance: http://www.savethechildren.net/alliance/what_we_do/child_protection/.
Introduction

This desk review captures the present state around the worst forms of violence which children and youth are subject to in Sierra Leone. This includes the legislative framework, the structures and mechanisms government has established and programming taking place to prevent the worst forms of violence. The objective of the desk review is to inform an EU funded project implementation focused on young people and children affected by the worst forms of violence in Sierra Leone. According to the SFCG’s proposal, these worst forms of violence include torture, rape, female genital cutting, child labour, gang and cult violence, gender based violence, sexual exploitation and child trafficking.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs (MSWGCA) has the primary responsibility for protecting children in Sierra Leone. The child protection system led by MSWGCA, supported by UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and World Bank amongst others, comprises many strategic partners both national and international NGOs as well as various government departments including the Sierra Leone Police, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Mineral Resources amongst others. However, MSWGCA is underfunded and understaffed. Sources suggest that MSGCA technical staff are inadequately qualified and are marginalised from the decision-making structures. As part of the decentralisation process, all Local Councils have established Gender and Social Welfare Committees but they, too, are underfunded and marginalised within Council operations (African Development Bank Group 2011).

The Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) is an important strategic partner with MSWGCA. Established in 2007, at its inception the FSU’s strength was 143 personnel including 61 female and 82 male officers. Twenty-four FSU’s were also established in various local police precincts countrywide. The vision of the FSU is to create a violence-free society by eradicating or minimising the incidences of sexual and domestic violence, child abuse and child offences in Sierra Leone. It is reported that like the MSWGCA, the FSU is under resourced and has major financial challenges. It lacks equipment to carry out DNA tests in rape cases, lacks vehicles to visit crime scenes, and the compromise of victims under pressure from parent has let many criminals off the hook.

The current laws governing children in Sierra Leone include the Children and Young Persons Act (Chapter 44 of the Laws of Sierra Leone, 1960 “Cap 44”) the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (Chapter 31 of the Laws of Sierra Leone, 1960 “Cap 31”) along with other related legislations and policies that generally govern children at risk such as the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2005), the Protection of Women and Girls Act (Chapter 40 of the Laws of Sierra Leone, 1960), the Child Rights Act 2007 (CRA) and the Sexual Offence Act 2012. ~ Prison Watch Sierra Leone 2013.
Since early 2000, a number of important pieces of legislation have been passed in Sierra Leone as part of the post war reconstruction agenda. Beginning with the rights of women, the three gender acts in 2005 domesticated the CEDAW commitments and criminalised rape. The youth act in 2003 sought to mainstream youth issues into the national development and post conflict agenda. Specifically for children, the Child Rights Act was passed in 2007, the Anti-trafficking Act, and in 2012 the Sexual Offenses Act. These Acts have put into place a number of different structures by which the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) pursues its child protection mandate which it has signed on to through ratification of international instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst others. An important document on violence against women commissioned by the Overseas Development Institute examines the forms of redress for women subjected to violence in Sierra Leone which highlights the conundrums and difficulties in the justice sector value chain for women, let alone for children (Denney & Ibrahim 2012). A combination of poverty, culture, and limited governmental capacity will continue to undermine child rights in Sierra Leone and provide the space for the worst forms of violence against children.

A dearth of data made evidence based programming difficult. Recently some detailed evidence has been gathered to show the status of child protection issues in Sierra Leone throwing light on the worst forms of violence against children. This data collection supported by UNICEF over the past couple of years clearly shows the precarious situation of children in Sierra Leone. The Multi Indicator Cluster (MIC) survey was conducted in 2010 and published in December 2011. It gathered information from children subdividing the age groups from 5 – 11 years and 12 – 14 years showing child labour through a number of different categories in the house, economic work, household work, out of the house and in the house. A 2012 survey led by Street Child in Sierra Leone was the first national survey to count the number of children on the street. They used different categories to organise their data making comparison between different initiatives difficult.

There is no ONE policy or plan specifically addressing the worst forms of child labour or the worst forms of violence against children. The GOSL’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper called Agenda for Prosperity commits to specific actions around child protection and welfare including improving social protections through developing and implementing a child and family welfare policy. While there is no specific mention of the worst forms of violence against children but the social protections policy it proposes to adopt will apparently address the worst forms of violence against children (Government of Sierra Leone 2013).
Methodology

The agreed methodology for the desk review is included in the Annex. A discussion guide, also in the Annex, was developed based on the information required to collect, field tested and shared for comment with SFCG staff. It was found that no database exists of organisations involved in child protection or prevention in Freetown at either MSWGCA or with SLANGO. The Ministry of Development referred us to the MSWGCA. SLANGO was unavailable on multiple visits for an EU funded NGO listing. Finally, a list received from the Ministry of Finance was used to establish contacts. However many of the email contacts for the 29 youth and child serving organisations found on the Ministry of Finance list bounced back. Many organisations would not share telephone numbers to further the communication. Ultimately, 41 organisations were contacted by email, letter or phone to solicit input for this desk review. Further, 3 key stakeholders such as the National Commission on Youth, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs and UNICEF were interviewed using the discussion guide. The list of organisations contacted – both participating and non-participating - is included in the Annex.

An Internet search for requisite documents was undertaken. Additionally academic journals were explored for relevant papers. The information gathered has informed this report which is divided into three sections. The first section reviews the thematic status of each of the forms of worst type of violence against children and young people in Sierra Leone and sketches the contemporary status of each of these scourges according to the literature available. Where possible, statistics are included. The second section seeks to consolidate the information gathered from the organisations who serve child and youth interests and Section 3 provides recommendations. The Annotated Bibliography can be found in the Annex.

Clarifying Terms - Children and Youth

Children, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), reach up to 18 years however there is an overlap with the social category of youth. Youth, according to national youth policy in Sierra Leone, range from 15 to 35 years. According to the Criminal Procedures Act, a young person is defined as over 14 and under 17 years of age in Sierra Leone. Various instruments for collecting data on children and youth use a variety of categories. For the purposes of this soliciting of information from child and youth serving organisations in Sierra Leone, four age categories were utilised namely < 10 years as children, 11 – 15 as adolescents, 16 – 24 as youth and > 24 as older youth.

However, the term ‘youth’ also requires clarification. Youth is a socially constructed category and as such neither refers to a fixed age group or a homogeneous social group of people. As a label it is therefore limited in its utility for tailored and responsive policy making. Table 1 summarises a series of age-based definitions of youth used in policy-making and programming.
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relevant to Sierra Leone— the summary highlights how agreement is neither consistent within nor across institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Secretariat</td>
<td>15 – 29</td>
<td><a href="http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/youth-forum-opening-ceremony-">http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/youth-forum-opening-ceremony-</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>heralds-start-commonwealth-gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ordinary Session of the Assembly, Banjul, Gambia, July 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>15 -35</td>
<td>ECOWAS Youth Forum 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>15 – 35</td>
<td>National Youth Policy, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Criminal Procedures Act defines a child as under 14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>young person as over 14 and under 17 years of age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences between definitions of youth by age are rooted in different ideas or markers of when children become youth, youth become adults, and adults become elders. These life-course-based definitions assume that people evolve and develop in the same way through a linear series of experiences. In Sierra Leone, age-based definitions of youth include young people aged 15 to 35 years and can even be as high as 40 years, a much wider group than the UN global definition (15-24 years). The wide age range in Sierra Leone indicates that young people are suspended in a “space where they are neither dependent children nor autonomous adults” and may never become ‘social adults’ meaning they may never attain the social goods and status associated with adulthood such as a secure income (stable job), valuable skills, and secure shelter (Jeffrey 2010)(Honwana 2012, 23).

The wide age bracket used to define ‘youth’ in Sierra Leone and indeed in West Africa indicates significant social, political and economic upheavals that disrupt and constrain young people’s trajectories towards adult status. In a study of Sierra Leone, a series of obstacles confronting the
progress of young West Africans towards adulthood were identified by Ismail et al. (2009)\textsuperscript{2}

- Difficulty accessing quality education and lack of formal and vocational education
- Unemployment and underemployment and inappropriate training for the opportunities of the job market
- Youth involvement in violent conflicts as some countries are plagued with political unrest
- Drugs and substance abuse
- Poverty
- Inadequate opportunities for youth participation in political and socio-economic decision making
- Lack of technological advancement
- High vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, water borne diseases such as typhoid fever

Section 1: The Worst Forms of Violence

Children and youth’s experience of violence does not fall neatly into categories outlined as the worst forms of violence. Rather, children and youth are subjected to numerous types of violence which are often interrelated. Male and female children who are experiencing violence often span numerous interrelated forms of violence — structural, sexual, cultural, physical, emotional, psychological, communal or social -- and these are often locale specific and gender specific. The categories below outline the worst forms of violence and seeks to capture the present state of this ‘category’ in contemporary Sierra Leone however it is important to recognise the factors which support continuing violence against children in these worst forms. Evidence and statistics around the experience of children and young people and these numerous interrelated forms of violence are inadequate as many of these forms of violence are invisible or happen in secret and private places.

Child Trafficking

Human trafficking is a form of modern day slavery. It has been recognised since 2000 in a UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Person especially Women and Children (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2005). Child Trafficking has been recognised as an issue of concern in Sierra Leone from at least 2005 (Surtees 2005). A preliminary assessment by UNICEF indicated that Sierra Leone is primarily a source country and both internal trafficking and trafficking abroad and to a lesser extent, is a transit country for child trafficking. Victims are both male and female of varying ages and are trafficked for a variety of purposes including sexual exploitation (prostitution, marriage), labour (domestic work, mining, fishing, trading and vending as well as agriculture), begging and petty crime. The preliminary assessment found the most common form of child trafficking was internal for the purpose of forced labour and sexual

\textsuperscript{2} Studies by Olaiya 2014; Honwana 2012; Verdière et al. 2009; and Ashford 2007 reinforce these findings.
exploitation and suggested it become a core child protection issue. The preconditions required for trafficking are noted in Sierra Leone including:

- Economic causes - endemic poverty
- Political factors – corruption, porous borders
- Cultural factors – normative migration, child labour and early marriage
- Social factors – limited education, violence at home
- Individual factors – rebellion and peer influence.

Prior to 2005, child trafficking was not included in child protection issues nor were there any programmes to combat or prevent child trafficking. Having a comprehensive anti-trafficking law can serve as an important deterrent as there is an inclination for trafficking networks to gravitate to environments with a legal vacuum. The government has been committed to combat child trafficking and passed an anti-trafficking law in 2005. However few if any statistics are available about trafficked children since 2005.

FSU statistics from 2012 and 2013 indicate an increased recognition of child trafficking. See Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Cases of trafficking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western region</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern region</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern region</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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In a 2013 report by the US Department of State established Sierra Leone as a tier 2 country suggesting that the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) is not in full compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. In 2013, GOSL increased its commitment to prevent child trafficking through passing legislation to increase the penalties for child sex trafficking offenses and initiated seven suspected trafficking offenders as well as opened investigation into two government officials accused of trafficking. A national awareness campaign increased the number of victims identified. Victim services are all NGO based meaning no dedicated government resources (Anon n.d.). A 2007 national action plan has not been renewed.

A plethora of legal instruments in terms of conventions, treaties and optional protocols at international and regional level to which Sierra Leone is a signatory apply to prevent child trafficking. See Suretee (2005) for a summary in chapter 9. Other legislative tools are employed to supplement specific legislation including anti-corruption, money laundering, organised crime, sexual assault, rape, forced labour/servitude, labour laws, etc. Nevertheless, three main
national legislative and policy tools are employed to address trafficking in person including children in Sierra Leone.

**Anti-Trafficking Act** – Passed by Parliament in June 2005 and signed by the President on August 12, 2005, Sierra Leone’s Anti-Human Trafficking Act was drafted by the government and inputs were solicited from various government ministries, civil society actors and community consultations at regional level in four districts Western Area, Koinadugu, Pujehun and Kono were undertaken. Apart from the designation of children, specifically, everyone under 18 years of age is a ‘child’ as a matter of law for the purposes of application of the anti-trafficking law, there are no other special considerations for child trafficking.

**National Task Force to Prevent Trafficking** – Established in November 2004, the act formalises the National Task Force to Prevent Trafficking to serve as an oversight body on issues related to trafficking. Mr. Eehunge Shiaka of the MSWGCA is the Chairperson and the task force meets on a monthly basis. This committee meets regularly and includes various government departments, international organisations and civil society. The objective of the task force is to provide guidance on trafficking issues as well as develop strategies and action in the arena of trafficking in persons. According to the law, the task force has the responsibility to construct a protective framework for victims of child trafficking including procedures and practices by which victims of trafficking will be provided both protection and assistance.

**National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons** currently in Sierra Leone there is no national plan of action to combat trafficking in persons. Child trafficking is integrated into the child protection issues in Sierra Leone and doesn’t act as a standalone issue or single thematic issue with its own dedicated plan.

**Anti-Trafficking Secretariat** – An anti-trafficking secretariat proposed by the law has been established in the MSWGCA offices in New England. Additionally there are activities going on in all the districts to fight against child trafficking. Each district has a committee comprising of officials from the MSWGCA, the police and other child serving organisations.

A number of legal instruments support the Anti-Trafficking Act and work to prevent child trafficking. This includes the Sierra Leone Constitution [Act Number 6, Chapter III, Section 19, sub-section 1 of the 1991 Constitution Sierra Leone says “No person shall be held in slavery or servitude or be required to perform forced labour or traffic or deal in human beings” although it has rarely if ever been used], the Children’s Rights Act [‘Any person who trafficks (sic) or illegally

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3 Interview with Mr. Francis Kabia, Director, Monitoring Child Interventions at MSWGCA on 11th June 2014
44 Interview with Mr. Francis Kabia, Director, Monitoring Child Interventions at MSWGCA on 11th June 2014
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removes any child from Sierra Leone, his or her community or his or her family commits an offence punishable by at least twenty years imprisonment’ and the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act (Cap. 31) 1960 (Surtees 2005).

Child Labour
The main approach of GOSL to combat child labour is through programs that improve access to education and retention rates in school however there has been no evaluation to understand if there is a causative impact. UNICEF and USAID have been instrumental with supporting the education programmes (VINC & GREN 2013).

The GOSL has been supported to establish a number of mechanisms through a joint EU/ILO initiative called TACKLE which seeks to gather evidence about the worst forms of violence particularly child labour in Sierra Leone. The four outputs of this multi-year project are:

- Improved country level child labour and education legal framework
- Strengthened institutional capacity to formulate and implement child labour strategies
- Targeted actions to combat child labour
- Enhanced knowledge base and networks on child labour and education

Child labour is not an uncontested concept in Sierra Leone where many families count on their children to support them in small scale economic activities or agricultural labour. A commonly used definition of “child labour” suggests that a child is considered to be involved in child labour activities if s/he, at any time during a week, performed the following:

- Ages 5-11: at least one hour of economic work or 28 hours or more of domestic work per week.
- Ages 12-14: at least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours or more of domestic work per week.

This definition allows for differentiation between child labour and child work in order to identify the type of work that should be focused on, and as necessary reduced and/or eventually eliminated.

Two key concepts in child labour are exploitation and hazardous work. The 2007 Child Rights Act (CRA) defines exploitative labour as labour which deprives a child of health, development and education and sets the minimum age for employment at 15 years. The CRA also states that children must be either 15 or completed basic education before entering into an

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6 Used in the Multiple Cluster Survey undertaken to gather information about children and young people to inform policy making.
apprenticeship. Children are also prohibited from performing night work between 8 pm and 6 am. The CRA prohibits children under 18 years from engaging in hazardous work. The law defines hazardous work as seafaring, mining and quarrying, carrying heavy loads, working in bars, hotels or places of entertainment or in places where machines are used and in environments in which chemicals are produced or used.

The international convention defines the worst forms of child labour as prohibited to all persons under 18 years as follows:

1. all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced of compulsory labour, including forced of compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
2. the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or pornographic performances;
3. the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
4. work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

The term ‘worst forms of child labour’ encompasses both hazardous work (d) and other worst forms (a) to (c). The difference is that, while hazardous work can sometimes be modified through changes in the work environment and the work itself to remove the hazardous aspects, the other worst forms of child labour can under no circumstance be considered acceptable.\(^8\)

FSU statistics for 2012 do not identify child labour although child cruelty (eastern region 10 cases and 34 cases in western region) is identified. In 2013 only one case of child labour was identified in the northern region although figures for child cruelty and child neglect are increased significantly from 2012 to 2013 (Sierra Leone Police 2014).

The Child Rights Act enacted in 2007 is the main legal instrument to prevent child labour. The 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Sierra Leone captured the child labour statistics of those under 14 years distinguishing between 5 – 11 years and 12 – 14 years\(^9\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Sierra Leone MICS Data 2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Attendance among Child Labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Labour among Students</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The data suggests that child labour is pervasive among children aged 5 to 14 years in Sierra Leone. The survey findings suggest this is a conservative number for child labour as some

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\(^9\) Statistics Sierra Leone and UNICEF Sierra Leone, Final report
children may be involved in hazardous work for shorter periods of time and are not captured in this estimate. Further,

“63 percent of children aged 5-11 years and 15 percent of children aged 12-14 years. Among children aged 5-11 years, the overwhelming majority that perform child labour are classified as such due to performing one or more hours of **economic work** per week. Similarly, almost all children aged 12-14 who perform child labour are classified as such due to performing more than 14 hours of **economic work** per week. Higher levels of child labour are associated with rural residence and lower levels of mother’s education and household wealth. Even among households in the wealthiest quintile, 49 percent of children aged 5-11 and seven percent of children aged 12-14 perform child labour. Levels of child labour among children aged 5-11 are highest in the south (66 percent) and lowest in the West (50 percent); among children aged 12-14, they are highest in the east (24 percent) and lowest in the West (four percent). There is little difference between girls and boys in the performance of child labour.” (Statistics Sierra Leone & UNICEF Sierra Leone 2011, p.100)

A detailed table on page 102 of the MICS report provides a comprehensive picture on the conditions of the child labour whether the child is working outside of the home, paid or unpaid work as well as differentiating between economic activity and household chores.

The implementation of the CRA has met with some resistance. There are perceptions that the values inherent in the CRA are an imposition from the “west’ rather than reflecting those of Sierra Leone. This is likely a result of the contested nature of the terminology of child labour. The ontology draws on a rights-based approach and inadequately reflects the responsibilities of a child to a family which are inherent cultural values in Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, since the CRA was enacted in 2007, some progress has been noted on keeping child labourers in school (Statistics Sierra Leone & UNICEF Sierra Leone 2011).

Other legislation supports the CRA in preventing child labour. The Constitution prohibits forced and compulsory labour. In August 2012, the GOSL enacted the Sexual Offenses Act which criminalises and assigns penalties for sexual acts involving children and GOSL began carrying out prosecutions on this in January 2013.

A 2012 report by the US Department of Labour suggests that children in Sierra Leone are engaged in the worst forms of child labour and particularly dangerous activities in agriculture and in the mining sectors (VINC & GREN 2013). The same report offers data suggesting that a different picture than the MIC survey although the source of the data is 2008 so the MICs would be more current.
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Table 4 Primary Completion Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>5 – 14 years</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending School</td>
<td>5 – 14 years</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combining work and School</td>
<td>7 – 14 years</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Completion Rates</td>
<td></td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary completion rate; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013

The report points to hazardous labour in unregulated small scale and informal mining operations that operate outside of any regulatory framework. It suggests there are thousands of children primarily boys between 10 and 17 who are engaged in alluvial diamond mining (Surtees 2005). The CRA specifically prohibits child mining. Mines Monitoring Teams are to assess the operational aspects of diamond mining including ensuring all agents have licenses and do not use child miners. The penalty for non-compliance with this policy is the withdrawal of the agent’s mining licence. However, this policy lacks enforcement and as of 2012 no mining licenses had been withdrawn due to child labour (VINC & GREN 2013).

It also suggests that children engaged in stone crushing work in unsafe and unhealthy labour conditions. As Sierra Leone is a source, transit and destination country for children who are trafficked for the purpose of forced labour and commercial sexual exploitation and the majority are internal occurring between the rural and urban environments or to mining areas.

There are three mechanisms put in place to combat the worst forms of child labour namely;

**National Commission on Children** - The CRA puts into place this commission however it has not yet been established. It is reported that this Commission will be launched on June 16, 2014, the Day of African Child, in Port Loko.\(^{10}\)

**Child Labour National Technical Steering Committee** – this committee is headed by Mr. Abdul Karim Conteh from the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

**Child Labour Unit** – Established by with the assistance of TACKLE, these units are reportedly working on a full time basis. They also have branches in the provinces in all districts wherever there is a Ministry of Labour.\(^{11}\) The Ministry reports they are only able to inspect conditions in

\(^{10}\) Interview with UNICEF Child Protection Officer on June 13, 2014.
\(^{11}\) Interview with Ministry of Labour, June 12, 2014.
the formal sector and don’t have the resources to inspect for child labour in the informal sector.\textsuperscript{12} Its effectiveness has yet to be measured.

\textbf{Child Welfare Committees (CWC) –} established by the CRA, this mechanism is a local and volunteer response to support child protection and welfare at village and chiefdom level. Established by MSWGCA and the FSU of the SLP, there are reportedly 260 CWCs but their effectiveness is a contentious issue as in many cases it is dependent on the willingness of the Paramount chief to be actively engaged in reporting child rights violations (Street Child of Sierra Leone & Help a Needy Child in Sierra Leone 2012). Reports suggest that many children are not aware of this mechanism and its effectiveness has not been evaluated.

\textbf{Gender Based Violence}

The war years, during which gender based violence was used as a strategy of war to brutalise many women and girls, broke the “culture of silence” that shrouded gender-based violence in Sierra Leone (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA 2005). Gender discrimination remains pervasive in Sierra Leone and is sanctioned and reinforced by traditional and cultural practices. Early marriage and Female Genital Cutting (FGC) are two traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls. Gender based violence is defined by the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women (1993) in Article 2.

Domestic violence is a form of gender based violence which is widespread in Sierra Leone. The causes of this type of violence are embedded in customs and traditions and people’s attitude to gender inequity and inequality. In 2007, the GOSL enacted the Domestic Violence Act which criminalises the social norm and obligates the police to respond. A maximum sentence of 2 years is prescribed by this law which also criminalises sexual offences that occur in marriage.

In 2007, three acts were passed (called the Gender Acts) which turned international commitments of the CEDAW into national treaties. The Gender Acts included the Domestic Violence act, the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act and the Devolution of Estate Act indicated a sea change in attitudes towards gender equity and gender equality and were a core part of the post conflict reconstruction agenda to create a new social order (African Development Bank Group 2011).

The table below clearly shows that while legislation is a necessary and important first step, changing social norms and attitudes is a long and slow process. Still 73% of women believe their husband has the right to beat them. This attitude is most prevalent in the south (81%) and least prevalent in the West (51%). Higher levels of acceptance are found in rural residents, among women who are currently married, and older women, as well as among women with lower

\textsuperscript{12} Interview with Ministry of Labour, June 13, 2014
education level or household wealth (Statistics Sierra Leone & UNICEF Sierra Leone 2011, p.112).

### Table 5 Attitudes to domestic violence among girls and young women
Percentage of women age 15-49 years who believe a husband is justified in beating his wife/partner in various circumstances, Sierra Leone, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>If goes out without telling him</th>
<th>If she neglects the children</th>
<th>If she argues with him</th>
<th>If she refuses sex with him</th>
<th>If she burns the food</th>
<th>For any of these reasons</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>2549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>2263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>2571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>2086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2010

**Female Genital Cutting**

Sierra Leone is one of the 29 countries where Female Genital cutting (FGC) takes place. Unlike 24 of the 29 countries where FGC takes place, no legislation has been enacted to prevent FGC (UNICEF 2013). Although the Sierra Leone government signed the Maputo protocol which seeks to eliminate FGC taking an approach of zero tolerance, the Sierra Leone government has failed to ratify this protocol unlike all the other West African countries. The government is suggesting delaying FGC until a female is of legal age to decide, i.e. 18 years.

According to UNFPA (2005), over 90% of Sierra Leonean women have undergone the procedure and it remains a strong social norm. The table below with statistics from the MICS survey shows that the prevalence has hardly dropped between 2005 and 2010 despite increasing awareness.

### Table 6 MICS Data 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval for female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) among women</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) among daughters (up to 14 years)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FGC is practiced by the female society called the Bondo and is shrouded in secrecy and is “more common in rural areas, in the Northern Province and in the poorest three quintiles and among uneducated women”. “Higher levels of the practice of FGM/C on daughters aged 0-14 are among households with lower levels of wealth and mother’s education, higher age of child,
mothers who have had FGM/C performed on them, and residence in the North” (Statistics Sierra Leone & UNICEF Sierra Leone 2011, p.108). It is suggested that there has been progress made in preventing FGC as the prevalence of FGC among daughters was formerly 34% and is now 10%. The UN adopted a resolution to end FGC in 2012 and efforts to eradicate this harmful practice are being intensified (UNICEF 2013).

A 2006 compiled CEDAW report suggests that changing this social norm will take time as not much has changed with regards to this issue since then.

“12.5.1 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is deeply rooted in the cultural practices of Sierra Leone. Advocacy for its eradication has received a high degree of hostility in the country from all spheres. Female Genital Mutilation continues to keep women stereotyped. This traditional practice teaches that women and girls are to be subordinate to men in matters of sexuality.

12.5.2 Before now discussions around FGM were not openly discussed but currently there are discussions on the age of consent as an entry point.” (GOSL 2006, p.31)

Torture
A national legal framework exists to protect children from torture as follows:

The Constitution article 20 (1) States that no person shall be subject to any form of torture or any punishment or other treatment which is inhumane or degrading. CRA section 33 (1) prescribes that no person shall subject a child to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment including any cultural practice which dehumanises or is injurious to the physical and mental welfare of the child. The CRA section 33(1) and (2) does not effectively repeal the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act in terms of corporal punishment for purposes of ‘correction’, but reaffirms the concept of ‘reasonable’ and justifiable correction of children. CRA article 33(3) however repealed the Corporal Punishment Act and it is no longer permitted as a sentence.

It is suggested that torture or conditions close to this exist at the Remand Homes in Sierra Leone for juveniles who are detained there (Prison Watch Sierra Leone et al. 2013, p.33)

Sexual Exploitation
Sexual exploitation concerning children was made visible by a seminal report published by UNICEF in 2001 entitled Profiting from Abuse. This report unravels the multiple elements that fuel the supply and demand of children for sexual exploitation and abuse (UNICEF 2001). In West Africa the research into sexual abuse, exploitation and violence against children which has been published mostly assumes that the violence is perpetrated inside the private space of a home, involving parents or close relatives or is a result of sex trafficking. As a result school
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Based sexual violence for instance against children has remained largely invisible. This could be due to the assumption that schools are, by definition, a safe and protected place for children. In the past decade, the focus on the millennium development goals has seen a push to get all children into school by 2015. The scholarly and public interest is affected by limited quantitative evidence around school based sexual violence. However, qualitative evidence suggest that sexual exploitation for educational benefits or otherwise is on the rise (Jones & Espey 2008).

While rape is an offence under the common law in Sierra Leone, unlawful carnal knowledge, an offence that carries a maximum jail sentence of only 12 years, had been the law used for the incidents of rape against children 14 years of age or below (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2005, p.14). Enacted in 2012, the Sexual Offenses Act broadens the scope of the law to protect women and girls from gender based violence and more specifically girl children from sexual violence, complementing the three gender acts passed in 2007. The Sexual Offenses Act makes the age of consent 18 year. This means that a child cannot give consent to any sexual activity. Some consider this law draconian as it contravenes cultural practice and societal norms. It also offers free medical treatment and free medical report for any victim of sexual assault.

Statistics from the Family Support Unit (FSU) don’t differentiate age so it is impossible to differentiate between children, youth and older women. It also doesn’t differentiate gender. However the FSU statistics tell their own story; in 2012, a total of 4613 cases were reported and in 2013 a total of 7684 cases were reported. In 2012 unlawful carnal knowledge cases were reported by the FSU, and in 2013, under the Sexual Offenses Act, sexual touching was reported. Table 7 illustrates inconsistencies in the way the data is collected and reported, a situation exacerbated by changes in legislation. However, NGOs involved have suggested that child rights violations should be increasingly reported which may be reflected in the 2013 and 2014 FSU's figures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Unlawful carnal knowledge</th>
<th>Rape</th>
<th>Sexual touching</th>
<th>Rape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 Cap 31 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act
In a 2011 national headcount of street children, over 1821 under-aged girls were found to be engaged in the sex trade. While 750 of these girls were located in the section in Freetown where most of the bars and entertainment spots are, Figure 1 below shows how these under-aged girls are distributed over the provincial locations. Almost 12% of a town’s street girls were found to be commercial sex trade workers.

**Figure 1 Commercial Sex Workers by Town (Excluding Freetown)**

Rape and Sexual Violence
The use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war is well documented (Marks 2014). Cultural and traditional mores provide a hostile institutional framework for gender equality and sexual violence is rampant both before the war and indeed after the war (OECD 2012). Despite passing a law in 2007 to criminalise rape, rape continues to be a terrible scourge in Sierra Leone. The Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) reported 927 cases of rape in Freetown in 2009 with no convictions.\(^\text{15}\) In fact, it seems that in the past 10 years, the incidents of rape are on the increase\(^\text{16}\) although the FSU statistics in the table above don’t support this trend.

The Sexual Offenses Act of 2012 raised the penalties for rape from 2 years to 5 or 15 years and it prohibits the negotiation for out of court settlements which is frequently done between the families and the perpetrator at times resulting in forced marriage of the survivor and the perpetrator. It seeks to protect children from sexual violence in schools and in rural areas where customary laws prevail.\(^\text{17}\)

In response, International Rescue Committee (IRC) established Sexual Assault Referral centres in Kenema, Kono and Freetown called Rainbo centre to provide specialist services to survivors

\(^\text{15}\) http://www.irinnews.org/report/89581/sierra-leone-impunity-in-rape-cases-thrives
of rape. Among the services provided for victims of rape are a medical examination, care, information, referrals and assistance to survivors of sexual violence and other related forms of gender-based violence. In Kono, 290 rape cases were reported within 11 months of January to November 2013 making it the highest ever recorded.\(^\text{18}\) Statistics from the FSU for 2012 and 2013 indicate a drop in rape cases report (without knowing age) which could reflect a response to the criminalisation which means fewer people report rape due to the stigma of victims.

Recently, the Adoption of the Maputo Protocol which seeks to reduce sexual violence against women and eliminate FGC has been delayed in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone signed the Protocol at its adoption in Mozambique in 2003, but is yet to ratify the document, making it the last country in West Africa with this status.\(^\text{19}\)

**Conclusions**

It is reported that while improvements have certainly been made in the field of child welfare, the country is still a long way from being able to safeguard the rights of its children and youth. GOSL’s ability to domesticate its international commitments is improving however its ability to enforce its own domestic legislation is also weak (Street Child of Sierra Leone & Help a Needy Child in Sierra Leone 2012).

A report by UNICEF suggests that efforts to combat violence against children are frequently reactive focusing on symptoms and consequences and not causes. The same can be said for the youth policy which is formulated in response to youth issues reflecting “more alarm than constructive engagement” and is triggered by a series of poorly understood, complex and interrelated societal dynamics (Sommers 2007).

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\(^\text{18}\) http://politicosl.com/2013/11/kono-records-highest-rape-cases-rainbow-centre/

Section 2: Lessons Learned and Organisational Experience on the Worst Forms of Violence against Children and Youth

Letters were written to 41 stakeholders in government departments, ministries, NGOs and INGOs soliciting their cooperation in the data collection process for the desk review around the worst forms of violence associated with the children and youth sector in Sierra Leone. The discussion guide developed by the research team was attached to the letters distributed which gave fore-knowledge to personalities interviewed to talk about the age categories of children and youth they targeted in their interventions. The guide also brought out the thematic areas that the child or youth serving organisations worked in.

Among the 41 organisations that were contacted to obtain information for the desk review, the team succeeded in interviewing 18 despite distributing hard copies, using email and following up with phone calls. Some email addresses also bounced. Some people whose telephone numbers were on the list of contacts had left the organisations and had already been reemployed in other organisations. Some telephone calls were never answered. Some Country Director’s telephone and email contacts were not accessible when requested. Some received us in their offices and delegated the filling of the discussion guide to staff who in turn never responded.

Table 8 summarises the thematic areas and the number of organisations working in each one of them among the 18 that were interviewed. Only two organisations out of 18 did not mention sexual exploitation. These were the National Youth Commission and Christian Brothers. The thematic areas that had the second highest figure were torture and under-reported rape. Among the 18 organisations that took part in the survey, a small number work on gang & cult violence which had the same number as for ‘Others’. The following areas constituted the option ‘Others’: discrimination; advocacy around child rights; juvenile justice; teenage pregnancy and violence in sports. There was no organisation interviewed that worked on all the thematic areas highlighted above.

The age groups of the targeted children and youth were divided into four (4) categories. Table 9 illustrates the frequency of the age brackets of the targeted children and youth that the 18 organisations interviewed worked with. Ten organisations targeted 11-15 years old children. There were 9 organisations interviewed that work for children 16-24 years old. For youth over 24 years old, there were only 4 organisations interviewed. For children less than 10 years, 7
organisations were interviewed and 7 organisations interviewed worked for all the age categories.

In examining the current trend of violence, some organisations stated that there was increase in violence while others said violence was on the decrease. The third category said it was neither increasing nor decreasing; but that at the moment of the desk review, they observed that reporting child and youth rights violation was on the increase. The organisations and ministries that mentioned increase in violence were mainly government departments including Family Support Unit of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Headquarters in Freetown, the National Youth Commission, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and one INGO Restless Development. Figure 2 illustrates the age categories and the thematic areas of those who reported increase in violence. In terms of common thematic issues, it was observed that Restless Development, FSU and the Ministry of Youth Affairs worked on sexual exploitation. Restless Development and FSU worked on GBV, FGM and under reported rape cases. The FSU and the Ministry of Youth Affairs work on torture.

**Figure 2 Organisations and their thematic areas with increase in violence**

Based on the responses obtained for the ministries and organisations interviewed, 50% stated that violence was on the decrease. This could be based on the realities in targeted communities since those who stated that violence was on the increase did not necessarily operate in the same communities as those who actually experienced decrease in violence.
The profile of organisations that experienced a decrease in violence up to the Desk Review period is found in Table 10 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Thematic areas</th>
<th>Age groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Child labour; sexual exploitation; child trafficking; torture; under reported rape; FGM</td>
<td>All categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MSWGCA</td>
<td>Child labour; sexual exploitation; child trafficking; torture; under reported rape; FGM; GBV; gang &amp; cult rape; discrimination</td>
<td>Below 10 years to 24 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Centre for Rehabilitation &amp; Development</td>
<td>Child labour; torture &amp; GVB</td>
<td>&lt;10 years up to 24 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pikin to Pikin</td>
<td>Child labour; sexual exploitation; child trafficking; torture; under reported rape; GBV</td>
<td>&lt;10 years up to 15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Christian Brothers</td>
<td>Child labour; child trafficking; torture; teenage pregnancy</td>
<td>&lt;10 years to 24 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Network Movement for Youth &amp; Children’s Welfare</td>
<td>Child labour; torture; under reported rape; FGM; GBV</td>
<td>All categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Youth Welfare &amp; Development Organization</td>
<td>Child labour; sexual exploitation; child trafficking; torture; under reported rape; FGM; GBV</td>
<td>All categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Youth Advocate Programme</td>
<td>Child trafficking child labour; sexual exploitation; under reported rape; GBV; gang &amp; cult violence</td>
<td>&lt;10 years up to 24 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Street Children of Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Child labour; sexual exploitation; child trafficking; torture; under reported rape</td>
<td>&lt;10 years up to 15 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People interviewed spoke of what they saw changing in their thematic areas with regard to the protection of the rights of children and youth. One said ‘Parents are much more protective, educated on the issues & are more vocal’. In a similar vein, some said that more people have knowledge on what to do for child rights violations. Another said: ‘although the regime is weak in terms of protecting the rights of children and youth, there are now laws and policies which protect the rights of children and youth. What we need is to reinforce the laws that have been established.’ An interviewee stated that what they encountered as a challenge was to ensure that MSWGCA & MoHS’s were committed to the cause for the sustainability of the programmes. Changes in personnel or priority areas also posed challenges for some organisations. Based on information from some interviewees, there were still negative cultural attitudes and practices towards children in some operational communities.
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The Grant Manager interviewed from IRC said: ‘**data around the actual prevalence of violence is becoming more accurate**’ and that there was increase in community awareness of the detrimental effects of child labour. Christian Brothers helped to establish Child Welfare Committees in their project communities to monitor and prevent violence against children. Another interviewee stated that there was decrease in the number of FGM cases because girls now reach the age of consent to agree to it. Children are told to use preventive approach to protect themselves.

Another critical question the interviewees had to respond to was: **What is happening in the environment in Sierra Leone that is contributing to this change (increase or decrease) or lack of change in the level of violence against children?** A respondent stated that perpetrators of violence were being pursued in court of law and punished thereafter with heavy fines or they face jail sentence. Some said there was increased sensitisation in the communities to protect children’s rights. Another respondent said government and CSOs were more supportive of these days to protect the rights of children and youth. Another interviewee said that school children were assigned responsibilities which helped to protect their rights.

The next question on the discussion guide was: **What is your organisation doing or working on to prevent violence in your thematic area(s)?** Several organisations are involved in sensitisation programmes around Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), awareness raising on existing laws, and advocacy and follow-up on cases at FSU. They also organise school talks, radio and television programmes and have created mothers clubs and school clubs. Some organise training in resilience for youth and to acquire skills to promote employment.

The research team further asked the interviewees the following question: **From where does your organisation draw its inspiration to do this work?** Some said they were inspired through the international instruments or policy documents and the mandate of their organisations. Others stated that they were inspired through staff commitment, collaboration and from partnerships. Some also said that they got inspiration from the vulnerability assessment that they conducted.

The 18 organisations interviewed were actively engaged in defending the rights of children and youth in their respective communities. Most organisations were engaged in sensitisation programmes around the rights of children and youth; while others worked directly with the children and youth to empower them in protecting their rights.

In their work, organisations are inspired through various ways ranging from the international instruments to documentations related to national efforts already made to protect the rights of children and youth. Table 11 illustrates the various documents mentioned by the organisations and government ministries that they use in their work.
As shown in Table 11 above, 8 organisations use the Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2007 while 7 use the 3 Gender Act; followed by the internal policies of the organisations. Three organisations mentioned the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Others that followed were the organisations’ strategic plans, the code of conduct for teachers and the Child Protection Act. These documents serve as reference materials for work around the protection and promotion of the rights of children and youth in the country.

The question asked on funding was: **Who is funding most of your organisation’s programming?** Several answers were obtained for this question: OSIWA, UNDP, UNICEF, Plan Sierra Leone, Escap Netherlands, Children in Crisis, World Bank, Justice Sector, Action Aid, YMCA, Finnish Government, UNESCO, UNFPA, IRC, Concern World Wide, ENCISS, CORD Aid, Comic Relief, Global Rights USA, Street Children UK, and the Government of Sierra Leone fund the various organisations interviewed. Some also spoke of soft funding from their memberships.

An interviewee stated that what they encountered as challenge was to ensure that MSWGCA & MoHS’s were committed to the cause for the sustainability of the programmes. Changes in personnel or priority areas also posed as a challenge for some organisations. Some
interviewees spoke of some parents compromising with perpetrators. Those organising trainings for youth said there is inadequate funding to organise trainings for all the targeted youth. Others said they experience lack of mobility to reach out to other areas in need; their staffs also need their capacity reinforced while others experience community resistance to change - some communities do not cooperate to support NGO work. They also spoke of impunity in relation to some perpetrators who have committed crimes against children and youth in communities where they operate.

In relation to success stories, an interviewee stated that their organisation has succeeded in unifying over 4,000 street children and close to 3,000 have been supplied to get education in 13 towns across the country. Some also said currently they are experiencing an increase in knowledge level among youth on SGBV issues; and there were increased reported cases of rape and SGBV influencing the development and implementation of the teenage pregnancy strategy. Some said they no longer experience violence in organising quiz & drama competitions in schools in their operational communities. Another interviewee said they have prevented a girl from early marriage who is currently working with them. In another interview, it was said that traditional leaders in Western Area have been engaged by some organisations to support non-violence campaigns for children. Some supported the development of by-laws at chiefdom level for the protection of adolescent girls against teenage pregnancy as well as the prosecution of perpetrators including chiefs. Some said they now experience a reduction in early pregnancy. In another interview it was said that someone has been imprisoned in Makeni for child violation. Some contributed in the revision of the laws against female genital cutting.

The desk review team asked if the organisations interviewed had published any reports on the issues that they have been working on. Out of 18 organisations, 12 said they had published reports and that they were available on request. 6 organisations said they had not published any reports as yet.

The last question for the discussion was: ‘Are there any notable achievements to mention in your work? ‘Some said they had experienced some positive changes in children and youth situations due to their work. Some said their organisation contributed immensely to the passage of the 3 Gender Act in 2007. Some said the creation of mothers’ clubs and girls clubs has brought some positive change in the protection and promotion of children and youth rights in their project communities. Some constructed 2 buildings to the FSU while others have established youth and child resource centres.
Section 3: Recommendations

Several recommendations came out of the desk review and these are presented below.²⁰

Information

There are several issues with respect to information that need to be addressed by the child- and youth-focussed agencies.

First, there is inadequate information sharing between actors. For example, MICS is an excellent document with a wealth of information, data and statistics but, during the interviews, only UNICEF, which undertook the study, mentioned MICS as a source of information.

Statistics do not appear to be representative of what is happening to children and youth which may be due to underreporting.

The quality and availability of information is inconsistent due, in part, to legislative changes which make year on year comparison impossible. FSU data is a perfect example where the statistics collected between 2012 and 2013 changed, are inconsistent and appear to be underreported.

There is very little gender breakdown in information on children and youth work, statistics are not disaggregated by gender and age and, in some cases, information is not separated from that gathered about adults (FSU). More focus is required on segregating data on consistent gender and age lines as the experience of males is different from females and demographic groups are not homogenous.

Information is scattered and incomplete. There is no one location or agency that is a repository for all data and information that is required to evaluate the situation or make informed programming decisions. Evidence-based programming could be supported by sharing statistical information and having conversations about it.

Coordination

The field portion of the Desk Review revealed that there is no central list of contacts, source of information, or data base around child protection and youth issues and no central body for programming.

UNICEF is doing an excellent job focussing on children but there is no established focal point for information or advocacy work for youth and no overall evidence-based picture to inform programming for children and youth.

There appeared to be a significant amount of sensitization activity organised by the groups that participated in the study but little evidence to show its impact. These factors create repetitive

²⁰ Despite several attempts to gather the data from local organisations early in the desk review process, information is still being received from local organisations. Recommendations will be developed further after discussion with SFCG.
work for all organisations involved and may mean that resources are not being used efficiently and gaps are not being addressed effectively or at all.

Leadership
It was reported that, while improvements have certainly been made in the field of child welfare, the country is still a long way from being able to safeguard the rights of its children and youth. GOSL’s ability to domesticate its international commitments is improving however its ability to enforce its own domestic legislation is weak.

UNICEF reported that none of the Millennium Development Goals will be met by 2015. This demonstrates the challenges that government is facing to implement the legislation that is enacted. For instance the National Commission on Children was recommended in the 2007 Child Rights Act and in 2014 this Commission has not yet been established.

Clearly choices have to be made around which of the worst forms of violence and which issues to focus on in developing a coordinated, well-informed system to improve the lives of children and youth in Sierra Leone.
References


UNICEF, 2001. *Profiting from abuse: An investigation into the sexual exploitation of our children*, Unicef. Available at: http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=JWTSHE-kPnYC&oi=fnd&pg=PP4&dq=%22abuse,+including+abuse+by+the+authorities,+such+children+typically+have+little+recourse+to+the+law.+And+those+who+return+home+may%22+%22+and+unequivocal+message:+These+shameful+abuses+of+child+rights,+so+long+a+dirty+secret,+must+not+be+allowed+to%22+&ots=8Tr6Feknf1&sig=l0mw6smERgE-lG4cpBm1We5JtUk [Accessed June 12, 2014].


Annex

Annex 1: Annotated Bibliography

The Annotated Bibliography contains the documents considered for this desk review which were summarized in the References section along with additional important books, articles, reports and websites that contribute to the collective knowledge on child and youth protection issues in Sierra Leone, West Africa and Africa more generally.


Source: [https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/14741](https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/14741), accessed June 23, 2014

This volume contains a range of original studies on the controversial role of youth in politics, conflicts and rebellious movements in Africa. A common aim of the studies is to try and explain why patterns of generational conflict and violent response among younger age groups in Africa are showing such a remarkably uneven spread across the continent. An introduction by Jon Abbink (Being young in Africa: the politics of despair and renewal) is followed by three parts: 1. Historical perspectives on youth as agents of change (Murray Last on youth in Muslim northern Nigeria, 1750-2000; G. Thomas Burgess on youth in revolutionary Zanzibar); 2. State, crisis and the mobilization of youth (Peter Mwangi Kagwanja on youth identity and the politics of transition in Kenya, 1997-2002; Karel Arnaut on youth and the politics of history in Côte d'Ivoire; Jok Madut Jok on the position of youth in South Sudan; Piet Konings on Anglophone university students and Anglophone nationalist struggles in Cameroon; and Sara Rich Dorman on youth and politics in Eritrea); 3. Interventions: dealing with youth in crisis (Yves Marguerat on street children in Lomé, Togo; Angela McIntyre on the phenomenon of child soldiers in Africa; Simon Simonse on failed Statehood and the violence of young male pastoralists in the Horn of Africa; and Krijn Peters on the reintegration of young ex-combatants in Sierra Leone).


The African Development Bank’s (AfDB) funding for the Sierra Leone Country Gender Profile (CGP) is in line with commitments made in the Updated Gender Plan of Action (2009-2011) to
support Regional Member Countries (RMC), to build their knowledge base, and to inform their work on gender equality, women’s economic empowerment and the Government of Sierra Leone’s (GoSL) post-war reconstruction policy framework. It is also one of the non-lending activities of the Joint Assistance Strategy for Sierra Leone (JAS) prepared by the African Development Bank Group (AfDB), the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (2009-2012). In this sense it is a manifestation of the harmonisation of efforts following the recommendations of the Paris Declaration. The overall objective of the multi-sectoral CGP is to be responsive to and effectively engage with the GoSL’s gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda. The specific objectives are to i) assess gender-equality issues relating to basic services and women’s economic empowerment, and to identify key gender gaps and offer recommendations; ii) examine the socio-cultural and economic factors that constrain efforts at gender equality in the country; iii) assess the institutional capacity of the National Gender Machinery; and iv) examine existing gender policies, strategies and legislation, and recommend actions. It is worth noting that this gender profile is the first of its kind in the country and is a timely intervention, as it will also inform the JAS Mid-Term Review (MTR) and the new JAS in 2013.


The objective of this report is to review the initiatives carried out in the last four years in West and Central African countries with regard to child protection information and monitoring systems. An analysis of the different options available in the region reveals i) the advantages and limits of each approach; ii) the difficulties experienced in collecting, analyzing and disseminating protection data; iii) the lessons learned and the challenges in this area; and iv) a proposal for a UNICEF framework of intervention to strengthen national child protection information and monitoring systems in the region.


Tradition and Rights is about female genital cutting (FGC) in West Africa. The practice violates the rights of girls to be protected from harm, yet in many communities it is a cherished tradition, defended by women and men alike. This publication describes the complexity and the sensitivities of the issue in West Africa. It is meant to generate the constructive dialogue that will be necessary for communities to abandon the practice. This report is the result of a study conducted in 2005 by the West African Regional Office of Plan with support from Plan Germany. The researchers reviewed publications, interviewed national authorities and activists, and collected information about FGC in villages in Mali, Niger, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.


The mapping and analysis undertaken in Sierra Leone in late 2009 reveals that the existing laws, structures and services for the protection of children are not achieving their intended impact on the lives of the youngest members of society. Although actors at several levels are committing considerable resources to child protection initiatives, indicators demonstrate that a large percentage of children still face abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation in their daily lives. Strong leadership is required to bring together various efforts into a well-articulated and common national vision that is appropriate to and accepted by a range of different stakeholders, most notably children, families and communities. Key findings of this report demonstrate the urgent need to launch a more focused national dialogue and action plan for the development of a sustainable child protection and welfare system.

The current development context of Sierra Leone represents an opportune moment for making critical breakthroughs related to child protection. Major strategic initiatives that are currently underway, including the Poverty Reduction Strategies, against a backdrop of significant economic development and much-needed decentralization, offer opportunities for decision-makers to seize the opportunity to ensure that child protection and welfare concerns receive adequate attention. In doing so, the government of Sierra Leone can catalyze and capitalize upon the work of dedicated local, national and international actors to ensure that child protection and family welfare are integrated into initiatives such as the five-year Agenda for Social Protection.

In the past decade, efforts to strengthen the formal child protection system have been coordinated by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs (MSWGCA), mostly
notably through the spearheading of the National Policy for Child Well-being (2005) and the Child Rights Act (2007). These initiatives have provided the basic principles and practical framework for child protection and welfare advocates. The CRA has codified several important measures, including the dual prevention and response mandate of community-level Child Welfare Committees, as well as the inclusion of joint police-social worker Family Support Units for investigating and monitoring cases. While the promotion of an overarching legal and policy framework for child protection and welfare is welcome, there remains significant concern that the CRA relies too heavily upon voluntary mechanisms for preventing and mediating family crisis, while the response system tends towards an adversarial approach, with greatest emphasis placed on law enforcement and court based interventions.

The formal child protection and welfare system does not sufficiently take into account long-standing childrearing practices and the often harsh realities faced daily by impoverished communities. In the majority of cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation, it appears that communities are more likely to turn to local mediation structures to resolve child protection incidents. Given the traditional role of the Chief as mediator within communities, the government’s engagement with customary child protection mechanisms and resolution practices must be considered more strategically.

Another limitation facing the MSWGCA is an extremely small budget and consequently low capacity to manage its activities. The formal system established under the CRA redefines the responsibilities of the government in a manner that is unachievable under the current circumstances. Currently, key child protection and welfare funding comes primarily from the international community, which has become a kind of “surrogate” social welfare provider.

According to respondents, this has tended to undermine the authority of the government and, at times, fosters an agenda that perhaps responds more to external pressures than to local concerns. Redressing this balance will require that the government articulate a clear child protection and welfare strategy that reflects local realities traditions, as well as strengthens staff capacity to achieve the ambitious plans in place.


Source:

This paper presents the findings and insights generated through the mapping and assessment of national child protection systems in five West African countries: Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Niger,
Senegal and Sierra Leone. The research process began in July 2009 and was completed in January 2011. The goal of the country research was to provide national actors with a profile of their existing system and an initial assessment of its contextual appropriateness and relevance to the populations being served. The need to undertake this research was prompted by the recognition that African perspectives – and the prominent role of communities – have not been fully integrated into the global dialogue that is evolving around national child protection systems.


This paper presents the findings of a short case study conducted under the programme Achieving Sustainable Governance Transitions: The Politics of Public Goods and Services, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The programme combines applied research, proactive outreach and extended engagement with policymakers with the aim of developing practical frameworks to better understand how politics and governance affect the provision of essential public goods, including justice and security.

An objective of the study is to contribute to an emerging body of research on the merits of using political economy analysis (PEA) to reflect on the kinds of factors policymakers and practitioners should consider in developing interventions to address particular problems. PEA is concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time.


Source: [http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/100/400/363.abstract](http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/100/400/363.abstract), accessed June 23, 2014

The recent conflict in Sierra Leone presents a challenge for analysis. Elite elements have not had the prominence predicted by models of ‘warlord’ political economy, but alternative ethnic or religious nationalisms have yet to come forward to fill the lacunae in state governance. Scholarship focusing on ‘lumpen’ or ‘secular sectarian’ agency only serves to emphasize the conflict's apparent detachment from pre-war patterns of politics and identity. However, it is
argued in this article that long-term exclusionary processes do in fact underlie these agencies. Here, the central issue is localizing processes of rural sociality. This phenomenon has roots in the pre-colonial era, but it has been greatly exacerbated by regimes of ‘native administration’ originally imposed by British colonialism. In much of Sierra Leone, de facto citizenship remains a privilege for those domiciled in old villages registered for tax collection. Youths, itinerant workers, and other low status individuals inevitably find themselves in attenuating orders of precedence in access to basic rights and properties. The loss of identity implicit in this process no longer finds a compensating movement in modern education and employment. Here is fertile ground for the rapid growth of ‘lumpen’ agency and perhaps much of the chaos and brutality of the subsequent conflict.

**Government of Sierra Leone. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: Sierra Leone, United Nations, 2006.**


Most recent online version of the GOSL CEDAW Report.


Sierra Leone’s Vision for 2013 to 2035 is to become a middle-income country. It would be an inclusive, green country, with 80% of the population above the poverty line. It would have gender equality, a well-educated, healthy population, good governance and rule of law, well-developed infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, with private-sector, export-led growth generating wide employment opportunities; there would be good environmental protection, and responsible natural resource exploitation. After generally satisfactory experience with the Agenda for Change, 2008-12, Sierra Leone is now embarking on the Agenda for Prosperity (AfP), for social and economic development for 2013-18. Rapid expected growth in minerals production and export, together with the potential for petroleum exploitation, should provide resources to help transform the country and make the AfP feasible. Problems in implementing AfC have been carefully assessed, and measures developed to avoid them in the AfP. This document describes the Government of Sierra Leone’s Agenda for Prosperity.


What factors contribute to youth exclusion and increase the likelihood of youth engagement in violence? How can DFID effectively address issues of youth exclusion and violence? This report from Social Development Direct examines existing evidence and analysis on the links between youth exclusion, violence, conflict and fragile states. It highlights factors which can contribute to youth violence, and makes recommendations for DFID's work on youth exclusion and violence.


Source: [https://www.rienner.com/title/The_Time_of_Youth_Work_Social_Change_and_Politics_in_Africa](https://www.rienner.com/title/The_Time_of_Youth_Work_Social_Change_and_Politics_in_Africa)

Most young Africans are living in a state of "waithood," argues Alcinda Honwana, finding themselves suspended in limbo between childhood and adulthood. Failed neoliberal economic policies, bad governance, and political instability have caused stable jobs to disappear; and without jobs that pay living wages, these young people cannot become fully participating members of society. But that is only part of the story.

Examining the lives of young people in Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia, Honwana focuses on the tremendous transformative potential of the waithood generation—not only in Africa, but also globally—as young people come to believe that the struggle to overcome their predicament requires radical social and political change. From organizing protests in the streets of Maputo, Dakar, Madrid, and New York, to sparking revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, the waithood generation, as we are reminded in *The Time of Youth*, is using its resources redress the wrongs of contemporary society.


This report highlights domestic violence as a neglected issue. Yet, the researchers recognize that women and girls face multiple forms of violence on a daily basis that go unrecognized and unacknowledged. It is believed that all types of violence against women and girls—whether occurring in the home or in a school or in the midst of conflict—are interrelated and stem from the same problem of women’s oppression and gender discrimination. And though the report’s focus is on the horrible toll of domestic violence in West Africa, partner abuse is not unique to one region or continent. Many of the stories in this report could well have described experiences of women in Minneapolis as well as Monrovia.

This report aims to not only bring attention to a long-neglected issue but spark a new conversation about the way that violence, in all its forms, is holding women and girls back from achieving their potential.

This IRC report is based on a decade of programming and research with women in Liberia, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone as well as visits carried out by an IRC-formed Commission on Domestic Violence to the region in March 2012. During this trip, researchers met with women from Sierra Leone and Liberia to hear firsthand how domestic violence is impacting their lives including President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, First Lady Sianyama Koroma of Sierra Leone, government officials, traditional leaders, and women leaders in civil society. IRC hopes to amplify the voices of millions of women in West Africa who are struggling, against enormous odds, to build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities.


This report presents the findings of a study on youth vulnerability and exclusion (YOVEX) conducted in West Africa. The aim of this study, which was sponsored by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), is two-fold; first, to stimulate debate on the security and development challenges posed by the demographic transition currently under way in West Africa and, second, to generate policy recommendations geared to the reduction of youth vulnerability and exclusion. The research was undertaken in seven countries that are either recovering from armed conflicts or which have not experienced intra-state warfare, but display state fragility characteristics (Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone). The case studies confirm the critical importance of local context for understanding the situation of
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Youth, but also point towards common lessons relevant to the future design of youth programmes in West Africa.


Source: [http://phg.sagepub.com/content/34/4/496](http://phg.sagepub.com/content/34/4/496), accessed June 23, 2014.

Global transformations are rapidly altering people’s experiences of growing up. This report offers a comparative perspective on some of the challenges facing young children and youth across the world, focusing especially on young people’s practices in the fields of education and employment. The paper discusses conceptual frameworks for analyzing young people and evaluates these theoretical ideas through attention to interdisciplinary writing on educational restructuring, the privatization of school curricula, children’s work, and youth unemployment. The common predicaments or ‘vital conjunctures’ (Johnson-Hanks, 2002) of children and youth — for example, their inability to remain in formal schooling or experience of unemployment after leaving education — offers a basis for a globally comparative human geography attuned to the relationship between structural change and sociospatial marginalization.


This briefing paper seeks to raise awareness of the problem of sexual exploitation in and around schools in the West African region. It also highlights problems with regards to limited evidence and explores policy implications. It aims to support Plan’s regional ‘Learn Without Fear’ campaign and contributes evidence to the global debate on sexual exploitation in and around schools and children in general.


Rape and sexual violence loom large in the study of civil war in Africa. Sierra Leone has been one of the most prominent cases for establishing rape as a ‘weapon of war’, yet little is known about how sexual violence was understood by commanders or combatants within the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Mainstream analyses of armed groups and civil war rarely engage with gender dynamics, despite their centrality to war making, power, and violence; and research that does focus on sexual violence tends to overlook the complex internal dynamics of the groups responsible. This article examines the internal gender dynamics of the RUF from the perspective of male and female members in seeking to understand the perpetration of sexual violence. It shows that both formal and informal laws and power structures existed to regulate gender relations and control sexual behaviour within the group. It identifies four categories of women – non-wives, unprotected wives, protected wives, and senior women – and shows that women's interests and experiences of sexual violence were not homogeneous, but were instead shaped by their status within the group. In this way, sexual violence, examined in social context, provides an entry point for understanding how power, protection, and access to resources are brokered in rebellion.

Morgan, Jenny and Alice Behrendt. Silent Suffering - The psychosocial impact of war, HIV and other high-risk situations on girls and boys in West and Central Africa. Plan West Africa, date unknown.


The regions of West and Central Africa are home to ever-growing numbers of suffering children. These are children who live on the streets, who are trafficked and exploited as cheap labour, neglected or sexually abused, or who are forced into combat in a civil war. To learn more about the impact of these difficult circumstances on children, Plan’s West African Regional Office, in partnership with Family Health International, initiated a five-country study entitled ‘Psychosocial support to children in difficult circumstances’.


Ending violence against girls in Africa is one of the most pressing challenges facing Africa today. This report pulls together information from three sources: existing literature in violence against girls; thematic studies on five settings in which African girls experience violence; and retrospective surveys of young girls' experiences of violence. This information has been analysed to give an overview of the magnitude of the problem, its causes and consequences, as well as the elements of a possible strategy for the way forward.

**OECD. Social Institutions & Gender Index: Sierra Leone. 2012.**


Data on Sierra Leone social institutions and gender.


African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child


The research, carried out by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), reveals the enormous economic and social cost of violence in schools across the world. Focused on three types of violence in schools – corporal punishment, bullying and sexual violence – it found the total cost of school violence in terms of social benefits lost in just 13 countries for which information is available ran to almost $60 billion. The research found that children who experience violence at school are likely to earn less, be in greater need of healthcare and other services, and long-term, contribute less to their countries’ economies. It says that the problem is a significant barrier to achieving the Millennium Development Goals - as it leads to truancy, under-performance and high drop-out rates. No country is immune from the blight of school violence.
and eradicating it takes commitment and resources. But failing to invest in it costs considerably more.

**Prison Watch Sierra Leone and the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims.** *Children and Juveniles in Detention - Study on compliance with international standards in Sierra Leone*. Prison Watch Sierra Leone & DIGNITY Danish Institute Against Torture, 2013.


Prison Watch Sierra Leone presents a professional study issued with the aim to provide an analysis of conditions of detention for children and juveniles in Sierra Leone highlighting obstacles and issuing recommendations for necessary legal and institutional reforms to improve the conditions of detention.


Addressing youth issues is essential to promoting stability and preventing violence in fragile and conflict-affected states. However, there is little evidence that youth programming and policies have helped reduce violence in these settings. This can reflect the lack of understanding about youth issues and how problems affecting them encourage their participation in violence. This study set out to understand youth violence in Liberia and Sierra Leone, two countries in which there has historically been a great deal of youth participation in group violence, where the risk of youth mobilization into violence persists, and where interpersonal and gender-based violence are still a concern. In addition to having young populations, both countries have governments that have emphasized improving youths' lives by both reducing poverty and preventing violence. In turn, programming and policies in these (and many other conflict-affected) countries tend to be focused on employment generation due to the assumption that youth become prone to violent behavior as the result of economic exclusion (their inability to achieve a stable source of livelihood). The findings from this study will be useful to help governments (particularly of fragile and conflict-affected states) and donors better understand youth issues, design more effective interventions to address youth violence, and promote longer-term stability. The report begins with a review of literature on existing theories of youth
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exclusion and drivers of youth violence, with a greater focus on history of violence in West Africa. It proceeds with an outline of the study methodology for data collection, sample selection, and analysis. The analysis follows, highlighting key findings. The report concludes with recommendations for policies and youth programming.


Source: Hard copy of document received from FSU.

This document contains statistics gathered for the Sierra Leone Policy Family Support Unit.


This report examines the large and complex youth employment challenge in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire, where there is an “urgent need to create employment for 4.5 million youth” and where over half of all youth lack proper work.

Mindful that much of the region’s youth cohort is restive and unemployed, Liberia’s ‘rebel behavior’ and ex-combatant youth among them, the report will also consider the implications of providing ‘productive and decent work’ for youth; that is, work that promises to put youth on the road towards acquiring respect and professional development as well as compensation. The report will conclude with a description of an employment programme for some of the region’s most marginalized and overlooked: poor, unemployed urban youth.


The Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was carried out in 2010 by Statistics Sierra Leone. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) provided financial and technical support.
MICS is an international household survey programme developed by UNICEF. The Sierra Leone MICS was conducted as part of the fourth global round of MICS surveys (MICS4). MICS provides up-to-date information on the situation of children and women and measures key indicators that allow countries to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed - upon commitments.

An additional objective of the MICS4 survey in Sierra Leone is for the survey effort to contribute to the development of the national statistical system, data and monitoring systems, and to strengthen national capacity in the design, implementation, and analysis of such monitoring systems.

The 2010 Sierra Leone Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS4) is a nationally representative survey of households, women, and children. The main objectives of the survey are (i) to provide current information for assessing the present situation of women and children in Sierra Leone — including the identification of vulnerable groups and of disparities among groups — in order to inform policies and interventions; (ii) to produce data to monitor progress toward the achievement of targets and goals that include the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and World Fit For Children; and, (iii) to contribute to the improvement of national statistical, data and monitoring systems in Sierra Leone and to strengthen national capacity and technical expertise in the design and implementation of such systems.

Interviews were successfully completed in 11,394 households drawn from all districts of Sierra Leone. The main results from the survey are summarized in this report.

Street Child of Sierra Leone. "National Headcount of Street Children in Sierra Leone." April 2012.


This is the first ever publication of comprehensive, detailed, and up to date data on the number of children living on Sierra Leone’s streets. In late 2010 it was decided that a project was needed to gather accurate information on some of the country’s most marginalised children. The initial coming together Street Child of Sierra Leone, their national partner HANCi-SL, the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs (MSWGCA) and subsequently StreetInvest – set the Head Count project in motion. These have remained the critical four partners to the project’s success.

So visible yet so often ignored, these children have tremendous potential to influence the country’s future – for better or for worse. By making them the focus of a national head count
we can better understand not only where these children are, but also how they live. The results from this Head Count will help us transform the injustice of their circumstances, and harness their tenacity, resourcefulness and optimism towards a more positive future for Sierra Leone.

For this exercise it was agreed amongst participants that a ‘street child’ would be recognised as ‘any child whose life is controlled by the streets’. The terminology is intentionally broad whilst being, by definition, a prescriptive statement. Any child who spends the majority of his or her time on the street, regardless of whether he or she has a home to return to at night, is considered a street child.

Still, it is acknowledged that no single definition can embrace the individuality, unique circumstances, or personal history of every child. We must look beyond definitions to develop and refine our understanding and awareness of the children who we refer to as street children.


This preliminary assessment finds that child trafficking is an issue of concern in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is primarily a source country both for internal trafficking (from rural to urban areas) as well as trafficking abroad. To a far lesser extent, Sierra Leone may be a country of transit and destination. Child trafficking victims were both male and female of varying ages. While this assessment primarily considered child trafficking, it was noted that adults were also trafficked from and within the country. Trafficking occurs for a range of different purposes including sexual exploitation (prostitution, marriage), labour (domestic work, mining, fishing, trading and vending, agriculture), begging and petty crime, adoption and into the fighting forces. While there are no statistics available to assess the rate of child trafficking, this preliminary assessment found that child trafficking is apparently occurring quite frequently. This conclusion is based on the rate of (negative) migration experiences by community members in the six districts surveyed as well as a consideration of vulnerable groups in the country, a portion of whom appear to have been trafficked. The most common manifestation of child trafficking appears to be internal cases for the purpose of forced labour and sexual exploitation. This affects both boys and girls. In the absence of confirmed statistics on trafficking, it is perhaps sufficient to note that the various preconditions for trafficking noted in other countries also exist in Sierra Leone. These include economic causes (poverty and material aspiration), political and legal factors (war, corruption, porous borders), cultural factors (normative migration, child labour, early marriage, etc), social condition (limited education, violence in the home) and individual characteristics (rebellion and peer influence). As such,
child trafficking must be an area of concern generally for government and civil society as well as factored among the more pressing child protection issues. The current child protection structure does not accommodate the specific needs of trafficked minors nor have there been programmes to prevent child trafficking. Further, few trafficking cases have been identified and pursued in the criminal justice system. However, there appears to be commitment to addressing this issue amongst government, NGOs and international organisations. A barometer of this commitment is the recent passage of the anti-trafficking law. It is imperative that continued efforts be focused on child trafficking to address the current situation as well as prevent the further escalation of the problem. The assessment outlines, in addition to the current state trafficking in the country, the various legal, policy and programmatic efforts underway in the country that can be mobilised against child trafficking. Also discussed are the gaps and issues to be considered in on-going counter-trafficking efforts.


The work on analysing and strengthening child protection systems in sub-Saharan Africa has moved child protection (from violence, abuse and exploitation) a significant step forward in terms of developing standard approaches to preventive and protective services that can be taken to scale. However, most child protection service models continue to be rooted in Western models of service provision and much of what is being developed is suited to better off and more stable countries, rather than to fragile states and conflict-affected countries, such as DRC, Guinea Bissau, CAR, Chad, South Sudan or Somalia. The work on community-based child protection mechanisms attempts to fill an important gap by strengthening families and endogenous protection mechanisms, but evidence of community-based child protection models that can be taken to scale is still limited.

Child protection in emergencies has developed effective approaches to child protection challenges in situations of conflicts and natural disasters, but these approaches tend to be temporary and most are not sustained beyond the crisis, once donor funding declines and INGOs have left. Existing documentation on systems approaches to child protection in emergencies are largely aspirational rather than grounded in empirical evidence of effective approaches to strengthening child protection systems in emergencies. However, this is beginning to be addressed through a number of studies on child protection systems in emergencies.
These notes are a compilation of ideas from the fragile states literature that have particular relevance for child protection systems strengthening (e.g. Pritchett and de Weijer 2010). They are based on a review of relevant literature and on a study done by Just Governance Group.

The notes aim to contribute to the debates and work on child protection systems rather than provide definitive or authoritative guidance.


This briefing paper focuses on both boy and girl domestic workers, keeping in mind that the vast majority of children working in domestic service in West and Central Africa are girls. Most children in the two regions are involved in domestic chores at home; starting with small tasks and gradually increasing in complexity and workload. The educational purpose is to teach them the necessary practical, economic and social skills for adult life. Work in the home may consist of light tasks that are combined with schooling, but for those not in school it may also involve tasks taking most of the day, work in family businesses and commercial crops, and they may begin working for a wage outside the home. Parents and children, and often also employers, see child domestic work as part of this process of learning. Girls, in particular, relocate to a relative’s house to help out with domestic chores. Both girls and boys do domestic work when staying with relatives to pursue education, and teenaged girls and boys seek paid work as domestics.

International agencies and non-governmental organisations have drawn attention to the fact that children’s work in domestic service often is among the worst forms of child labour due to the health risks for children. Accordingly, the ILO Convention No. 182 states that all children under the age of eighteen must be protected from such work. Protecting child domestic workers is challenging because of the hidden nature of domestic work inside private homes, because children often work for relatives and because domestic work may be socially and culturally accepted as appropriate work for children. It is often difficult to gather evidence of when domestic work is benign and when it is harmful.

Based on a review of a broad range of literature—spanning from newspaper articles, to reports of commissioned research, to Master and Doctoral theses, to peer reviewed academic publications—this briefing paper focuses specifically on children’s experience of doing domestic work and on their aspirations for the future to bring to light a nuanced perspective of children’s dreams, strategies and tactics whether they have looked for domestic work themselves or have
been put to work by their parents or guardians. Some of the reviewed literature contains detailed information on children's work in domestic service but lacks depth in the analysis, in which case the empirical findings are presented here and are re-analysed comparatively in conjunction with other studies.

**UNICEF. At a Glance: Sierra Leone Statistics. December 27, 2013.**

This site provides statistics for Sierra Leone on: basic indicators, nutrition, health HIV/AIDS, education, demographics, economics, women, child protection, the rate of progress, adolescents, disparities by residence, and disparities by household wealth, as well as early childhood development.


**UNICEF. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change. New York: UNICEF, July 2013.**

This report is a comprehensive statistical overview of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in the 29 countries where the practice is concentrated (including Sierra Leone). Analysis of the data reflects current perspectives on FGM/C, informed by the latest policy, programmatic and theoretical evidence. The purpose of the report is to generate an in-depth understanding of FGM/C that can be applied to the development of policies and programmes, with the ultimate aim of eliminating the practice.

Source: [http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=JWTSHE-kPnYC&oi=fnd&pg=PP4&dq=%22abuse,+including+abuse+by+the+authorities,+such+children+typically+have+little+recourse+to+the+law. And+those+who+return+home+may%22+%22and+unequivocal+message:+These+shameful+abuses+of+child+rights,+so+long+a+dirty+secret,+must+not+be+allowed+to%22+%22and+u](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=JWTSHE-kPnYC&oi=fnd&pg=PP4&dq=%22abuse,+including+abuse+by+the+authorities,+such+children+typically+have+little+recourse+to+the+law. And+those+who+return+home+may%22+%22and+unequivocal+message:+These+shameful+abuses+of+child+rights,+so+long+a+dirty+secret,+must+not+be+allowed+to%22+%22and+u), accessed June 12, 2014

The book presents the complexity and scale of the abuse of children and demonstrates how sexual abuse increases the risk of being drawn into other forms of child abuse.


The West and Central Africa region has been racked by conflict over the past decade. Several countries - Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone - are still embroiled in, or emerging from, long-term warfare. Women and girls in these countries are most vulnerable to gender-based violence and need special protection measures. This first-of-its-kind study by UNICEF on the situation of war-affected girls and women in the region highlights innovative programmes being implemented with partners to address the impact of conflict, and recommends how UNICEF can more proactively champion the rights of girls - particularly adolescent girls.


The State of Africa’s Children 2008 is a regional edition of UNICEF’s The State of the World’s Children 2008 report. Complementary to the global report, it examines the state of child survival in Africa and highlights the need to position child health at the heart of the region’s development and human rights agenda. It also outlines possible solutions – programmes, policies and partnerships – to accelerate progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. This report is a seminal publication on the state of African children.
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Sierra Leone is consolidating peace after the civil war of 1991-2002, and in November 2012 went through the third round of credible presidential, parliamentary and local council elections. The UN Security Council, recognising these positive changes, decided to end the mandate of UNIPSIL by 31 March 2014. The new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2013-2018) – Agenda for Prosperity – was launched in June 2013. Representing the development partners, UNICEF was instrumental in drafting of the Human Development & Social Protection Pillars. This report describes UNICEF’s activities and results in Sierra Leone in 2013.


Insecurity is a primary development challenge of our time and a significant barrier to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the right to universal primary education. These challenges are further complicated by the changing nature of conflict that involves multi-level, intra-state clashes of extended duration and is marked by recurring cycles of violent conflict. Current institutional approaches and arrangements have been inadequate to address these changing patterns.

Peacebuilding has emerged as a central strategy to address conflict and accelerate progress towards achieving the Goals. Education has an important role to play in building peace, but it can also be a potential driver of conflict.

The Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy in Conflict-Affected Contexts (PBEA) programme is unique in both scale and scope, and is designed to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security in conflict-affected contexts, including countries at risk of, or experiencing and recovering from, conflict. Towards this end, the programme will strengthen policies and practices in education for peacebuilding.

To achieve these results, the programme will focus on five key outcomes:

- Outcome 1 aims to increase inclusion of education into peacebuilding and conflict reduction policies, analyses and implementation.
- Outcome 2 will increase institutional capacities to supply conflict sensitive education.
Engaging Children and Youth as Partners in the prevention of Violence against Children

- Outcome 3 aims to increase the capacity of children, parents, teachers and other duty bearers to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace.
- Outcome 4 will increase access to quality, relevant, conflict-sensitive education that contributes to peace.
- Outcome 5 is cross-cutting and will contribute to the generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming related to education, conflict and peacebuilding.

The PBEA programme is currently being implemented in 13 countries.


This case study is part of a project of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Women, Peace and Security Initiative, led by Ms. Sahir Abdul-Hadi. The project is taking stock of the progress in implementing United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, adopted in 2000. The case study documents the lessons learned in Sierra Leone. Additional case studies are being prepared regarding other post-conflict contexts.


Sierra Leone is a source, transit, and destination country for children and women trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Trafficking within the country is more prevalent than transnational trafficking and the majority of victims are children. Within the country, women and children are trafficked from rural provinces to towns and mining areas for domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, and forced labor in diamond mines, petty trading, petty crime, and for forced begging. Women and children may also be trafficked for forced labor in agriculture and the fishing industry. Transnationally, Sierra Leonean women and children are trafficked to other West African countries, notably Guinea, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, and The Gambia for the same purposes listed above and to North Africa, the Middle East, and Western Europe for domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. Sierra Leone is a destination country for children trafficked from Nigeria and possibly from Liberia and Guinea for forced begging, forced labor in mines and as porters, and for sexual exploitation. There have also been cases of children trafficked from refugee communities in
Sierra Leone. The Government of Sierra Leone does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so, despite limited resources. The government reported that it prosecuted five traffickers, but was unable to provide data on trafficking convictions. While Sierra Leone reported that it referred victims to an international organization’s shelter, the number of victims referred was low.


In 2012, Sierra Leone made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Special Court for Sierra Leone found former Liberian President Charles Taylor guilty of planning, aiding, and abetting crimes committed by rebel forces in Sierra Leone, including procuring and using child soldiers. The Government passed the Sexual Offenses Act, which includes penalties for child prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism. The Government also collected data on the number of street children in the country, provided temporary shelter and support to street children and victims of trafficking, and implemented a number of initiatives to improve school attendance.

Despite these efforts, limited funding has been provided for enforcement and long-term support for victims of trafficking was unavailable. Children in Sierra Leone continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in dangerous work in agriculture and in mining.

Wessells, Mike. What Are We Learning About Protecting Children in the Community? The Save the Children Fund, November 2009.


This report presents an inter-agency review of the evidence on community-based child protection mechanisms in humanitarian and development settings.
Wessells, Mike. *An ethnographic study of community-based child protection mechanisms and their linkage with the national child protection system of Sierra Leone*, Save the Children, 2011.


Community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs) are used widely by non-governmental organisations and communities to address and protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. The research in this study reviews the effectiveness and sustainability of CBCPMs and aims to strengthen the link between CBCPMs and the national child protection system. A global, inter-agency desk review of mostly externally facilitated CBCPMs was conducted as the first phase of work and the foundation for this study. The ethnographic research presented in this report is part of an inter-agency, grounded learning initiative undertaken in response to the desk review. It aims to strengthen child protection practice in the global child protection sector through research in three countries in West Africa (Sierra Leone), East and Southern Africa (Kenya), and Southeast Asia, respectively. This report was produced by The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity as part of a wider inter-agency learning initiative, funded by the Oak Foundation, USAID, UNICEF, World Vision, and Save the Children.
Annex 2: Methodology and Deliverables

Proposed Methodology

FFA will use both direct contact with children and youth serving organisations in Freetown as well as a literature and internet searches to construct the desk review for Search for Common Ground. The mixed methodology FFA proposes is:

1. Listing of all child serving organisations in Sierra Leone. These organisations will be categorised according to their work around child protection issues. Some of the relevant categories are as follows:

   Organisations registered as supporting child protection issues across Sierra Leone: This information will be attained from the Ministry of Social Welfare and UNICEF, the Youth Commission and through visits to the Ministry of Development where INGOs and NGOs are registered.

   UNICEF and Ministry of Social Welfare and Children’s Affair partners: UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Welfare as partners have a national network of child serving organisations which they have been supporting over the years. This list will be comprehensive and national in scope and based close to the ground. It will provide a good source of information as to the approach and the gaps that are evident.

   Child serving international organisations: There are a number of International NGOs working on children’s issues such as PLAN UK, Save the Children UK and International Rescue Committee (IRC).

   Additionally, in Freetown there are a number of interlocutors who are working on children advocacy issues. A preliminary listing is proposed:

   - Center for the Coordination of Youth Activities (CCYA) Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organization
   - Child Fund Children in Crisis UNICEF
   - PLAN FAWE
   - International Rescue Committee CORD Sierra Leone
   - Save the Children UK
   - National Youth Commission Family Support Unit

2. Key contact people will be identified for the different categories of organisations on the list and a meeting established with each.

3. A set of guided questions will be constructed for an informational interview with each of the organisations in the different categories. Informational interviews using the guided questions will be sought with these organisations to find who their local partners are to include
to the list as well as the key issues they are working with. The guided questions will be shared with SFCG to add or subtract as they see required.

4. In either a telephone conversation or a visit to the office an informational interview will be held with the key contact person from the child serving organisation. In this interview we will extract information from each group about the documents they use to inform their work or have been generated by their work.

5. The informational interviews will also identify gaps in the literature or information available to organisations as identified by them.

6. Internet search – an internet search will be conducted particularly focused on key websites identified through interviews or searching known websites (such as UNICEF or the Women’s Refugee Commission) as sources of information. These will be compiled in an annotated bibliography.

7. Academic journals – a review of appropriate academic journals relevant to the issues will be conducted. The review will include relevant journals identified through either the documents shared by child serving organisations or through the internet search to explore relevant concepts through which children and violence is understood. This research will give a background to the analytical framework and help to identify gaps. An annotated bibliography will capture the key documents that are relevant to West Africa.

**Deliverables**

- Desk Review of the child and youth sector in Sierra Leone (30 pages maximum, appendixes excluded)
- Guided questions tool for informational interviews
- Annotated bibliography
Annex 3: Discussion Guide

1. Name of organisation: __________________________

2. Contact person: __________________________

3. Date: __________________________

4. Contact ( ) in person or ( ) by phone or ( ) by email

5. Age bracket of children/youth targeted by the organisation - Which age bracket of children and youth does your organisation target?
   ( ) less than 10 years
   ( ) 11 – 15 years
   ( ) 16 – 24 years
   ( ) over 24 years
   ( ) all of the above

6. I understand that your organisation is actively engaged in working to prevent violence of any form on children / youth in Sierra Leone. Can you tell me which forms of violence your organisation is working to prevent? Check the appropriate answer(s).
   ( ) Child labour
   ( ) Sexual exploitation
   ( ) Under-reported rape
   ( ) Child trafficking
   ( ) Gender based violence(s)
   ( ) Torture
   ( ) Gang & cult violence
   ( ) Other please specify __________________________

7. Over the past year or two and up to the present is violence (around the issues your org is working) against children/youth increasing or decreasing or staying the same?
   □ violence is increasing
   □ violence is decreasing
   □ violence is about the same
   □ Other please specify __________________________

8. Over the past year or two have you seen any change in your thematic area as mentioned above? If so, what specifically is changing in your thematic areas in terms of protection of children and youth against the worst forms of violence or in terms of prevention of this kind of violence?

9. What is happening in the environment in Sierra Leone that is contributing to this change (increase or decrease) or lack of change in the level of violence against children?

10. What is your organisation doing or working on to prevent violence in your thematic area(s)?

11. From where does your organisation draw its inspiration to do this work?
12. Who is funding most of your organisation’s programming?

13. What are some of the challenges you face in the implementation of prevention programs?

14. Are there success stories related to the prevention programs you have implemented? If yes please summarise below:

15. Which documents /policies guide your organisation’s work on these forms of violence against children?

16. Are these documents available to the public? ( ) Yes ( ) No (provide source if possible)

17. Has your organisation published any reports on the issues that you have been working on? ( ) Yes ( ) No

18. If yes, are they available to the public? ( ) Yes ( ) No (provide source if possible)

19. Are there any notable achievements to mention in your work? ( ) Yes ( ) No

Thank you for your time
### Participated in the Desk Review Information Gathering Process

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<td>1</td>
<td>Centre for the Coordination of Youth Activities (CCYA)</td>
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<td>Center for Rehabilitation &amp; Development (CORD)</td>
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<td>Christian Brothers</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Defence for Children International</td>
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<td>FAWE</td>
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<td>International Rescue Committee (IRC)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Ministry of Youth Affairs</td>
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<td>National Youth Commission</td>
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<td>Network Movement for Youth &amp; Children's Welfare</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Pikin to Pikin</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Restless Development</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Police Family Support Unit (FSU)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Youth Advocate Programme</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
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<td>Youth &amp; Child Advocacy Network</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Youth Welfare &amp; Development Organization</td>
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### Contacted But Not Responsive

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<td>Action for Children and Youth Development</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>African Cultural Relief Organization</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Africa-Turkey/Sierra Leone Friendship Society</td>
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<td>All As One</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Center for Coordination of Children in Need</td>
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<td>Children's Forum Network</td>
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<td>Children's Learning Services - Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>Finnish Refugee Council</td>
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<td>Future for Children Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>Saviour of the World Children Center (SWCC)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Youth Partnership for Peace &amp; Development</td>
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Annex 5: Consultant Bios

Frances Fortune

Frances Fortune is a specialist in conflict transformation strategy and post conflict state building with a particular focus on integrating tools in development programming and measuring impact. With over 25 years of experience in West Africa managing projects in conflict sensitive environments, conducting research and designing programmes to effect positive change, Frances has insight and experience into results and performance management systems that produce positive outcomes in complex environments. Frances has published several articles and book chapters around conflict issues and using the media as a tool for peace building.

Frances is an Independent Consultant working with a team of Consultants and Associates for clients to support strategic direction and to evaluate projects among other assignments. From 2000 to 2012 Frances worked for Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in various field-based posts in West Africa and from 2006 as their Africa Director. She was a member of senior management of SFCG for 5 years and led a team of 6 people and 14 country programmes managing over 50% of SFCG’s annual budget.

Frances holds a Master in Conflict Management and Analysis from Royal Roads University, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada and a Bachelor of Science (Hons) from Queen’s University, Kingston Ontario. Presently Frances is pursuing a PhD in Global Governance at the Balsillie School of International Affairs at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

Patrick Masuba

Patrick Masuba was a Regional Design Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor for Search for Common Ground’s (SFCG) West Africa programmes in Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire. In this position and over a five year period, Patrick provided technical support to Design Monitoring and Evaluation teams in the four countries mentioned above in terms of regular output monitoring and periodic outcome monitoring and other evaluation processes.

Before forming FFA with two partners, Patrick worked in Guinea as Project Officer for Search for Common Ground; conducting a baseline audience survey and implementing the follow-on project raising awareness on girls’ and women’s rights, including the right to education. In Côte d’Ivoire he coordinated several surveys and the findings informed SFCG’s programming in that country. Prior to working for SFCG, Patrick worked for Care International in Sierra Leone in several capacities: Training Team leader, Liaison Officer and as Deputy Project Manager for its Initiative in Support of Civil Society Good Governance and Human Rights project in Tonkolili and Moyamba districts in Sierra Leone. He taught French at high school level and was attached to the Franco-Sierra Leonean Pedagogical Centre as Pedagogical Advisor in Bo Sierra Leone for the supervision of French teaching in high schools in the Southern Region of Sierra Leone.
Engaging Children and Youth as Partners in the prevention of Violence against Children

Patrick has a Master in the teaching of French as a foreign language from the University of Franche Comté, Besançon in France. Patrick holds a Higher Teacher’s Certificate in French and English from Milton Margai College of Education and Technology.

He attended a training workshop at the INCORE International Summer School – University of Ulster, Northern Ireland on Evaluation and Impact Assessment of Peacebuilding Projects. He also successfully completed a training workshop at the Peacebuilding & Development Institute, American University in Washington DC, on building monitoring and evaluation into program operations. He is highly motivated with experience in monitoring and evaluation in the sub region including leading research and participating in consultant-led teams.