

“Open for business”: Promoting equitable land rights protection in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea

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Acronyms

ATCA	Alien Tort Claims Act
CBG	Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée
CBO	Community Based Organization
CJPS	Center for Justice and Peace Studies
EPO	Equatorial Palm Oil
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAC	Global Aluminum Corporation
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GS	Green scenery
HDI	Human Development Index
LAA	Land Authority Act
LRA	Land Rights Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRO	Public Relations Officer
RECAP	Rural Agency for Community Action Program
SAC	Socfin Agricultural Company
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SiLNoRF	Sierra Leone Network on the right to Food
SLA	Sierra Leone Agriculture
SLIEPA	Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency
TDS	Talking Drum Studio
UN	United Nations
UPHR	United for the Protection of Human Rights
US	United States
WAA	West Africa Agriculture

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Executive Summary

Project background

The Mano River countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) are currently facing serious challenges related to large scale land acquisition by multinational corporations. In many cases, these acquisitions are done under non-transparent conditions and in violation of national laws and the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (GP). Large-scale land acquisitions can result in local people losing access to the resources on which they depend for their food security and livelihoods. Local residents in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia have been directly dispossessed of the land they live on and work on, often their long-standing heritage. Moreover, these land acquisitions have resulted in creating frustration within the affected communities where violent protests has sometimes resulted in the loss of human lives and the arrest of activists¹.

It is in this context that Search for Common Ground (SFCG), in collaboration with national partners initiated the project "Open for Business: Promoting equitable land rights protection in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea" with the goal to reduce the potential for land rights conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Specifically, the project aimed at:

1. To enhance the capacity of civil society, State actors and investing companies to promote equitable land rights
2. To increase popular understanding of land rights in communities affected by corporate land concessions

Engaging a broad range of national and local civil society organizations, landowners and land users, local and traditional authorities, investing companies and State authorities,

Objectives of the evaluation

The final evaluation assessed the project's achievements of its goal and objectives. It also provided an opportunity for the identification of lessons learned and best practices that will be applied to improve on the design and implementation of similar projects going forward.

The intended users of the final evaluation is the donor, SFCG, the implementing partners and other SFCG partners.

Methodology of the evaluation

The evaluation involved a blend of methodologies including a documentary review and a field study in the three countries, combining quantitative as well as qualitative data collection and analysis. It involved a comparison between a treatment group composed of beneficiaries of the project and comparison groups composed of members of communities with similar sociodemographic characteristics with those from the treatment groups in terms of culture and tradition and presence of investment companies but were not targeted by the project. The purpose of this approach was to isolate the attitudinal, behavioral and perception changes about land rights and conflict resolution that can be attributed to the project.

¹ <https://makonitimes.com/2016/03/21/sierra-leone-activists-released-after-six-weeks-jail-for-protesting-socfin/>

The quantitative data collection targeted a 360 women and men from both the treatment and comparison groups in each country. In each country, Focus Group Discussion with communities' members and individual interviews with key stakeholders were conducted.

Key findings

The evaluation found that the activities undertaken by SFCG in collaboration with its local partners achieved its set objectives.

EFFECTIVENESS

S.O. 1: To enhance the capacity of civil society, State actors and investing companies to promote equitable land rights.

The main stakeholders of the project have been exposed to the national laws pertaining to land rights in their countries, both the implementing partners and the local CBOs have had their levels of knowledge about land rights improved and the Land Management Committees created in Liberia and Sierra Leone for the purpose of defending the land owners' rights have been sensitized on the legal procedures to follow in order to protect their members' rights. In Guinea, Concertation platforms have been created in the districts where the project was being implemented and those platforms which aim to create opportunities for dialog between the main stakeholders around large scale land transfer to mining companies have been welcome by the government's local representatives and the main mining companies have accepted to participate.

The project's implementation within the communities was done through awareness raising activities with the use of participatory theatre, mobile movie projection, radio broadcasting and group discussions. This approach has been accessible to the communities' members who reside mainly in areas where there is not any electricity and it has enabled the land owners who have been affected by large scale land acquisition to have their understanding of the land rights and to become more active participants in the Community Based Organizations created to defend those rights.

100% of the implementing partners have been able to cite examples of new knowledge or practices that they acquired and helped improve on their work and approaches to land rights promotion.

In Guinea, the implementing partner Fondation Guinee Solidarité Plus benefitted from the financial support from the project to implement the activities

In Sierra Leone, several organization did benefit from it. Green Scenery at national level, SilNorF in Bombali, RECAP (Rural Agency for Community Action Program) in Pujehun and UPRH have all benefitted financially from funds provided by the project.

In Liberia, CJPS has also benefitted from the project's funding.

100% the CSOs interviewed considered that their participation to the project has contributed to intervention capabilities to promote land rights in their respective countries.

In Guinea, among the male respondents, 65% from the communities where the project was implemented think that women should have the right to own land compared to 35% from the comparison communities, while in Sierra Leone those rates are 85% and 65% respectively and in Liberia they are 77% and 45.5% respectively.

Among the women respondents, 87.5% in Guinea from the project communities are favorable for women to own land compared to 55% from the comparison communities while in Sierra Leone, those rates are 95% and 67.5% respectively and in Liberia, they are 97% and 65% respectively.

Although in all the three countries the citizens who are affected by the land concessions to corporations are more willing to solve the conflicts peacefully, in Sierra Leone and in Guinea there is a deficit of trust towards the corporations and the traditional leaders and government representatives who conceded to the land transfer. In Liberia whoever, in Kanga and Farlie, the communities' members are still very suspicious of Sime Darby, the company operating within their communities although in Ghon, the people show more disposition to negotiate with the company.

In Guinea, only the **27%** of the respondents had favorable opinions of the companies. This largely due to the fact that despite the efforts shown by SFCG and the implementing partners, the Concertation Platforms are still at the incipient stages of their activities and a lot of the respondents still hold bad memories about the companies. This is illustrated by the following statement from the Village chief of Hamdallahi Close to Sangaredi: *"CBG has been present in our community since 1972 and since then, we do not recall of any good that they have done for us or any promise that they have kept. In more than 40 years of presence here only two members of our village have ever found work for the company"*.

In Sierra Leone, only **22%** of the respondents have favorable views of the companies for the same reasons expressed in Guinea.

In Liberia, although only **60%** of the respondents showed positive views about the presence of Sime Darby, in Ghon, 92.5% of the respondents were favorable while in Farlie and Kanga, 27.5% are positive views about the presence of Sime Darby in their communities.

In Sierra Leone, the main external hindrance towards achieving the goal of the project remains the reluctance of the companies to effectively participate to discussions with the communities' members and the citizens' suspicion about the companies, while in Guinea, although the main mining companies are becoming more disposed to actively participate to the concertation platforms, the impact of their activities on the livelihood of the communities and the fact that they seldom kept their promises have limited the trust from the citizens.

Measure of outcome and output indicators

S.O. 2: To increase popular understanding of land rights in communities affected by corporate land concessions.

The evaluation found that activities undertaken by SFCG and its three implementing partners not only helped the latter defining how to conduct their sensitization and advocacy campaigns around abusive large scale land acquisition, but also constituted an opportunity for their CSO members to get more acquainted with the national and international laws related to land concessions.

When asked if they had become more aware of land rights over the past two years, 73% of the respondents from the treatment groups in Sierra Leone responded "Yes", against 17% from the comparison group, in the Guinea 75% from the treatment group responded "Yes" while for those from the comparison group only 15% said "yes". The rates in Liberia were 80% and 19% who responded "Yes" for the treatment group and the control group respectively.

However, in Guinea, only the **27%** of the respondents had favorable opinions of the companies. This is largely due to the fact that despite the efforts shown by SFCG and the implementing partners, the Concertation Platforms are still at the incipient stages of their activities and a lot of the respondents still hold bad memories about the companies. This is illustrated by the following statement from the Village chief of Hamdallahi Close to Sangaredi: *“CBG has been present in our community since 1972 and since then, we do not recall of any good that they have done for us or any promise that they have kept. In more than 40 years of presence here only two members of our village have ever found work for the company”*.

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Adaptability

The CBOs created or leveraged in the framework of the project still need more support in order to become empowered to operate without any external support. Some of them have only been recently created as in the case of the concertation platform in Kamsar which was being set while the present evaluation was being conducted.

Conclusions


The project has had very positive results because it has enabled the beneficiary communities to be more aware of their land right and the consequences of leasing all their land to foreign investors, it has also created a framework for peaceful conflict resolution and enable more women to participate in negotiation for land lease. However, the timeframe for the project implementation was too short for strengthening the results obtained, some of the concertation platforms created in Guinea and the Land Management Committees created in Liberia and Sierra Leone are still at the incipient stages of their existence and are not very well equipped to face companies with large financial powers which enable them to hire good law firms and take advantage of their weaker counterparts.

In Sierra Leone, the contracts between the companies and the land owners contain a clause which requires renegotiations every 7 years and there are only 2 years left before the first 7 years are completed. It is therefore recommended that the project is extended for at least the next two years for the three countries in order to better prepare the beneficiaries to make better deals during the negotiations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed towards the main stakeholders in land transfer in the three target countries. They are based on the objectives of the project and focus on providing peaceful land concession measures.

Towards the local communities

 In Sierra Leone and Liberia, it is necessary for the governments to proceed to the identification of the land owned by each family before any concession is done. The way in which the families identify their land currently is based on the positions of trees and other natural boundaries. When they accept to transfer their land to the multinationals, the companies destroy the trees and

any means of knowing the limits of the properties and since the land owners do not have any documents showing the positions of their properties and the land concessions are all for more than 50 years, it is unlikely that the future generations of the land-owning families will have any chance to know where their land is. It is therefore necessary that before any land deal is made, that the properties are clearly documented and that all the land owners know where their land is located.

✚ Land concession to major corporations is a legal act with grave, solemn consequences which therefore cannot be engaged into without a legal representation. Any time that they are faced with a multinational seeking to operate in their communities, they need to hire lawyers to document with precision the promises made by the different parties. The need for legal representation for the citizens during land concession negotiations must be mandatory.

✚ In every district affected by large scale land acquisition, land-owners associations must be created to oversee and monitor the commitments of the companies and ensure that the environment is protected and that the promises are fulfilled.

✚ In every land deal with the multinationals, the promises must be clearly documented in a legally binding way with clear deadlines for their concretizations so that the each stakeholder is held responsible for their commitments

Towards SFCG, its implementing partners and in funding partners

✚ It is imperative for the sake of sustaining the gains from the project to that it is prolonged so that the beneficiary communities in Sierra Leone and Liberia can be better prepared for the negotiations that they will be holding with the investment companies within the next two years. An in Guinea, the newly created concertation platforms will benefit from more capacity building in order to be empowered to operate without external support.

✚ One of the weaknesses of the project has been the lukewarm involvement of lawyers in its implementation. If the project is extended, it is recommended that lawyers associations in the target countries be associated in it so that they can assist in the sensitization of the beneficiaries about the legal aspects of the contracts that they enter into.

✚ Concertation platforms spearheaded by local government representatives must be established in all the communities where large scale land concessions have been done and the companies must be represented in order to avoid conflict.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context of the evaluation

Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia are neighboring countries with similar landscape and they are rich with mineral resources and agricultural potentials but with very poor populations and serious economic challenges. The fragility of these countries results from the protracted sociopolitical unrest in manifested through poor governance and the reliance policies which seek short term benefits and results at the expense of long term stability. The current stability and peace which they are enjoying have not solved the dire poverty and constant struggle for decent livelihood that the populations of these countries are facing. Their Human Development Indices are among the lowest in the world with 0.43 for Liberia, 0.43 for Sierra Leone and 0.411 for Guinea², which place them respectively at poverty levels are such that although women play an important role in the household economies, gender inequalities remain a hindrance for human development and often, women are discriminated against in education, political representation, land ownership and labour market. Consequently, the Gender Inequality Indices for the Mano River Countries show that they are lagging compared to the rest of the world with Gender Inequality Indices (GIIs) of 0.651 for Liberia, 0.650 for Sierra Leone and 0.649 for Guinea³. Life expectancy in those countries is also among the lowest in the world with 50.1 years in Sierra Leone, 59 years in Guinea and 61.8 years in Liberia⁴.

The fertility of the soil, the abundance of rainfall and the richness of the land with minerals have been attracting large multinationals. Moreover, the combination of a general economic downturn, rising food and commodity prices, and new forms of state-backed investments have tempted the governments of these countries to lease their land to multinationals. They allocate common land to international investors at considerably not transparent conditions. They take advantage of the unclear legal situation under which most of their populations make use of the national land resources for their subsistence. The Mano River countries are typical targets of large-scale land acquisitions. Their governments act under the assumption that their countries have sufficient land resources to satisfy both the demand of foreign investors and the need of the local smallholders for subsistence agriculture.

In terms of access to land, governance and transparency in land acquisition remain very murky in these three countries with customary and deeded land existing side-by-side, even in lightly populated areas.

In Sierra Leone, the Paramount Chiefs remain the custodians of the law and the land in their chiefdoms and part of their role is to make sure people rightfully use the community's natural resources, such as farmlands, forest plants and minerals. Nearly all of the estimated 5.4 million hectares of land suitable for agriculture in Sierra Leone is in the "Provinces" and is managed under

² 2015 HDR Report - | Human Development Reports

³ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>

⁴ *"World Health Statistics 2016: Monitoring health for the SDGs Annex B: tables of health statistics by country, WHO region and globally". World Health Organization. 2016. Retrieved 27 June 2016.*

customary rules, comprising of: Communal ownership with family (ancestral landholding families) and Individual rights of occupation under the supervision of lineage elders (settlers)⁵.

The Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA) has advertised the availability of over 4.3 million ha of cultivatable land for the production of food crops and opportunities for the production of biofuels for the global market. Subsequently, there has been a rush a major multinational to acquire fertile land at a very low cost. According to the US-based policy think-tank the Oakland Institute's 2011 country report on Sierra Leone, that country counts 15 large-scale land deals totaling 500,000 ha.

Multinationals operating in the field of mineral mining have been present in **Guinea** for more than 40 years. Since the country became independent, one of its main sources of National Revenue has been Bauxite, gold and Iron ore. While in Sierra Leone, all the land in the rural parts of the country belongs to families who work on it and the Paramount Chiefs are its custodians, in Guinea, the land belongs to the State, the citizens live on the land and are free to work on it as long as the State does not need it. In general, customary property rights remain dominant in rural areas. Customary rights are secured by the person who initially cleared the piece of land.

Management and use rights of the land fall to the land founder's family or descendants, but the ownership of land remains with the state. Usufruct land rights are recognized within the formal legal system as well as the customary system. Under the Land Code, rights must be registered, but State land administration institutions lack capacity and resources to support registration or have never been created. The Rural Land Policy calls for formalization of customary rights but lacks implementing regulations and programs. Most of Guinea's land is unregistered, governed by customary law, and vulnerable to transfer by the state or privatization. Customary rights are recognized within sectoral policies to varying degrees, but are generally limited to use-rights⁶.

Consequently, whenever the State decides to allocate any portion of land to an entity, even if that land was already occupied by citizens, it has the legal powers to do so. However, in that case, the dwellers on the land have to be compensated for their relocation and the relocation has to be negotiated with the citizens. Because of the increase in the mining business in Guinea with the continuous arrival of new mining companies and the expansion of the existing ones, more and more villages are being relocated. However, citizens' relocations for the benefit of large corporations have not always been peaceful, because the people are very much attached to the land where their forefathers are buried and although Guinea is predominantly inhabited by Muslims and Christians, they still have traditional practices which involve Secrete Societies with Sacred Bushes and they are very reluctant to watch them destroyed.

While in Sierra Leone, the land in the provinces belongs to communities and families, in **Guinea**, it is the property of the State. In **Liberia**, land ownership in the rural parts of the country suffers from the murkiness of the legal framework with land tenure being governed by both the formal laws and traditional by-laws. The lack of transparency in land ownership has been used and abused by multinationals to effectively grab massive portions of land in Liberia.

Land issues contributed to the devastating Liberian Civil War and, though the conflict ended in 2003, security of tenure has not been achieved for most rural dwellers. In order to reinforce the protection

⁵ Leasing Agricultural Information for Investors November, 2012

⁶ USAID COUNTRY PROFILE PROPERTY RIGHTS AND RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

of land owners in the rural parts of the country, Civil Society in Liberia organized and crafted a Land Right Act (LRA) and Land Authority Act (LAA). The LRA seeks to secure local peoples' rights to their forests and farms while the LAA seeks to create a formal institution in charge of overseeing conflict related to land tenure. However since these two documents have been drafted, they have not been adopted by the Parliament which has resulted in putting progress towards a full and effective protection of the land owners in the rural parts of the country in limbo.



To a certain extent, the land concessions to major corporations is due to the endemic poverty prevailing in the rural parts of Liberia which makes some communities to actually invite the multinationals to their counties and provide them with land at a very low cost in exchange for investment in social infrastructures such as school, health centers, roads and the promises to provide employment for the youth. This has been the case with communities of Ghon, Farlie and Kanga from the Zodua Clan in the Grand Cape Mount County granting Sime Darby 5000 hectares of land in order to develop their communities. However, conflict has very rapidly emerged between the company and communities' members over the conditions in which the cession has to be done. Sime Darby has been occupying part of the land without providing the expected investment.

In all these three countries land transfer to the corporations was done in nontransparent circumstances that violate the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (GP) and the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests and can lead to conflict.

It is in this context that Search for Common Ground initiated the project "Open for business": Promoting equitable land rights protection in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

1.2. Objectives of the project

The goal of the project is to reduce the potential for land rights conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea with two specific objectives:

-  To enhance the capacity of civil society, State actors and investing companies to promote equitable land rights;
-  To increase popular understanding of land rights in communities affected by corporate land concessions.

The project which started in August 2013 came to an end in August 2016 and SFCG conducted an evaluation in order to assess whether it met its specific objectives.

1.3. Objectives of the evaluation

The final evaluation has assessed the project's achievements towards its goal and objectives. It has also provided an opportunity for the identification of lessons learned and best practices that will be applied to improve on the design and implementation of similar projects going forward.

The study answered to the following questions:

Effectiveness:

-  To what extent did the project contribute to the expected results of the project:

- ✚ Do the key stakeholders have an improved understanding of the provisions of international and national land rights mechanisms?
- ✚ Are Civil Society Organizations more capable of leading activities to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights?
- ✚ Is there an enhanced dialogue between community members, local government and companies?
- ✚ Do citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions?
- ✚ How did the project have different effects on men and women?
- ✚ What are the internal and external factors that facilitated or hindered the achievements towards the desired changes/objectives?

Measure of outcome and output indicators

- ✚ What progress has the project made towards its goal and expected results? In specific, the following logframe indicators will be measured:
- ✚ % of citizens exposed to SFCG media programming and/or outreach that can cite two mechanisms for protection of their rights, compared to citizens not exposed to programming.
- ✚ % of citizens exposed to SFCG media programming and/or outreach that can cite one local mechanism for redress in case of abuse compared to citizens not exposed to programming.
- ✚ % of community members surveyed who say they have an improved perception of companies who leased land in their community as a result of project activities.
- ✚ % key stakeholders interviewed who believe that relationships between citizens, authorities and companies have been improved as a result of project activities.
- ✚ % of affected landowners who state that they would choose peaceful means to resolve land conflict, as opposed to violent means.
- ✚ % key stakeholders (partners and local organizations working with our local partners) interviewed who can cite at least one example of new knowledge improving their work.
- ✚ #of USG-supported anti-corruption measures implemented
- ✚ # of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions
- ✚ What is the number of outputs achieved versus the expected outputs, number of beneficiaries reached out to vs. expected number?

Adaptability

- ✚ What changes in the conflict context around land grabbing have been observed over the course of the project in the target communities?
- ✚ Has the project adapted to respond to those changes? How?
- ✚ What are the lessons learned and best practices from the project' implementation that should inform the future programming of SFCG in the region?

2. Methodology

The study involved a blend of approaches consisting of a documentary review and a field data collection and analysis. The evaluation was conducted in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and consisted of the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

2.1. Documentary review

The documentary review was conducted primarily through the secondary data made available by SFCG such as the project proposal, the logical framework, midterm and narrative reports as well as government, UN agencies' and NGOs' published research documents about the subject of land leasing in the Mano River countries. Documents pertaining to the formal and informal legal systems in the target countries such as constitutions, the Land Code in Guinea and Land Right Act in Liberia were also studied along with anthropological research on land ownership and concession in the three target countries. These documents were studied in order to better contextualize the expectations, outcome and output set out for the project.

The secondary data analysis sought to examine the legal framework pertaining to land rights and to land leasing for the mining and agricultural purposes in the Mano River countries and to what extent women have been empowered to access to land. It also sought to analyze the citizens' livelihood in those countries in the context of shrinking opportunities to access to land for the purpose of farming. The process through which land was leased to the corporations and the roles of the different stakeholders was also examined.

The project's narrative reports were also studied to help in assessing the effectiveness with which the project was conducted. The indicators in the logical framework serve as a yard stick for the comparison between the expectations from the project and what was actually achieved. The documentary review served to write the inception report which was shared with the "Open for Business" project manager for approval. The Inception report contained the methodological tools used for the field study.

2.2. Field data collection

The field data collection was conducted in a sample of communities selected with SFCG offices in Monrovia, Freetown and Conakry and it consisted of quantitative as well as qualitative data gathering.

In Liberia where the project was implemented in three communities, all of them were selected for both the qualitative and quantitative data collection while making sure that the respondents to the quantitative data collection did not participate to the qualitative data collection. Moreover, data were also collected from 3 other communities for the purpose of comparison.

In Sierra Leone, the project was implemented in three the Districts of Bombali, Pujehun and Port Loko. In each of the Districts of Bombali and Port Loko, 8 villages among which 4 were from the beneficiary communities and 4 from the comparison group while Pujehun, the 6 villages among which 3 were from the beneficiary communities and 3 from the comparison group.

In Guinea, the data were collected from the 3 Districts of Boke, Kamsar and Sangaredi and in each district, the 6 villages among which 3 were from the beneficiary communities and 3 from the comparison group.

The samples for each country were determined by the methodology proposed in the Terms of Reference which proposed the following:

- 1080 surveys (360 conducted in each country) targeting the project's communities as well as comparison communities;
- 45 key informant interviews (15 per Country)
- 15 focus group discussions (5 per country)
- 6 radio listener group discussions (2 per country)
- 1 literature review

Quantitative questionnaires were used to collect data from the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project. One-on-One interviews were organized with the same categories of beneficiaries and stakeholders and the implementing partners, policy and lawmakers namely the representatives of ministries in charge of agriculture and Land ownership, Paramount Chiefs, traditional, Civil Society partners involved in good governance.

2.2.1. Quantitative data collection

In each one of the countries quantitative data was collected from 360 respondents spread in the communities targeted for the present study as suggested by the Terms of Reference. Therefore, in all there were 1080 respondents who were randomly selected for the survey. The selection of the communities targeted for the study was done with the help of the project coordinator in each of the countries and the CSOs implementing it on the field.

Because there has not been any baseline study done for the evaluation, in order to accurately assign changes in knowledge and attitude to the activities of the project, comparison groups were used during the data collection. In other words, people who have not been exposed to the activities of the project were also interviewed during the data collection. Communities with the same sociodemographic characteristics as those benefitting from the project and in similar conditions were included in the evaluation. The comparison groups were selected with the help of the implementing partners who work in the communities. The comparison communities which were selected are located in the same districts but far enough from the project communities so that they cannot be affected by the project's benefits.

The same questions were asked of the communities from both the comparison groups and the treatment groups in order to be able to determine if the changes which occurred are due to the activities undertaken in the course of the project. For instance, to determine the percentage of citizens exposed to SFCG media programming and/or outreach that can cite two mechanisms for protection of their rights, compared to citizens not exposed to programming, the same number of respondents who have benefitted from the project were pulled from both the treatment and comparison groups. In each country half of the respondents came from the treatment groups and half from the comparison groups.

2.2.2. Qualitative data collection

The qualitative data collection consisted of semi-structured one-on-one interviews and FGDs with key respondents. For the sake of better triangulation, the evaluator ensured that the respondents to the quantitative data collection were not interviewed for the qualitative data collection. The respondents to the qualitative data collection made of women, men, and community traditional and

religious leaders, government representatives involved in land ownership and agriculture, traditional and religious leaders, representatives of humanitarian organizations and civil society organizations. The Focus Group Discussions were organized for the beneficiaries and they consisted of discussions with groups of 6 to 7 participants. In Sierra Leone, 7 FGD were organized while in Liberia and Guinea, 3 and 6 were organized respectively. The FGD were all mixed with both men and women participating.

As for the Key Informant Interviews, the following actors were consulted.

Liberia

- ✚ Programme Manager for the Centre for Justice and Peace Studies
- ✚ Cultural Group leaders in Kanga
- ✚ Chairman of the Zodia Land Management Committee
- ✚ Secretary for the Zodia Youth
- ✚ Leadership Trainer for the Zodia Clan
- ✚ Public Relations of the Zodia Land Management Committee
- ✚ Focal Point person of the SFCG in Ghon
- ✚ Zodia Dean of Elders

Sierra Leone

- ✚ Green Scenery (GS) Executive Director
- ✚ The District Council Chairman in Pujehun
- ✚ The Village Chiefs
- ✚ Pujehun Radio Station Manager
- ✚ The Pujehun Local Ministry of Agriculture Crop Manager
- ✚ Pujehun Land Owners' Associations Representatives
- ✚ Makari GBanti acting Paramount Chief
- ✚ The District Council Chairman in Port Loko
- ✚ Port Loko Radio Station Manager
- ✚ The Port Loko Local Ministry of Agriculture Crop Manager
- ✚ Port Loko Land Owners' Associations Representatives
- ✚ The Bombali District Council Chairman

- ✚ Makeni Radio Station Manager
- ✚ The Bombali Local Ministry of Agriculture Crop Manager
- ✚ Bombali Land Owners' Associations Representatives

In Guinea

- ✚ "Open for Business" Project Coordinator
- ✚ "Open for Business" Focal Point people in Boke and Kamsar
- ✚ Fondation Guinée Solidarité Plus Project Manager
- ✚ Sous-prefet of Kamsar
- ✚ Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture at the Sous-Prefecture of Kamsar
- ✚ Representative of the Ministry of Mining at the Sous-Prefecture of Kamsar
- ✚ Representative of the Ministry of Territorial Administration at the Sous-Prefecture of Kamsar
- ✚ Vice Mayor of Sangaredi
- ✚ Village chief of Hamdallahi
- ✚ Global Aluminum Corporation Public Relations Officer in Kamsar

2.3. Constraints and Limits

The major limit of the evaluation remains the reluctance of the Multinationals to accept to be interviewed. Aside from the Public Relations Officer of GAC in Guinea, none of the others was available to be interviewed. Attempts were made to interview representatives of Socfin in Pujehun, Sierra Leone, the investment company which operated in the Chiefdom. At first, the Company's Public Relations' Officer accepted to meet with consultant and started answering questions, however, in the middle of the interview, he changed his mind and decided to call on the Plant Manager, who told the consultant that he could not be granted an interview and invited him to leave the premises.

Another limitation of the study pertains to the fact that the sample size for the quantitative data collection were predetermined by the Terms of Reference and equally determined for the three countries. According to the ToRs, in each country a sample of 360 questionnaires were to be administered when in fact the situations are very dissimilar and there are great variations between populations' sizes of the targeted communities. That method of sampling was such that in Liberia where the project was implemented in only three villages, the samples of respondents were too big while in Sierra Leone and in Guinea where it was implemented in big districts with tens of villages each, the samples were small.

3. Analysis of the findings

The findings are generated from the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data. They focus on assessing the three evaluation criteria which were indicated by the Terms of Reference:

effectiveness, measure of outcome and output indicators and adaptability of the project, however, during the data analysis, it appeared that the sustainability of the gains remains critical for the recommendations to be made for the project, therefore a subsection dedicated to it was added.

3.1. Sociodemographic characteristics

The analysis of the socioeconomics and demographics of the populations in the target areas is critical for the understanding of their attitudes, knowledge and practices in relation to the land concessions to the multinationals and its impact on the citizens' livelihood and their reaction to the situation that the presence of the agribusiness companies has generated. The people's openness to dialog is to a certain extent explained by their levels of knowledge and expectations of benefits from companies.

Because one of the important aspects of the project was the empowerment of women to participate in the dialogs about land concessions, the consultant strived to have a gender balance among the respondents in the three countries. In Liberia, 55% of the respondents are men while in Guinea and Sierra Leone, women represent 40% and 50% respectively. In Liberia, the average age of the male respondent is 35 years while that of the female is 59 and in Guinea they are 37 and 48 and in Sierra Leone 36 and 45 respectively.

In terms of the importance of land in their livelihood, 95% of the respondents in Sierra Leone and 92.5% and 80% in Liberia and Guinea respectively stated that ownership of land is crucial to their livelihood and that it is their main source of income. Among the same respondents, less than 20% in Guinea, 10% in Liberia and 5% in Sierra Leone cited occupations that are not related to food production from the land (such as petty trading) as their main activities.

The data shows also that although in all the three countries women do own land, there are disparities in favour of men. Figure 1 shows how the presence of the agribusiness companies has affected land ownership in the target communities where the project is being implemented. The respondents in Sierra Leone have been more seriously affected by the loss of land as a result of the presence of the companies with 52.5% of men and 28% of women having lost their land. In Guinea 10% of men and 5% of women stated that they have lost their land as a consequence of the presence of the companies and in Liberia, the rates are even smaller with 5% of men and 2.5% of women having lost their land.

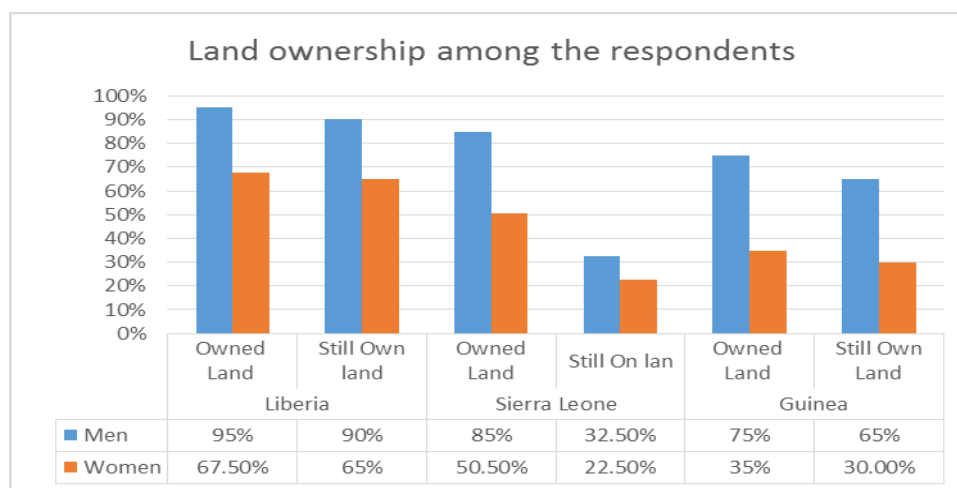
That situation is explained by the fact that in Liberia, the communities actually invited Sime Darby to come and operate within their county and they have given a portion of land to the company and have still some land left to work on. The discontent displayed with regards to the presence of Sime Darby is related to the fact that the company did not realize its promises and there were disagreements with regards to the compensation for the trees which were being cut on the communities' properties. In the rural parts of Liberia in general, there are trees all around that grew naturally and have been here for hundreds of years and they have economic value because they provide food for communities' members as it is the case for wild palm trees or they have medicinal value. Those trees are considered as important as the food that is grown in the farms, whenever they are cut, and the communities are deprived of food. According to the Zodia Land Management Committee chairman, Sime Darby wanted to cut the trees without appropriate compensation.

In Guinea, the conflicts with the companies are more related to pollution of the waters, the abuses on the environment which affect the people's livelihood and the fact that the communities do not feel that they are being compensated to the losses that they have incurred as a result of being displaced from their homes. There are disparities in the responses, while in Sangaredi for instance,

the participants to the FGD stated that their main occupations are in trading, in Hamdallahi, all the respondents rely on the land for their livelihood and they claimed that the presence of CBG has drastically altered their sources of income. According to the village Chief, the main activity of the community used to be cattle herding, farming and fishing on the river, but because of the chemical waste thrown in the river by CBG, the fish have disappeared and the cattle started dying, the community lost too many cows and now, its members are forced to keep the remaining animals up north at the border with Guinea Bissau where the land is not affected by chemical waste. The consequence of having their cattle too far from their dwellings is that they have lost the possibility to produce the milk that they used to eat and sell. This has had a negative impact on their sources of income and livelihood. Over the past 40 years that the CBG has been present in Sangaredi, they have never been compensated for the loss that they have incurred.

In Sierra Leone in contrast, whole chiefdoms have been transformed into vast plantations and the communities' members expressed the feeling of having been foreigners on their own land. The situation of the Sahn Malen Chiefdom where Socfin owns a Palm Oil plantation is an illustration of communities which now within a plantation where the company has set up road blocks and barriers to control people's movement and where in some cases only a small margin of less than 200 meters are left around the villages for their members to grow food. That situation very considerably limits the citizens' ability to grow food since all their farms have been taken away by Socfin and in some cases they were reduced to grow food only in their backyard gardens.

Figure 1: Ratios of men and women who owned land ten years ago and now



3.2. Effectiveness of the project

The effectiveness of the project relates to how the set objectives and expected results were achieved, namely how it strengthened the main civil society partners' organizational structures and visibility, and/or enabled them to innovate in their activities and more capable of leading activities to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights and related national laws, how it created effective and sustainable networking opportunities for civil society organizations promoting the protection of the vulnerable communities' land rights in each country as well as how did the project reached its expected results in each of the three targeted countries.

3.2.1. Civil Society capacity building

The project implementation relied on implementing partners who specialize in the promotion of human rights protection. In Sierra Leone four organizations were directly involved in the

implementation. While Green Scenery operated at national level with advocacy with lawmakers and policymakers and the networking of civil society organizations involved in land rights, the Rural Agency for Community Action Program (RECAP) in Pujehun, Sierra Leone Network on the right to Food (SiLNoRF) in Bombali and United for the Protection of Human Right (UPHR) in Port Loko are responsible for implementing the activities at community level. These organizations have created Land Owners Associations which have started to form as main defenders of the land owners within the Chiefdoms. In Liberia, the Center for Justice and Peace Studies (CJPS) has set up Community Based Organizations which contribute to the sensitization about the land rights within the areas of intervention. In Guinea, *Fondation Guinée Solidarité Plus* is the main implementing partner and it operates at national level and contributes to the creation of a national platform dedicated to the awareness raising on land rights. At local level, platforms regrouping all the main stakeholders involved in land management are being set up directly by SFCG representatives and *Fondation Guinée Solidarité Plus*.

Overall the members of the CSOs who were interviewed said they now feel better equipped to address the issues pertaining to land rights and to sensitize the public about it because of the way that their knowledge at personal level has developed as a consequence of their involvement in the project. The project has also contributed to creating visibility for the CSOs partnering in the implementation. According to the project coordinator for SiLNoRF in Bombali stated, his organization was already involved in human rights promotion and the right of people to work on their land and produce enough food to care for their families. That organization is right based and focused on helping people have decent food. The project “Open for Business” is in line with what it does because too many people in Bombali have lost their livelihood as a result of land grabbing by the multinationals. What the project has done for SiLNoRF is to build its capacities in terms of how to effectively raise people’s awareness about the issue of their right to land, how to use the radio and public discussions, how to closely monitor the activities of the companies and how those activities impact of people’s livelihood.

The project “Open for Business” also afforded the CSOs involved in it the possibility to conduct studies on how the presence of multinationals has contributed to an increase in violence in the communities. The CSOs’ intervention in the communities through the project has also enabled them to have more exposure and recognition as credible organizations fighting for people’s right to land which is very important for the durability of the project’s gains. Once it is over they will be equipped to still continue their interventions.

Besides the CSOs helping in the projects implementation, the radio stations have also been very appreciative of their participation in the project. Radio broadcasting has proved to be an effective tool in all the three countries to raise awareness about the project and contribute to making the companies more informed about the objectives of the project and less reluctant to dialog. Moreover, all the radio station managers have acknowledged that the project has contributed to diversifying and enriching their programs and increasing their audiences and above all it has contributed to making them more aware of the extent of issue of land concessions to multinationals and integrate it in their own programming.

“The Bush Wahala radio program episodes and the Atunda Ayenda radio program episodes have generated a lot of interest from the public beyond the areas of the project’s intervention and the listeners have been calling to express their appreciation about the ways in which the programs have contributed to not only make them more aware about the effects of the presence of the companies in their communities but above all about land rights and what posture to adopt when negotiating land deals and the right to refuse to lease their land.”

People have been more aware of the laws pertaining to their right to their land thanks to the radio programs.””

A radio station Manager in Sierra Leone

One of the main objectives and achievements of the project has been the creation of platforms for dialog between the companies, government actors and the communities’ members in the intervention areas as well as at national level. In Guinea the platforms are being set up with the active participation of representatives of the government and companies. According to a representative of Investment Company in Guinea there are legitimate complaints from the communities’ members in the areas where the mining companies operate and those companies have indeed done things that have caused prejudice to the people and this has to be acknowledged.

“Last year, we were digging trenches in the mines and it cause flooding in people’s rice fields and destroyed their crops, and before that other acts were committed by the mining companies that need to be discussed. The people in the communities are not aware of the good that we do for them.”

Investment Company’s Public Relations Officer

However, according to the GAC PRO, the company that he represents does pay taxes, it builds roads and contribute to the funding of the school system but the communities’ members are not aware of it and they often only see the negative side of the companies’ presence in their midst. He stated that creation of a platform for concertation is a welcome opportunity for all of the stakeholders to sit in one room and discuss all the issues that are important for a good cohabitation.

In Kamsar, in Guinea, the creation of the concertation platform was presided over by the Sous-Prefet⁷ and the town’s mayor with the participation of all the presidents of the land owners associations and the Global Aluminum Corporation. A secretariat was set up to elaborate the mission of the concertation platform and the work agenda. The same approach was used in Sangaredi where the Mayor was also involved in the creation of the concertation platform.

The companies’ participation to the platform of concertation was also achieved in Port Loko where the one Paramount Chief has given CSO and NGO actors’ support, which has helped to procure attendance from companies in meetings with policymakers and community members. These meetings were especially fruitful because it became apparent that the companies were largely unaware just how unhappy community members were.

In Liberia, the Zodua Land Management Committee was set up with the participation of the representatives of the three communities involved in the project and the attendance of the Sime Darby’s Public Relations’ Officer. The Land Management Committee has been actively holding meetings and participating to the awareness raising activities organized by Talking Drum Studio and the Centre for Justice and Peace Studies.

⁷ The sous-prefet is a civil servant who is responsible for the administration of a district. S/he is the representative of the presidency within the district and has under her/his authority the police and the representatives of all the different government ministries.

“the coming of Talking Drum Studio⁸ and CJPS has been a blessing for us because it is true that we are the ones who invited Sime Darby to come and invest on our land but we were not well equipped to understand the implication of what we were doing, we signed “gentlemen’s agreement” without knowing the legal ramification of what we were doing, the company discouraged us from hiring a law firm but it had its own and it made a lot of promises that were unwritten and that it is not liable for”.

A Zodua Land Management Committee member

It is with the coming of Talking Drum and CJPS that the Land Management Committee has been sensitized about land rights. He believed that they are now better prepared to conduct sensitization within their community and above all when it comes to negotiating with Sime Darby because they now know that it is critical to engage lawyers in the negotiations so that the company will be accountable for its promises.

The same attitude was expressed by the District Councilor in Pujehun and the section Chief in Malal according to whom, the creation of Land Owners Associations at grass root level by Talking Drum Studio has been a very important step in correcting the wrongs caused when their land was being leased to the multinationals, luckily for them, the agreements with the companies involve a clause stipulating that there will be renegotiations every 7 years and there are only 2 more years for the first 7 and they will need to have law firms involved in the negotiations this time.

3.2.2. Citizens’ awareness about the land rights

To assess the level of the population’s awareness about land rights and the legal tools available to promote and defend those rights, and to determine the changes that can be attributed to the project’s activities in the target areas two approaches have been used: the first one consists in comparing the general awareness of the people land rights in the target areas before and after the project started, and the second by comparing the awareness level in the target areas with that in the communities used as comparison groups using both the quantitative and the qualitative data gathered from the field data collection. However, there are limitations to the use of comparison groups because radio programs have been used in the project implementation and they ended up becoming popular throughout the regions, both inside the implementation communities and outside including some of the control communities. Moreover, people from communities sensitized by the project have been taking about the effects of land leasing and about what they have been learning from the activities of Talking Drum Studio and its implementing partners to their friends and families who reside in the control communities.

Among the respondents from the communities where the project’s activities were undertaken in the three countries, more than 90% have acknowledged having taken part to at least one event organized by the implementing partners.

The main tools used to raise the awareness of the citizens about their land rights are radio programs, group discussions, video projections and drama. During the FGDs in all the three countries, the participants praised the implementing partners for the awareness raising initiatives and above for the direct discussions with the public.

⁸ In the villages of the Mano River countries, Search for Common Ground is known as “Talking Drum Studio”.

“The most important activity undertaken by the Talking drum Studio has been to come and sit with us and listen to us and understand our situation. The presence of SLA in our community has caused us a lot of harm because we were made a lot of promises which were never kept and worse of all, we used to receive a few little social support from the government but with the arrival of SLA, the government has stop supporting us because the Paramount Chief has assured the government that we are getting support from the SLA. We have been suffering because our land has been taken away from us and we do not have any more land to work on and the only people who are coming here to listen to us are the people from UPRH and Talking Drum. We did not know who to go to in order to complain about our situation and we did not even know that we had the right to contest the presence of SLA on our land. The Paramount Chief is not an interlocutor because he is among those who created that situation and the Government is on the side of the company not on ours. Now because of the discussions with Taking Drum and UPRH, we are better prepared to negotiate with the company because we know our rights to our own land.”

An Imam in Port Loko, Sierra Leone

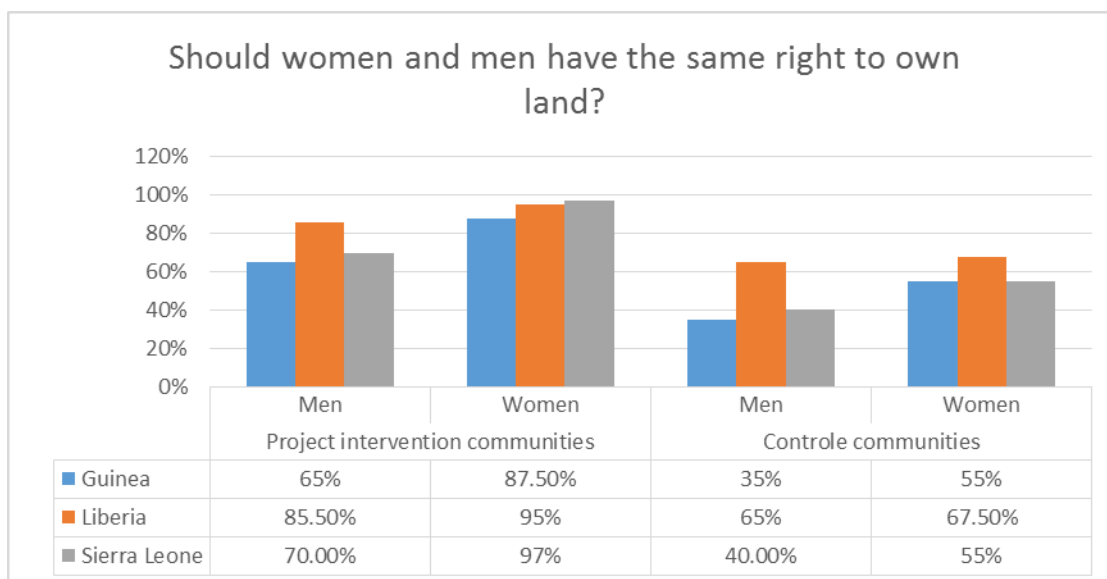
3.2.3. The effect of the project on men and women

Women in all the three countries play an important role in the household economies, however they are less likely to have access to land or participate in negotiations about land concessions. In the rural communities where the project is being implemented, there are long held beliefs that men talk on behalf of their wives and sisters on matters pertaining to land. Part of the projects activities involved sensitization about the need to empower women to participate in land management within their communities and have more say in decision making processes and accountability. All the activities undertaken by the project involved ensuring the participation of women. In Liberia, drama was used as a medium for sensitization and women and youths were portrayed as playing an active role in protecting their communities’ rights to their land. In all the Land Owners Associations created in Sierra Leone, the Zodua Land Management Committee in Liberia, as well as the Concertation Platforms created in Guinea, women have been members of the secretariats.

The mobile cinema screenings and post-screening discussions aimed at sensitizing the viewers about Land rights and triggering dialogue about the promotion of women’s rights to land and the effects of land grabbing on household economies. The implementing CSO partners took the opportunity to also sensitize the participants on their rights and the reporting mechanisms allowed by law in case they are violated. These discussions dealt with topics such as women’s rights to inheritance, land ownership and women’s leadership roles at community and national levels. By including adult men to the discussion, they have been made more aware of women’s rights and this has contributed to making them conscious of the need to associate women to the decision making processes in affairs concerning women’s priorities, consequently more women have been given position in village land committees and therefore the right to have a say on issues that are important to them.

The effects of the sensitization on the communities’ members are shown on Figure 2 below. In all the three countries, the communities’ members in the project implementation areas have been more receptive to women having the same rights to land ownership as men than those from the comparison communities.

Figure 2: About women and men having equal rights to land ownership



The figure shows the effects of the project's sensitization approach on the beneficiary communities. More women and men in those communities are now more inclined to recognize women's equal rights to access to land.

3.2.4. The internal and external factors that facilitated or hindered the achievements towards the desired changes/objectives

The project was implemented in two years for the objectives assigned and all the activities undertaken. One of the main internal factors which facilitated achievements towards the objectives has been the experience of the implementing partners who have been involved in the promotion of Human Rights in general and land rights in particular. Moreover, their knowledge about the communities where they were assigned to undertake the activities also made it relatively easier for them to quickly operate.

Moreover, given the bad publicity that the companies had been receiving and their desire to show for the positive undertaking that they have engaged in, their Public Relations Officers (PRO) have found in the concertation platforms that SFCG offered to set up an opportunity for them to come clean with the public and work with representatives of the communities so that they can reduce the negative publicity and find solutions to the concern of the communities' members through dialog. This is what made the GAC's PRO say *"we welcome this initiative without any reserve because we are sure that the communities' members are not against our presence here, they just want us to be good neighbors and we have been doing a lot of good for them but this has not generated any publicity, this platform will give us the opportunity to directly talk to their representatives and show for all the good that we have been doing"*.

Another external factor which contributed to easing progress towards the specified objectives has been the void around the support provided to the communities which are victims of land concessions. Although the whole processes used to take the land away from the owners was legally flawed because there has not been any *informed consent* from them and in the case of the land owners of Makari Gbanti, the lawyer representing them were in fact hired and paid by ADDAX, there has been few organizations coming to their assistance to provide support under the form of sensitization and to organize them so that they can reclaim their rights. "Open for Business" has contributed to filling the void and was welcome by the people because of the support provided. This

made it easier for the communities to adhere to the concertation platforms created where they found the opportunity to directly talk to the PRO of the companies and the government representatives.

3.3. Measure of outcome and output indicators

The effectiveness of the project relates to how the set objectives and expected results were achieved, namely how it strengthened the main civil society partners' organizational structures and visibility, and/or enabled them to innovate in their activities to promote land rights and related national laws, how it created effective and sustainable networking opportunities for civil society organizations promoting land rights in each country as well as how it reached its expected results in each of the three targeted countries.

Two sets of specific objectives were set out for the project, one targeted the capacity building of the CSOs and the other one targeted the increase of popular understanding of land rights in communities affected by corporate land concessions.

The following table summarizes the project's logical-framework outcome, and the achievements recorded.

Table 1: Summary of progress toward the objectives

Results	Indicators	Targets	Achieved
General Objective 1: To reduce the potential for land rights conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.			
Specific Objective 1: To enhance the capacity of civil society, State actors, local authorities and investing companies to promote equitable land rights			
ER 1.1 Key stakeholders have an improved understanding of the provisions of international and national land rights mechanisms	% key stakeholders interviewed who can cite at least one example of new knowledge improving their work	65% of interviewees	100% of the implementing partners have been able to cite examples of new knowledge or practices that they acquired and helped improve on their work and approaches to land rights promotion
ER 1.2 Civil society organizations are capable of leading activities to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights	2.4.1-9: # of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions % of CSO members who feel more confident (than before)	1 partner organization per country: 3 organizations total	In Guinea, the implementing partner Fondation Guinee Solidarité Plus benefitted from the financial support from the project to implement the activities In Sierra Leone, several organization did benefit from it. Green Scenery at national level, SiNoRF in Bombali, RECAP (Rural Agency for Community Action Program) in Pujehun and UPRH have all benefitted financially from funds provided by the project. In Liberia, CJPS has also benefitted from the project's funding. 100% of the CSOs interviewed considered that their participation to the project has contributed to improve their intervention capabilities and to promote land rights in their respective countries.

	the project) that their CSO has the capacity to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights																																																																																
Specific Objective 2: To increase popular understanding of land rights in communities affected by corporate land concessions																																																																																	
ER 2.1 Dialogue between community members, local government and companies is enhanced	% of community members surveyed who say they have an improved perception of companies who leased land in their community as a result of project activities	65% (at least 65% of women and 65% of non-landowners agree)	<p>In Guinea, only the 27% of the respondents had favorable opinions of the companies. This largely due to the fact that despite the efforts shown by SFCG and the implementing partners, the Concertation Platforms are still at the incipient stages of their activities and a lot of the respondents still hold bad memories about the companies. This is illustrated by the following statement from the Village chief of Hamdallahi close to Sangaredi: <i>“CBG has been present in our community since 1972 and since then, we do not recall of any good that they have done for us or any promise that they have kept. In more than 40 years of presence here, only two members of our village have ever found work for the company”</i>.</p> <p>In Sierra Leone, only 22% of the respondents have favorable views of the companies for the same reasons expressed in Guinea.</p> <p>In Liberia, although 60% of the respondents showed positive views about the presence of Sime Darby, in Ghon, 92.5% of the respondents were favorable while in Farlie and Kanga, only 27.5% are positive views about the presence of Sime Darby in their communities.</p>																																																																														
ER 2.2 Citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions	% of citizens exposed to SFCG media programming and/or outreach that can cite two mechanisms for protection of their rights, compared to citizens not exposed to programming	10% difference (at least 10% difference also when disaggregating by gender, origin, and land ownership. This means radio impact should be measurable among women, indigenous groups, and non-landowners)	<p>Among the 360 respondents in Liberia only 13 from both the control and the treatment groups claimed to not own land, all the others respondents stated that they do own land and it is still their main source of livelihood.</p> <table><tr><th>*T= treatment</th><th colspan="4">Liberia</th><th colspan="4">Guinea</th><th colspan="4">Sierra Leone</th></tr><tr><th>*C= Control</th><th colspan="2">T*</th><th colspan="2">C*</th><th colspan="2">T</th><th colspan="2">C</th><th colspan="2">T</th><th colspan="2">C</th></tr><tr><td>LO= Land Owner</td><td>LO</td><td>NL</td><td>LO</td><td>NL</td><td>LO</td><td>NL</td><td>LO</td><td>NL</td><td>LO</td><td>NL</td><td>LO</td><td>NL</td></tr><tr><td>NL=Non-Land Owner</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Men</td><td>35 %</td><td>-</td><td>17 .5 %</td><td>-</td><td>42. 5 %</td><td>35 %</td><td>15 %</td><td>15 %</td><td>39.5 %</td><td>35.5 %</td><td>25.5 %</td><td>20.5 %</td></tr><tr><td>Women</td><td>32. 5 %</td><td>-</td><td>12 %</td><td>-</td><td>30. 5 %</td><td>30 %</td><td>12 %</td><td>18.5 %</td><td>45 %</td><td>47.5 %</td><td>15.5 %</td><td>20.5 %</td></tr></table>	*T= treatment	Liberia				Guinea				Sierra Leone				*C= Control	T*		C*		T		C		T		C		LO= Land Owner	LO	NL	LO	NL	LO	NL	LO	NL	LO	NL	LO	NL	NL=Non-Land Owner													Men	35 %	-	17 .5 %	-	42. 5 %	35 %	15 %	15 %	39.5 %	35.5 %	25.5 %	20.5 %	Women	32. 5 %	-	12 %	-	30. 5 %	30 %	12 %	18.5 %	45 %	47.5 %	15.5 %	20.5 %
*T= treatment	Liberia				Guinea				Sierra Leone																																																																								
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	% of citizens exposed to SFCG media programming and/or outreach that can cite one local mechanism for redress in case of abuse compared to citizens not exposed to programming	10% difference (at least 10% difference also when disaggregating by gender, origin, and land ownership)													
			T= treatment C= Control	Liberia				Guinea				Sierra Leone			
				T*		C*		T		C		T		C	
				LO= Land Owner				LO	NL	LO	NL	LO	NL	LO	NL
				NL=Non-Land Owner											
				Men				55%	-	22.5%	-	35.5%	22%	18.5%	10%
Women				60%	-	25%	-	42.5%	25.5%	15%	12.5%	57.5%	60%	42.5%	39.5%

3.3.1. Key stakeholders have an improved understanding of the provisions of international and national land rights mechanisms

The sustainability of the project's achievement can only be assured if the main national stakeholders who are involved in it are empowered to continue with the promotion of land rights activities without any external support. For that purpose, the CSOs and the Community Based Organizations needed capacity building in order to improve their understanding of the provisions of international and national land rights mechanisms. The partner CSOs which assisted in the project's implementation have all been engaged in community development and human rights promotion well before the beginning of the project. However, they all acknowledged the contribution of the project to the improvement of their intervention capacities within the areas of intervention. The project's implementation required from them a better understanding of the laws pertaining to land rights.

The evaluation found that activities undertaken by SFCG and its three implementing partners not only helped the latter defining how to conduct their sensitization and advocacy campaigns around abusive large scale land acquisition, but also constituted an opportunity for their CSO members to get more acquainted with the national and international laws related to land concessions. At a personal level, the representatives of the CSOs involved in the project recognized that it has enabled them to improve their own knowledge about land rights, such as the Land Rights Act and the Land Rights Authority which are still pending in Congress in Liberia, National Land Policies and land acquisition processes as well as the traditional and formal land tenure in Sierra Leone while in Guinea, the partners had to learn more about the Mining Code as well as the national laws pertaining to national land ownership. This enabled them to better prepare to engage more effectively in awareness-raising with the communities, the creation of CBOs and Concertation Platforms.

"I have been working on the right of the people to food and we have done a lot of work in that respect. What the project brought to us is the improvement of our understanding of the relationship between large scale land acquisition and food production in vulnerable communities and above all what needs to be done to improve the situation of the victims of abusive land concessions. The project has enabled us to study more the Sierra Leone

Government policies pertaining to land concessions and the laws pertaining to the protection of the citizens' rights to land and how they can be used to correct the wrongs done to the people in our areas of intervention".

Implementing partner in Sierra Leone

The same feeling was also expressed by the other local NGO partners working in Pujehun and Port Loko in Sierra Leone and those in Guinea and Liberia. Overall the members of the CSOs who were interviewed said they now feel better equipped to address the issues pertaining to large scale land acquisitions through legal and peaceful means because of the way that their level of knowledge has developed as a consequence of their involvement in the project.

Within the communities as well the local CBOs created in the framework of the project's implementation have also acknowledged about the laws.

"If Talking Drum had started coming to our community before we accepted to lease our land to Sime Darby, a lot of things would have been done the way they were done. We signed directly a Memorandum of Understanding with the company without even knowing about the laws of the land and the obligations of Sime Darby under the laws of the nation. They discouraged us from hiring a lawyer in a legal transaction which involves thousands of hectares of land and the livelihood of thousands of people, and our future generations. They made promises that were not written and that they are not obliged to respect. With the education that we received about the laws on land rights, we are now better prepared to face the company in future negotiations".

A Zodua Land Management Chairman member

3.3.2. Civil society organizations are capable of leading activities to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights

Green Scenery in Sierra Leone has been specially focused on the fight against land grabbing by multinational and made it a priority in its actions before its partnership with Talking Drum Studio. However, according to Executive Director, through the funds it made available, the "Open for Business" has been an opportunity for it to increase its capacities to sensitize the public and advocate for changes and engage the government to go beyond just relying on the Land Policy that is in place to enacting Land Rights Acts which promoted the protection of the people's rights to their land, put order in the ways in which large scale land acquisition is practiced and to the enforcement of the laws.

In Liberia, the CJPS has perceived the project as having contributed to making it more visible in communities where it was assigned to operate. It has also learned to use tools that Talking Drum Studio commonly uses in its approach to sensitization in the rural communities such as drama and to

organize the local citizens into CBOs to address issues that are dear to them. “Open for Business” has also been an opportunity for the organization to study more in-depth the issues of large scale land acquisitions in Liberia and their impact on the livelihood of the citizens.

In Guinea, SFCG actively conducted sensitization, networking and created CBOs within the target communities while *Fondation Guinée Solidarité Plus* did the mapping and the creation a platform of the CSOs which are likely to engage in the promotion of land rights. *Fondation Guinée Solidarité Plus* and SFCG organized international and local CSOs involved in mining activities and land regulation with the objective to foster coordination and collaboration, and to encourage experience-sharing between all actors engaged to mitigate the risks linked to mining within the country.

3.3.3. Dialogue between community members, local government and companies is enhanced

One of the major differences made by “Open for Business” has been to provide opportunities for dialog between communities’ members, local government and the investing companies. This was done through the engagement of the CBOs at local level within each one of the target communities and the CBOs’ leaders are then educated on land laws and the rights of the land owners. The difference that this approach has made was felt through the contrast between the views expressed by the respondents from the treatment groups from those in the comparison groups. While in the treatment communities there were organized structures which were engaged and willing to dialog with the stakeholders in the land concession, in the control communities there is a void when it comes to even the knowledge about land rights. There was not any CBO engaged on the issue of land rights encountered in them.

In Guinea, the incipient platforms have already garnered the local government representatives (sous-prefet and mayors), the Districts’ representatives as well as the companies’ PROs who see in them an opportunities to showcase for their contributions to the communities as well as the possibility to directly listen to the communities’ representatives’ grievances.

In Liberia, the only company operating in the “Open for Business” target areas is Sime Darby, it has open an office in Ghon and regularly participate in the dialog meetings with the Zodua Land Management Committee, although the company still faces reluctance from the communities of Farlie and Kanga, the dialog in which they engage with Land Management committee has made the members of the Ghon community more receptive to the company’s activities. According to one of the Zodua villages’ chief, *“We have differences with Sime Darby because they are taking too long to effect the changes that they promised, they still have not built the schools that they promised nor the roads and the health center, but the fact that they accept to sit down and talk to us shows that they have dispositions to resolve these issues through dialog and that is what we are looking forward to”*.

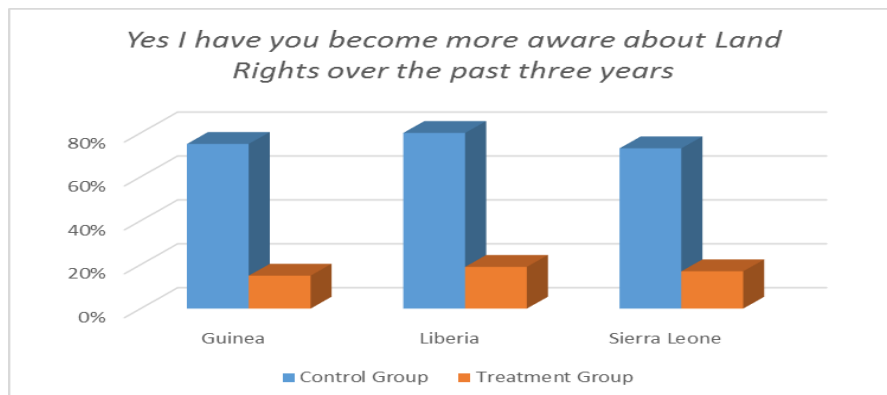
That statement from the Ghon village was echoed by the communities’ leaders in Farlie and Kanga who still oppose the ways in which Sime Darby is proposing to operate within the Zodua Clan.

3.3.4. Citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions

The quantitative surveys conducted with communities showed that the awareness-raising activities conducted as part of the project had made a difference, when comparing survey results from the treatment groups with those from the comparison groups, as shown on *figure 3 below*. When asked if they had become more aware of land rights over the past two years, 73% of the respondents from

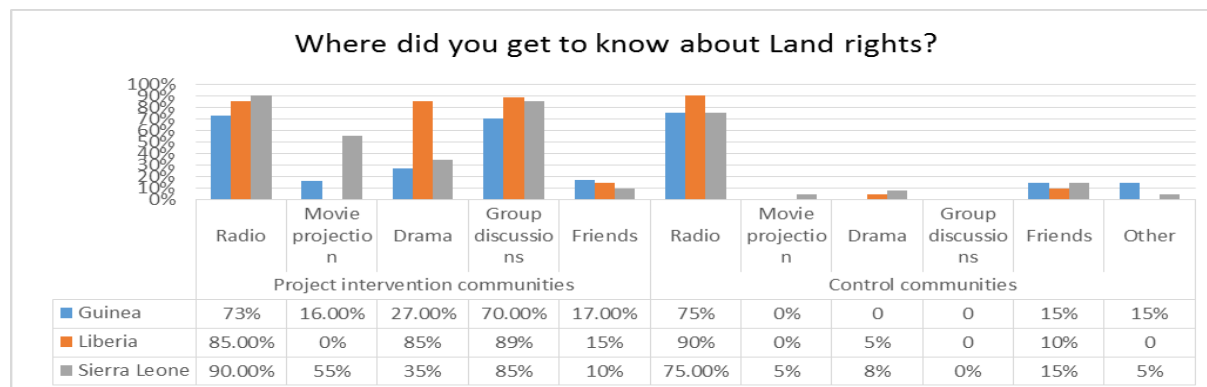
the treatment groups in Sierra Leone responded “Yes”, against 17% from the control group, in the Guinea 75% from the treatment group responded “Yes” while for those from the control group only 15% said “yes”. The rates in Liberia were 80% and 19% who responded “Yes” for the treatment group and the control group respectively.

Figure 3: Changes in knowledge about Land Rights



To the question about where they have acquired the knowledge about land rights, while the majority of the respondents from the implementation communities mentioned the “Open for Business” activities, those from the control communities mentioned the radio sensitization program as the main sources of knowledge as shown on the figure 5 below. Among the respondents who claim to have seen their knowledge about land rights increase over the past three years, the responses are distributed as follow in both the implementation and the control communities.

Figure 4: Sources of knowledge about land rights



3.4. Adaptability

The adaptability of the project seeks to analyze the extent to which the changes brought about by the project are sustainable, the CBOs and the concertation platforms created by the project can continue to operate beyond its lifespan, how much they were empowered to sustain themselves and effectively legally fight against abusive large scale land concessions with peaceful means without any having to rely on external support and more particularly without the support of SFCG. The analysis of the project’s adaptability will therefore examine two points: changes in the conflict context around land grabbing have been observed over the course of the project in the target communities and the ways in which the project adapted to respond to those changes; and the subsequent **lessons to learn**

and best practices from the project' implementation that should inform the future programming of SFCG in the region will then be analyzed.

3.4.1. Observed events related to land grabbing

Several events related to large scale land concessions have occurred in the course of the project implementation in the three target countries.

In **Guinea** several communities are scheduled to be displaced to other places so that their current locations will be attributed to mining companies, this is the case for Hamdallahi in the outskirts of Sangaredi which will be displaced to allow the enlargement of the CBG's operations in the area. The displacement had been planned for several years but the community's members had never been given the opportunity to engage in direct negotiations with either CBG or the local government's representatives for the details of the transfer. The situation has engendered suspicions on the part of the members of the village who are reluctant to move without seeing tangible evidence that their livelihood will be at least maintained at the present level. The distrust for local authorities and for CBG stems from the fact that they have been neighboring the company for more than forty years and have not benefitted from any kind of contribution from the company to their livelihood although they have lost a lot due to the negative impact of its activities on the environment. According to village chief, they do not refuse to move but want assurances that they will not be left worse off. As a result of that situation, as part of the readjustments made after the midterm evaluation of the "Open for Business" project, the Guinea team decided to include that community in its areas of intervention and undertook several sensitization events including group discussions with the community's leadership on land laws, land rights and on the need to engage discussions with the government and the companies' representatives through the Concertation Platform created in Sangaredi.

The same situation prevails in Kassabo, a village next to Kamsar which is also targeted for displacement in order to allow Rio Tinto to exploit bauxite and the community of Katagouna near Boke where the Chinese mining company *Société Minière de Boke* (SMB) has been building a new port in order to evacuate the bauxite to China:

"We just woke up one day and saw some Chinese people coming with tracks and heavy machineries and they started digging trenches which caused floods in our farms and destroyed our crops. When we tried to talk to the Chinese managers, they refused and asked to talk to the government representatives, however, the Sous-Prefet told us that he had no idea about where the Chinese came from and what they were doing. The Sous-prefet had to call Minister for Mines to find out that they were building a port, we were very upset by the fact that foreigners are coming here not only to take away our land but also to destroy our environment and our crops and they were showing arrogance by refusing to talk to us".

According to a Katagouna village member

In that case also, SFCG targeted the community and included it in its areas of intervention and the Village chief is a member of the District Committee which represents the land owners at the negotiations within the Concertation Platform.

In **Liberia**, at national level, there has been a lot of awareness raising about the issue of land grabbing with the CSOs becoming more and more dynamic in denouncing the phenomenon and demanding that the parliament adopts the Land Rights Act and the Land Authority Act in order to regulate and provide oversight over the large scale land concessions. In May 2016, Global Witness, an

International NGO released a report showcasing of a case of high profile corruption of government and parliament leaders including the parliament speaker and the Chairman of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's Unity Party with over US\$950,000 in bribes and other suspicious payments by UK mining firm Sable Mining. According to the report, Sable Mining paid that amount of money to corrupt leaders in order to entice the parliament to change Liberia's law so that the company can take possession of the Wologizi concession⁹. The Wologizi Mountain is in Lofa and is known to contain a great amount of iron ore deposits.

Within the "Open for Business" project implementation areas, there has been conflict brewing between Sime Darby representatives and the Kanga and Farlie communities and those two communities and the one of Ghon. The Ghon community is more welcoming of Sime Darby which has offices in that village and has already started planting trees, while those of Farlie and Kanga still have pending unresolved complaints around the land concession deal. This has lead Sime Darby to not be able to carry on with the work on the plantation. However, with the creation of the Zodua Land Management Committee, the members of all the three communities have been able to dialog between themselves in order to resolve their contradiction and talk to Sime Darby.

In **Sierra Leone**, conflicts around land grabbing have been flaring in all the areas where multinationals have been investing on plantations. The conflicts have been resulting in the arrest and imprisonment of members of CSOs involved in land rights protection as well as ordinary citizens who live in the communities where the companies are operating. In Bombali, several women were arrested on charges that they had burnt the ADDAX plantation because they were frustrated by the presence of the company on their land. The company complained that more than 2000 hectares from the land that it occupied have been reduced to ashes by angry local citizens from the chiefdom of Makari Gbanti, while in Port Loko, one of the Paramount Chiefs had to ask West Africa Agriculture to not add any more land to the already 7 000 hectares already being exploited because he was filling the pressure from the citizens of his chiefdom who were becoming more and more frustrated and displaying their anger to him. In Bo, in May 2016, six land rights activists who were jailed after being found guilty by a high court in Bo on dubious charges. CSOs, led by Green Scenery, mobilized and raised 210 million Leones to bail out the activists and implicitly demonstrate discontent with the court's decision.

The violent actions noted in the areas when the agribusiness companies are operating are largely the result of the mistrust which prevails between the companies and the citizens who feel that their main source of livelihood has been taken away from them and the absence of dialog with the companies which were insisting on only talking to the government representatives and the paramount chiefs whom the citizens accuse of being the main sources of their current situation.

The "Open for Business" project has targeted a sample of the areas affected by the brewing conflict and centered its activities on sensitization around land rights, peaceful conflict resolution and the creation of Land Owners Associations.

⁹ <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/global-witness-exposes-bribes-top-liberian-officials-uk-mining-company-and-varney-sherman/>

3.4.2. Lessons to learn and best practices

The realities in the three countries differ because while in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the main reasons for land acquisition by major corporations are agricultural, in Guinea they are mainly mining for natural minerals and the processes used are different. In Guinea, the communities are relocated from their ancestral dwellings to other places and in that country, the land is the property of the State to which the law has given the powers to legally resort to that practice to enable mining companies to exploit the land. In Sierra Leone, the communities members in their vast majority never wanted to lease their land and never welcomed the companies, they were compelled by their Paramount Chiefs and government to give away their land while in Liberia, the Zodia Clan in the three communities had in fact taken the steps to call on Sime Darby to come and invest in their community. The lessons learned from the project's implementation will therefore be country specific.

On the implementation process

In **Sierra Leone**, the project implementation was done through the support of one CSO at national level and three others in the three Districts where the project was being implemented. In addition to those four organizations, CBOs were created to support the activities and trained to become credible interlocutors for Government and for the investing companies. These organizations have all benefitted from the capacity building that the project has provided. While at national level, Green Scenery had already the expertise in the field of advocacy, its participation to the project implementation has afforded it the opportunity to work with SFCG and monitor the changes at community level.

The capacity building provided to the CSOs in the framework of the project have contributed to making them more knowledgeable about land right issues and better empower them to continue to work in the communities without external support. By multiplying the number of CSOs and by engaging multiple CBOs at local level in three districts the project in Sierra Leone has multiplied the chances for the project's gains to be maintained after it is completed.

One of the lessons to learn from the project's implementation in Sierra Leone remains the lukewarm involvement of lawyers in the project. The whole process by which the land was flawed because there has not been any clearly informed consent in any one of the communities where the project is being implemented and in some cases as in Sahn Malen Chiefdom, in Pujehun, coercion was used to take land away from the owners. However, although SFCG works with Namati, the legal advice providers, that association's services have not been fully leveraged in the course of the project. Namati had tried to get involved in the land grabbing issue in Sierra Leone and more specially in Port Loko but was intimidated by a Paramount Chief and stopped intervening in that chiefdom. By working with Namati on the issue of land grabbing in Sierra Leone, the effectiveness of the project would have been more far reaching.

In **Liberia**, the project was implemented in only three villages with support of one national NGO which created and trained three CBOs in the communities to undertake sensitization sessions and raise the awareness of their fellow community members on the land grabbing issues. In comparison with the other two countries, the number of communities involved in the project seems very low given that they are all in the same Clan and only less than 10 miles distant from one another. The effectiveness of the project would have been better felt if it had been implemented in more counties. However, given the fact that the Terms of Reference did not include the study of the efficiency of the project, the cost effectiveness was not analyzed in the framework of the present evaluation.

The fact that local residents of the communities had been organized into CBOs and the drama team is composed of members of the communities have been a very positive aspect that contribute to the sustainability of the gains if the drama team continues to work after the project is ended.

In **Guinea**, the adjustments made after the midterm evaluation have resulted in the project being focused in the communities closer to Conakry in Boke, Kamsar, Sangaredi and Kouroussa. The adjustments are such that the project was implemented in those areas in 18 months instead of 3 years. The communities selected are all vulnerable to being displaced or have been facing brewing conflicts with either the local government authorities or with the companies operating in their areas.

In contrast with the other two countries, in Guinea, SFCG was itself conducting the activities of mobilization in the local communities while its implementing partner was operating at national level with the mapping of the CSOs which are likely to partner in the advocacy campaign. There was not any Civil Society Organization whose visibility was created within the communities or whose capacities were built to better address the issue of land grabbing locally.

The downside of the approach is the limited number of CSOs which are actually involved in the day to day activities of the project and whose capacities are built well enough to enable them to carry on with the goals of the project once it completed.

The use of projections, drama and radio broadcast and group discussions has proved to be very effective in conveying the objectives of the project. “Open for Business” was implemented in rural areas where there is not electricity and where the use of radio is among the main ways to communicate with outside at night above all and there are not any television sets and movie projections seldom happen, the use of mobile video does galvanize the public and stimulate debates because in all the communities visited where there had been video projections, the residents still remember the contents and the subsequent debates engaged with the representatives of Talking Drum Studios.

The effectiveness of the CBOs created by the project

In all the three countries, CBOs were created or leveraged by the project in order to have an orderly approach to the dialogs which will be engaged with the local authorities and the companies. In Sierra Leone, Land Owners Associations were created to become the interlocutors and representatives of those who lost their land during the negotiations, in Guinea the Districts’ Representatives were leveraged to talk in the name of their communities’ members while in Liberia, the Zodia Land Management Committee represents the interest of the three communities. These CBOs have been trained and have had their capacities to defend the interests of their communities strengthened, however, they have not been fully empowered to take initiatives and their effectiveness at negotiating alone without any external support is not assured.

One of the main reason why the large scale land acquisitions have been detrimental to the communities is the lack of documentation and full free consent of the land owners and this is due in part to the absence of involvement of lawyers when the legal agreements were being signed by people who do not have detail and deep knowledge about the legal ramifications of their commitments. Although the CBOs have been trained and capacities strengthened, they still need more legal support and more technical guidance during negotiations.

4. Conclusions

Overall, the project has achieved its objectives with regards to strengthening the capacities of the CSO partners to create conditions for peaceful conflict resolutions around abusive large scale land acquisitions by international corporations. The project activities led by partners and local CBOs and stakeholders trained in advocacy and awareness-raising led to better knowledge about land rights among the beneficiary communities. In all the three implementation countries, the CSOs which were involved in the project agreed that the project had been an opportunity for them to learn more about land rights, and had contributed to add content to their activities.

Effectiveness

The positive changes which resulted from the project's implementation are due to the ways in which the activities were conducted. The capacity building of the CSOs galvanized them around the objectives, raised their knowledge about the land rights and the abusive ways in which the companies have been taking away land from their owners and strengthened their ability to intervene in the communities for the purpose of conducting sensitization and advocacy campaigns.

The combination of the strengthened capacity of partner CSO, the knowledge that their members gained in the field of land rights, as well as the visibility and credibility that they acquired in the eyes of both communities and public authorities, strengthened the quality and effectiveness of their work, and provides opportunity for project's results to be sustainable. The project was also successful in creating opportunities for increased collaboration among CSOs as well as between CSOs and government authorities engaged in land rights.

The use of mobile cinema in areas that do not always have electricity mobilizes more viewers and created an opportunity for greater numbers of women and men to participate and exchange on land grabbing issues, while the radio broadcasting has enable the project to reach a larger audience.

Women's involvement in the implementation process, through their participation in the CBOs, the concertation platform and participatory theatre has enabled them to have their priorities taken into account and the sensitization that they were afforded prepares them to for future negotiations for land concessions. The study has found significant changes with regard to men and women's knowledge, attitude and behavior towards peaceful ways to solve conflicts around land grabbing at the community level, comparing with the comparison groups used for the purpose of this evaluation. Through the use of treatment and comparison groups, it was possible to say that these changes occurred as a result of project activities. In the communities targeted by the project, both men and women have agreed that the project has opened their eyes on land rights and has changed their attitudes. In contrast, data collected in control areas showed little understanding and openness towards land rights.

Measure of outcome and output indicators

The study has found that the project had successfully achieved both of its objectives – To enhance the capacity of civil society, State actors and investing companies to promote equitable land rights and to increase popular understanding of land rights in communities affected by corporate land concessions. The creation of platforms of concertation in Guinea has brought together the main actors in the large scale land concessions together to communicate and find ways to anticipate conflicts and take action before they occur while the Land Management Committees in Sierra Leone

and Liberia have been strengthened through the capacity building provided by the project in order to better prepare them to negotiate land deals.

In comparison with the communities with the same sociodemographic characteristics, more men and women from the project's communities have been able to cite mechanisms for the protection of the land and willing to solve the land related conflicts and redress cases of abuse peacefully. However, as far as the willingness to welcome multinationals in their communities are concerned, there is only in one community in Liberia which is receptive, all the others in Liberia and Guinea have shown less inclination to have them operate within their communities. This is explained by the long history of negative effects of the presence of the companies within their midst and the fact that those companies often failed to keep their promises.

Adaptability

The project has had very positive results because it has enabled the beneficiary communities to be more aware of their land right and the consequences of leasing all their land to foreign investors, it has also created a framework for peaceful conflict resolution and enable more women to participate in negotiation for land lease. However, the timeframe for the project implementation (two years) has been too short for strengthening the results obtained, some of the concertation platforms created in Guinea and the Land Management Committees created in Liberia and Sierra Leone are still at the incipient stages of their existence and are not very well equipped to face companies with large financial powers which enable them to hire good law firms and take advantage of their weaker counterparts.


In Sierra Leone, the contracts between the companies and the land owners contain a clause which requires renegotiations every 7 years and there are only 2 years left before the first 7 years are completed. It is therefore recommended that the project is extended for at least the next two years for the three countries in order to better prepare the beneficiaries to make better deals during the negotiations.

One of the weaknesses of the project has been the lukewarm involvement of lawyers in its implementation. If the project is extended, it is recommended that lawyers associations in the target countries be associated in it so that they can assist in the sensitization of the beneficiaries about the legal aspects of the contracts that they enter into.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed towards the main stakeholders in land transfer in the three target countries. They are based on the objectives of the project and focus on providing peaceful land concession measures.

Towards the local communities

 In Sierra Leone and Liberia, it is necessary for the governments to proceed to the identification of the land owned by each family before any concession is done. The way in which the families identify their land currently is based on the positions of trees and other natural boundaries. When they accept to transfer their land to the multinationals, the companies destroy the trees and any means of knowing the limits of the properties and since the land owners do not have any

documents showing the positions of their properties and the land concessions are all for more than 50 years, it is unlikely that the future generations of the land-owning families will have any chance to know where their land is. It is therefore necessary that before any land deal is made, that the properties are clearly documented and that all the land owners know where their land is located.

✚ Land concession to major corporations is a legal act with grave, solemn consequences which therefore cannot be engaged into without a legal representation. Any time that they are faced with a multinational seeking to operate in their communities, they need to hire lawyers to document with precision the promises made by the different parties. The need for legal representation for the citizens during land concession negotiations must be mandatory.

✚ In every district affected by large scale land acquisition, land-owners associations must be created to oversee and monitor the commitments of the companies and ensure that the environment is protected and that the promises are fulfilled.

✚ In every land deal with the multinationals, the promises must be clearly documented in a legally binding way with clear deadlines for their concretizations so that the each stakeholder is held responsible for their commitments

Towards SFCG, its implementing partners and in funding partners

- ✚ It is imperative for the sake of sustaining the gains from the project to that it is prolonged so that the beneficiary communities in Sierra Leone and Liberia can be better prepared for the negotiations that they will be holding with the investment companies within the next two years. In Guinea, the newly created concertation platforms will benefit from more capacity building in order to be empowered to operate without external support.
- ✚ One of the weaknesses of the project has been the lukewarm involvement of lawyers in its implementation. If the project is extended, it is recommended that lawyers associations in the target countries be associated in it so that they can assist in the sensitization of the beneficiaries about the legal aspects of the contracts that they enter into.
- ✚ Concertation platforms spearheaded by local government representatives must be established in all the communities where large scale land concessions have been done and the companies must be represented in order to avoid conflict.
- ✚ Advocacy towards public authorities (lawmakers and government representatives) will be conducted by SFCG staff directly, with the support of implementing partners who will focus most of their efforts in the communities.

6. Annexes

6.1. Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation “Open for business”: Promoting equitable land rights protection in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea

1. **Background**
2. **Organization Overview**

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is a non-governmental organization working to transform the way societies deal with conflicts. We have acquired over 30 years of experience in peacebuilding and are based in 53 local offices worldwide.

Our Vision

While conflict is inevitable, violence is not! Therefore we work to achieve social change through transforming the way people deal with conflicts – away from violent and adversarial approaches, towards collaborative problem solving. For more information, visit www.sfcg.org.

• **Intervention Summary**

The UN’s Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (GP) and the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests constitute internationally negotiated and accepted frameworks for equitable corporate land investment. However, to date, large-scale land acquisition in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia has failed to bring about the trumpeted benefits for citizens. Current practice overwhelmingly benefits investors, while actively harming local livelihoods. In a context of State fragility and a history of violence, such investment risks breeding widespread frustration and conflict. Search for Common Ground (SFCG), in collaboration with national partners, is thus proposing a project with the overall goal to reduce the potential for land rights conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Specifically, the project aimed at:

1. To enhance the capacity of civil society, State actors and investing companies to promote equitable land rights
2. To increase popular understanding of land rights in communities affected by corporate land concessions

Engaging a broad range of national and local civil society organizations, landowners and land users, local and traditional authorities, investing companies and State authorities, we worked towards the following results:

1.1 Key stakeholders have an improved understanding of the provisions of international and national land rights mechanisms

1.2 Civil society organizations are capable of leading activities to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights

2.1 Dialogue between community members, local government and companies is enhanced

2.2 Citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions

Activities implemented include: workshop on land rights framework, advocacy and strategy development workshops, advocacy micro-projects, dialogue platforms, radio programs on land rights issues, mobile cinema projects, and participatory theatre.

SFCG partnered with three civil society organizations to implement this project: *Fondation Guinée Solidarité Plus* (FGSP) in Guinea, *Center for Justice and Peace Studies* (CJPS) in Liberia, and *Green Scenery* (GS) in Sierra Leone.

The project was implemented in: Pujehun, Bombali and Port Loko (Sierra Leone), Grand Cape Mount County (Liberia) and Basse Guinée, Moyenne Guinée and Haute Guinée (Guinea).

1. The Evaluation

2.1 Evaluation's Goal and Objectives

The final evaluation will assess the project's achievements towards its goal and objectives. It will also provide an opportunity for the identification of lessons learned and best practices that will be applied to improve on the design and implementation of similar projects going forward. The study will answer to the following questions:

1. Effectiveness:

2. To what extent did the project contribute to the expected results of the project:
3. Do the key stakeholders have an improved understanding of the provisions of international and national land rights mechanisms?
4. Are Civil society organizations more capable of leading activities to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights?
5. Is there an enhanced dialogue between community members, local government and companies?
6. Do citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions?

7. How did the project have different effects on men and women?
8. What are the internal and external factors that facilitated or hindered the achievements towards the desired changes/objectives?
9. **Measure of outcome and output indicators**
10. What progress has the project made towards its goal and expected results? In specific, the following logframe indicators will be measured:
11. % of citizens exposed to SFCG media programming and/or outreach that can cite two mechanisms for protection of their rights, compared to citizens not exposed to programming.
12. % of citizens exposed to SFCG media programming and/or outreach that can cite one local mechanism for redress in case of abuse compared to citizens not exposed to programming.
13. % of community members surveyed who say they have an improved perception of companies who leased land in their community as a result of project activities.
14. % key stakeholders interviewed who believe that relationships between citizens, authorities and companies have been improved as a result of project activities.
15. % of affected landowners who state that they would choose peaceful means to resolve land conflict, as opposed to violent means.
16. % key stakeholders (partners and local organizations working with our local partners) interviewed who can cite at least one example of new knowledge improving their work.
17. #of USG-supported anti-corruption measures implemented
18. # of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions
19. What is the number of outputs achieved versus the expected outputs, number of beneficiaries reached out to vs. expected number.
20. **Adaptability**
21. What changes in the conflict context around land grabbing have been observed over the course of the project in the target communities?
22. Has the project adapted to respond to those changes? How?
23. What are the **lessons learned and best practices** from the project' implementation that should inform the future programming of SFCG in the region?
24. **Audience**

The intended users of the final evaluation will be the donor, SFCG, the implementing partners and other SFCG partners. The report will be published on SFCG's website and other civil society, government officials, development actors and investment companies once finalized.

- **Methods**

The evaluation should include a mixed method methodology comprising of both qualitative and quantitative methods. This will include small scale surveys, radio listener group discussions, key informant interviews, a literature review of all relevant project documents and reports, interview with partner CSOs, and focus group discussions. The key informant interviews and the focus group discussions should consist of semi-structured open-ended questions, while the survey will be closed ended questions.

The targets for the evaluation will be local authorities, agro-business, radio listeners, partner CSO members, program staff and community members.

As an illustration, data collection could include:

- 1060 surveys (360 conducted in each country) targeting the community;
- 45 key informant interviews (15 per Country)
- 15 focus group discussions (5 per county)
- 6 radio listener group discussions (2 per county)
- 1 literature review

Participants for the survey should be selected by random sampling. Interview, focus group, and radio listener groups will be selected in coordination with SFCG and project partners based on the criteria proposed by the Consultant.

1. **Implementation Information**
2. **Evaluation Team**

The Consultant will lead this final evaluation, supported by the DME Coordinators in the three implementing countries, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. The DME Coordinators will be leading the field data collection tasks and reporting findings to the DME Specialist who will do the final reporting.

The Regional Project Coordinator will also play a follow up role, ensuring all logistics and budget support is granted to the evaluation team.

- **Location**

The evaluation will be conducted in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Exact locations will be proposed by the Consultant, but will include a minimum of 2 project target site (county / district) per country.

- **Deadlines**

The final evaluation is planned to start as soon as possible in July 2016, with plan and tool development, and end with report finalization by end of August 2016.

- **Deliverables**

The expected final evaluation deliverables are as follow (all deliverables are expected to be written in English):

- An evaluation plan detailing a proposed methodology (in line with the evaluation methodology stated above), evaluation matrix and written evaluation tools, to be approved by SFCG before starting data collection;
- A draft evaluation report for review by SFCG staff and other stakeholders
- A Final Report (45 pages max in length, excluding appendices) that consists of :
 - Executive summary of key findings and recommendations
 - Table of contents
 - Research findings, analysis, and conclusions with associated data presented. The report should be structure around the main objectives / evaluation criteria
 - Lessons Learned
 - Best practices
 - Recommendations for future action
 - Appendices, which include detailed research instruments, list of interviewees, terms of references and evaluator(s) brief biography
 - A Powerpoint presentation of the report
 - Databases of the evaluation data
 - A short summary report (5 pages) meant to be shared with audiences outside SFCG

- **Logistical support**

SFCG will provide the following logistical support to the Consultant.

- Transmission of all background materials (project proposal, meeting notes, reports, etc.)
- Availability of meeting room in Conakry, Freetown, Monrovia
- Use of SFCG printers and paper consumables
- Pick-up from / to airport and /or transportation from / to boarder by road between Liberia, Sierra Leone and Liberia
- Booking of hotel and facilitation visa process (booking only – payment of the hotel and visa will be at the consultant’s charge)

- Transmission of quantitative and qualitative documentation of project activities
- List of Participants who participated to the project activities, list and contacts of Partners and radio stations
- Field transportation (vehicle, driver, fuel)
- Meeting arrangements with stakeholders and beneficiaries if requested by the consultant
- Selection of data collectors, translators, facilitators, note takers if requested by the consultant
- The following human resources are available to support the Consultant in the data collection and/or supervise data collection, at no cost for the Consultant :
 - In Guinea: 1 senior DME staff and 1 assistant
 - In Liberia: 1 senior DME staff
 - In Sierra Leone: 1 DME staff

Important: The Consultant is offered the possibility to delegate the management of the data collection to the SFCG DME staff in one or two countries. Exact role that the Consultant intends on giving to the SFCG DME staff, if any, should be clearly highlighted in the technical offer (“evaluation team” section).

Such logistical support will be financially supported by SFCG and hence should not be reflected in the Consultant’s financial offer. All other costs and actions that are not mentioned above should be included in the Consultant’s financial offer.

- **Budget**

The budget available for this Final evaluation is USD**12,000** (twelve thousand US Dollars).

This is exclusive of all costs mentioned in the “logistical support” chapter. This is inclusive of all Consultant’s fees, travels costs, and data collection costs.

1. **Requirements of consultant**

SFCG has the following requirement from the evaluator:

- Proficiency in English and French
- More than 5 years of experience in project evaluation or the equivalent in DM&E expertise, including collecting data in interviews, surveys and focus groups
- Experience working with international organizations
- Experience conducting large-scale quantitative surveys
- Experience working with DRL or USAID funded projects
- Understanding of and experience working with human rights, governance, media, and peacebuilding organizations/projects
- Evaluation methods and data collection skills
- Ability to be flexible with time and work schedule

The following would be a plus:

- Conflict resolution/peacebuilding experience
- Experience in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia

The consultant is required to respect the following Ethical Principles:

- Comprehensive and systematic inquiry: Consultant should make the most of the existing information and full range of stakeholders available at the time of the review. Consultant should conduct systematic, data-based inquiries. He or she should communicate his or her methods and approaches accurately and in sufficient detail to allow others to understand, interpret and critique his or her work. He or she should make clear the limitations of the review and its results.
- Competence: Consultant should possess the abilities and skills and experience appropriate to undertake the tasks proposed and should practice within the limits of his or her professional training and competence.
- Honesty and integrity: Consultant should be transparent with the contractor/constituent about: any conflict of interest, any change made in the negotiated project plan and the reasons why those changes were made, any risk that certain procedures or activities produce misleading review information.
- Respect for people: Consultant respect the security, dignity and self-worth of respondents, program participants. Consultant has the responsibility to be sensitive to and respect differences amongst participants in culture, religion, gender, disability, age and ethnicity.

6.2. Biography of the evaluator

The evaluation was conducted by Dr. Yssa Oumar Basse, the Managing Director of the Group Strategies and Leadership consulting firm. Yssa has implemented several major projects directly for major International NGOs including Plan WARO and the Plan COs in West Africa and for that NGO through other structures including the ACPF (African Child Policy Forum) and Partners-Senegal as well as World Vision, Care, Oxfam Intermon and ChildHope UK. He has conducted research and evaluation in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia several times on behalf of Plan International and World Vision. Yssa is a Senegalese native who speaks fluently French, English and Fullah which the main language spoken in Guinea and one of the languages spoken in Sierra Leone.

6.3. Bibliography

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Final Evaluation Open for Business – 02

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6.4. Interview guides

With key CSOs

Knowledge about the formal and traditional laws about land ownership and transfer process

- ✓ How can private foreign entities acquire land for commercial purposes in the country?
- ✓ The social and economic implication of the transfer of vast pieces of land to private entities on the local residents?
- ✓ In case land in the rural areas has been transferred to private entities under conditions in violation of traditional laws, how did the owners use to resolve the cases?
- ✓ Their perception about national and international laws about land ownership and land rights and mechanisms as well as the regulatory framework for protection of land rights
- ✓ Their role in the fight for the protection against land grabbing
- ✓ The activities that they have undertaken outside of the project

Knowledge about the project

- ✓ Description of their role in the project and the activities undertaken within its framework. The activities undertaken by the project
- ✓ What is their perception about the objectives of the project?
- ✓ Their perception about the changes brought about by the project (if any)
- ✓ Their perception about how the people received the message from the project
- ✓ Their perception about how the investors received the message from the project
- ✓ Has the project led to an increase or decrease in land transfer to major investment companies
- ✓ Has there been any improvement in the dialogue between community members, local government and companies?
- ✓ Do citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions?
- ✓ What changes in the conflict context around land grabbing have been observed over the course of the project in the target communities?
- ✓ The ways in which the project affected gender disparities in terms of land ownership
- ✓ The new knowledge that the project has brought about with respect to regulatory framework for protection of land rights
- ✓ What resistance have they faced in the framework of the project?

- ✓ What made the project implementation easy?
- ✓ Do they feel they have been better capacitated to continue the fight against land grabbing without the support of SFCG?
- ✓ Are they more capable of leading activities to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights?
- ✓ What are the lessons learned and best practices from the project' implementation that should inform the future programming of SFCG in the country?

With Government representatives

Knowledge about the formal and traditional laws about land ownership and transfer process

- ✓ Who owns land in the rural areas, how is it acquired and transferred?
- ✓ Under what circumstances can land be transferred? At what price?
- ✓ How can private foreign entities acquire land in the rural areas of the country?
- ✓ The social and economic implication of the transfer of vast pieces of land to private entities on the local residents?
- ✓ In case land has been transferred to private entities under conditions that the citizens in the rural areas would not agree to, how did they use to resolve the cases?
- ✓ Their perception about national and international laws about land ownership and land rights and mechanisms as well as the regulatory framework for protection of land rights

Knowledge about the project

- ✓ What they know about the project and the activities undertaken within its framework
- ✓ What is their perception about the objectives of the project?
- ✓ Their relationship with the SFCG and the implementing partners
- ✓ Their perception about the changes brought about by the project (if any)
- ✓ Their perception about how the people received the message from the project
- ✓ Their perception about how the investors received the message from the project
- ✓ Has the project led to an increase or decrease in land transfer to major investment companies
- ✓ Has there been any improvement in the dialogue between community members, local government and companies?
- ✓ Do citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions?
- ✓ The ways in which the project affected gender disparities in terms of land ownership

- ✓ The new knowledge that the project has brought about with respect to regulatory framework for protection of land rights

With investors

Knowledge about the formal and traditional laws about land ownership and transfer process

- ✓ The process by which they acquired the land
- ✓ What attracted them to the country
- ✓ Their understanding of how private foreign entities can legally acquire land in the country?
- ✓ The social and economic implication of the transfer of vast pieces of land to private entities on the local residents?
- ✓ What conflict resolution mechanisms have been developed with regards to land acquisition by investors?
- ✓ Their perception about national and international laws about land ownership and land rights and mechanisms as well as the regulatory framework for protection of land rights

Knowledge about the project

- ✓ What they know about the project and the activities undertaken within its framework
- ✓ What is their perception about the objectives of the project?
- ✓ Their relationship with the SFCG and the implementing partners
- ✓ Their perception about the changes brought about by the project (if any)
- ✓ Their perception about how the people received the message from the project
- ✓ Has the project led to an increase or decrease in land transfer to major investment companies
- ✓ Has there been any improvement in the dialogue between community members, local government and companies?
- ✓ Do citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions?
- ✓ The ways in which the project affected gender disparities in terms of land ownership
- ✓ The new knowledge that the project has brought about with respect to regulatory framework for protection of land rights

With SFCG and implementing partners

Context of the project

- ✓ The national context under which the project was implemented

- ✓ The ways in which the project is implemented (local partnership, activities undertaken, report mechanisms)
- ✓ How the civil society organizations were involved in the project?
- ✓ How were the investment companies involved in the project? What has been their perception and reactions to the project?
- ✓ How was the government involved in the project?
- ✓ How were the traditional leaders and the citizens involved in the project?
- ✓ What change has the project brought about in conflict resolution?

Project achievements

- ✓ Has the project led to an increase or decrease in land transfer to major investment companies in violation of national and international regulations?
- ✓ Has there been any improvement in the dialogue between community members, local government and companies?
- ✓ Do citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions?
- ✓ What changes around land grabbing have been observed over the course of the project in the target communities?
- ✓ The ways in which the project affected gender disparities in terms of land ownership
- ✓ The new knowledge that the project has brought about to citizens with respect to regulatory framework for protection of land rights
- ✓ What resistance have they faced in the framework of the project?
- ✓ What made the project implementation easy?
- ✓ Do they feel they have been better capacitated to continue the fight against land grabbing without the support of SFCG?
- ✓ Are they more capable of leading activities to strengthen the regulatory framework for protection of land rights?
- ✓ What are the lessons learned and best practices from the project' implementation that should inform the future programming of SFCG in the country?

With traditional leaders

Knowledge about the formal and traditional laws about land ownership and transfer process

- ✓ Who owns land within their chiefdom, how is it acquired and transferred?
- ✓ Under what circumstances can land be transferred? At what price?

- ✓ How can private foreign entities acquire land in their chiefdoms?
- ✓ The social and economic implication of the transfer of vast pieces of land to private entities on the local residents?
- ✓ In case land within their chiefdom has been transferred to private entities under conditions that they would not agree to, how did they use to resolve the cases?
- ✓ Their perception about national and international laws about land ownership and land rights and mechanisms as well as the regulatory framework for protection of land rights

Knowledge about the project

- ✓ What they know about the project and the activities undertaken within its framework
- ✓ What is their perception about the objectives of the project?
- ✓ Their relationship with the SFCG and the implementing partners
- ✓ Their perception about the changes brought about by the project (if any)
- ✓ Their perception about how the people received the message from the project
- ✓ Their perception about how the investors received the message from the project
- ✓ Has the project led to an increase or decrease in land transfer to major investment companies
- ✓ Has there been any improvement in the dialogue between community members, local government and companies?
- ✓ Do citizens in target communities affected by corporate land concession have greater awareness of land rights protection provisions?
- ✓ The ways in which the project affected gender disparities in terms of land ownership
- ✓ The new knowledge that the project has brought about with respect to regulatory framework for protection of land rights

6.5. Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE	
1.0	IDENTIFICATION
1.1	COUNTRY <input type="text"/>
1.2	DISTRICT <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
1.3	COMMUNITY <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

1.4	DATE OF THE INTERVIEW					
1.5	AGE OF THE RESPONDENT					
1.6	GENDER OF THE RESPONDENT	(1=Male; 2=Female)				

Section 2 Land Ownership		
201	MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENT	MARRIED.....01 SINGLE/NEVER MARRIED...02 DIVORCED.....03 WIDOWED.....04
202	What is your occupation?	Farmer.....01 Trader.....02 Fisherman.....03 Cattle herder.....04 Office worker.....05 Unemployed.....05 Other (Specify).....06
203	Have you ever owned land?	Yes01 No.....02
204	If "Yes" to the previous question, How did you acquire the land that you owned?	Inheritance.....204...205...2.....01 Gift.....02 Bought.....03 I cut the trees and made the land my property.....04 Other (Specify).....05
205	Do you still own land?	Yes01 No.....02
206	If "No" to the previous question, what happened to your land?	I sold it.....01 It was taken away from me.....03 I gave it away.....04 Other (specify).....05
207	How important is it for people to own land in your community?	Very important.....01 Important.....02

		not important.....03 I do not need to own any land...04
208	What do people in your community use their land for?	Agriculture.....01 Grazing for animals.....02 Other (Specify).....03
208	Is your land the main source of income in your community?	Yes.....01 No.....02
Section 3 Knowledge about the project		
301	Have you ever attended an activity undertaken by (local implementing partner)	Yes.....01 No.....02
302	If "yes" to the previous question, what was it about?	Video projection about land grabbing.....01 Discussion about land transfer.....02 Theatre.....03 Radio programmes.....04 Other (specify).....05
303	What did you learn about those activities?	the laws about land ownership.....01 Advocacy techniques.....02 Conflict resolution.....03 Land registration mechanisms.....04 Illegal lease of land.....05 Other (specify).....06
304	What do you think is the best way to resolve conflicts around land ownership?	Confront the people who took our land and get it back by force.....01 Take them to court02 Negotiate with them.....03 Fight for our land by all means necessary.....04 Talk to our lawyers.....05 Other (specify).....06

305	Who in your community do you think is more responsible for land grabbing?	Private companies.....01 Traditional leaders.....02 The government.....03 Others (specify).....04
306	Do you know of any UN guidelines pertaining to land acquisition?	Yes.....01 No.....02
307	What do you think about foreign companies coming to your community to invest on land?	It is very good, they create jobs.....01 It is very bad, they take away land from farmers.....02 I do not have an opinion about it.....03
308	Do you think that women have the right to Own land?	Yes.....01 No.....02
309	Do you think that women should participate in land negotiations?	Yes.....01 No.....02
310	What is the most important thing to do when someone or a company seeks to lease your land?	Trust your negotiation skills and negotiate directly.....01 Ask for advice from someone who knows about the laws.....02 Talk to your traditional leaders.....03 Other (specify).....04
311	Do you consider that you have become more aware about land rights over the past two years?	Yes.....1 No.....2
312	Where did you get your knowledge about land rights?	Radio.....1 Movie projection.....2 Drama.....3 Group discussion.....4 Friends.....5 Other (Specify)6