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**A Final Performance Report on
Search for Common Ground
in Sierra Leone to
the United States Agency for International Development**

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) received funding in 2002 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to undertake a program titled “Promoting Peace, Security, and Stability in Sierra Leone,” award number 636-G-00-02-00002-00. The program’s goal matched USAID’s second strategic objective: **democracy and governance strengthened**. Under this program, SFCG proposed to conduct media and community outreach activities focused on the specific themes of governance reform, corruption, and social reintegration, with HIV/AIDS as a cross cutting issue. This final performance report will provide a summary of the results SFCG achieved toward its goal in Sierra Leone during the three fiscal years of the grant.

Sierra Leone’s governance situation is gaining more credibility each year with three peaceful elections and a relatively free media. Yet corruption remains endemic and the government uses media mainly for propagandizing purposes.

With the generous support of USAID, SFCG has been able to increase by the thousands the number of people linked into the national dialogue through radio programming and the launching of four new community radio stations. It has also had an impact on corruption in certain sectors like education and diamond area community development. Marginalized groups—women, children, youth, and ex-combatants—have all experienced higher visibility and increased access to public discussion due to involvement in SFCG radio programming and participation in networks.

II. COUNTRY SITUATION

On May 14, 2002, Sierra Leone held a democratic national election, a significant benchmark in its post-war era and the beginning of the democratization process that includes decentralization—a major reorganization of governance mechanisms to allow more local decision-making. While all three elections held in as many years were essentially violence-free and legitimate, considerable obstacles continue to challenge Sierra Leone’s nascent democracy. Some of those obstacles include deep-seated corruption, mistrust of government institutions, a lack of national identity especially in unconnected rural areas, a dearth of information and misinformation communicated by the government to the public, lack of education, an extremely weak economy, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The tension between young people and elders in a highly politicized social setting continues to be a boiling point, as most people still struggle to survive. Power associated with jobs and earning a livelihood is extremely limited, encouraging corruption and mismanagement. Not helping matters is the fact that the economy has not produced many noticeable effects on people’s daily lives. For example, electricity continues to be scarce, leaving most businesses in Freetown and around the country to rely on backup generators as their primary source of power. It also must be mentioned that the persisting unrest in the sub-region—in Guinea, Liberia, and Côte d’Ivoire—is also a potential threat to peace in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone is, however, making important inroads to an increasingly stable peace. Nearly all of the country is now linked into the national dialogue through radio, which is having a positive impact on its efforts to rebuild a national identity. Related to this is the presence of an active independent media scene, an important ingredient for a democratic society. In many cases youth

are learning to contribute positively to their communities and women are exploring opportunities to participate in politics and general community decision-making.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goal of this program was to *strengthen democratic governance*, which is USAID's strategic objective (SO) 2. The activities SFCG undertook during the grant were also meant to contribute to USAID's SO1, *Reintegration process for war torn communities advanced*.

SFCG used a cross cutting, multi-layered program and partnered with other USAID-supported NGOs including the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to work toward achieving the second strategic objective of the USAID program in Sierra Leone. Under SO2, SFCG conducted activities measured by two SO indicators as well as implemented activities applicable to two intermediate results (IRs)—IR2 and IR4—for a total of five indicators tracked (IR level indicators not tracked for IR4).

- SO Indicator 1: Number of public meetings where issues are effectively articulated.
- SO Indicator 2: Number of networks that include those who are marginalized.
- IR2 Indicator 1: Airtime devoted to civic and public education.
- IR2 Indicator 2: Number of requests for intervention on targeted issues.
- IR2 Indicator 3: Number of events on targeted issues promoted.

SFCG also contributed to IR1 and IR3 of SO2, along with the implementing partners NDI and World Vision International (WVI).

To contribute to the 3 IRs of the first SO, SFCG worked with WVI and Management Systems International (MSI), complementing their work to achieve results.

IV. PROGRAM RESULTS

As mentioned above, SFCG was responsible for implementing activities that work toward SO2, which is *democracy and governance strengthened*. SFCG was well positioned with its media and outreach networks to provide information and community support to large portions of Sierra Leone. SFCG also used its expertise in conflict transformation to challenge communities to find peaceful ways to deal with differences, notably in regards to the way the country is governed on all levels. SFCG worked in conjunction with NDI, MSI, International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) to achieve results under SO2.

Under SO1, which is the *reintegration process for worn torn communities advanced*, SFCG was a contributing partner. SFCG complemented the work of WVI and MSI by engaging Youth Reintegration and Education for Peace Program (YRTEP) participants in community projects like solidarity events and youth non-violence campaigns. Also, its media work engaged nation building program participants in on-air discussions on governance issues.

The following sections highlight the progress SFCG made toward achieving the strategic objectives and intermediate results. The first few sections focus on those areas for which SFCG was an implementing partner. The report then includes information about how SFCG contributed to the remaining IRs under SO2 and finally SO1.

A. Strategic Objective 2

Democracy and governance strengthened.

SO2 Indicator 1: Number of public meetings where issues are effectively articulated

Deep-seated corruption is a major obstacle to democratic governance in Sierra Leone. It leads to mistrust of the government and misused resources. Yet Sierra Leoneans cannot effectively hold the government accountable without being well informed and organized. SFCG therefore conducted both outreach and media work to fight corruption as a way to strengthen democracy. An integral part of this strategy was holding public meetings to raise community awareness and building coalitions and alliances centered on a range of specific topics like the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS), and quality education.

SFCG’s media work mobilized the networks it supported (more information about networks below under the second SO2 indicator) and publicized the outcomes of the public meetings held by the networks.

Table 1

Baseline Value (2001)	FY 2003 Target	Achieved Value	FY 2004 Target	Achieved Value
8	65	216	84	151

As noted in Table 1, SFCG met its targets for the number of public meetings where issues are effectively articulated during both fiscal years. The public meetings were held as networks were created, participants began working together, and to raise awareness in communities about network activities. There was therefore need for many meetings during the first of year program implementation as SFCG supported the initial stages of the networks.

SFCG effectively supported communities and groups to develop priorities and action plans during public meetings, emphasizing the power of joint action as a way to achieve results in the predatory society of Sierra Leone. The media and outreach teams worked simultaneously to stimulate discussion around positive meeting outcomes, eventually triggering action from stakeholders. This model contributed to the achievement of the following outcomes:

- The Diamond Area Community Development Fund Coalition, where SFCG mobilized communities to focus on accountability and transparency issues in their development process.
- The Transportation Taskforce increased traffic safety in Bo town and sorted out differences that had previously emerged out of poor communications and relations among transportation stakeholders.
- The Local Partnership Board enhanced police and community relationships and involved civil society in community security issues.
- The National Electoral Watch worked for a transparent electoral process, causing decreased tension between the various players.

SO2 Indicator 2: Number of networks that include those who are marginalized

The networks SFCG helped create and then supported in various ways throughout the grant linked people and organizations to each other and helped them to de-politicize discussion of and

action around contentious issues like transportation, diamond mining, education, and elections. Individuals and groups engaged in dialogue with a variety of actors through involvement in the networks. This exposure to others on a regular basis while working on projects together enabled people to see issues through a larger social lens rather than the partisan lens with which most came into the networks.

Table 2

Baseline Value (2001)	FY 2003 Target	Achieved Value	FY 2004 Target	Achieved Value
1	23	34	30	16

Table 2 shows that SFCG met its FY2003 target, but did not meet its target for FY2004. In this case, the target for the second year should not have increased, as SFCG supported during the first year networks' start up organization and activities. SFCG therefore had reduced capacity in the second year to increase the number of new networks, as it continued using resources to support the work of existing networks. Examples of a selection of networks follow.

Bo Transportation Taskforce—This taskforce had positive effects on community relationships and traffic safety in Bo town through the building of trust, regular communication, and a better understanding of traffic rules among the Bike Riders Association (a network of mainly ex-combatant youth who operate the motorbike taxis to earn a livelihood). The transportation taskforce model spread to Makeni, Kenema, and Kono, all of which are areas facing the same transportation dilemma since the end of the war.

The transportation taskforce was created to address problems between the Bike Riders Association and the transportation authorities in Bo¹. Disenfranchised youth mistrusted the



Member of the Bike Riders Association (right) receives a certificate after participating in a Transportation Taskforce education workshop in February 2004.

government institutions. This mistrust was compounded by the poor relationship among government stakeholders in the transportation sector itself. Communication was non-existent, with all stakeholders working in isolation. The bike riders were victims of this situation and were harassed by transportation authorities, causing tension and sometimes violence. SFCG therefore supported the creation of a platform for this marginalized group to work with the authorities. The Transportation Taskforce brought clarity to common problems and provided an opportunity for all taskforce members to plan ways to jointly work on those problems.

Diamond Area Community Development Fund Coalition—In locations that are part of the DACDF, consultation, transparency, and accountability issues were a source of marginalization for community members, as only a small group of elders received information about the fund. The information was then often manipulated to suit the interests of a powerful few. SFCG therefore chaired the sensitization committee of the DACDF Coalition. Key members were the

¹ The Sierra Leone Road Transport Authority, the Customs and Excise Office, Sierra Leone Police, the Income Tax Office, Sierra Leone Roads Authority, and the Passenger Welfare Association.

Anti-Corruption Commission, Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, and the Sierra Leone Indigenous Miners.

Together with coalition members, SFCG used community meetings, narrative reports, and radio discussion programs in local languages to provide communities with information enabling them to effectively use and monitor the development fund. Working with communities, SFCG and the coalition established consultative processes of development. With the impact of the DACDF coalition work and the lessons it learned, the coalition has now been extended to include other extractives including timber and gold. The coalition now has 12 members including human rights and environmental organizations.

Quality Education Coalition— SFCG facilitated and established a civil society coalition² that worked to support the government in achieving its national objective of quality basic education for all by 2007. The coalition complemented other ongoing efforts supported by UNICEF, Global Movement for Children, and Education for All supported by the Sierra Leonean Teachers Union and the Ministry of Education. One effect the coalition had was the government changed its mechanism of distributing education subsidies from giving them to education secretaries (which encouraged corrupt practices) to distributing the subsidies directly to head teachers. The government’s decision corresponded with a coalition campaign during the first quarter of 2003, to which SFCG provided extensive media coverage. Exploring the obstacles in achieving basic quality education has deep rooted implications that affect a number of people—especially teachers and pupils who bear the brunt of the ineffective and bureaucratic education system in Sierra Leone.

Independent Radio Network—This network brought together 10 broadcast media stakeholders from around the country and facilitated a joint response linked to the National Electoral Commission (NEC). Several member stations are new stations that otherwise would have been much less integrated into the electoral processes of the past three years. Especially for Radio Moa in Kailahun, involvement in the IRN helped link the people of the isolated Kailahun District into the national dialogue on elections, governance, and through the IRN’s *Meet the Candidate* program, political representation. This strengthened Kailahun’s connection to Sierra Leonean national identity.

Peace Festivals and Community Project Networks—Youth are often marginalized in Sierra Leone and their interactions are highly politicized, leading them to mistrust others and sometimes engage in harmful and illegal behavior. Therefore, when SFCG began supporting communities to organize peace festivals, it worked closely with youth groups to engage them in the organization process along with local authorities and civil society groups. In provincial capitals and Kabala, the festivals have become an annual event, where youth groups work side by side their former rivals—both other youth groups and authority

Youth Network Projects

The Bo project will be a musical center for youth; in Kenema the youth plan to create a recreational centre for youth including a cinema hall and table tennis.

The Kabala peace festival was the first public event held since the war and the revenue provided support to the recently opened community radio station, Radio Bintumani. The successful organization of the festival was significant, as the five conflicting ethnic groups who live there make up a complex and difficult political setting.

² The Coalition for Quality Education is comprised of SFCG, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), the Sierra Leone Teachers’ Union (SLTU), OXFAM, and the Campaign for Good Governance (CGG). The Ministry of Education was invited to participate but has not yet joined.

figures. The youth groups are now taking joint responsibility with community elders and leaders to save and use revenues earned at the festivals for community projects. See the text box for project examples.

1. Intermediate Result 2

Participation in national dialogue facilitated.

Indicator 2.1: Airtime devoted to civic education and public information

SFCG was the implementing organization for the intermediate result of facilitating participation in national dialogue. Through its balanced media programming with nation-wide coverage, SFCG created a credible feedback loop between the general population and its leaders.

Chart 1

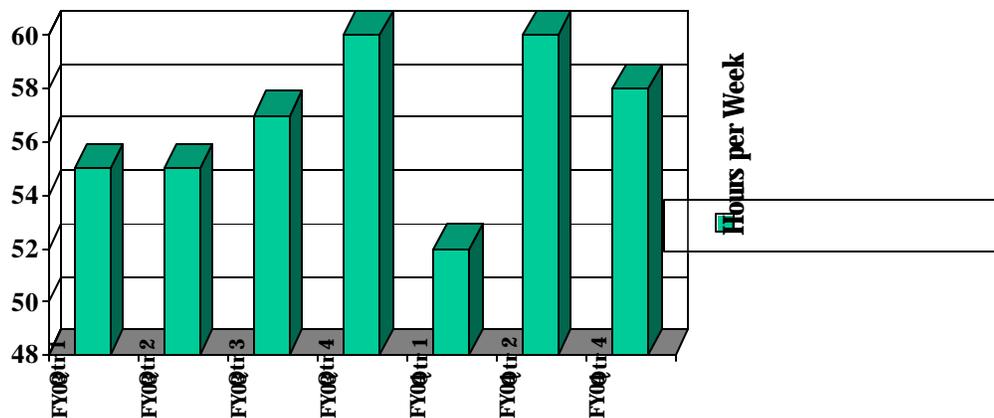


Chart 1 indicates the average number of hours per week of airtime devoted to civic education and public information during the two fiscal years of the grant for which SFCG had target values. While the airtime values are significantly higher than the 2001 baseline of 14 hours per week of airtime, SFCG was unfortunately not able to reach its targets of 70 hours per week for FY2003 or 75 hours per week for FY2004. SFCG’s production of programs increased significantly, but Sierra Leone continued to face serious electricity shortages throughout the period, creating problems for radio stations to air their planned schedules. Also, the delivery of cassettes by commercial vehicles was often delayed and programs were even sometimes stolen en route to partner stations.

SFCG’s support to five community radio stations, four of which were launched during this grant, added to the effectiveness of the feedback loop mentioned above by allowing people living in areas with previously little or no media access to participate in national dialogue on a range of issues. The local reporting from community radios fed into national programming produced by SFCG. Also, the Independent Radio Network’s involvement in the electoral processes of 2002, 2003, and 2004 meant people across the country had increased access to electoral and governance related information.

Indicator 2.2: Number of requests for intervention on targeted issues

SFCG receives hundreds of requests for intervention on its targeted issues each year. The requests reflect the population's trust in SFCG as a fair and trustworthy organization working for their interests. The requests also indicate engagement in community issues, as people hear about issues on SFCG's radio programming and are moved to respond. SFCG is sometimes copied on letters addressed to the president or parliament for action on issues. This is positive, as it illustrates Sierra Leoneans are increasingly trying to communicate with the government.

Table 3

Baseline Value (2001)	FY 2003 Target	Achieved Value	FY 2004 Target	Achieved Value
0	388	517	450	360

Table 3 shows that SFCG surpassed its target for number of requests received for intervention on targeted issues in FY 2003, but not in FY2004. The reason for this is that there was a breakdown in data collection for this indicator, particularly regarding oral requests for intervention while staff were away from the office on field trips. SFCG believes the number of requests is actually much higher than what it officially recorded, however.

The following is an example of a request for intervention in a corruption case that SFCG followed up on.

Contractor Corruption: Blackboard Scandal—A man came to SFCG with the issue of sub-standard blackboards a contractor delivered to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MOEST). SFCG reported it to MOEST, and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) investigated and charged the contractor with not properly fulfilling the terms of his contract. According to the ACC, the same contractor had received an incredibly high number of contracts during a period of six months, including the blackboards contract. Upon further investigation, SFCG uncovered that the contractor is the youth leader of the SLPP (ruling political party) in the Western area and a close confidant of the Vice President.

Indicator 2.3: Number of events on targeted issues promoted

SFCG uses its broadcast media capabilities to promote events focused on targeted issues in order to help increase participation in those events, lend credibility to the events by giving them national coverage, and engage Sierra Leoneans at the national level in dialogue about an issue people in a particular locale are addressing through their event.

Table 4

Baseline Value (2001)	FY 2003 Target	Achieved Value	FY 2004 Target	Achieved Value
5	40	42	45	30

As noted in Table 4, SFCG reached its target value for number of events on targeted issues promoted during FY2003, but not for FY2004. This is mainly due to the fact that during the final four months of the grant, the one issue that dominated the country was the local council elections,

which occurred in May 2004. Fewer large events were held during that period requiring SFCG media support. SFCG instead focused on supporting networks engaged in the electoral process—namely the IRN and the National Electoral Watch along with the government to do civic education—to carry out many small-scale activities leading to increased citizen awareness about the candidates, the elections, and the decentralization process in general. Examples of events SFCG promoted follow.

Peace Festivals

As mentioned above, SFCG worked with multiple groups and associations in communities around Sierra Leone to help them organize annual peace festivals. The festivals brought communities together to support local artists, created a popular venue for cultural expression, and provided an opportunity for learning about local civil society initiatives. Through entertainment, cultural expression, and dialogue, peace festivals created a captivating forum for promoting social reintegration. The organizers decided on a theme for each festival. For example, festivals held in 2004 before the local council elections focused on the role of the youth or security forces during the electoral process.

To promote the festivals, SFCG produced radio programming during the event, which was broadcast live throughout the surrounding area. For example, the 2003 Makeni festival was broadcast live for six hours a day on a local radio partner. In addition, the peace festivals feature panel discussions with local representatives and address important themes of social reintegration. Also, panel discussions and radio dialogues augment the messages contained in the cultural activities.

Polcomfest

Apart from its traditional peace festivals, SFCG also supported institutions and groups working on community peace building activities, especially those promoting social reintegration. During the period of the grant, SFCG supported the police in their roll out of their new post-war era policy of community policing. SFCG usually collaborated with police during events at least partially organized by SFCG. The Polcomfest, however, was led and initiated by the police and was a police-community festival event promoting improved police-community relations. SFCG used the forum to highlight post conflict police challenges nationally and mobilized support for the new community policing policy.

2. Intermediate Result 4

Increased community response to human rights issues.

This intermediate result was implemented by SFCG, International Rescue committee (IRC), and Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) in Kailahun district. Although SFCG was not directly responsible for the indicators of this IR, SFCG had a number of activity level indicators, which were reported on in the quarterly reports. During the recent evaluation of SFCG's work in Sierra Leone, however, the evaluation team visited the project location and noted positive feedback about



Golden Kids celebrate the opening of Radio Moa in Kailahun.

SFCG programming contributing to the IR indicators. Women respondents insisted the media work of Radio Moa, established through the project in Kailahun, had decreased the incidence of domestic violence in their locales, and created a higher level of community tolerance for rape victims. Other women said the media ensured an improved representation of women during the nominations for the recent local council election.

In addition to the work in Kailahun on community response to human rights issues, SFCG contributes to this IR not only there, but nationally as well, as its national programs also work on human rights issues. Anecdotal evidence from women, police, and traders documented during the recent evaluation of the full SFCG program is available in the evaluation report soon to be finalized and shared with USAID. The evaluation report mentions rape victims having access to voice their problems, issues of sex and polygamy and its excesses now being openly discussed, and increased community understanding about the family support unit of the Sierra Leone police and its programming.

SFCG also brought into focus issues related to gender-based violence through its children's radio programming. IRC and CVT trained cub reporters to highlight trauma and gender-based violence issues, and together with the young journalists, jointly designed a public information campaign to address key social issues.

Changing the discourse about human rights from a top down approach of teaching about internationally designed human rights conventions to exploring rights issues in rural myths, parables, cultures, and stories was the main strategy SFCG used to reach Sierra Leoneans on these issues. Human rights is not a new concept in Sierra Leone, as the traditional cultures have their own way of manifesting rights—the rights are usually communally based rather than individually based. Human rights concepts more closely related to the internationally accepted standards have penetrated rural communities, yet understanding is still minimal.

3. *Intermediate Result 1*

Broadened community-based political participation.

The implementing organization for this intermediate result was NDI, with SFCG serving as a contributing partner. NDI worked with communities through Civic Forums to improve their understanding and engagement of political processes and trained parliamentarians in constituency relation skills. SFCG complemented NDI's work on the following indicators.

Indicator 1.1: Number of citizens participating in Civic Forum discussions

SFCG publicized the Civic Forum discussions on the radio, updated the public on the progress the discussions were making, and highlighted practical achievements reached as a result of the discussions through the broadcast media. The community radios supported by SFCG also complemented the Civic Forums by stimulating debate during on-air roundtable discussions about the issues discussed in the forums, pertinent issues for the community.

Indicator 1.2: Number of targeted parliamentarians with improved constituency relations skills

Through participation in the IRN radio network programs called *Parliament Bol Hat* and *Meet Your Candidate*, SFCG contributed to improving constituency relations skills of incumbent and prospective parliamentarians. For example, both of these radio programs brought parliamentary issues to the general population during the local council election campaign in March through May 2004. As mentioned earlier, the public is able to hold parliamentarians more accountable if they know the issues their leaders have power to affect, and what issues they have responsibility to manage.

SFCG has focused mainly on, and has had the most success with, providing the general population with information and skills to hold leaders accountable. Part of SFCG's future strategy in Sierra Leone, however, is to work with the government to help them understand the benefits of meaningfully communicating with the population through the media and not merely using it as a tool for propaganda.

4. *Intermediate Result 3*

Broader public/private participation in improved diamond sector management.

MSI was the implementing partner on this intermediate result. SFCG contributed to achievement of the IR and complemented MSI's work by bringing together multiple stakeholders in a coalition to participate in managing the Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF). SFCG also chaired the DACDF Coalition's sensitization committee, which raised awareness about the fund and advocated for effective fund management. The committee also used community meetings and radio discussion programs in local languages to provide communities with information required to demand effective fund management.

SFCG also supported the Peace Diamond Alliance with radio coverage, which conducted training in small diamond recognition for representatives from a variety of diamond mining associations. The training was designed to help miners and diggers understand the value of their production.

Regarding the Kaisombo mine in Koidu, SFCG brought together an alliance of organizations called the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) to address the dangerous mine situation there. SFCG's media coverage of the issue raised the profile and credibility of local NGOs and CBOs like NMJD, enabling them to affect change in Kaisombo mining conditions. The raised profile achieved through media coverage increased their ability to effectively participate in diamond sector management.

B. Strategic Objective 1

Reintegration process for war torn communities advanced.

SFCG was a contributing partner to the second intermediate result under SO1, complementing the work of World Vision and MSI in constructively engaging war torn populations.

Through its youth work supporting social reintegration, SFCG linked up with YRTEP participants to further engage them in its solidarity events and youth non-violence campaigns. This was particularly useful in bridging the divide and reducing tension arising from the struggle for power and resources that existed between youth who were returning after being displaced or as refugees and those who stayed behind in their communities.

Through its media programs, SFCG engaged nation building program participants in discussions and interviews on governance issues and provided access to various stakeholders, broadening the debate and facilitating wider reach of the nation building program participants' expertise.

1. Intermediate Result 2

War torn populations in targeted communities constructively engaged

The YRTEP program was comprised of training sessions intended to facilitate reintegration of ex-combatants into communities, while at the same time providing skills training for war-affected youth. The trainings provided reorientation, life skills training, and remedial education. It was also meant to target the groups of ex-combatants most likely to be tempted to turn to crime and violence to survive if they felt they had no other options. SFCG contributed to this effort by producing and distributing news about the YRTEP program and messages promoting reconciliation to local radio stations.

The Nation Building program was designed to provide participants with leadership and negotiation skills in order to improve relationships among each other and their communities. Participants included civil servants, local government officials, civil society activists, youth organizations, women, and religious groups. SFCG used stories about Nation Building program participants in its regular programming.

Indicator 2.1: Number of ex-combatants and war affected youth provided with reintegration skills

SFCG provided information about the DDR process through its radio programs to many thousands of people. This helped them to know more about services available to them, and through programs like the soap opera *Atunda Ayenda*, provided them with references on how to act within a peaceful society. SFCG also publicized the opportunities available through the program *Troway di Gun* by mainstreaming voices and concerns of ex-combatants; managed expectations of ex-combatants during the DDR process; and resolved disputes between NCDDR and its implementing partners.

Many of the children initially involved with *Golden Kids News* were child soldiers. Their experience as cub reporters has provided them with skills they can use later on, and on a larger scale, has increased society's willingness to accept back these individuals and others like them.

An impact survey conducted by SFCG on the radio program *Atunda Ayenda* indicated that such radio programming has improved the advocacy skills of young people—helping to put their issues in the public forum for thoughtful debate.

Indicator 2.3: Number of participants provided with nation building skills

SFCG's radio programs provided nation building skills by enabling civic education program participants to articulate issues and deepen their analysis. Also, by linking local debates into the national dialogue and vice versa, SFCG promoted the sense of nationhood.

The participants from MSI nation building trainings were linked with community radios for them to be a resource in addressing community issues. SFCG reporters explored the training modules with the participants and developed clips of these into their programs.

V. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

One major challenge during the grant was trying to encourage the government to see the benefits of using media as an effective way to communicate with the populace, and to use it as a tool for development. Instead, the Sierra Leonean government continues to see the media merely as a tool for propagandizing its public relations messages. In the coming year SFCG will continue to work on winning buy-in from the government on the two-way feedback loop being made possible with national media coverage and an increasingly engaged and civic-minded population.

Other challenges included:

- The heavy reliance on generators for power supply in Makeni's Radio Mankneh and all the community radios with which SFCG worked.
- SFCG's media expertise is a crosscutting tool; SFCG is a trusted organization and source of information. The demand for partnership was therefore very high.
- The media model has begun to be copied by SFCG's partners, thus challenging SFCG to be more innovative in its programming.
- SFCG does not take positions on political matters, yet the public analysis is always through a political lens in the highly politicized Sierra Leonean society. It was very difficult to maintain the image of impartiality.

VI. FINANCIAL REPORT

Please refer to the separately attached final financial report.