

**REAPING WHAT'S BEEN SOWN:
EXPLORING DIASPORA-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT FOR SIERRA LEONE**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Honors Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with Distinction.

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Sierra Leone (darkened) in the African context
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Political Map of Sierra Leone
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“Diaspora... originally referred to a scattering or sowing of seeds. The good thing about seeds is that they grow. The better thing yet is that they spread. And the best is that once spread they grow again.”

Diaspora Dialogues, IOM, 2007

*“We will drag ourselves out of this poverty zone
And we’ll care for our own, our Sierra Leone
We will raise up our hearts and our voices as one”*

“My Vision, My Home, My Sierra Leone”
Ustina More

“We originally planned to go back. It was the original plan for most people.”

Sierra Leonean-American interviewee

This work is dedicated to the memory of Ms. Khadija Jalloh—a beautiful woman, a dedicated Sierra Leonean, and a shining example of the kind of person that all youth should strive to be. May her efforts to engage the Diaspora not be in vain.

(May 11, 1986 – December 6, 2008)

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ABSTRACT

In September 2007, the post-conflict West African nation of Sierra Leone reached a turning point in its history. It has been experiencing the positive inertia which results from the first successful transition of government power since 1961. Members of Sierra Leone's Diaspora—its population living abroad—have been contributing to the momentum as individuals and small groups, but they are divided along many lines. Through the quantitative analysis of 250 survey responses and qualitative analysis of 31 follow-up interviews with Sierra Leoneans resident in the United States, direct participation in Diaspora forum discussions, knowledge from personal experiences in Sierra Leone and Ghana, and a literature review of Sierra Leonean history and African migration and development scholarship, this research is proof that the population has many common goals despite perceived differences. A report will detail their collective profile and make policy recommendations to maximize their potential for large-scale development throughout Sierra Leone that will decrease the country's dependency on outside assistance. Transnational migration, in which there is not one departure and one arrival but rather a more continual movement between locations, is becoming ever more popular in this age of globalization. Instead of creating a trend in which Sierra Leoneans only move back upon retirement in the United States, this research proposes a change in development work which will facilitate highly skilled, professional migrants of any age

in a country's Diaspora to lead transnational lives, developing capacities in their places of birth alongside expatriate workers from international organizations and local communities. Sierra Leone should be a model country and a test case for these projects. To achieve the utmost success in Diaspora-driven development projects, migration scholars must put more emphasis on studying single populations rather than overarching theories and presuppositions which lump all migrants into categories which leave them seeming less than human or invisible.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

When something comes up in conversation with a person I have just met regarding what I do, where I go, how I dress, what music I listen to, what my research is on, and who I am in general, the most common question I get is,

“Why did you choose Africa?”

I used to just laugh and give a stock answer: “Before my Dad retired, he taught a high school course entitled ‘Human Behavior’, and his favorite part was when he could teach about the similarities between mountain gorillas and humans. As a kindergartener, my bedroom was packed with stuffed gorillas. I wanted to *be* Dian Fossey. She studied mountain gorillas in the Virunga Volcanic Mountain range spanning parts of Central Africa—The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Uganda. When I was old enough to realize that the mountain gorillas were in extreme danger of extinction, I became fascinated by the atrocities going on throughout Africa’s Great Lakes Region—Rwanda’s genocide, DRC’s proverbial World War III, Uganda’s rebel militias. From gorilla to guerrilla, the rest is history. Now I can’t get enough.”

Or I tell them: “As a freshman in high school, I worked with my World Cultures teacher to start a Model United Nations. As the new school, our students were given the

nations of less strategic importance to represent. I was the Honorable Delegate from Burkina Faso. ‘What! Where is that?’ I thought. So I learned Burkina Faso is a small, destitute, landlocked, desert country in West Africa with lots of very different cultural practices than those in America. ‘Africa? I’ve never been taught anything about Africa!’ I realized. So I spent as much time as I could over the next three years learning what I could about the continent. My last high school project before graduation was about where I would be in ten years, and I said that I would be working for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso’s capital. You can see how much sense it makes that I ended up working for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Freetown, Sierra Leone’s capital.”

Why did I choose Africa? I have no idea, no linear or academic answer. People do not want to put stock into a person who talks all the time about her feelings, doing things because of intuition, or falling into situations, so I try to have explanations ready. The true answer is that I think Africa chose me. West Africa chose me. Sierra Leone chose me.

I love West Africa because it makes me a better person. Perhaps it is the tropical climate and stifling humidity that so many others abhor. Maybe it is the characteristic that makes Africans with lesser capacity for acquiring material wealth develop such a greater appreciation for natural wealth. Whatever it is, I feel better, look healthier, think more clearly, sleep more soundly, smile uncontrollably, talk to more people, and know that I belong there.

Moreover, I now know that my passion for West Africa and African Studies has become a very selfish love. Instead of holding on to my experiences, I have to work to share them with others so that people can begin to understand that Africa as a whole is *far* more than megalomaniacal presidents, gruesome wars, starving children, pandemic diseases, growing deserts, and exotic safaris. It is the continent where life began, so, inherently, we are all African. Much of it is teeming with fertile land, natural resources, and incomprehensible room for expansion. Why else do you think Africa has been sliced like a cake for the rest of the world to feed on for so long? To add insult to injury, not only has it been divided but it has been chewed up and spit back out for Africans to deal with.

This is not to say that they have been completely forgotten—much to the contrary. Thousands of international organizations (IO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO) are resident throughout Africa—four-hundred of them in Sierra Leone as of Fall 2007—to assist fledgling democracies, post-conflict populations, and rampant public health problems. Many of them do a great service, save lives, live on a shoestring, and sacrifice a Western quality of life to do something that they believe they are meant to do. Many others, however, are only working to travel and “have adventures” in “dangerous places” before they become old enough to move back home, get married, settle down, and work in “real jobs.”

Expatriate employees—especially those working under the United Nations umbrella—earn exorbitant salaries and monthly subsistence allowances (MSA) amounting to at least two or three times what they would earn in their respective home

countries doing the same work. In a world where one's remuneration was based upon how much he or she was positively affecting the lives of others, that might be fair; however, that world is far from reality. Such salaries are a misallocation of needed financial resources in the developing world.

A huge number of people go on vacations where they pay to volunteer in remote areas and help villagers, expecting an experience straight from a Christian Charity commercial or The New York Times. Of course these experiences have their positives and often inspire change in the lives of the volunteers to return home and keep doing development work, but at what expense? I generally wonder why a man or woman will write a check for an African charity or work in an African slum for two weeks when the thought of doing so in the American ghetto is out of the question.

Even more interesting is the phenomenon in which a volunteer or international worker is given far more—in terms of hospitality, life lessons, and experience—than he or she can give in return, despite all the good intentions in his or her heart. In a 1968 address given to international volunteers in Mexico, Ivan Illich said, “To hell with good intentions” (Illich 1968) as his response. I will be the first to admit that I may have done more harm than good in places I have traveled. When internationals leave areas, they perpetuate a cycle of dependency on foreign assistance all the way from the bottom to the top that has entrenched a colonized-colonizer mentality deep in the social hierarchy long after colonization officially ceased (Memmi 1965). They instill false hopes in local people that all of their problems will be solved. They create knowledge vacuums because local populations have not been trained in upkeep of facilities and programs. If, since the

early 1960s, it has been obvious to people in developing countries that international volunteers and employees are really just sustaining their own livelihoods and assuaging their consciences, why are we not more actively searching for an alternative?

It is with all of these thoughts, two and a half years of African migration research, and three very different stays in Sub-Saharan Africa that I present the following information about the need to facilitate Diaspora-Driven Development for the West African nation of Sierra Leone. In a nutshell, a Diaspora-Driven Development Project is one in which immigrants return to their country of birth or make significant investments from abroad to assist the country's progress and the sustainability of development work by training those in the country who have never had the opportunity to travel abroad. I am not alone in my thinking that the time has come to search for a new approach to development work. Development workers and scholars have long felt that immigrant communities abroad are a necessary factor in the development equation; however, I may be one of few American individuals willing to admit that the best idea is to let them do it themselves. Work for the Africans that you are trying to assist—do not have them work for you. Work alongside them or under them. Let them—not us—come up with the ideas that will improve living conditions in their homes. The ideas are there. Now is time to put our interests aside and listen.

I have listened, and this is the story I have found. To the best of my ability, the content in these pages make up a factual, straightforward, and honest academic work. However, in focusing on a country I have fallen in love with and presenting detailed accounts of interest to a group of people who have accepted me as an honorary citizen, I

will not pretend that my position is not subjective. All of the opinions and depictions contained herein are mine and do not reflect those of the University of Delaware, my thesis advisers, The United Nations, or the Sierra Leoneans with whom I have worked.

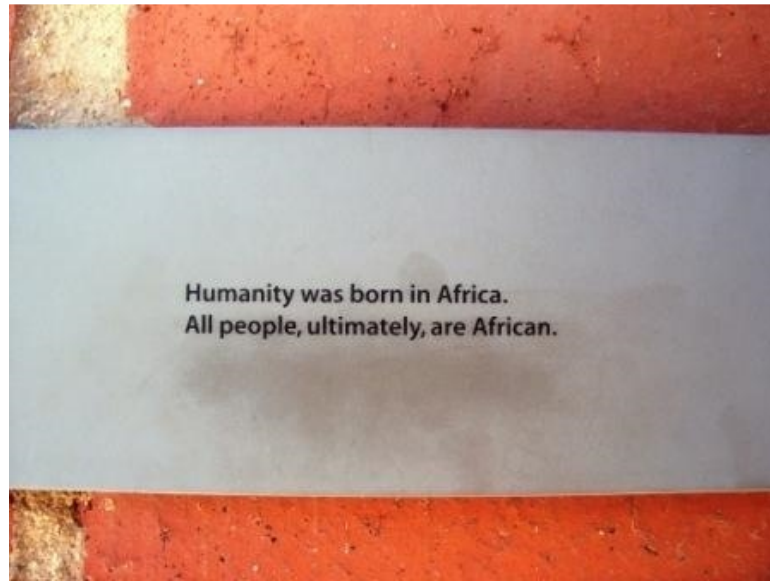


Photo 1. Plaque hung outside the Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa¹

¹ All photos within this thesis were taken by the author.

Chapter 2

RELEVANT THEORIES AND TERMS

Every academic has a field, and every field has a lexicon. This text will attempt to not get bogged down in theory, but an introductory lesson may be necessary to frame the rest of the thoughts within.

Theories of Mass Migration and Return

In discussing his typologies of migration, William Petersen states that the major difference between individual migration and mass migration is that the latter is the social pattern which is created by the pioneers of the former. “Migration becomes a style, an established pattern, an example of collective behavior. Once it is well begun, the growth of such a movement is semi-automatic: so long as there are people to emigrate, the principal cause of emigration is prior emigration” (Petersen 1958:263). This snowball effect can be seen in myriad ethnic enclaves throughout the United States and other Western nations. Higher aspirations alone are not enough to determine the exact resettling location of a voluntary immigrant; social momentum provides the focal point for pursuing such aspirations.

This is not to say that migrants and their families do not have minds of their own, but rather that the ease of passage and possibility of an established community upon arrival in a new country makes following former emigration patterns attractive. Aguirre,

in his article exploring the Marielitos' mass migration from Cuba to the United States (Aguirre 1994), makes it clear that it is damaging to label all migrants from one location as the same. When examined critically, mass migrations consist of a heterogeneous mix of people with many different backgrounds, lifestyles, assets, and motivations for their movement. On the other hand, it is possible to determine certain aspects of populations involved in mass migrations which are similar. These similarities and differences must both be utilized in establishing immigration policies and reports.

We are currently in an age of mass migration (Williams 1998). Multiple changes in technologies, such as transportation, communication, declining costs of transportation, increasing family resources, and the growing attractiveness of destinations have transformed how social space is perceived. The same thought should also be projected when it comes to return: although strategies of return migration are not well understood, it is known to be more associated with the migrants' country of origin than with the country of destination. Therefore, it will take more positive change (socially, culturally, politically, and economically) in a person's home country to be a pull factor for return.

Due to several well-documented trends, the return migration of refugees and voluntary migrants has largely become known as "the myth of return." The more individuals become established in a host country, the less likely it is that they will return to their birth country. There are myriad reasons for this. A person's whole family may now be in the host country. Children may have been born and marriages with someone from another ethnic group may have occurred. Job security and income may be too great to leave. If the home country is considered post-conflict (as Sierra Leone is), the political,

economic, and cultural stability may not seem to be improving. Others may have been outside their country of origin for so long that they are completely unsure of its current makeup. “Because repatriation is usually a medium-to-long term solution, it involves re-uprooting social structures which have adapted and developed in exile” (Zetter 1999:2). The permanence of return and its implications for citizenship are often too much, especially in a world where mobility is growing increasingly important.

The phenomena of “brain drain”—emigration of skilled professionals from developing nations—and “brain waste”—the underutilization of professionals’ skills upon arrival in host countries—have long resulted in lose-lose situations for poor countries. According to the United Nations, each doctor trained in Sub-Saharan Africa who migrates to the Western world for work saves their host country \$184,000, and \$4 billion per year is spent in Africa paying approximately 150,000 expatriate workers to fill the gaps from the brain drain (Africa's Health-Care Brain Drain 2004; Sako 2002). The illusion of return and staggering statistics revealed about emigration from developing nations have prompted many researchers, organizations, host and home governments to seek innovative solutions to reaping the fruits of diasporas’ time abroad.

The term *Diaspora*, highly in vogue and overused in current development discussions (Dufoix 2008), here means that a group of people have “a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support for the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship” (Clifford 2004:305). Those who migrate and choose to cut ties completely are vastly different than those who migrate to improve their own standing

but also feel a responsibility to give back. The same social momentum starting with a few pioneers (i.e. leaders) in a mass migration must be established when examining the possibility for a Diaspora's return. Mobilizing resources and facilitating Diaspora leaders with economic incentives and institutional legitimacy for the beginning of their journey will ease fears in those who follow and provide frameworks for improvement in future mass return migrations.

The Resource Mobilization Approach

Today's post-modern world requires post-modern theories if one wishes to attempt an understanding of the post-modern individuals living within it. Largely established as a way to explain the innumerable identity-related social movements and instances of collective protest in the late 1960s and early 1970s, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald put forth the theory of resource mobilization (Zald 1977). It is a highly rational approach to collective behavior that claims the most important factors for the success of any social movement are resources, centralized organization, and a goal-oriented approach. This is because collective grievances are ubiquitous in free, developed societies, but not all can mobilize to assert their grievances.

Social movement decision makers can resolve their strategic dilemmas and deal with competition between social movement organizations most optimally when they become equipped with moral, cultural, social-organizational, human, and material resources (McCarthy 2004). These resources can be both intangible and tangible (Freeman 1979), running the range of money, investments, institutional legitimacy,

cultural know-how, networks of individuals and corporations, movement infrastructure, labor, professional skills of activists, and office buildings (Staggenborg 2008).

The most successful movements are no longer set apart from the corporate world or the government; rather, they must rely on funding from private foundations, governments, and established organizations to survive. Movement members can also be as active or passive as they want because the professionalization of social movements ensures that movement leadership will do the real legwork as long as others contribute by donating money or sending prefabricated letters to policymakers.

Critics of resource mobilization feel that it and its proponents emphasize rationality too heavily. When public goods and sweeping change are the basis of a movement, the “free rider” dilemma says that the *truly* rational thing to do is sit back and watch others take risks while reaping the benefits (Olson 1965). Therefore, in order for a movement to gain active participants, emotion, ideology, culture, grievance, collective memory, and the role of the mass media all play a very large role and must not be ignored. Tangible, concrete accomplishments are also often hard to come by throughout a movement’s operation and rather judged retrospectively and subjectively (Buechler 1993). Moreover, the term “resources” is often far too vague to evaluate a movement because—as seen with Freeman’s definition above—they can be molded to fit many different things.

To the credit of resource mobilization theory and in a recent attempt to make sense of things, Goodwin and Jasper said:

The search for universally valid propositions and models, at least for anything so complex as social movements, is bound to fail.... It makes

little sense to search for that presumptive handful of necessary and sufficient causes that allegedly explain each and every social movement.... At the theoretical level, we need to recognize that a variety of concepts and theories may help us “hit” this moving target.... Some kinds of movements require political opportunities, whereas others do not; some recruit through preexisting social networks, whereas others do not; some require powerful grievances or collective identities, whereas others do not (Jasper 1999:51-2).

Diaspora-Driven Development initiatives are absolutely movements which require resources, organization, and entrepreneurial leadership. The other “ingredients” for a successful program are there and the assessment of goals can be easily monitored, but backing institutions have to make the final step and be receptive to adaptation throughout project implementation.

Chapter 3

OVERVIEW OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MIGRATION

Africans are a global people. Not only can every human being trace his or her roots to the first humans who migrated from Tanzania's Great Rift Valley up to 200,000 years ago, but historical and contemporary trends show that Africa—with 25 percent of the world's landmass and 10 percent of its total population—is the continent with the most mobile population (Curtin 1997). Ancient traditions still used among small ethnic groups whose primary sustenance comes from hunting, gathering, agriculture and pastoralism result in frequent migrations. As these lifestyles are tied closely to the whims of nature, it is required that individuals, families, and groups relocate whenever herds migrate, vegetation is lacking, or land loses fertility.

One of the most large-scale migrations in history was that of the Bantu people who uprooted from the area now encompassing Nigeria and Cameroon and formed settlements largely throughout the entire southern half of the continent, bringing their languages and joining with indigenous groups along the way. Beginning in the sixteenth century, 400 years of the Atlantic slave trade resulted in upwards of 15 million Africans forced from the continent (Curtin 1997), and the legacies of European colonialism laid the groundwork for many of the migration patterns that have been seen to this day. The movement of Africans today is largely within the continent. However, it is important to

note that the professional, illegal (or irregular), forced, and temporary labor migration of Africans is becoming more and more globalized. Whereas the population of Europe was three times that of Africa in 1950, the two were roughly equal by 2007. Conversely, Africa's population is expected to triple that of Europe by the year 2050 (Chamie 2007).

In 2006, 39 of the 50 countries with the least development were in Africa (United Nations Development Program 2006). With over 70 percent of some of its nations living on less than the equivalent of \$1US per day, migration becomes a way to escape crushing poverty. In 2005, there were an estimated 17 million international migrants in Africa (Economic and Social Council 2006). More importantly, migration often becomes a means for survival. Refugees represented 18 percent of those international migrants in 2006 (approximately 3.06 million), a higher percentage than in any other continent (UNFPA 2006). Some estimates in 2006 placed the number of IDPs at well over 11 million throughout Sub-Saharan Africa (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center 2006), and some estimates pointed to as many as 13 million. Sudan accounted for the highest number of IDPs at 6 million. At the beginning of 2006, there were an estimated 5.2 million 'people of concern' to UNHCR throughout Africa—including refugees, IDPs, stateless persons, and asylum seekers (UNHCR 2006). However, it is important to note that these are only those persons who have found their way to UNHCR sites and been documented. Actual numbers are much higher.

The UNHCR estimates suggest how difficult it is to acquire adequate data on African migrants. Some nations have never conducted a proper census, many individuals possess no documentation for identification, and countries often have very different laws

regarding immigration, emigration, and citizenship. For example, Côte d'Ivoire considers children born of immigrants within its borders as immigrants, whereas a child born in many other African nations is a citizen by place of birth (Kress 2006). As the population with the least stability and security, it is especially difficult to get reliable data on forced migrants.

There are many historic precedents to explain why Africans are so mobile. With the Berlin Conference's "cutting of the African cake" into politico-administrative entities in the nineteenth century, borders were often imposed upon African ethnic groups, splitting established nations. Thereby, members of an ethnic group could become citizens of two or more states, while most African societies include members of several ethnic groups. If at all possible, many individuals within these groups continued to cross colonial boundaries and lived their lives as they always had. Some states in Africa—especially the largest and those which have experienced significant conflict, such as Sudan and the DRC—have extremely porous borders.

Migration into Africa has occurred throughout the years as well. The colonial period brought not only European administrators and farmers, but also Syro-Lebanese merchants to West Africa, as well as merchants and workers from the Indian subcontinent to East and Southern Africa. In the post-independence period, these populations generally became privileged but vulnerable minorities. For example, successful Lebanese business people in Sierra Leone whose families have been in the country for generations are still not allowed to vote because they are not African by bloodline (U.S. Department of State 2006). These communities add a vibrancy and international flair to

many urban atmospheres in Sub-Saharan Africa as migrant communities do throughout the world, but they can also act as an oppressive, quasi-colonial force among local populations.

Colonialism started the process of rapid urbanization witnessed throughout the continent. In 2007, cities in Sub-Saharan Africa were growing fastest in the world at a rate of 4.58 percent annually. Migration from rural areas to cities is expected to result in a majority, 53.5 percent, of Africans living in cities by 2030 (UN-HABITAT 2007). The growth of cities is resulting in increasing populations of slum dwellers, homeless individuals, and the impoverished. Consequently, poverty and extremely close living conditions are causing diseases to spread very quickly.

Vestiges of colonialism can be seen in many other aspects of contemporary African migration. Outflows of intercontinental migrants, mainly to Western Europe, were traditionally directed primarily to former colonial powers: for example, Congolese emigrating to Belgium, Senegalese to France or Nigerians to the United Kingdom. In the 1990s, the handover of power from White minority to Black majority populations in Southern Africa resulted in an exodus of Whites to majority White areas, mirroring the outpourings of the 1960s during the independence era. A quarter of a million White South Africans have emigrated since the end of apartheid in 1994, but the country is still home to 80 percent of the continent's 5 million Whites (Southern African Migration Project 2005). These emigrations of Whites often had disastrous economic consequences, as they played key roles in agriculture, business, and government, and rarely thought to train the Blacks left behind before their exodus. In response to a need to

get away from former colonial powers, many privileged and studious Black Africans have also made the choice to emigrate to the United States, China, or Russia since the 1960s.

In the post-Cold War period, large-scale repatriations of refugees and resettlements of IDPs have occurred. In the early 1990s, there were an estimated 5.7 million uprooted Mozambicans, including 1.7 million refugees and 4 million internally displaced. By 1996, most had returned home (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2001) (Amnesty International 2004). The beginning of this century saw the end of several brutal conflicts—in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa. Each stood at a different point of post-conflict development and reconciliation, but the massive return of people to their homelands reflected growing stability. Likewise, the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) of child soldiers has received increased attention from international authorities and NGOs. As of 2007, an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 child soldiers participated in conflicts throughout the world, with Africa's the most publicized. They can be boys and girls as young as six years old taken from their homes and often forced to kill their family members as initiation. The end of Liberia's civil war saw DDRR of 21,000 child soldiers (AI, 2004), estimates place at least 30,000 children participating in the DRC conflict, and Sierra Leone's civil war involved approximately 10,000 (Allen 2006). States that have experienced conditions leading to massive uprooting are poorly equipped socially, economically, politically, and physically to deal with the massive returns accompanying

peace, making stability difficult to maintain without the creation of institutions for income-generation and employment.

Optimists and pessimists alike are able to point to situations in Sub-Saharan Africa which support their arguments. The growth of good governance, peace accords, and truth and reconciliation committees increasing stability in many nations can be countered by crushing violence and economic collapse evident in others. With increasing peace between Northern and Southern Sudan since the end of its 22-year civil war in 2005 has come an increased focus on the genocide taking place in its western province of Darfur. An estimated 400,000 Sudanese have died in this area roughly the size of Texas. The conflict has produced an estimated 2.5 million refugees, 5,335,000 IDPs (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2006), and has spilled over to Chad. The Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) took power from warlords in Somalia in June 2006, and Ethiopian forces backed by the US ousted the UIC in December. Far from ending the conflict, Somalia saw its worst fighting since 1991 starting in April 2007, and conditions between warring religious factions in this failed state may fuel the potential for heightened conflict long into the future. As a target in the “War on Terror,” the US anti-terrorism task-force stationed in Djibouti monitored Somalia as a haven for Islamists, bombing suspected terrorist sites throughout 2007. Living conditions under Zimbabwe’s ruler, Robert Mugabe, have gone from bad to worse to near impossible. Zimbabweans flooded over the South African border in numbers never seen before (up to 2000 per week in June 2007), seeking livable conditions despite an increasingly xenophobic

society. Indeed, 23 of the 40 most unstable countries were in Africa in 2007 (The Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy 2007).

The migration of Africans has historically been one of intra-continental migration, generally over borders into neighboring countries or circulating throughout regions. However, recent trends have shown that the number of international migrants in developing countries has barely risen over the past few years, but numbers of migrants seeking employment or asylum in developed nations have been growing rapidly (Economic and Social Council 2006). This phenomenon suggests that widening wealth gaps between the Global North and Global South are becoming impossible to ignore, as they impel international migration.

Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed the creation of numerous international organizations for the purpose of removing barriers to trade and the free movement of goods, capital, and people. Generally, these agreements have been poorly implemented or contradicted by policies and practices in member states (Ricca 1990; Adepoju 2001). Despite the existence of many zones in which there is nominally freedom of movement by nationals of signatories to these agreements, there is nonetheless a great deal of illegal migration.

Illegal migration within Sub-Saharan Africa is varied and complex. It is often tolerated in periods of good relations and economic prosperity, only to be repressed during economic downturns or periods of international tensions. For example, the seasonal labor migration of many citizens of Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire played a key role in the Ivoirian economy since even before French colonization in 1886. However,

instability and an anti-foreigner campaign launched to keep a contested president in power led to over 365,000 Burkinabe returnees in 2006 and 2007 (Kress 2006). One scholar enumerated 23 mass expulsions of migrants conducted by 16 different African states between 1958 and 1996 (Adepoju 2001).

Intercontinental migration of Africans to Europe and the Middle East increasingly includes poorly educated labor migrants, and irregular migration has been skyrocketing over the past decade. The areas receiving the most international attention include those closest to the Afro-Mediterranean coast—namely Spain, the Canary Islands, Italy, and Malta. An estimated 31,000 illegal migrants arrived in the Canary Islands in 2006, a 600 percent increase from 2005. At least 6,000 others were thought to have died in their attempts to reach the islands throughout the year (Canaries Migrant Death Toll Soars 2006). In an effort to stop boats before they start, Frontex, the EU's border control agency, has been patrolling the shores of Senegal and Mauritania; however, as some West African nations are stepping up their security, others—such as The Gambia—are opening up as smuggling ports (Fleming 2006). African nationals who successfully reach Europe often face harsh realities such as unemployment, racism, and homelessness, but these are risks they are willing to take to escape the lack of opportunity faced at home.

Policies aiming to curb or halt illegal immigration altogether are being drafted, and EU and AU nations are now working together to educate populations about the benefits of legal migration and the hazards of illegal migration. Spain's government signed several bilateral immigration treaties with Western African nations in 2006. Senegal, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Gambia in particular agreed to help stop

potential illegal migrants before they left and to facilitate the repatriation of those caught once they arrive on Spain's shores. In return, Spain agreed to provide each nation with several million Euros in aid over a five-year period and authorized some recruitment of skilled and unskilled African laborers. In addition, the EU drafted treaties to help in the fight against illegal migration and trafficking, attract skilled labor, and create brain circulation instead of brain drain. Forty million Euros to boost job creation within Western Africa were also allocated.

One of the greatest blows to African development has become its "brain drain"—or the emigration of skilled professionals and students to developed nations. Human and intellectual capital is being lost to the continent at the rate of between 20,000 (Mutume 2003) and 70,000 ("The African Press: Spain's Fences Fail to Stop Immigrants" 2006) of Africa's most qualified individuals per year, amounting to about one-third living outside of their countries of origin (Sako 2002). Africans in the United States possess the highest average level of education of any immigrant group compared with other regions. 48.9 percent of African immigrants hold a Bachelor's Degree, 19.4 percent have earned their Master's Degrees, and 30,000 have their PhDs before even entering the U.S. ("African Immigrants..." 2000). Not only are these individuals unable to contribute directly to the development of their homelands, but, Africa loses approximately US\$184,000 in tax revenue with each migrating professional (Federation for American Immigrant Reform 2002). To add insult to injury, the World Bank estimates that the continent spends US\$4 billion every year to replace them with non-African expatriate workers ("An Overview of Evidence" 2004).

Many Africans entering developed nations are attracted by “the good life” portrayed in international media which promises success based on individual merit. Many of their home nations rife with patronage and corruption no longer hold such promise. However, a “brain waste”—underutilization of skills accompanied by underpayment in employment—is often experienced. As the most educated immigrant group in the US, annual household incomes of Africans are still reportedly an average of US\$11,600 less than those of Asian immigrants ("African Immigrants in the United States are the Nation's Most Highly Educated Group" 2000). Education, training, and job experience abroad often holds little value in immigration countries, and immigrants are often forced to work jobs far below their skill level. The overall experience of living in an industrialized nation may be more stable and secure, but dreams of climbing the socioeconomic ladder are much more difficult than many imagine.

One of the most devastating aspects of the brain drain involves the healthcare sector. Whether trained at home or in the Western world, developed nations are scooping up the most promising doctors and nurses throughout Africa with unsurpassable incentives—earning up to twenty times their current salaries, for example (Kaba 2006)—and international recruitment drives (Batata 2005). The World Health Organization’s minimum standard to ensure basic healthcare among a population is one doctor for every five thousand people. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 38 countries fall short of this standard, and thirteen have one or fewer doctors for every 20,000 people. As of 2006, Sierra Leone had only one doctor for every 33,000 people and 5 dentists in the entire country of 6 million (United Nations Development Program 2006). The increasing morbidity and

mortality of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria throughout the continent are being compounded by this, resulting in a “dual brain drain”—one of emigration and death. Malawi, for example, has one nurse for every 5,900 people (Hamilton and Yau 2004) and a 14.2 percent HIV infection rate (Central Intelligence Agency 2007).

Within the continent, the phenomenon of “brain circulation” occurs in which individuals migrate from lesser-developed nations to those with booming economies, such as Gabon, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa. Jobs left vacant by those emigrating to the US and Europe are often filled by migrants (Adepoju 2004). This reduces inter-continental drain and helps African development, but several countries in greatest need of development continue to lose valuable human resources.

As a response to the desire for many Africans to emigrate to developed nations in the Western world, governments and international organizations—namely IOM and the UN—are creating Diaspora programs in an attempt to have African nationals aid in the development of their homelands. Physical repatriations of African professionals are still few and far between, but these programs have been created in hope that some are willing to help citizens in their homes by transferring knowledge via technology or teaching during short-term stays. Financial investments from Africans in the Diaspora are also becoming increasingly important.

Remittances—money sent from abroad to an individual’s family or community—provide a crucial form of income to millions throughout Africa. Official statistics from formal remittance flows are reported at US\$17 billion per year, but flows are increasingly

sent through the informal economy. Therefore, The World Bank's best estimates suggest that Africans working abroad send home up to US\$93 billion per year (The World Bank 2004). Remittances often reach poor households more than other aid does, boosting disposable incomes, producing multiplier effects, providing for children's education, building homes, and starting small businesses. Although official development assistance is assumed the main source of external financing, a 2005 UN report revealed that remittances have overtaken Foreign Direct Investment throughout the continent, with the average per capita remittance received at around US\$200 each month (Hamam 2005). They have not been linked to an overall increase in countries' development, but they have bolstered national savings and shored up credit ratings in some. They have become so important in some areas that mobile phone companies in countries such as Kenya and Tanzania started working in 2007 to allow migrants to send money transfers via text message (Mwakugu 2007). Evidence in certain scholars' research suggested that Somalia's economy is virtually being kept alive by its remittances (Lindley 2005).

Many of the trends in African migration could be discerned in other lesser-developed areas. However, as the poorest region and one in need of great attention regarding economic development, healthcare innovation, environmental sustainability, and political stability, they have to be examined more closely than they have in the past to come up with durable and practical solutions. If coordinated migration policies and their necessary funding are provided, the developed world and Sub-Saharan Africa alike may be able to harness the diverse yet equally positive effects of African migration—among them the types of projects portrayed in the following pages.

Chapter 4

THE HISTORY OF SIERRA LEONE

When the Portuguese explorer Pedro da Sintra first laid eyes on land in 1462, he called it *Serra Lyoa* (Lion Mountain). There was a staggering difference in terrain from the waterline to the “rough and wild” crouching lion (Kup 1961:6) of the Peninsula Mountain Range. *Sierra Leone* is simply a fusion of that name from Portuguese, Italian, and English. Its borders have changed several times since its discovery; however, the modern nation-state is located in West Africa and borders the Atlantic Ocean to the West, Liberia to the South and East, and Guinea to the North. To put its size in the context of American geography, it is slightly smaller than South Carolina (Central Intelligence Agency 2009). Too few people in America even know that Sierra Leone is a *country*, let alone a place full of people whose history is intertwined with our own. Therefore, to put its current social, political, and economic stance into context, it is imperative to take a look at its long, varied, and often troublesome past.

Precolonial Era

The prehistory of Sierra Leone is obscure because its ancient societies had no written language (Lamp 1990). The limited amount we know today comes mostly from ancient artifacts. Archaeologists discovered stone, wood, and iron tools inside a cave in

the Western Kono District that peg the first inhabitants of the area arriving as early as 2500 BC (Alie 1990:6). Several sculptures of heads and other anamorphic forms created from wood, terracotta, stone, iron, and ivory have been unearthed as well. They are often attributed to the *Sapi* and *Bullom* cultures, undoubtedly because “The Portuguese called [Sierra Leone’s] coastal people the Sapes” (Alie 1990) when they first set foot on the mainland. Numerous intricate ivory carvings were commissioned by the Portuguese to take back home with them, and Sapi-Portuguese creations can be viewed at a number of art museums in Europe and North America to this day (Bassani 1988). Unfortunately, there is very little else known about the Sapes due to the melding of cultures and warfare imposed by the *Mane* people of the Mali Kingdom in the 1500s. Many Sapes were sold as slaves, while many others migrated to the Cape Verde Islands (Alie 1990:41). Today, the *Sherbro* are believed to be the result of the Mane conquering the Bullom. The *Loko* are the fusion of the Mane and *Temne*—the majority ethnic group of the North. The majority ethnic group in the South—*Mende*—are believed to be a form of Mane fused with *Kissi* and *Gola*. These convoluted relations are important insofar as they point to the continuum and interrelation of people entrenched in beliefs of “tribalism” among Sierra Leone’s numerous ethnic groups today.

In 1594, Alvares d’Almada wrote to the King that the colonization of Sierra Leone by the Portuguese would be a far better investment than staying in the Cape Verde Islands because the former was “tranquil and the inhabitants were satisfied.... So abundant are the natural products of this land that it is difficult to mention any one thing that is lacking, blessed as it is...” (Kup 1961:13). His suggestion, and those of many

future merchants, went unheeded while the Dutch and British continually encroached further along the West African coastline. As a result, proxy wars for European control of Sierra Leone and piracy of traded goods often occurred off the shores of the peninsula and its Bunce, Bonthe, and Banana Islands.

Slavery is as much tied to the history of Sierra Leone as the rest of West Africa, and in some ways more complicated. British slave traders began docking at Bunce Island in 1562, the Portuguese were supplied with slaves throughout the 16th century, and the Danes and Dutch participated peripherally for many years (Bergner 2003:28). Between 1670 and 1730, the British Royal African Company (BRAC) moved in to dominate trade between Sierra Leone, London, the North American colonies, and the West Indies. At first, too few slaves were sold to even make docking ships in Sierra Leone profitable, but numbers grew to between 1,500 and 3,000 per year not long after. Warring tribes near the coast would sell enemy prisoners and the *Fulas*—part of the vast number of nomadic *Fulani*, or *Peul*, flung across the Sahara Desert—would bring slave caravans “from the northern interior” in exchange for European goods (Kup 1961:60-1). Many slaves became a part of the triangle trade in Jamaica and Barbados, but the majority today whose roots can be traced to Sierra Leone were sent to South Carolina and Georgia because of their skills in cultivating rice. Plantation owners in the American Colonial South knew rice would grow perfectly in its wet, semi-tropical climate, but they had no knowledge of how to do so. Hence, they paid high prices for a small number from Africa’s similarly wet, tropical “Rice Coast” (Opala n.d.). Those who are still resident in

the Low Country Region of South Carolina and Georgia are known as *Gullah* (Opala n.d.).

The Province of Freedom

After a few hundred years of participation, Great Britain began declaring its air “too pure to accommodate slavery” and outlawed the practice completely in 1772 (Alie 1990: 48). When the British and American Colonists fought in the Revolutionary War from 1775 to 1783, slaves loyal to the British crown were provided the opportunity to escape slavery in the American South. Many went to the cold Canadian island of Nova Scotia. Others fled to England, where they were still treated as second-rate humans. They lived in poverty and encroached upon white British society until the abolitionist Granville Sharp came up with an idea to establish a “Province of Freedom” in Africa for their resettlement.

Sharp’s intentions may have been for them to be “the freest and happiest people on earth”, but doubtless the funders of the project simply wanted to get rid of the Blacks as quickly as possible. In 1786, Sierra Leone was declared “too disease-ridden to hold a British prison colony,” so the white prisoners were sent to settle in Australia. Just one year later, however, 350 Blacks—along with approximately twenty White craftsmen, five White doctors, and seventy White prostitutes—sailed to the same “disease-ridden” coast to establish their utopia.

Within the first year, a very high percentage of these first inhabitants died, giving Sierra Leone its longtime reputation as “the white man’s grave” (Kingsley 2004 [1897]). Nonetheless, neither they nor the British gave up on their Province of Freedom. Those

who survived were joined by 1,200 freedmen from Nova Scotia and 550 deported Maroons from Jamaica, and countless “Recaptives” rescued from slave ships by the British Navy but not returned to their homelands. This group of returnees melded together in Freetown, and their future generations have since been known as the Krio (or Creole). They proved a very resilient lot with their own cultural “blend of Western and numerous African cultures” (Alie 1990). They were provided with colonial education in Freetown and became “the ‘firsts’ of the professional class in West Africa” (Alie 1990). During the 1860s through 1890s, they became an elite class who branched out throughout the region—in modern-day Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, The Gambia, and Niger. The Sierra Leonean Colony became known as “the Mother” and “the Athens” of West Africa, and its founders hoped it would prove “an agency for the social and spiritual regeneration of the whole Negro world” (Alie 1990).

The Colony and The Protectorate

There have always been marked differences between Sierra Leone’s coast and its interior, largely as a result of Colonial economic exploitation and administration. The Colony was established by the British in 1808 along the Sierra Leonean peninsula (currently Freetown or Western Area), and the borders which make up its modern boundaries were not considered The Protectorate until almost a century later. Although the action was said to be done with the best interests of the people at heart, the British governor’s plans for The Protectorate are believed to have been “incomprehensible to the majority, if not all, of the chiefs he met” (Alie 1990: 126). In the interior, there was

almost no legal evidence that the chiefs had given up their land, and the proclamation made on August 31, 1896 establishing the Protectorate was only made in Freetown.

Essentially, African inhabitants of the Protectorate had to live with all of the negatives of imperial imposition (e.g. taxes on property and houses) without any of the benefits (e.g. higher education and healthcare). This led to hostilities between the chiefs and Freetown administrators, oppression from the Frontier Police, the Temne Hut Tax War and Mende revolt at Bumpe in 1898, and several armed uprisings throughout the colonial era. A railway line and roads were built in the late 1890s to access areas of agricultural production and mining. They came to an end far before hitting the northern part of the Protectorate and were not intended for use by the general population, but large trading and administrative centers popped up along their routes and populations swelled. The current provincial capitals—Makeni (Northern), Bo (Southern), and Kenema (Eastern)—were all established along the railway lines, and they opened up Colony schools to many of the youth in the Protectorate with an eye on education.

There came a rise of an “educated Protectorate elite” in the 1930s, but they were denied the right to represent the people of their areas. Rather, a very small number of Paramount Chiefs were selected to sit on Sierra Leone’s Legislative Council because it had long been known that their socioeconomic situations were closely linked with bowing to their Colonial masters. In 1938, the Sierra Leone Branch of the West African Youth League “played a very important role in reducing the social gap in the Colony and the Protectorate,” and “post-Second World War constitutional provisions had the effect of transferring power to the Protectorate” (Alie 1990: 182-3). The attitude of the British

colonial administration toward the Krio population was on a constant decline until independence, so more power was transferred to their educated counterparts in the Protectorate as time went on. Nonetheless, Krio culture continued to appeal “to the upwardly mobile” and their language became a *lingua franca*. Those in the Protectorate who benefitted often made the move to Freetown or abroad, and most of the inhabitants who stayed there continued to lag far behind Freetown’s population in terms of opportunity. To this day, it remains the same.

The colonial era changed the social structure of traditional Sierra Leonean ethnic groups. Chief structures and communal values fell by the wayside. Traditional religion was dropped for Christian worship. Students fortunate enough to receive an education were taught to be British and not Sierra Leonean. Those not fortunate enough were left illiterate. Farmers were encouraged to give up subsistence agriculture for cash crops. Laborers in Freetown and miners in the Protectorate suffered under abysmal working conditions and received equally poor remuneration. All things Western were valued and all things African were loathed. The gap between urban and rural populations (especially in the North where infrastructure did not go) continually widened, and migration to urban centers with aims to overcome the gap resulted in slums and volatile communities of impoverished, uneducated, and unemployed people.

Independence

Britain began making plans to decolonize immediately following World War II as a result of its weakened economic and military position as opposed to altruism or a

change of heart. The Protectorate Assembly was established in Sierra Leone in 1946 to give a greater voice to Protectorate inhabitants beyond the Colony's Legislative Assembly and to move the people toward independence. The Assembly and a new drafted Constitution effectively transferred power to the Chiefs of The Protectorate, and the Krio population in Freetown was vehemently opposed. The division led to the formation in the Protectorate of one of the country's most well-known parties, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), initially led by Sir Milton Margai, Albert Margai (his brother), and Siaka Stevens. In 1958, the new Constitution took effect with the Colonial Governor as President and Sir Milton Margai as elected Prime Minister.

Demands for political power upon independence immediately took effect. For example, Albert Margai and Siaka Stevens broke off to form the more radical People's National Party (PNP), and Stevens broke off yet again just before independence to form the All People's Congress (APC—currently in power). What may have started off as a few men's desire for personal power also became grounds for different ethnic groups to vie for control. Stevens' APC became a party followed by many Temne because they believed the government was becoming "a Mende hegemony" (Alie 1990:217). After Sierra Leone's Independence was declared on April 27, 1961, Sir Milton ran government with a steady hand and a tolerance for the opposition until his death in 1964. Albert succeeded him with much more radical tendencies, and accusations of tribalism and corruption became the norm. Ethnic tensions reached their peak in 1967 with Sierra Leone's first general election as a Republic.

Decline

Following the 1967 election, the APC won the majority and the Governor-General swore in Siaka Stevens as Prime Minister without question, despite accusations of rampant election fraud from both sides. Immediately prior to Stevens naming his cabinet, the army commander, Lansana, staged the country's first in a long line of military coups d'état and attempted coups. Riots and protests in the street became the norm. Politics became even more embroiled with ethnic tensions and unemployed youths found outlets for their aggression in the hands of party bosses.

Stevens continued heading the government after Lansana reinstated him, and endemic corruption, economic mismanagement, and international debt continued to rise. Stevens declared a state of emergency in 1970 when the new United Democratic Party (UDP) threatened his support from Freetown and the northern provinces. As threats continued by way of assassination and coup attempts, Stevens consolidated more power by naming his own supporters to government, ordering incarceration and execution of several opposition members, and declaring Sierra Leone a one-party state. The APC and Stevens held almost complete power over the country until 1985, when he amended the Constitution so that Major-General J. S. Momoh could succeed him. From 1985 to 1991, Momoh served as President and the country continued its downward spiral. According to Daniel Bergner, twenty-nine years of successive dictatorships brought:

Mismanagement so thorough and corruption so complete that the government no longer had any regular revenue, was propped up almost entirely by international aid, and paid its civil servants so infrequently that they looted their own offices, selling off their typewriters and desks and light fixtures to feed their families. Everything that Britain had, in reality,

bequeathed to Sierra Leone—decent schools, decent roads, dependable electricity—was, by the 1990s, gone. The unpaid teachers sold exam scores; the unpaid education officials sold secondary school placements and professional school degrees; the unmaintained roads had given way to impassable craters; and, except where private generators made for specks of light, the capital, every evening, became a place of total darkness (2003: 31).

Then, the chaos that brought Sierra Leone and its people to the world stage exploded onto the scene.

Civil War

While the government and public sector were imploding as a result of poverty, corruption, and mismanagement, peace and stability were exploding throughout the region. Protests, looting, and labor strikes were frequent in the capital and throughout areas from where the majority of agricultural and mineral exports came. Starting in 1989, Liberia was in the midst of a vicious civil war led by ex-President and rebel leader Charles Taylor. A group of young students expelled from Fourah Bay College in 1985 for their opposition to government were busy fomenting revolution abroad. Their military leader was Foday Sankoh. Upon their return, they began recruiting and spreading their ideology throughout the Kono diamond mines. In 1991, this group launched their first attack as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), swathes of refugees immediately began fleeing to neighboring Guinea, and President Momoh pleaded with the West African region to send troops as reinforcement (Noble 1991:A7).



Photo 2. Old Fourah Bay College, originally symbolizing Freetown as the “Athens of West Africa,” was bombed during the Civil War and has yet to be restored.

There seemed to be no real rhyme or reason to the actions which the RUF took—neither ethnic affiliation nor rigid political ideology. Nonetheless, they left a bloodstained trail in their wake. Their aim was largely to take control of the alluvial diamond mines in the northeast. When they entered villages, they would often decapitate leaders, rape women, amputate limbs, kill anyone who did not seem to be acquiescing, burn children, and abduct young men and women to fill their ranks. Often, these girl and boy child soldiers were forced to kill their family members or make choices about who would live and die. Heavy amounts of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and alcohol were involved in the desensitization of RUF fighters, and most were brainwashed to believe that the government was the only body to be blamed for their suffering.

The lines became blurred quickly when non-RUF belligerents entered areas simply to exploit the chaos for their own means and other rebel groups cropped up. For

example, another group with little affiliation or marked hostility to other rebel factions were The West Side Boys, often described by international media as flamboyant and incessantly drunk (BBC Africa 2000). The only distinction which can be made about the rebels is that disenfranchised, indigent, unemployed youth were easy targets for recruitment. The war erupted more as a result of economic strife and overt manipulation than anything else, but the great irony in it all is those affected most by the violence were neither to blame for the conditions in the country nor in positions of economic privilege to be exploited.

In 1991, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front (NPF) of Liberia entered Sierra Leone and also wanted control of the diamond mines. In 1992, Young military officers in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) sent President Momoh into exile and established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) to run the government. By 1993, their lack of success in driving back the RUF led to the hiring of Executive Outcomes, a South African mercenary firm, to do so for them. In 1996, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah (SLPP) was elected via Presidential election to take over from the NPRC, but Johnny Paul Koroma and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) ousted him in 1997 after peace talks with the RUF failed. The AFRC and RUF then joined factions.

In 1998, Kabbah was reinstated by the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). On January 6, 1999, the RUF launched an attack on Freetown. This date marks the point in history where Sierra Leone entered conversation among middle-class American households and the point where it has remained in the distant background of the international psyche. The Hollywood

movie, *Blood Diamond*, the popular documentary, *Cry Freetown*, and the best-selling memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, are all snapshots of the Sierra Leonean civil war, but much has changed and a great amount of progress has been made since the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed in 1999 and the war was truly ended in 2002. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to come up with ways for both victims and perpetrators of the violence to move forward, and a Special Court for Sierra Leone was built in Freetown to bring the leaders of the most heinous crimes against humanity to justice. Charles Taylor, ex-President of Liberia and scapegoat leader for much of the initial instigation to violence in the region, is currently on trial in The Hague after his arrest in 2007.

Current Climate

Not long after arriving in Freetown, I wrote down something that a man I worked with in the International Organization for Migration said. “People here don’t talk about the rebel war. Everyone knows someone who fought. Everyone knows someone who died. Everyone knows someone who lost everything. If we continued to talk about it, we would never be able to get beyond it. We would still be killing each other. We’re tired of fighting. We’re so tired, and we want peace.” I later learned that his own father was shot to death on his front porch in front of him, yet he worked with IOM after the war to disarm and reintegrate members of the rebel groups so that his country could rebuild. Citizens from all over the country and members of the Diaspora scattered all over the world agree with his sentiment.

In September 2007, Sierra Leone saw its first peaceful transition of government power when Ernest Bai Koroma was elected President in a run-off election. The National Electoral Commission and all international election observers declared the election a great success, all polling sites suspected of fraud were thrown out, and opposition party conflict was almost nonexistent. Koroma's inauguration was a public event attended by people from all over the country and diplomats from all across Africa and the Western world. The vast majority was ready for change, and they are now relying on President Koroma and his government to take the lead in ushering Sierra Leone into the twenty-first century.

The three most notable campaigns being run by the Koroma administration are the Diaspora and Development campaign (See Chapter 8 for more on this), the Attitudinal and Behavioral Change campaign (ABC), and the Open Government Initiative. The citizens of Sierra Leone have to develop before the nation can develop, but forty years of mistrust and trauma have left them with a deep psychological hole out of which they must climb. ABC was launched to assist Sierra Leone's national cultural healing, and it is largely a public service and awareness-raising campaign using radio announcements, billboards, and national addresses to remind people that they need to trust each other, stop begging for handouts, and lift themselves up. In his Open Government, President Koroma demanded that all officials declare their assets. With the assistance of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), anyone found to be too opaque or suspected of corrupt behavior will be fired.

It has been over one and a half years since Koroma was elected, yet it remains to be seen whether his pronouncements will lead anywhere. There is much more to changing behavior than putting up billboards and very few officials have declared their assets, but optimism and resilience continue. Small improvements are being made here and there—such as easing the process of registering a business, streamlining Customs in the port, and opening more banks—to improve the climate for economic expansion and investment.

No one can deny that Sierra Leone is in a better place today than it has been since the 1960s, but the situation is dire because the country has to start from rock bottom. Its 25 years of one-party rule and dictatorships followed by eleven years of war have made it the poorest and least developed nation in the world (The Human Development Report Office 2008). It is nowhere near a track of reaching the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the target date of 2015. The average per capita income (adjusted to purchasing power parity) is only \$700, or less than \$2 per day, and the entire nation's 2008 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$1.9 billion is not much more than the amount allotted for *one day* of base operation in the U.S. Department of Defense (Office of Management and Budget 2008; Central Intelligence Agency 2009). There is truly nowhere to go but up with figures so low and momentum for change so high. So long as peace remains and words are followed with deeds, the momentum will continue.

Chapter 5

EXISTING DIASPORA-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

International Organization for Migration

IOM was created in 1951 to assist the millions of displaced people after World War II. Originally known as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME), it has changed names three times to incorporate its increasing scope. At present it has 125 member states, 18 observer states, and field offices in over 100 countries.

Its motto is “Managing Migration for the Benefit of All,” and that is exactly who its employers are—migration managers. They work with government leaders at the highest level, penniless refugees at the lowest level, and every type of person in between to make sure that the abstract complexity of the movement of people stays safe, humane, and real.

On the other hand, fears are that abstract complexity may become too much to handle as IOM takes on more and more—giving way from a concentration of quality programs to a quantity of lackluster projects bogged down in bureaucracy. Its employees work in policy, anti-trafficking, with refugees, internally displaced persons, the reintegration of child soldiers, truth and reconciliation commissions, reparations teams,

irregular (illegal) migrants, voluntarily returned migrants, detained migrants, migration and development, remittance tracking, pandemic diseases, research, and more. There is no doubt that migration touches nearly every facet of life, but such a wide array of concerns, countries, and cultures to deal with may prove too much and render IOM ineffective.

IOM's two programs of most relevance to this are the completed Return of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN) Program and the new Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) Program. Both provide valuable lessons on where to move forward with Diaspora-Driven Development, and a specific MIDA project called Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

Return of Qualified African Nationals

IOM's RQAN ran in three phases from 1983 to 1999. Its strategy was one of permanent return for Diaspora members with "knowledge and skills required to make a contribution to the development of the country to which they wish to return but lack the means to effect that return" (Office of Program Evaluation 2000).

It was the essence of resource mobilization because it supplied participants with financial, occupational, and institutional resources, but its insistence on permanency is where it fell short in being successful. Only about 1,200 people returned to six different nations throughout the duration of the program. Returnees would take up posts in high

priority sectors for development and all expenses for return plus living allowance would be paid by IOM for twelve to 24 months.

Although it had many failings, RQAN is believed to be an exemplary model with such important implications that studies analyzed its benefits and problems for years (Sako, 2002; Ardittis, 1985; Pires, 1992). Accountability and measurement of success in the program was hard to come by, supervisors in return countries submitted few evaluations of their new employees, political and economic situations in home countries deteriorated, and many returnees re-emigrated (to South Africa and different Western nations, mostly) after monthly payments by IOM were stopped or “reverse culture shock” became too great. IOM’s institutional capacity to follow the impacts of RQAN was too low on the African side, and no governments involved were expected to continue sustaining the program’s participants (Office of Programme Evaluation 2000). The scope of RQAN may have been too ambitious for IOM to cover successfully, so it shifted its focus at the turn of the century to returns more feasible to home countries, host countries, participants, their families, and IOM Missions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Migration for Development in Africa

Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) was established in 2001 as a means for facilitating the transfer of skills, finances, and material resources from Africans in the Diaspora to their countries of birth to accelerate development. One of its initial pilot projects was MIDA Italy, funded by the Italian government and initiated for skills transfer to Ghana and Ethiopia.

The outcome of MIDA Italy was highly unsuccessful. Initial support for MIDA Italy was received from the Ethiopian and Ghanaian Governments, but ultimately no adequate agreements were made and ownership fell to Italy. There was no gender focus to the project. The preparatory phase of the project ran very well in Italy, but almost no publicity of MIDA ran in home countries. A lot of research was done throughout the project and databases were created, but it seems any momentum burnt out before any concrete transfers were made. No transfer of skills or capacity building took place at all. A web site was created for MIDA Ethiopia, but it was impotent with no involvement on the home country side. Some micro-enterprise investment projects were established in Ghana, but overall management of the project made it so that the true part of the vision was not practiced (Officer of the Inspector General 2005: 1-2).

Luckily IOM's final evaluations were honest in the project's failings and needs for improvement. According to MIDA's design, its projects will be most successful when governments and private sectors in host countries (e.g. Italy) and home countries (e.g. Ghana) are committed to their implementation, ownership of the programs rests with the African countries themselves, IOM acts as facilitator to a decentralized project, funds are secured on both sides, and all Organization of African Unity (OAU) nations endorse the concept (Officer of the Inspector General 2005). Subsequent MIDA projects have worked to build on the recommendations which came from Italy's pilot; however, as long as the funding is coming from host country governments and allotted more for the IOM offices in the developed countries, I do not believe that they will achieve their objective for sustainable development and continuation.

United Nations Development Program

Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals

The first of its kind among return migration projects was the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) Program. Established in 1977 in Turkey, this program gives migrants the ability to return and work essentially as United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in their home countries, so long as the home country government signs on with UNDP. UNV are paid monthly stipends for living allowances far lower than the average UN employee but far higher than the income of the average worker in Sub-Saharan Africa, and hardworking UNV are often absorbed into the UN system when vacancies arise. The institutional legitimacy, remuneration, and possibility of full-time employment by the United Nations all contributed to TOKTEN's success in Asia, Southern Europe, and the Caribbean. But many home country governments in Sub-Saharan Africa have never signed on. The program is still in existence, though underutilized (Logan 1990).

For example, the first meeting I attended in Freetown in September 2007 was with the country representatives of UNDP regarding the implementation of a TOKTEN program. IOM's scope in Sierra Leone was rigidly set to assisting only the return of qualified nationals from The Netherlands and voluntary returns of irregular migrants from Belgium and the UK. However, the office often received enquiries from qualified nationals throughout the world interested in return. Both IOM and UNDP currently operate as UN agencies in Sierra Leone, so Freetown's MIDA office reached out to try

and fill the gaps in assistance by referring them to TOKTEN. In particular, a Sierra Leonean professor in Brunei asked to return and work at the University of Sierra Leone could not do so because there was no funding for his travel or guaranteed salary upon his arrival.

IOM and the professor in Brunei were told TOKTEN would be established by November 2007. To this day, there is still no TOKTEN program in Sierra Leone.

World Bank

African Diaspora Mobilization Initiative

The other Diaspora Development initiatives in existence are quite a bit more ambiguous, and it is hard to see what is rhetorical, what is stagnant, what will truly be put into practice, and whether temporary return will be part of the process. The World Bank's African Diaspora Mobilization Initiative (ADMI) Team is working with the African Union, the African Development Bank, and many African governments to use remittances as development tools for poverty reduction. They aim to initiate "resource mobilization efforts from the African Diaspora and private sector in the Americas" (African Diaspora Initiative Team 2008). The World Bank Institute Regional Coordination Unit (WBRCI) is working to facilitate banking operations needed for Diaspora communities in North America to deliver funds for health and educational services in their home countries. It wants to establish a Bank-wide Diaspora engagement program (World Bank 2008), but it is not yet clear whether that means for investment purposes only or to allow room for Diaspora members to return.

The World Bank's interest seems highly rhetorical and laden with bureaucratic operations that will not get ADMI off the ground. The WB Africa Region held its first "Open House for Mobilizing the African Diaspora for Development" in Washington, DC, in November 2007. In April 2008, John Afele of the WBRCI attended a meeting of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora at the Embassy of Sierra Leone, and he went over the project's aims with the crowd. However, none of what he said applied concretely to Sierra Leone, and there has been no apparent progress on the project in the past year. According to its Website, the WB currently has 21 projects running in Sierra Leone (World Bank 2009). If qualified members of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora were mobilized to run the projects instead of WB staff, I believe ADMI would be fulfilling its stated task with results instead of future promises.

United States Agency for International Development

Diaspora Networks Alliance

USAID and its Global Development Alliance (GDA) have conceptualized the Diaspora Networks Alliance, appropriately coined DNA to recognize that the strength of blood ties to a place is stronger than the loose affiliations of expatriates. Its main focus currently is on remittances, but the vision laid out on its website—though brief—shows an interest in much more. It is seeking prospective partner organizations to carry out its goals of multipronged Diaspora engagement through "Diaspora Philanthropy, Diaspora Volunteer Corps, Diaspora Direct Investment (DDI), Diaspora Capital Markets, Diaspora Tourism and Nostalgic Trade, and Diaspora Advocacy and Diplomacy" (USAID 2009).

It is a new initiative, so there is very little information or assessment of it. Its first project is a business competition, Development Marketplace for the African Diaspora in the Americas (DMADA), meant to provide support for African Diaspora Entrepreneurs and set to start in mid-2009 (Press Office - USAID 2008).

This kind of competition—though miniscule in focus—seems to be the best start to Diaspora ownership that I have seen. The underlying problems with Diaspora-related projects previously and currently being run by IOM, UNDP, WB, and USAID are scope and timeliness. Each of the above organizations are truly international bodies—with offices in almost every country and a hand in development projects that cross the board of urgency of implementation, sector, target population, and objectives. It also seems that each organization is set in competition with one another in getting out the initiative in the fastest and most sustainable manner. Nonetheless, they often work together (USAID and WB, for example) on implementing projects and become bogged down in pomp and circumstance or bureaucratic procedures before projects even reach the ground.

Work with Diasporas could be broadened to almost as large a scope if vision is changed to give members of Diaspora communities priority in running projects designed for their home country. However, being put out of a job after designing it is probably last on the minds of expatriates. The only solution, then, for Diasporas to do development work in the foreground is if they operate as organizations on their own. International organizations would probably be better served to allow Diaspora communities to compete for funding and run projects on their own than to attempt to run the projects with Diaspora input on the side. If Diaspora-Driven Development is going to be the next wave

in development work, interested Diaspora Organizations and their counterparts in their home countries (i.e. public sector, private sector, or government) must be given ownership. Otherwise, it will continue to be the way it already is—demanding handouts and perpetuating dependency. Allowing Diasporas to be in the foreground and international organization employees to stay in the background will hasten independence.

Chapter 6

CASE STUDY: TEMPORARY RETURN OF QUALIFIED NATIONALS

Overview

The Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) project was designed to respond to the myriad problems with development which are common to countries in the post-war reconstruction process.

Throughout Sierra Leone's conflict, a large number of skilled and professional nationals took refuge in The Netherlands to flee the dangers of the war and improve their livelihoods abroad. Migrants from Sierra Leone staying in the Netherlands are often highly educated and benefit from occupational, educational, and social mobility that would not be available in their country of origin. To complement the Government of Sierra Leone's efforts in implementing the recommendations of the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and work towards achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, the country is in great need of qualified nationals in sectors crucial to its development and reconstruction who are not available locally.

TRQN's pilot phase ran from April 2006 through March 2008, and I was fortunate enough to run it from September 2007 through January 2008. The project's purpose is to create possibilities for Sierra Leonean nationals in the Netherlands to

contribute to the reconstruction of their home country. They are expected to build the capacity of those living in-country by teaching and training so that their impact continues long after they return to The Netherlands. Candidates who apply through IOM The Hague are selected and placed in sectors identified by the Government of Sierra Leone as “high priority for development” and according to the individual volunteers’ qualifications.

Applications consist of IOM forms, a resume, a photograph, and some open ended questions regarding each applicant’s reasons for wishing to volunteer. IOM Sierra Leone is then expected to find a position for the applicant, write up Terms of Reference and a Contract for each volunteer, and find lodging for them during their stay. Both IOM offices then solidify travel arrangements and ensure that TRQN volunteers are able to maintain their residency (or dual citizenship) in The Netherlands once they depart for TRQN participation.

The pilot (first) phase of TRQN was very successful. Nineteen separate volunteers participated, and the target number of returnees was 25. Fortunately, the success was not in concrete numbers but in dedication and repeated returns. Of the nineteen volunteers, six extended their initial stays or returned to Sierra Leone for second or third assignments, putting the number of returns well over the target 25. Prior to TRQN, a circular and sequential return project has never been attempted by an international organization. They have focused on one return trip or permanent relocation only, but sequential return may be the best way to adapt to the global transnational environment which migrants now live in.

Not all participants in a sequential repeated return would do so. To the contrary, most would only participate once. However, a few short stays in one's home country after he or she has not been there for many years may be the best way to ease the process of readjustment. The first few months could be a shock, and having only a short time to absorb a country is more like a vacation than a return. A second and third return would allow time to become accustomed to living conditions and begin making an impact. Others in succession could allow participants time to decide whether they want to maintain transnational lives, resettle in their home country, or never return again.



Photo 3. A group of TRQN participants meet in the IOM Freetown office

Each participant's story was very different, and they all came from different backgrounds, age groups, and occupations. What made them the same was their motivation and love for Sierra Leone. They were not patronizing and had not become

Eurocentric. They understood the beauty and potential in front of them, and they recognized Sierra Leone as home—not the site of a temporary adventure in a long line of countries, as do many international workers.

Every TRQN participant with whom I had discussions expressed their hope to return to Sierra Leone permanently in the near future. One had already made the decision not to return to The Netherlands after his first six months, and another has purchased a house in the heart of Freetown because he plans on making a permanent move within the next year.

Although all volunteers must be Sierra Leonean nationals, there is a place in the equation to make the project attractive to Western nations. TRQN creates invaluable international networks between similar sectors. Volunteers' employers in The Netherlands and host organizations in Sierra Leone became linked upon the former's interest in their employee's project. For example, one participant teaching Geographical Information Systems (GIS) at The University of Sierra Leone (USL) noticed quickly upon arrival that there were almost no computers on campus new, healthy, or fast enough to accommodate the software, let alone an entire lecture hall of students. Over USL's Christmas break, he returned to The Netherlands to collect and ship a series of computers from the university where he was employed as a researcher back to USL. The donated computers were no longer being used and would have otherwise been shipped to a junkyard. The environmentally-conscious Dutch university liked the alternative much more. Mutually beneficial partnerships could be created in the future as a result of such international sharing. A better equipped populace in Sierra Leone and more efficient use

of resources will lead to economic and social benefits in-country as well as in countries linked to them via Diasporas.

TRQN participants from the Netherlands helped to develop, build capacity, train, consult, teach, and bridge individuals and organizations within Sierra Leone in amazing ways. They worked in development organizations, agricultural training, ports management, education, construction, media, youth employment and empowerment, non-governmental organization enhancement, women's entrepreneurship and empowerment, and training of the disabled. I was able to see every volunteer's work in action, and IOM played a role in facilitating and assisting their work whenever possible. In situations where making a personal visit to the participants' host organizations was not possible, meetings, phone calls, and reports were used to track each participants' progress.

The success and future potential of TRQN was recognized upon the end of its pilot phase in March 2008. As a result, its second phase was approved to last from July 2008 through July 2011 with IOM as implementer and the Dutch Government as donor. So that future implementation, continuity, and expansion is made on the project, success stories from a few TRQN pilot projects and recommendations for improvement follow.

Specific Projects

Sierra Leone Ports Authority



Photo 4. A typical “office” and working conditions at Sierra Leone Ports Authority, Queen Elizabeth II Quay, Freetown

The first and arguably most active participant returned to Sierra Leone to work with the Sierra Leone Ports Authority (SLPA) from November 2006 through February 2007. His work among staff and Management was very highly valued, so he was asked to participate in sequential return for periods between one and three months at a time. As of March 2009, he is still implementing new ideas and improving upon outdated practices throughout SLPA’s various departments. Most importantly, he has trained a significant number of SLPA staff and is working to set up a partnership with a Dutch Ports Organization named Rotterdam Maritime Group (RMG) to modernize SLPA’s staff capacity.

During evaluations I conducted on 1 and 16 November 2007 and 4 January 2008 to assess his work, I was able to see his enthusiasm, how valuable his presence is to the men and women he has been training in various departments, and some of the tangible changes he has brought through his consultancy. Computers connected to the Internet have been put in place in Management offices to give the port a more informed and competitive edge in the market. As a start to better conditions, many employees forced to work in the dusty, dirty container section of the ports now have proper gloves and face masks to keep their lungs more healthy and their hands more safe. Currently, he is working with the Marketing office to design a Website. This will allow companies and individuals interested in shipping goods to be better prepared upon arrival at SLPA. Returnees will find this especially helpful when faced with retrieving their possessions at customs, a process which before was rife with inefficiencies, loss, damage, and bribery.

SLPA appreciates an outsider's view because, as the General Manager said, "It is often hard to diagnose one's own disease." Moreover, this volunteer is considered a blessing because he does so much just as a volunteer. The state-owned port is overstaffed, underfunded, and grossly mismanaged, so free support from a Sierra Leonean national is recognized as a selfless attempt at saving SLPA from within.

Currently, the SLPA is working with the Government of Sierra Leone and the World Bank on a privatization scheme to improve the ports and boost the Sierra Leonean economy. There is a possibility that a very large percentage of SLPA employees may be retrenched, and it is believed by both SLPA and IOM that the TRQN participant's continued presence in training, capacity building, and liaising between employees and

Management will be crucial. He has taken it upon himself to meet, share ideas, and work alongside the WB Team that is working within SLPA, and their exchange could be very beneficial to all. Upon privatization, there may be an even greater need for Diaspora returnees to train retained port workers and retrain those who are retrenched after privatization is implemented.

This TRQN participant is the most exemplary model of the type of volunteer needed for a Diaspora-Driven Development Program to work properly. He has been very diligent in sending in reports, formally and through frequent e-mails, to keep IOM informed every step of the way in his project implementation. All in all, it is believed that his presence and contribution will be very important to finding SLPA's way forward, and he wants more than anything to stay in Sierra Leone permanently starting in a few years. In e-mails, he used to use the word "home" to describe his time in The Netherlands. Now, as a greater percentage of his time is spent in Sierra Leone, he uses "home" to describe his birthplace.

National Association of Farmers in Sierra Leone

Another volunteer spent several short assignments assessing and working with the National Association of Farmers in Sierra Leone (NAFSL) at the National level to generate recommendations for reform and design training modules. He came up against several problems—such as stagnation, lack of technology, and disorganization—but he has still managed to achieve most of his goals and create networks between other individuals whom he never knew before.

He and I conducted a field visit to the Bombali District capital city of Makeni on 25-26 October, where we conducted a series of nine informal meetings. We met various councilmen, farmers' association representatives, NAFSL members, and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) workers in order to better understand the role that NAFSL is currently playing to advocate for farmers, as well as the role they feel it should be playing but is not.

During his meetings, this volunteer did something which most of the agriculturalists were not used to. He listened intently. As a result, cooperation was far easier than was expected, and we managed to compile several pages of recommendations, criticisms, observations, and points to consider for future improvement of NAFSL at the National, Regional, District, Chiefdom, and Village levels. For example, all representatives of farmers' associations and NAFSL members agreed that there needs to be more communication and cohesion between the various farmers' groups that have been set up in Sierra Leone, NAFSL's National Executives need to hold another election based not on nepotism or residency in the capital, the association's constitution and mandate have to be straightened out, and most reform and improvement work needs to take a bottom-up approach so that farmers can organize at the ground level for change.



Photo 5. Meeting with farmers' advocacy group leaders in Makeni, Sierra Leone

While in Makeni, the District Council Chairman mentioned working together on a Diaspora Fund for Agriculture that he is trying to set up between Sierra Leone and members of the Diaspora. While in Freetown, I worked during my free time to create its project proposal and budget.

This volunteer has worked very hard during his stays in Sierra Leone, people are receptive to him, and it is clear that he has the initiative to work to move NAFSL and the state of agriculture in Sierra Leone forward. In addition to his work with NAFSL, his current TRQN assignment is “with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security... working with the newly appointed Director of Agricultural Extension Services... on Democratization of Farmer Based Organizations in Sierra Leone.” He has also established a business in Freetown specializing in investment information for start-up enterprises as a strategy for job creation and bridging the income-gap. He has returned

at least four times now and has a house which he plans to move into permanently within the next year.

Stichting Wango

One volunteer's objective was a bit different from the rest. He had his own organization, Wango, in The Netherlands, and he was granted IOM's assistance because his project involved complete involvement and training of a local rural population. Wango was predominantly working to build a secondary school and agricultural training center for the small village of Songo Loko outside Freetown. The village is largely cut off from most of the country's institutions, and the nearest secondary school is infeasible to reach (a 16-mile walk round trip). Therefore, most adults are uneducated and most children have no opportunity to go to school beyond the primary level.

The volunteer had not been in Sierra Leone for almost twenty years before his first TRQN assignment. Due to the impact of the rainy season (sometimes as long as May through November), he had forgotten that the window of opportunity to build is rather short. Therefore, planning and implementation of the project failed in its first attempt because the quality of the road into the village makes it almost impossible to transport materials during the rains and the cement would not dry. Luckily, IOM gave Wango a second six-month run to achieve success.

On October 24, November 22, and January 9, I was able to make field visits to the village to assess the building site and meet the people with whom the volunteer is working. Within 2 months, the progress that he, Wango, and the people of Songo Loko

made on the building was truly remarkable! The first classroom building went from nothing to ready for roofing. The volunteer made adjustments to account for a lack of funding, such as making cinderblocks from village mud in the traditional manner, and he used most of his TRQN living stipend on buying supplies for building and transport.



Photo 6. Residents of Songo Loko on secondary school structure, October 24, 2007

Photo 7. Songo Loko secondary school progress, November 22, 2007

Photo 8. Residents of Songo Loko work to put roof on secondary school, January 9, 2008

The most evident fact taken away from field visits was how receptive the villagers are to Wango's work, how willing they were to use their own labor to complete the school's construction, and how excited everyone—from the smallest child to the oldest village member—was to become educated and improve their standing. Once the school was completed, they were assured that the Ministry of Education would step in to do the rest (i.e. Hiring and paying teachers, making provisions, officially registering and accrediting the school), so they worked to finish as quickly as possible.

The volunteer has huge dreams of what he would like to accomplish in Songo Loko and throughout Sierra Leone, but his actual ability to innovate and work through

obstacles is hindered by national conditions. As in most grassroots development projects, lack of funding has been his organization's biggest problem to date. He had to cut back on construction plans and focus on only one building at a time.

I worked with him to apply for a small grant for community based development projects through the US Embassy/USAID. He was granted a third extension of his TRQN program until mid-March 2008, but he eventually had to return to The Netherlands to approach donors and generate funds for the project. Fortunately, he paved the way for Wango's sustainability after his departure from Sierra Leone by training a small group of young men to run the project and opened up an office in Freetown for communication purposes between Sierra Leone and Europe.

Should the volunteer return permanently as he plans, he also wants to open an arts center in one of the buildings still left vacant in Freetown from the civil war. Sierra Leone has almost no craft training centers or art classes, and, evidently, the African tradition of apprenticeship between elders and youth was abandoned with feelings of mistrust generated during the conflict. Training artisans would create jobs, provide an outlet for young people (art therapy), and open up new avenues for tourism in a nation relatively unknown for its artistic tradition.

Educational Centre for the Blind

One volunteer arrived near the beginning of TRQN in September 2006 and never went back to The Netherlands. In a way, then, his personal story may be most successful. He began work for the blind and visually impaired of Sierra Leone in February 2007, and

his first assignment was as an IT specialist with the Pan African Development Initiative (PADI, acronym reflecting the Krio word for “friend”).

The disabled are often first to become disenfranchised and ignored in developing nations because providing facilities for the general population are seen as hard enough. Sierra Leone has a staggeringly high number of blind and visually impaired due to lack of opticians and outbreaks of diseases such as river blindness, yet they often end up homeless and begging on the streets. Although this volunteer has been presented with several obstacles, such as difficulty in purchasing land for a larger training facility for the Educational Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ECBVI) and lack of proper computer processors for some of the new audio-book technology he has acquired, the advancements that have been made for the blind during his time in Sierra Leone have been far greater.

He and some others were able to attend a conference for blind organizations in South Africa in 2007 where they made several invaluable connections. Some ECBVI staff were also sent to Liberia for training to create Braille books at the end of November. ECBVI has received news that they may be able to set up a Braille library with many books soon to be donated from a blind association in Sudan, and they now are working on implementing audio-book technology to lessen the reliance on large, burdensome Braille books.

They were donated a Braille Printing Press and Embossment Machine by the Force Foundation (The Netherlands), and the participant had a very large role to play in the planning and carrying out the unveiling ceremony. In attendance were The Minister

of Education, Youth, and Sports; the Deputy Minister for Lands, Country Planning, and the Environment; several representatives from the Ministry of Education, IOM, and various members of the press. The promises that the Ministries gave in response to ECBVI's plight during the ceremony alone were a great indicator of the kinds of connections and successes that this TRQN participant's presence have had for achieving awareness and education for all in this country.

He has many ideas, including the creation of a library for students and the expansion of the ECBVI throughout the country with the help of various other blind associations that he has networked with. His work ethic is amazing (he often works until 9 or 10pm), and it is evident that he truly cares about the people he is assisting and the progress that is being made for the blind and visually impaired communities in Sierra Leone.



Photo 9. TRQN participant with blind student

I worked with him to apply for a grant for a human rights-related project (of which the rights of the disabled clearly fits) through the U.S. Embassy/USAID so that ECBVI can conduct a countrywide demographic survey of the blind and visually impaired. A survey of this kind has never been conducted, and having a better grasp on the number and locations of most of the blind in the country will greatly enhance the capacity of organizations and the government to assist them and recognize their human rights

This volunteer is heavily invested in the success of the TRQN program, and he has been very helpful in providing ideas and recommendations for it. What is more, there have been clear links made between organizations in both the Netherlands and Sierra Leone since his time there.

Fourah Bay College, University Of Sierra Leone

One participant worked with FBC-USL for a period of six months, through May 2008, and he had various tasks to perform within his position as temporary lecturer. He taught courses in both the Departments of Biological Sciences and Geography focused on “Research Methods” and “Economic Botany,” of which he is expert. FBC-USL also has a Geographical Information System (GIS) laboratory where the United Nations’ Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) is training students, and his GIS expertise was used in providing training there as well. In addition, he worked with a few post-graduate students on designing dissertation projects in which they will research sorghum and rice production.

He linked the Geography and Biological Sciences Departments at FBC-USL to the University in The Netherlands to which he is attached as a researcher. Shocked to find that there were almost no working computers and no textbooks for his teaching, he flew back to the Netherlands and worked over FBC-USL's holiday break to collect the proper educational material he needs to teach his classes properly.

Sierra Leone Association of NGOs

The Sierra Leone Association of NGO's (SLANGO) is an umbrella organization which was created in Freetown to represent all of the national and international Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) throughout the country. Between the end of the civil war and 2007, SLANGO was allegedly headed by a small group of very corrupt individuals. After the election of President Koroma, they gave up on SLANGO and a new woman was put in charge. She reached out to IOM and the British Voluntary Service Overseas program (VSO) for assistance in rebuilding the organization, and TRQN was able to find a volunteer quickly. He worked to strengthen SLANGO's operation and develop the capacity and competencies of the organization's weaker member NGOs with training workshops and project proposal writing.

Meetings with SLANGO's coordinator led to her avid interest in the TRQN project. She wants to act as an official collaborator with IOM in the future to be the bridge between IOM and local NGOs/CSOs shall the need arise, and I feel that such a link will result in a much stronger and sustainable system.

National Radio

In a country where 65 percent of the population cannot read or write, only 0.2 percent of the population has an Internet connection, the vast majority do not own a television, and handheld radios can be purchased for a few dollars or built into the most inexpensive cell phone, radio is the only way for many people in Sierra Leone to receive information (Central Intelligence Agency 2009). Therefore, the quality of the radio stations, the caliber of their employees, and the validity of information they present are extremely important to the functioning of the nation. One only has to think back to the use of radio stations in fomenting the Rwandan genocide as a vivid example.

One TRQN participant returned to use his expertise as a radio announcer in The Netherlands in assessing the impact of a project that ABC Development Organization had been working on with one radio station in the capital and one in a distant province. He also worked constantly for six weeks to visit each of the other 24 local radio stations throughout the country and determine what their needs and capacity gaps are, hopefully for further projects with ABC.

Prior to his arrival in Freetown, he was already a very well-known man in Sierra Leone because many of his radio programs from The Netherlands are broadcast to Sierra Leone via the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone's (UNIOSIL) radio. His presence was very good for IOM, the TRQN program, the Sierra Leonean Diaspora, and the people of the country.

Recommendations

Each of the nineteen participants in TRQN's pilot phase definitely made an impact in their respective organizations. However, each had recognizable failings which could have been remedied had IOM's operation been more malleable. The recommendations below were compiled from personal experience as well as through meetings with participants and their host organizations.

TRQN participants should only be allowed if they will be on assignment for three months or more. If requesting to stay less than 3 months, it should be required that project participants prove they will be able to complete all aspects of their assignment prior to leaving or they set up travel to return in a timely manner. For example, a lecturer returning temporarily may be able to complete his or her task within a few weeks. However, someone working to assess and reform an organization will need to stay much longer, due to the tendency for obstacles to come up and situations to be delayed. If no repeated return can be accomplished, IOM should bring more than one person into each organization so that what is done in a short period of time is not lost after a volunteer's departure.

The program's publicity and information-gathering campaign must be continued throughout its implementation. Information quickly becomes outdated in a developing nation, especially one which is attempting to turn itself around so quickly. IOM The Hague should reach out to Sierra Leonean Diaspora Associations in The Netherlands so that all possible TRQN candidates will be informed of the project's success and the possibilities that are available to them to participate. IOM Freetown should reach out to

key host organizations (i.e. large industries, the universities, government ministries, and SLANGO) so that updated lists of needs are created for participants.

In terms of equipment and living allowances, there were several problems. It must be understood that budgets for projects are tightly set and less money spent on one participant translates to more participants able to be involved. However, different participants were paid different amounts, and many returnees asked for advances on their monthly stipends because they did not last.

The social consequences and expectations of a volunteer's return from Europe are very great, so many felt compelled to spend their allowances on family and community members. Therefore, it may be necessary to split stipends into smaller yet more frequent payments. Depending on the nature of the work that volunteers will be doing (i.e. within or outside the city, making frequent trips to the provinces, etc.), the allowance for transportation should be increased or funding should be provided for the shipment of volunteers' personal vehicles to the country. Equipment (i.e. Laptops and office supplies) should also be bought for TRQN and loaned to participants during their stays because it became very difficult and very costly for many to find Internet and working computers within the country.

MIDA is a priority to which IOM needs to stay committed. The staff's capacity and interest in Migration and Development projects in the IOM Freetown office was very low, and the manpower currently available to manage and maximize the benefits of TRQN and future MIDA programs is unacceptable. Moreover, a fatal flaw in the project is that national staff (i.e. Sierra Leoneans working in the IOM office) are being paid less

per month than the TRQN participants who are referred to as volunteers. National staff are paid on par with national averages and international staff with averages of developed nations so they do not throw off the balance. This injustice is a flaw in the entire UN system, so it will not be easy to fix, but it must be evaluated. How else could a MIDA program officer find any motivation to assist TRQN participants? As soon as funding is secured, more and better paid staff members need to be employed to ensure that adequate attention is made to this project's management and upkeep.

Monthly reports from participants are crucial to ensure sustainability and progress. Consequences should be made for non-cooperation, such as withholding of monthly living allowances until reports are submitted. In my time here, some participants have been consistent in preparing monthly reports, but there are a few from whom I have never received one. Quarterly reports from employers within each host organization must be stressed greatly because their feelings about the volunteer's contribution and the TRQN program to each organization are important for future implementation and amendment of the project. In cases where volunteers are only in organizations for one or two months, reports should be submitted to IOM by one week after the departure of the TRQN participant. In circumstances where previously agreed upon, the employer may make a verbal report to an IOM MIDA officer in a meeting rather than writing a report.

Conclusion

Sierra Leone's TRQN project with the Netherlands has been of great help to various priority sectors within Sierra Leone, and I feel that it has been very successful in

its two-year pilot phase. There were two TRQN participants in Sierra Leone upon my arrival in September 2007, and four others had participated in prior short-term stays. Throughout my five month internship, four volunteers returned on their second or third assignments, five came in with host organizations for the first time, four were accepted within host organizations and were preparing for their arrival, and four others had submitted applications and were awaiting acceptance from host organizations. The momentum that this project has is a very positive sign for its future impact and self-perpetuation.

The hope in the IOM Freetown office is that TRQN will be instated as a permanent project and that a Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) program will be expanded to mobilize members of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora throughout the developed world to act in whatever capacity they are qualified to facilitate the development of their home country.

The Sierra Leonean Government—realizing the importance of harnessing the skills of its Diaspora—now has a Migration and Development Taskforce of which IOM is a part, and the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO) has taken an avid interest in the future promotion of TRQN/MIDA projects and aims from within.

It is my belief that backing from the government, public and private sectors, and Diaspora Associations should eventually result in a TRQN-type program which is run by the government or Diaspora itself. As stated in a previous chapter, the scope of IOM's mandate is far too broad for it to focus too closely on any one country's Diaspora

throughout the world, and that is the place where Sierra Leone needs to be. IOM should make all of its MIDA project ideas, successes, and failures accessible to Diasporas and act as a consultant. If it continues to act as main implementer, Sierra Leone and its Diaspora (as well as other Diaspora groups worldwide) will never have ownership and will continue to be stuck in the dependency cycle IOM claims it is trying to reverse.

Chapter 7

MOVING THE SIERRA LEONEAN DIASPORA FORWARD

The Office of Diaspora Affairs

Shortly after the election of President Ernest Bai Koroma in September 2007, he said in a speech at State House on October 5, 2007:

“... in this new age of devotion to national service, I appeal to all Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad to join me in making this difference. To those in the Diaspora, come home and serve your country if you can or find other ways to contribute from afar. Home is where your heart is. As true patriots, you must contribute to the development of your country and your people” (“President Koroma Hosts Second Diaspora Day Saturday” 2009).

A week later, leading members of several Diaspora Organizations gathered together to discuss the involvement of the Diaspora in Sierra Leone’s development. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the group began an initiative called, “Engaging the Diaspora for a New Sierra Leone.” In order to help achieve the initiative’s intent, The Minister of Presidential and Public Affairs, Alhaji Alpha Kanu, and a prominent member of the Diaspora youth, Michel Sho-Sawyer, established the Office of Diaspora Affairs (ODA).

The ODA is meant to be a link between the Government of Sierra Leone and Sierra Leoneans abroad. It shows the clear interest that President Koroma has in bringing all resources to the table in developing the country, and it could potentially be the means for truly uniting such a huge, diverse, talented, and wealthy group of people. The

overarching goal of the office is to fill all capacity gaps in Sierra Leone's public and private sectors with its own human resources, so the initial projects that Sho-Sawyer is working on are the creation of a Diaspora Trust Fund and a Database of all Sierra Leoneans in the Diaspora.



Photo 10. The Director of the Office of Diaspora Affairs at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, September 21, 2008

Several problems have arisen from the manner in which the ODA was established. Michel Sho-Sawyer was the President of a well-known Diaspora Organization known as Youth for Sierra Leone's Improvement (YSLI), but opinions are mixed among members of the Diaspora about his qualifications to run such an office. As happens quite often, personal bad feelings or jealousy between influential bodies is threatening to nullify any good that could come from a benevolent vision. In order to combat such a thing, interview participants were asked in June 2008 what they think the

ODA needs to do. An office in its infancy can be improved, so changes that take effect quickly will ensure that its aims are achieved in the best interests of the Diaspora and the Government.

Seven (23%) interviewees did not even know the ODA existed, a bad omen from the start considering the level of interest that the majority of this study's participants have in the current affairs of Sierra Leone. Nonetheless, all participants gave plenty of suggestions. The most prevalent of them follow.

1. The President should have created a Ministry of Diaspora Affairs instead of an Office under his auspices. This would keep the ODA less involved in partisan politics, which could easily be a deterrent for members of the Diaspora who are unaligned with the current President's political party, the All People's Congress (APC).
2. In working with the President's Open Government Initiative, the office must be completely transparent. The worst thing that could happen to the ODA is to lose its credibility so early.
3. The ODA needs to establish greater communication with all Sierra Leoneans in the Diaspora and actively seek help. A website has been established (www.diasporaaffairs.gov.sl), but—as the main line of communication—it needs a lot of improvement. Open a forum on the ODA website for open idea sharing between the office and the Diaspora. The forum could be divided and sub-divided within the existing website's categories (i.e. Find Jobs, Success Stories, Financial Services) for the Diaspora to help itself before and after

returning to Sierra Leone. People on the fence about returning could read about those who have already returned to make transitions easier. It would allow more minds to become involved in improving the office while in its infancy. Also, allow for e-mail alerts or a regular e-newsletter when Diaspora meetings are going to be held or jobs become available, and request that independent Diaspora websites link to the ODA when possible.

4. A knowledge transfer program should be set up assigning teams to different industries and sectors of the economy for short (one month) to medium lengths (6 months) of time. The ODA's focus should not only be to place people returning from the Diaspora in government jobs; rather, it should conduct a survey of all significant organizations throughout the country to compile a database of needs. For example, The Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO) is the umbrella for hundreds of national NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Working with SLANGO could improve myriad organizations throughout Sierra Leone whose mission is complementary to government ministries, making processes run more smoothly.
5. An ODA coalition should be the official lobbyist for resources from foreign government (such as the U.S.) so that a knowledge transfer program can be started.
6. Create student exchange programs between Sierra Leonean youth in-country and in the Diaspora. This will help students abroad to not lose touch with their

birthplace or provide a look into the country where their parents are from. It will also give Sierra Leonean youth the ability to see other countries even if their families are unable to send them abroad.

7. Allow for qualified students in the Diaspora to compete for internships in Government Ministries. This will bring in fresh ideas, train the next generation, and provide incentives for young people to return to Sierra Leone upon completion of their education to finish what they start.
8. Come up with a strategy to call members of the Diaspora who are retired back home. Most people who retire from careers are still capable of contributing to their society, and they will have ample opportunity to do so in Sierra Leone.
9. Appoint ODA representatives to work or volunteer with the Embassies of Sierra Leone in all major Diaspora host countries. Physical access to an office for questions and information will ease the dialoging.
10. Hold town hall meetings with members of the Sierra Leonean public in Sierra Leone to sensitize them about the need for the inclusion of the Diaspora in national development and encourage them to keep an open mind so that everyone can work together more effectively.

On September 21, 2008, President Koroma and a large entourage of his Ministers and staff traveled to the U.S. for the UN General Assembly Meeting in New York City. They took the time while here to meet with large Diaspora communities in Washington, DC and New Jersey. Sho-Sawyer of the ODA and the Ambassador Stevens unveiled an initiative at the events to register all Sierra Leoneans in the U.S. in a database. The

registration form, on loose-leaf paper, asked “Name, Address, Phone/Fax, Age, Email address, Current Employment, Other skills, Professional Qualifications, Number of people in family, and Any further comments.” Registration is also accessible electronically on the Embassy’s website. The fact that the initiative has been started is commendable. However, it says registration is “**confidential** and is intended **solely** for the embassy’s database and for statistical purposes” [emphasis in document]. If the information is confidential, how will it ever be used for the necessary development purposes? A second or third outreach will have to be made upon compiling information into a database to ask permission from participants that information be dispersed. That outreach will yield far fewer results due to unresponsive people or outdated information, and participation will decrease from there. If the Embassy and the ODA are going to act towards achieving the President’s vision to involve the Diaspora, the time to act is now.

Sierra Leone Council of Representatives

Many members of the Diaspora who participated in this research feel that there is a multiplication of efforts regarding development projects on which Diaspora Organizations are working. The surveys and interviews alone yielded 90 different organizations (listed, with websites, in the Annex). Clearly, 90 groups of people combining their efforts would be much more effective in implementing change than if they continue to act separately. This is the idea that brought about the Sierra Leone Council of Representatives (SALCORE) in 2008—an umbrella organization acting in the interests of all Diaspora Organizations in the U.S.

SALCORE will operate for Diaspora organizations much as SLANGO operates for NGOs within Sierra Leone. Organizations registered with SALCORE have as much autonomy as they prefer, but they also have the collective intelligence and support of all other organizations. There is hope that communication between groups will lead to collaboration on initiatives and that collaboration will lead to combination of many smaller groups into a few larger groups with similar objectives, interests, and needs. The combination of efforts will provide credibility and visibility to bodies outside the Diaspora. For example, SALCORE will act as a liaison between the Diaspora and the Government of Sierra Leone. Regular meetings are held at the Embassy of Sierra Leone between the Ambassador and SALCORE's main backers.

The eventual aim is to have a SALCORE office in the U.S. and in Sierra Leone which can be shared by all member organizations to act as one body. Grants and funds raised by SALCORE will be shared. Their Krio slogan is "Wan Organization, Wan Representative, Wan Word." All ideas and actions of the group will be regarded as "Open Source," meaning that everyone has the right to access SALCORE's information and partake in its improvement. Credit should be given where credit is due, but information hoarding and intellectual property disputes will impede the development process. If SALCORE ever hopes to be a successful organization, its objectives must remain transparent and its members selfless.

Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Conference

A Diaspora Organization called Young Leaders – Sierra Leone, USA Branch (YL-SL) hosted its first youth empowerment conference (SLYEC) in 2007. Its main goals were to inspire young members of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora to action because members believe that African youth have been ignored as change makers and manipulated by politicians for malicious purposes for too long. YL-SL wants to foster the next generation of Sierra Leone's leaders by working with mentors who lead by example and creating a huge online network of Sierra Leonean youth throughout the world with which to communicate.

On September 13, 2008, SLYEC brought together many respected Diaspora members from across the country. Bockari Stevens, the Sierra Leonean Ambassador to the United States, talked at length about the need for similar Diaspora Organizations to come together under one umbrella (such as SALCORE) to truly make a difference. "All Sierra Leoneans are concerned Sierra Leoneans," he said, so ethnic and other identities must be swept aside. Well-known Diaspora leader, Amadu Massally, discussed young people's responsibilities as Sierra Leonean citizens to back up their talk with principled behavior and action. Television star, Isaiah Washington, spoke to the group about the recent discovery of his Sierra Leonean heritage, the granting of his dual citizenship, and his Gondobay Manga Foundation to "reach one million children in Sierra Leone by 2010".

A youth panel of undergraduates and recently matriculated medical school students in the U.S. who have done very impressive work in Sierra Leone gave very

honest advice to SLYEC's participants. Plan for research proposals and business plans to take years to get off the ground. Be incredibly flexible, talk less and listen more, shed your status, be prepared that people will try to stop you, never think that you are underqualified, understand that Sierra Leoneans may not identify with you even if you identify with them, and make sure that you follow through with every action that you take.



Photo 11. Participants in the 2008 Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Conference

Specialists in civic participation, politics, public policy, business, entrepreneurship, public health, medicine, human rights, law, media, technology, education, women's development, arts, and entertainment were all in attendance to facilitate the workshops. In an improvement from the first conference, extensive notes

were taken, all participants' contact information was collected, and a post-conference follow-up has held all parties more accountable to the commitments made.

Those in attendance who are already actively involved in both Sierra Leone and the Diaspora community were able to network with those around them. Keynote speakers delivered powerful messages about how to take the first step towards developing Sierra Leone and motivate them that the time is now to act. Workshops running the gamut of development and policy issues equipped participants with the right tools to mobilize for the future of their country. Finally, well-versed and recently returned Sierra Leonean youth sat on a panel to discuss the youth's role in Diaspora-homeland development and inspire the audience with their stories.

The overarching message for everyone to walk away with revolved around the need for Sierra Leoneans to act collectively in order to most effectively implement change and participate in civic duties to ensure that everyone's voice has an equal opportunity to be heard. Well-respected leaders in the Sierra Leonean community—among them The Sierra Leonean Ambassador to the United States, Bockari Stevens, documentary filmmaker Sorious Samura, The President of The Sierra Leone Network, the 2007 SLYEC Chairwoman, and television star Isaiah Washington—volunteered their time to pass on their expertise and goodwill to all present. In return, workshop participants asked a range of very important questions and requested information necessary to make the initial steps towards improving Sierra Leone.

Many powerful people were in attendance who said incredible things, but words are meaningless when they are not followed through with deeds. Pages of notes were

taken to keep track of action items mentioned and questions to follow up on. Lists of attendees' contact information were kept. Statistics were compiled from voluntary surveys taken to improve the conference in future years and the research within this report.

YL-SL put together a very detailed report from the notes with action items, contact details, and summaries of all of SLYEC's details. It set up a networking section of its website (<http://www.youngleaders-sierraleone.org/slyecHome/>) and created user accounts for every participant who provided a name and e-mail address. The group wants to make SLYEC an annual event both preceded and followed by continual action. The Sierra Leonean youth who participated know that positive change will only come if they become a part of that change.

The Sierra Leonean Government and the Diaspora in the United States are well aware of the developmental potential that Sierra Leoneans abroad will bring to boost their nation. What they need now is recognition from outside. If agencies like USAID, the World Bank, IOM, and UNDP want to assist the ODA, SALCORE, and the youth of SLYEC in achieving the goals which they have already laid out for themselves and the rest of the Diaspora, now is the time to join forces. However, should the Diaspora's vision not fit in line with the mandates which international organizations and host country donors are working under, the recognition must now be that Diasporas be able to do their work on their own terms. The following chapter will highlight the major trends found in the past year among the Sierra Leonean Diaspora population in the U.S. to exemplify their potential and tell their stories.

Chapter 8

THE SIERRA LEONEAN DIASPORA IN THE UNITED STATES

All of the information in the following chapter comes directly from the results of a Qualtrics survey distributed in April and May 2008, interview transcripts from June and July 2008, and surveys collected at SLYEC in September 2008. The research has been intended to network with as many Sierra Leoneans in the United States as possible and paint a picture of the population to which the Sierra Leonean government is so fervently reaching out. Although it takes away from some of the personal nature necessary to identify with a group of people, all names of research participants have been withheld in order to minimize the risks that may be involved in divulging such information. It is hoped that the simple statistics and overarching trends herein will prove that the Sierra Leonean Diaspora in the United States is ready to receive the assistance they deserve to return home for development. Copies of the questions distributed are contained within the appendices at the end of this report.

General Demographics

Migration statistics are very difficult to collect. The Sierra Leonean government and Diaspora put the number of Sierra Leoneans living in the United States at around

300,000. However, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Immigration Department, the only available numbers are that 42,816 Sierra Leoneans have entered the U.S. with the intention of permanency from 1986 to 2007. This includes 29,031 who have been granted Legal Permanent Residency (LPR) since 1989; 875 refugee arrivals since 1995; 1,251 accepted asylum applicants since 1997, and 11,659 naturalized citizens since 1986 (Statistics 2008). The erratic nature of years for which these numbers are made available makes it difficult to estimate, and the number of Sierra Leoneans who entered the U.S. prior to 1986 is inaccessible. This leaves a lot of their history of emigration up to speculation.

Many men and women began traveling to the U.S. from Sierra Leone between the mid-1940s and independence in 1961 to earn university degrees. There was a feeling amongst Sierra Leoneans in search of higher education that the U.S. offered the best of the West without the colonized mentality that came with attending university in Britain. Upon receiving their degree, most students returned home. As one interviewee put it, "Back in those days, people very rarely stayed abroad. I think because the country offered more then and people were not used to staying away from home. There was more hope for the future" (07 2008).

In the 1960s, people began coming to the U.S. to study and felt that they could not go back to Sierra Leone when they received their degrees. A woman who came to the U.S. in 1963 on scholarship said, "When I first came here, I didn't plan on staying. I was married to one of the Prime Minister [Siaka Stevens'] nephews. I couldn't go back because of the coup... we were *persona non gratis*" (13 2008). Since the first coup d'état

took place in 1967, most emigrants went abroad or were *sent* abroad to get away from worsening conditions. A man who arrived in 1972 said, “My father had the foresight to get me out because he saw what was going on... I was getting politically active [with the opposition]. As soon as I left, three of my friends were shot, three were imprisoned, one was poisoned, and the repression just increased.... So If I were in Freetown, given what was happening to my friends, we might not be having this conversation today” (01 2008). Until recently, voluntary Sierra Leonean immigrants have largely emigrated with the intention of getting away from instability and violence. As an example that views are changing, both the man and woman quoted above are now currently looking to return.

A brief section on the base statistics of the population examined in this research will help to put the rest of this chapter in perspective. For several reasons, all participants were found via convenient sampling. The only means of finding Sierra Leoneans willing to participate was through the database on Sierra Leone Web, the members of the Yahoo! Group “Salone Discussion,” the subscribers to the Salone Net Internet Forum, SLYEC, and word of mouth. There was no incentive to participate other than a selfless desire to help the study or a means of finding opportunities for return. Therefore, the only people who participated are arguably those Sierra Leoneans who still have strong patriotic feelings. There seems to be no drawback to this approach in terms of this study because Diaspora Development Projects are only aiming for those interested in assisting their home country. However, some statistics may be skewed far away from the general population of Sierra Leoneans living in the U.S. Further studies of the Diaspora as a whole would be wise to improve upon this.

A total of 405 contacts were made over the course of six months. Approximately 35 percent of respondents were female and 65 percent male. The age breakdown was rather uniform, and over half of all respondents have been in the U.S. since at least 1993.

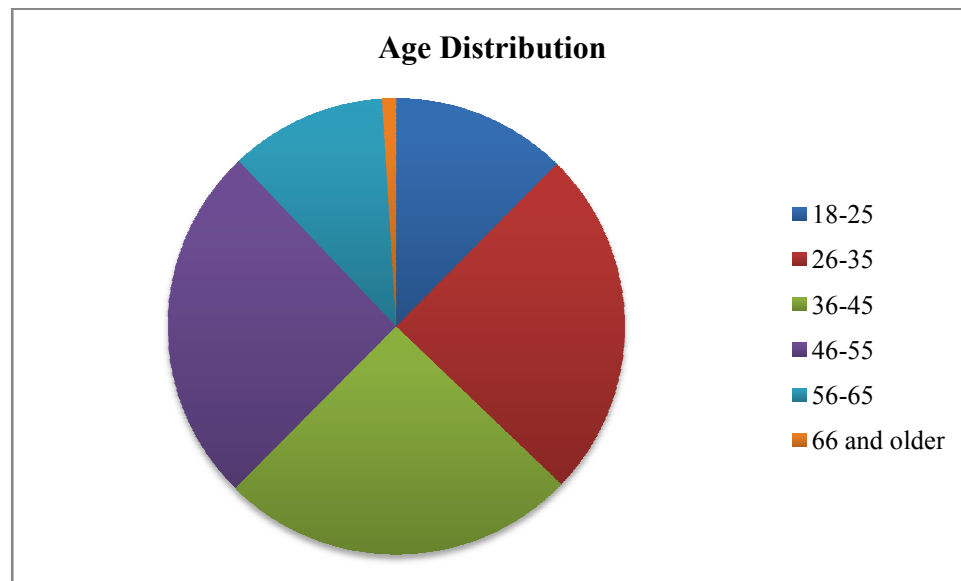


Figure 1. Age distribution of population studied

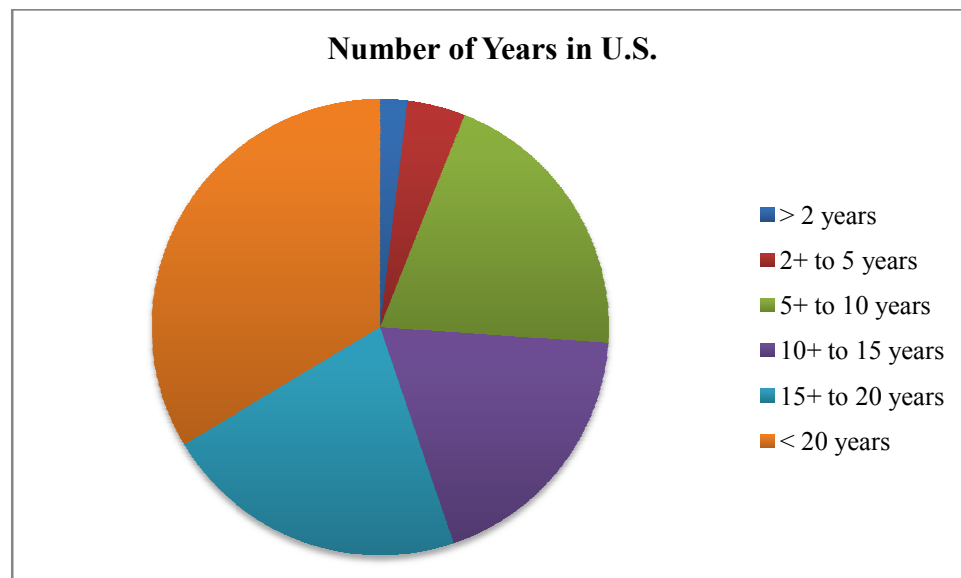


Figure 2. Amount of time population has been in U.S.

On the question of citizenship status, 57 percent have acquired dual citizenship since it was allowed in the Sierra Leone Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2006, and 29 percent possess Legal Permanent Resident Status (LPR). This type of security eases the process of travel between Sierra Leone and the U.S. immensely because both an American passport and a Green Card remove the need for visas and most complicated legal immigration issues.

Overall Trends

Educational Emphasis

Much like other African immigrant populations in the U.S., Sierra Leoneans are a highly educated group. In fact, 42.8 percent in this study traveled to the U.S. primarily as a result of an educational opportunity (see graph below), and 75 percent received their highest degree in the U.S. The percentage who have earned a Bachelor's degree is 55.3 (keep in mind that at least 12.4 percent are of college age and may still be in the process of finishing degrees), 39.3 percent moved on to earn a Master's Degree, and 9.8 percent have completed a Doctoral Degree. For comparison's sake, only about 10 percent of the general American college-aged population has earned a Master's degree (U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

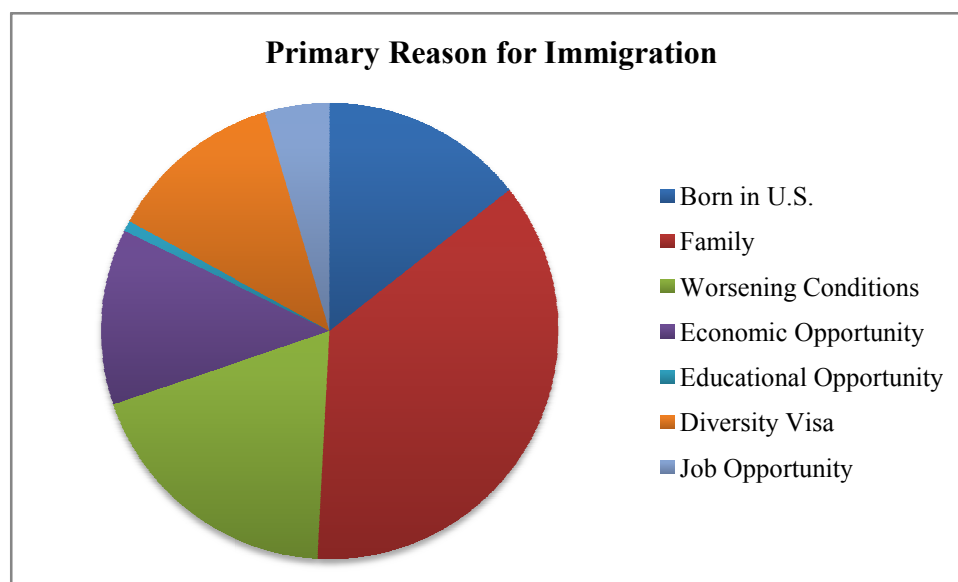


Figure 3. Primary reason population chose to emigrate to U.S.

Several interviewees cite their privilege in earning an education in the U.S. as something they have always intended on taking back to Sierra Leone. A 39 year-old man interviewed who is finishing up his Ph.D. in Social Policy said, “One of the reasons I went for advanced education was to see how best I can return back to help my people” He plans on returning as soon as he gets his degree to try to work as a professor in the University of Sierra Leone (06 2008).

A woman currently living in California put it this way: “People say that we’re just using the U.S. to get an education and leave, but if we had all the resources, we would not come here.... Why not come here and increase our opportunities and give back? Why not? That’s going to help all around because when we help people help themselves [in Sierra Leone] there’s no need for them to come to the U.S. anymore.... Sierra Leoneans

living abroad—who have been exposed to... and educated in the modern world—are the future of that country and making it better.” She returned in December 2008 to reopen her father’s hospital in Makeni (a regional capital) and is willing to return to do anything “as long as it has to do with education” (12 2008).

A very high emphasis is placed on education among Sierra Leonean families. The values which earned it the title “The Athens of West Africa” in the nineteenth century still remain. However, the consistently eroding institutional education standards and opportunities within the country since independence have pushed out many of the most privileged or hard-working. One in three survey and interview respondents specifically stated that one of the main problems to be addressed in Sierra Leone is the educational system. In the broadest sense of the term, an educated population will assist the country in developing far more quickly and more sustainably than anything else.

Occupations

The diversity and breadth of skills and occupations found among those surveyed is truly remarkable. Their expertise and training could fill just about every knowledge gap Sierra Leone currently has. For example, returning engineers can re-design the transportation system, physicians can bring in new medical techniques, accountants can work to bring corrupt officials to task, counselors can work with the large number of people still recuperating from trauma suffered in the war, and teachers can educate Sierra Leone's future leaders. With just the list below, it can be seen that Diaspora-Driven

Development programs could potentially provide Sierra Leone all that it needs to end its reputation as least developed country in the world!

Table 1. Partial list of occupations held by population

Accountant	Government Analyst	Program Coordinator
Assistant Provost	Home-Based Counselor	Public Health Worker
Associate Professor	Hospital Social Worker	Radiologist
Bank Manager	Human Resources Analyst	Real Estate Salesperson
Certified Public Accountant	Industrial Engineer	Recreation Coordinator
Chemist	Information Systems Analyst	Research Director
Child Care Director	Internal Medical Doctor	Settlement Processor
Clinical Director	Investment Banker	Social Worker
Computer Support Officer	Journalist	Software Developer
Construction Engineering	Management Analyst	Special Education Assistant
Consultant	Manufacturing Engineer	Structural Engineer
Cosmetics Manufacturer	Mechanical Engineer	Systems Architect
Database Manager	Medical Claims Auditor	Teacher
Dean of Graduate Programs	Minister	Technical School Teacher
Dialysis Lab Technician	Nephrologist	Technician
Diplomat	Nurse	Tour Guide
Director of University Relations	Paralegal	U.S. Army Supply Technician
Electrical Engineer	Physician	University Librarian
Engineering Manager	Postal Service Supervisor	UNIX-Linux System Administrator
Entrepreneur	Probation Officer	Urban Planner
Family Nurse Practitioner	Professor	Writer

Income

According to the 239 Qualtrics survey respondents who answered the question about annual income, the population of Sierra Leoneans actively looking to return and contribute earn much more, on average, than the respondents to the most recent U.S.

Census (see graph below). For example, 71 percent of the population earns over \$50,000 compared with just 21 percent of those in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

Similarly, 90 percent responded that they send a sizeable amount of their incomes through money transfers to friends and family in Sierra Leone each month. Among the group of 192 people who felt comfortable answering, between \$500,000 and \$1 million dollars is transferred per year—averaging out to about \$300 per month per person. They use a number of different transferring methods, among them Western Union, International Moneygram, and a host of locally owned and operated Sierra Leonean money exchange companies—MedSatu Forex (foreign exchange), Fundex, Dem Brothers, Afro International, Jah’s International, Barrie Inc., We Yone, Kalla Brothers Forex, CTI Transfer, People’s Enterprise, Salone International, and Sankhar Forex. Some also send money with friends who are traveling to Sierra Leone to make sure that it gets there and fees are not taken out.

Overall, the base facts found prove that this group of Sierra Leoneans in the U.S. makes up an elite population even amongst American citizens. Their income, occupations, and education levels alone do not convey the benefits they will bring to Sierra Leone. What marks their importance is how they feel their opportunities, achievements, skills, and privileges should be used. The following trends go even further in displaying their feelings about Sierra Leone and their plans to assist in its development.

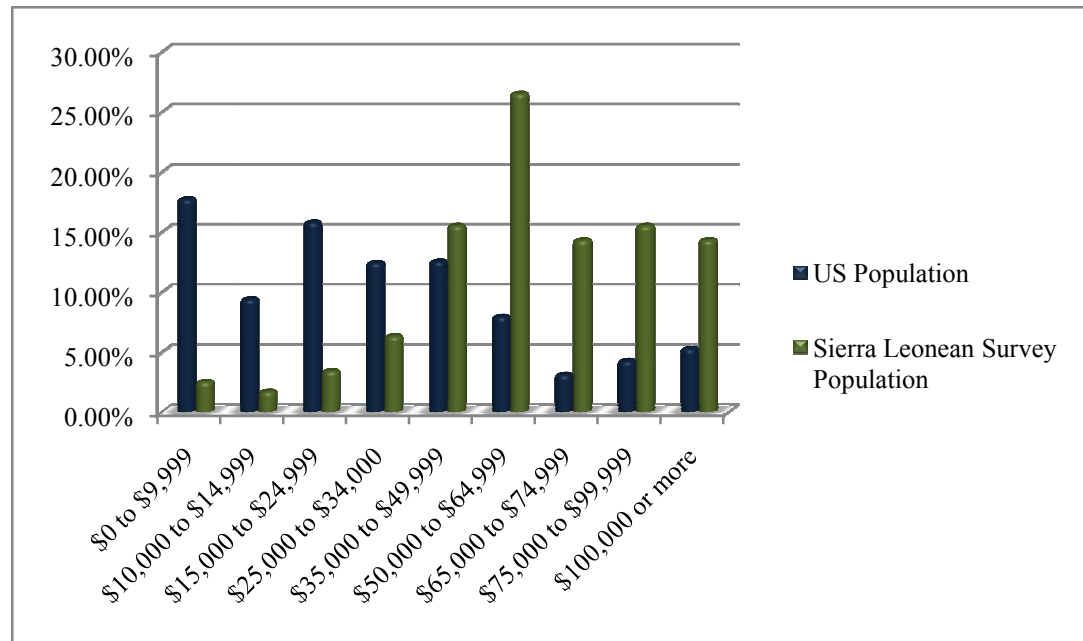


Figure 4. Income of population compared with 2007 U.S. Census data

Adverse Circumstances

As do a large percentage of immigrants from the developing world, the Sierra Leoneans involved in this research did not emigrate due to a hatred for their country. Rather, they did not feel that they could thrive—or survive—there. The adverse circumstances in the country caused many to leave, but it was not for lack of wanting to stay. Many people fled during the Rebel War (as most Sierra Leoneans tend to call the civil war), but they did not want to do so. One interviewee said point blank, “I would have not left if there were no rebel war” (15 2008). Another said that he had no choice: “When the war intensified in 1998, it became crucial to leave. I never wanted to leave because I had [already had] a taste of Western life, and I preferred Sierra Leone better

than anywhere.... My life, my wife, and the lives of my kids were in danger, so that's how it went" (31 2008).

Despite the adversity faced in-country over the past forty years, many have always kept Sierra Leone at the foreground of their thinking. They are simply waiting for an opportunity to return. Until this point, however, the opportunity has not been there. One of the more skeptical and cynical interviewees still has every intention of returning in two years time to search for a job. He said, "We're always ready to go back to Sierra Leone. It's the only place we really know.... My intention was not to leave." He came to the U.S. after the war because the infrastructure was so destroyed that there was no way for him to make a living. "Even though I graduated with a first class honors degree from USL, there is nothing.... That's why most of us left. I came with eleven other people. None of us returned back. But we're always ready" (20 2008).

Many did not emigrate with the intention of staying permanently. If a Diaspora-Driven Development Program can be established to provide people with funds to return and volunteer in organizations according to their skills, it will also provide the opportunity to build up opportunities for gainful employment. A full 73 percent responded "Yes," they would become involved in such a program if it was established, and the remaining 27 percent said "Maybe." The adverse circumstances which brought them to the U.S. could be improved upon and turned around with their help much more easily than without it, and many would like to take part in it.

Responsibility

81 percent of survey respondents feel that their education and skills acquired in the U.S. could be used more effectively in Sierra Leone than they are being used currently. This is not to say that such a large number are unsatisfied; quite to the contrary. 55 percent feel that their skills are being used on par with their potential, and 61 percent are satisfied with their current occupations. After distribution of the Qualtrics survey revealed that almost all participants plan to return and would like to assist with development, I began to search for reasons why. It came out rather easily that all but four of 74 subsequent people questioned feel it is a *personal responsibility* to return. This came with many explanations and one caveat.

One man said, “I’m one of those who believe that our parents sent us to this country [the U.S.] to see what the world is like and why it is what it is and then go back to Sierra Leone. I feel indebted to my country in that regard” (07 2008). The sentiment among those who feel they hold a responsibility to return is much the same. They had the opportunity to move abroad. They were fortunate enough to escape the violence. They had the privilege of getting a first-class Western education. However, their country is what molded them in the beginning, and they believe that the people who live in Sierra Leone today who may have been less fortunate can now have a chance to learn the best of the things which can be learned in the U.S.

A few respondents specified that they do not believe their responsibility is in returning; the responsibility is to contribute from wherever they can do so best.

“Returning permanently, sometimes people go back and don’t do anything. They get high

jobs and they don't do anything. So for me, if I can do my work, If the job is not hands on where I can conduct my job from the U.S. and still be successful, I swear to God I'll do it. If I go and don't do anything and make lots of money, get a UN job or a government job and don't do anything, that's not responsibility" (12 2008). If a large swathe of people were to return and become antagonistic, clearly that would detract from development and positive change. These people understand that.

Unity and Disunity

Among the Diaspora members interviewed, problems of ethnic tension and cultural mistrust were recognized. They know that unity is the way to development and a national consciousness will get there more quickly, but such sentiments are much easier said than done. To the rest of the American population, the Sierra Leonean Diaspora is homogenous—they're all Sierra Leoneans. To them, however, a lot of the homogeneity is situational. In areas with high numbers of Sierra Leoneans, such as the Washington, D.C. region, some Diaspora Associations are broken up along ethnic lines (e.g. The Fullah Progressive Union) or strictly by which school members went to (e.g. The Sierra Leone Grammar School Association). With the creation of SALCORE or the strengthening of the pre-existing National Organization of Sierra Leoneans in North America (NOSLINA), unity and communication must grow. One optimistic interviewee said, "People need to come together and learn together. That's what it's going to take—for us to unite and put our differences aside. It's not about you being a Temne and you being a Mende and you being a Fullah. That's why we call it 'Sweet Salone'. It's our country....

We have to be united, and that's what we lack.... [In the U.S.], we're always united—always ready to chip in and do whatever we can. If we can do it here, we can do it there” (12 2008).

With the creation of a Diaspora-Driven Development Program, there would be possibilities for both unity and individuality. The Diaspora as a whole would be united working towards the overarching goal of developing Sierra Leone in the best way possible. However, each person or Diaspora Organization participating would have the flexibility in working in whatever sector or geographical area which is deemed feasible according to their area of expertise and hometown affiliation. Allowing for such flexibility will help create unity because no agenda will be pushed over others. One man said, “I think people in the Diaspora have a lot to give, but it all goes back to trust. Trust between people at home and people back here” (21 2008). He believes that trust will come from people working with what they know and with people from where they came.

Dependency and Independence

An overarching theme which is felt both among the Diaspora and the Government of Sierra Leone is the need to change the mentality of Sierra Leoneans that has become entrenched over the past several years. The nation has been politically independent since 1961, but the people and the government are incredibly dependent on the international community and foreign aid. One young woman said, “People are always waiting for an NGO... to come fix their problem.... I believe in educating people—people building a

solution as opposed to imposing solutions on people. You actually raise people up...” (24 2008).

A Diaspora-Driven Development Program would create the next step in achieving political, social, economic, and psychological independence in Sierra Leone because the men and women returning to assist with development would be Sierra Leoneans themselves, not foreign workers. Among Sierra Leoneans, there is still a pervasive historical “mentality that ‘white is right’ That’s a defeatist attitude that has to change” (23 2008). By lessening the number of international workers and increasing the number of nationals working on large-scale development, a trust will develop and independence will increase.

This is not to say that all foreign workers and international organizations should pull out of Sierra Leonean at once. Many people think there is a definite need for expatriate cooperation, but it needs to be one of *equal* cooperation. One interviewee said, “I am a firm believer of working with expatriates. I believe, if we do that, things will get better” (31 2008). For the cooperation to be equal from the beginning, more project managers should be Sierra Leonean and salaries paid to international workers should be equaled out to be more like those paid to national workers.

Mistrust of Government

There is still a notable amount of mistrust of the Sierra Leonean Government among the Diaspora, so a Diaspora-Driven Development Program—although working with the government—must be an independent operation. “People have basically been

saying that the new government is the same people with different names. Unless you break the cycle, nothing's going to change" (21 2008). A few even believe that Diaspora members who have returned back to work under the Koroma Administration have been lulled into the cycle of inaction, so they believe that the Diaspora should work outside of the government. Specifically, one man said, "At this point, the Diaspora office [ODA] has yet to impress me. This is someone who came from America. Even the one's who came from America can mess up" (27 2008).

Transnationalism

For a good number of those interviewed, living in the U.S. has been very different than they expected it would be prior to their emigration. This is not to say that their experiences have been wholly negative, but certain aspects of American society are not conveyed to the world. Before arriving, people are told that the streets are paved with gold and lined with money trees, open for the taking to anyone who works hard enough. When they get here, they realize it's not so cut and dry. They found that "It was more an open society over there [in Sierra Leone] than it was here" (13 2008). "I still find that I have to deal with racism which I didn't have to deal with in my country. That was a huge eye opener to me. I thought, wow, this is supposed to be a great nation" (12 2008). It has been a great nation to most of those interviewed and surveyed; however, the discomfort which results from being an African immigrant in a nation with such a complex racial and cultural history has made most reluctant to call the U.S. "home". They are transnational.

Transnationalism as a concept and social movement is explained a bit in the definitions chapter of this report. Now that we are in an age in which home governments are paying attention to the potential development contributions of their Diasporas, migratory patterns are becoming less linear and concrete. Rather, they are becoming circular, with many people traveling between two or more social spaces. If the international community and employers are able to agree upon policies which facilitate transnational movement for migrants, I believe that many would wholeheartedly participate.

Transnationalism is not just a physical movement, but a psychological and social affect. “Home” is not where you were born, where you grew up, where you married, where you work, or where your house is. Home is where you feel comfortable, satisfied, at peace, and most inclined to be yourself. It is probably where your family and closest friends live. If you have neither, it is where you prefer to be alone. If your friends, family, memories, and opportunities are scattered in more than one country, “home” is not going to be set in stone.

Of the 72 total interviewees and SLYEC participants surveyed, 47 percent feel that Sierra Leone is home regardless of their current residence in the U.S. and 47 percent feel that Sierra Leone and the U.S. are equally “home.” One man said, “I’m trying to create a balance between them” (01 2008). There is also a sense among many of not really fitting into any one place. The interview of one man was peppered with such exemplary sentiments, despite having found great success as a project manager for Shell

Oil. For him, home is both Sierra Leone and the U.S. because he's "Too African to be American and too American to be African—right flat in the middle" (23 2008).

45.4 percent of all respondents to the first-run and SLYEC surveys have travelled to Sierra Leone since April 2006, and seven interviewees will be permanently moved back to Sierra Leone by summer 2009. All interviewees and SLYEC participants were asked their thoughts regarding permanent return, and most gave responses reflecting a transnational attitude (see graph below). Now that they have lives, friends, and families in both countries, the thought of cyclical movements between the U.S. and Sierra Leone is all that makes sense. A Diaspora-Driven Development Program would have to be created to reflect this.

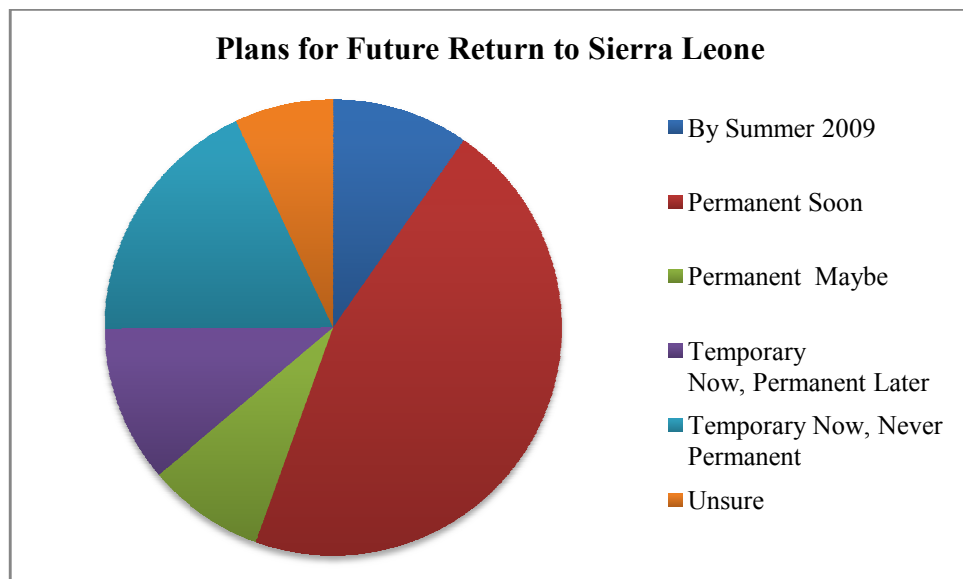


Figure 5. Plans within population to return to Sierra Leone

Retirement

A definite trend in results referring to when individuals are thinking about returning is that they will do so upon their retirement in the U.S. To an extent, this can be seen as negative because all of their young years will have been spent outside the country, but several interviewees feel that they will be able to put their skills to much better use in Sierra Leone when they are no longer reliant on work for an income and that life in Sierra Leone as an older person will be more fulfilling. One woman, who would like to start a retirement community in Sierra Leone, said, “Retiring in Sierra Leone is completely different than retiring here. Our culture is such that, if you’re there as an elderly person, you get a lot of help.... We are a community. We are a village.... Retiring here [in the U.S.], it’s very lonely...” (15 2008). Another man said he’ll return permanently “when I retire.... as much as I love America. Did you ever notice that we don’t have nursing homes in Sierra Leone? Nursing homes are foreign to Sierra Leone’s culture and mentality. It would not work. It’s like a community of family environments” (27 2008).

A man with his own pharmacy and plans to start a mobile clinic in Sierra Leone upon retirement said, “When we retire, that’s where we want to go and spend the rest of our years—to make a difference there. But before retirement, we’re definitely going to be more active starting next year [2009].... My reason for going home when I retire is because I’ll be more useful there in the community than here in the U.S. I owe that to my country” (29 2008).

Those who are in retirement are more stable economically, and they will be of great benefit to a Diaspora-Driven Development Program when it is created.

Overcoming Caveats in Results

There is a lot that could go wrong in attempting to start a successful Diaspora-Driven Development Program, and this kind of research is only the beginning. Exploratory research, surveys, and interviews are often skewed by respondents simply telling the researcher what they think he or she wants to be told. Dishonesty and something as fleeting as a person's feelings and emotions on the particular day he or she participated are enough to change results. However, this research has worked to overcome caveats seen and has laid a groundwork for future research to continue in an attempt to fix those caveats. Below are a few of the problematic trends.

Fear and Dishonesty

An above graph outlines that many of the survey respondents and interviewees have been in the U.S. for a very long time—some for over 20 years and through several very notable historic events in Sierra Leone's history. Except through online news stories, information relayed from friends and relatives in Sierra Leone, or short trips there over the years, they have very little knowledge of what life is like there anymore. The thought of returning is scary. One man said, "I just fear, I find it hard to imagine that any Sierra Leonean who has a halfway decent career here would give it up to permanently resettle in Sierra Leone" (18 2008).

There is doubt that many people will sacrifice their comfort here. In addition, some who are uncomfortable or unsatisfied with life in the U.S. are also fearful of returning to Sierra Leone without success stories or adequate funds to support their families. For those in Sierra Leone who still believe that living in the U.S. translates to riches, people returning from abroad are expected to reflect that. One man said, “How can you explain that you came from the U.S....with nothing? I think Sierra Leoneans are capable of doing the things we need to do. We just need somebody to organize us or maybe think about organizing ourselves” (09 2008). As he said, the comfort of having a Diaspora-Driven Development Program to assist return, facilitate settling in, and provide the option for return to the U.S. will make it easier for people to take the leap needed to return despite being fearful of the results.

Geographical Similarity

In order for a Diaspora-Driven Development Project to achieve its goals, participants will need to be spread out throughout the country. Most development work is concentrated in Freetown, the capital, and some of the most destitute poverty is in the northernmost villages in the provinces. One of the benefits to having Sierra Leoneans work to develop their country is that they have “hometown knowledge” and understand the cultural and lingual nuances where they will be working. Unfortunately, in this research, 59 percent of survey respondents were born in Sierra Leone’s Western Area (i.e. the Freetown Peninsula). At their time of emigration, a full 84 percent lived in the Western Area.

Freetown, although it has dire poverty, is the city where the comforts most familiar to life in the U.S. can be found, so there is fear that participants in a Diaspora-Driven Development Program will only want to participate if they are able to live and work in or just outside Freetown. One woman said, “I think people should work in the villages instead of sitting in Freetown—because that’s what they’re doing. They’re all sitting in Freetown. You have to go to the village and work with the people” (13 2008).

In order for the Diaspora to make a nationwide impact, projects will have to be run outside the capital, and individuals with a desire to work outside Freetown should be given greater preference.

Ethnic Tension

One of the greatest challenges to sustainable peace in Sub-Saharan Africa is the social construction of “tribalism.” Tribalism is largely a vestige of the colonial past where ethnic groups were pitted against each other by the colonial administration to take the Black majority’s focus away from the wrongs being committed by Whites. Upon independence, many African leaders found that they could garner support from their ethnic groups over others by harping on the differences stressed by the colonizers. Strong ethnically-affiliated political parties sprung up throughout the continent and ethnically-based nepotism has resulted in many government offices. Populations are divided.

As it is in Sierra Leone, many people do not know where their particular group diverged from another, but plenty of stereotypes and irrational generalizations are tossed about regarding one group or another to this day. Although many Sierra Leoneans

recognize tribalism's frivolity and the need for a national consciousness to achieve stable peace and development, division and loyalty along ethnic lines is still prevalent in political, economic, and social instances. I see this as a major setback to Diaspora-Driven Development. Some participants in the survey felt that a question about ethnic group was too personal or unnecessary (although a full 95.6 percent of first-run survey participants answered the question—more than the answered the question about current job or reasons for emigration). I agree that a person's ethnic background should be ignored or on the periphery, but—like in the U.S.—prejudice cannot be swept under the rug until it is fully recognized and eradicated.

For example, the Krio (Creole) are estimated to be only 10 percent of Sierra Leone's current population, yet a full 53 percent of survey respondents identify as Krio. Historically, the majority of the Krio population has lived in and directly outside Freetown. They are viewed as the population with the most privilege and connection to the outside world via trade and education. In many cases, this privilege has crossed generational boundaries, resulting in the disproportional number of Krio with opportunities to emigrate. Hostilities surface among non-Krio populations in this regard.

In order, the next most common answers to ethnic identity are Mende (28 percent), Temne (22 percent), Fula/Fullah (13 percent), and Mandingo (11 Percent). These percentages are more in line with the general makeup of the Sierra Leonean population. In order for a Diaspora-Driven Development Program to work properly without ethnic tensions, all Diaspora members have to be willing to put their groups aside and develop a national view.

Elitism

Seemingly, the most likely thing to go wrong should a Diaspora-Driven Development Program get off the ground is that “a new elite” will be created who do not contribute to the betterment of the rest of the population. In terms of education, experience, and income, there is no doubt that they will be considered elite, but there is a difference between those who use their advantage to better the whole population versus bettering only themselves. This fear is seen amongst Sierra Leoneans in country, also, and the issue of Western educated elites is not new. Many of the leaders of African independence movements and revolutionary struggles arose from Africa’s Western educated elite. “Whether as ‘activists, organization builders, ideologists, or members of the literary class, the nationalists were those who had received one type of formal education or the other’” (Bassey 1999:63).

Since Western education began creating a small minority of elite African individuals by hand-picking them to receive higher degrees in European countries, there have been serious repercussions for the individuals themselves and the societies which they come from. Psychologically, it has caused the elites to feel that they possess a dual identity and fit neither in their home societies or the Western societies where they received higher education. Socially, it has caused estrangement and inequality among African populations, and many elites treated the people under their leadership with such terror and/or misinformation that the schism and lack of trust between elites and the masses is still perpetuated to this day.

The arguments surrounding postcolonial African leaders still abound today. Charles Peterson, self-described African American elite, wrote that an elite “is a ‘colonized’ individual who is engaged in a serious race of upward mobility in the colonial society and/or already enjoys a notable degree of privilege” (Peterson 2007: 93). If, in order for someone to have the opportunity to become educated in a Western country, he or she is privileged in the home country in the first place, will he or she ever really be able to identify with the masses? A large percentage of Western educated Africans were born or lived for a significant amount of time in their home country’s capital city. In my own research, 50 per cent of all surveyed Sierra Leoneans who emigrated to the United States were born in Freetown, and 71 per cent lived there upon emigrating. Growing up in or moving to the capital city is not necessarily an indicator of higher social class, but there definitely is a correlation. If this is the case, would “reconnecting” in rural areas upon their return from abroad actually be a legitimate means to taking responsibility, or should it just be assumed that they have never and will never be of the same culture as the masses, regardless of citizenship and national history?

Indications that elites have not yet learned from history or embraced responsibility for their status in their home societies are still seen quite often. A recent article written by a Sierra Leonean said, “African elites’ inability to tap their values for national development emanate from their education systems, which do not emphasize African values, and have blinded the elites from seeing the relevance of their rich cultural values in policy-making” (Akosah-Sarpong 2008:Par 5). However, there are also situations in which individuals living in the rural areas or simply in lower positions in

society assume that the elites will disregard them. If there is no constructive dialogue, and especially if there continue to be prominent “bad apples”—those who make empty promises, preserve their own self-interests, or, even worse, harm those they are meant to protect—returning Sierra Leoneans will do very little to change the state of their nation.

How do you deal with privileged Africans who were given the opportunity to attain an education overseas and feel that their home country is owed nothing? Should you even bother? Remind them that Africa is more than politics and more than the desperation that is seen in the media. They may have witnessed atrocities and poverty in their lifetime, but speak always of hope and the difference that life would be like for them now with an education. Invoke Nyerere: “Graduates in the developed societies do not have such opportunities as we have in Africa, and such social satisfactions as we can have.... here in Africa we can, by the use of our skills, help people to transform their lives from abject poverty... to decency and simple comfort” (Nyerere 1973: 25). Returning to one’s home, working for and with the people, does not have to be complete self-sacrifice, and it’s possible to work towards one’s own self-interests in the process. If one can appeal to one’s rationality and sense of home, imagine the possibilities. It can work, and the time is now to make it so.

In years past, many people who have returned to Sierra Leone do not do anything but flash luxury cars, wear designer clothes, build large gated houses, and work to make money only for themselves. This makes the wealth gap ever wider and breeds greater aggression among the poorer population. As one man said, “These people have been there through the thick and thin of it, so they’re going to resent it for a while.... If you

can show them a better life, I think naturally they would follow you” (16 2008).

Returning simply for one’s own benefit is not the aim of Diaspora-Driven Development, so steps will be taken to ensure that returnees in such a program are placed in sectors where their impact will be more than just on the individual level.

On the whole, all interviewees who were asked about elitism had thought about it already. They are well aware of the types of people who return and conspicuously consume, and they claim that they will never do that. One man said, “I have to keep in mind that the fact that I had this Western education doesn’t make me any better, any more qualified, than someone who has gotten education back there or doesn’t even have any” (17 2008). Another said, “I don’t think that, because I’m living in the U.S., I’m better than these people. We eat, we drink together. When people return, some people say they won’t come to ‘that level’ anymore” (26 2008). A Diaspora-Driven Development Program could easily avoid elitism during its operation because participants would have to work in sectors with people who had never traveled abroad, and—unless someone is working in their own business—they will be required to work under a supervisor who is not part of the program. I firmly believe that the people who participated in this research did so because they have love for their country and the people of Sierra Leone, so checks and balances would be made in a project to keep them from forgetting the big picture.

Chapter 9

HIGHLIGHT: DIRECT EXPATRIATE NATIONAL INVESTMENT

Structural Adjustment Programs have been implemented, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been pledged, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) have been written, and Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) status has been granted, yet as long as dependency still rests primarily on the outside, Sierra Leone will never achieve any of its objectives. The current Government of Sierra Leone has been working tirelessly in conjunction with several international financing organizations to privatize state-owned enterprises and relieve a major budgetary burden. What exactly will privatization entail? Even at face value, none of the long-term benefits seem to outweigh the immediate losses.

In one case, the Sierra Leone Ports Authority (SLPA)—State-owned for many years—has been engaged in privatization dialogue with the World Bank since 2007, and all signs point that it will become so. Immediately, thousands of formal and informal workers would be laid off, and only about 300 employees are deemed necessary for its continued operation. Where will the severance packages come from for all of the laid off workers? Where will they work in a country which is already experiencing upwards of 65 percent unemployment (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2007). There is no doubt that reform, modernization, technological improvement, and training

needs to take place within SLPA, but bestowing ownership to the highest bidder will once again take a sector with huge revenue-building and GDP-growing potential out of the equation. African enterprises in possession of the most financial capital are not benefiting the people; in fact, most are owned by foreign corporations. There is no trickle-down to the local people who work for them, many do not employ from the local population, and taxes which are paid to governments make no impact at the national level. One needs only to look at the scandals surrounding Firestone Tire's rubber plantations in Liberia, Nestlé Company's cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire, and Shell Oil's fields in the Niger River Delta of Nigeria to see the negative legacies surrounding foreign ownership in West Africa.

In an attempt to get away from such partnerships, the Direct Expatriate Nationals Investment (DENI) concept is being shared with Diaspora organizations and African governments to finally use expatriate remittances for long-term national development and poverty reduction. It is marketed not as a fund, but as an "external resource mobilization and poverty reduction program." Advocates of DENI believe that privatization is the answer, but they understand the caveats of opening up ownership to the international community. Therefore, they are trying to set up a framework in which Diaspora members and well-to-do nationals in their home countries buy small holdings in state-owned enterprises up for auction. Essentially, a stock exchange will be created so millions of families own pieces of growing businesses as opposed to a few families of millionaires. This will create a "culture of ownership" instead of a "culture of dependency" in nations where the majority of populations have become alienated and detached from all formal

market activity, creating feelings of national pride and empowerment along with greater distribution of wealth.

Usually, a state-owned enterprise is put up for auction in an initial public offering (IPO), in which shares of a company are opened to all interested parties and sold to the highest bidder. In DENI, only Diaspora members and Sierra Leoneans in-country will be allowed to participate to buy “debt vouchers.” Debt vouchers are agreed upon to pay off a segment of Sierra Leone’s debt (for example, in conjunction with The Paris Club). They essentially aid in the cancelling of debt with a promise that the full amount cancelled will go towards direct investment in developing Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leonean in possession of the voucher then has a period of one year to decide in which business (within the program’s scope) that he or she wants to invest. Eventually, the hope is that DENI businesses will be completely Diaspora-entrepreneur owned or Diaspora-Government owned.

DENI was brought to the attention of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora in November 2008, and extensive progress has been made on its design in a very short time. Although several questions about its implementations are not yet answered, it seems one of the most progressive and action-oriented projects laid out since the start of the Koroma Administration in September 2007. A core group has approached the Government of Sierra Leone with the Project proposal, and the President has heartily agreed with its intentions. The United Nations Development Program in Sierra Leone has also been approached by the Government for funding of the initial consultancy, research, and publicity. A group of Sierra Leonean consultants are already in Sierra Leone surveying

the conditions on the ground in which the program could work, and interested Diaspora members are being assured of complete transparency and accountability at every turn. This type of project is one with a vision which could truly decrease Sierra Leone's dependency on the international community from which it so desperately needs to get away.



Photo 12. Interested members of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora meeting at the Embassy of Sierra Leone, Washington, DC, May 4, 2008

Chapter 10

NEEDS FOR SUCCESS

Personal Return Stories

The ODA has a tab on its website dedicated to “Success Stories.” Those thinking about return are more likely to be moved by personal testimonies than faceless statistics. However, it has so far only contained one, and that is definitely not representative of the number of people who have returned since President Koroma’s election. A regular circulation of return stories is needed to make an impact.

For example, a woman interviewed returned to Sierra Leone on June 18, 2008 with the intention of staying at least one year and hoping to stay permanently. She said, “People have visited and come back [to the U.S.] and said they’ll never go back because things have regressed from the last time. I saw opportunity and potential.” On March 13, 2009, she e-mailed me with the website of her new play center for children—KidZone—which she plans on officially opening in June 2009. It is a three-story, 4,000 square-foot building including indoor and outdoor playgrounds, an Internet café for children and their parents, a game room, a sports room, a classroom for tutoring, and areas for family parties (The KidZone, 2009). She wants “to work with the kids to reflect a new attitude in them” because “the culture that has developed is not what we want to see going forward.”

She has experienced challenges, but says, “Sierra Leone is my country, the people are my people,” and volunteer work is something that every member of the Diaspora should do (03, 2008).

In addition, several of the TRQN participants from The Netherlands are participating as a way to ease themselves and their families back into living in Sierra Leone. They all have positive experiences which they would be happy to share. The ODA would be intelligent to seek out such stories. The ODA Website also does not represent stories of return that have been negative. It would be foolish to expect that every situation in Sierra Leone has been changed, and only providing successes may instill a false hope in many members of the Diaspora.

Survey of Sierra Leonean Industries and Organizations

The only way to successfully involve the Diaspora in a large way is to have a database of needs in Sierra Leonean organizations and industries. I envision the database to be as accessible as a Craig’s List© for the Diaspora, and it could be accessed through the ODA website in the “Find Jobs” section. This would contain jobs that cannot be filled or skills that are unavailable amongst professionals in-country. It could indicate degrees or credentials preferred, the length of time a person would be needed, and what he or she would be expected to do on the job. Whether the job was paid, volunteer, full-time, part-time, or contractual would be available. Who to contact, how to contact, and where the job would be would also be necessary.

Initially, the work in collecting this information could be split up to very small levels of government (e.g. District Councils) or given to a small group of individuals hired through the ODA. Announcements of the initiative could be made through the national media—in print, online, and on the radio—so that managerial staff would have the opportunity to be made aware of the database ahead of time. Then, data collection meetings could be held throughout the country for the first run and training on how to use the database for managers would be done. When positions are filled, it is the responsibility of those who do the hiring to edit their lists of needs. Based on experience with upper-level staff in offices as diverse as the Ministry of Labor, SLANGO, and the West Africa Oil Refinery in Freetown, data collection would be well received.

Duplicate Surveys of Sierra Leoneans throughout the World

The pieces of this puzzle would not be complete without a more thorough knowledge of where and how many Sierra Leoneans are living throughout the world. The most obvious place to survey next is the United Kingdom because of the likelihood that people from developing nations will emigrate to their country's former colonial power. However, evidence of the involvement and interest of Sierra Leoneans in nations as widespread as Canada, The Netherlands, Bahrain, Liberia, and The Philippines was evident even in the distribution of my survey, so an effort needs to be made that will include all first and second generation Sierra Leoneans.

In fact, I received several e-mails from Sierra Leoneans in other countries very quickly upon release of my survey, so I created duplicates in hopes that data could be

used as well. The duplicates yielded 36 Sierra Leoneans resident in the UK, 23 in Canada, and 19 in the European Union within 24 hours. I did not have the time or the knowledge to dedicate to these surveys, but I know that the interest is there.

After the original distribution of the survey for this report, it has come to attention that it is too long. If researchers are more interested in getting basic information from a large number of people than a great deal of information from a small number, it could easily be shortened to the version of the survey distributed at the SLYEC that was only 21 questions long. As a guide, questions contained in the first- and second-run surveys and the interviews are attached in appendices.

Chapter 11

CONCLUSION

During the first day of my month in Ghana in January 2009, I was talking to a professor at the university about the stark differences I was already noticing between Freetown and Accra, Ghana's capital. Despite the humidity, I could feel almost immediately how much lighter the air was than in Sierra Leone. It was an emotional feeling, linked to the attitudes of the Ghanaians around me. Regarding Sierra Leone's condition, the professor said simply, "Of course. The devil lived there." The mental photograph has stuck, and I believe he was right. Some thing—some "devilish" force—has been there, but I also know the winds are changing.

Sierra Leone has always faced far too much outside intervention. Beginning with the advent of slavery in the 1400s, Sierra Leone's path through history moved through a massive detour of catastrophic proportions that has since taken its people through Heaven and Hell and back again. Many who came from the land are spread throughout the world, whether they have knowledge of their heritage or not. Had it not been for slavery, the Colony would not have been so influenced by Western culture and the nation's current makeup would not be nearly as diverse. As a Colony, Freetown was the British administrative headquarters for every British West African Colonial outpost. Currently, hundreds of expatriate workers and employees of foreign governments roam the streets of

the capital. Even when the country was at the height of its civil war, it was not free from Irish, British, American, South African, and ECOWAS military incursion. As long as something can be gained from working there—natural resources or a salary, adventure and even danger—Sierra Leone will not be left to the Sierra Leoneans. However, I believe that is what it needs.

As the world continues to look back at mistakes it has made in Sub-Saharan Africa and search for solutions to right wrongs, one of the worst things we can do is think about the future in terms of doing things “for” or “to” the Africans who live there and abroad. Too often we do things simply because that is how they have always been done. Working within a system to change it is easier than doing the work to create a new system, but that is what we need. This is no longer the era of blatant racism and ethnocentrism à la Rudyard Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden,” missionaries, museum curators, or colonial administrators. We are now stuck in an era of international donors, altruistic fundraisers, Internet activism, and “volun-tourism”. The burden has become masked and laced with politically correct connotations—people doing work out of the goodness of their hearts and “to make the world a better place.” African development work has evolved, but it is still laden with dependency creation, white guilt, and Western supremacism. Its effects are sneaky.

The era of Diaspora-Driven Development work is that of the future, and this report aims to usher it in sooner rather than later. Permitting a country’s citizens abroad the access, responsibility, and means to take control of the development of their homeland will have myriad benefits. Psychologically—their return will contribute to the

cultural healing of a nation whose collective psyche has been torn to pieces. Socially—a cyclical return will allow them to adjust slowly to changes, learn whether they can reintegrate into society, and reunite with friends and family who also may have been scattered throughout the world. Economically—their skills will contribute directly to national development, their money will be kept in the country (opposed to international workers), and fewer resources will be spent to employ outsiders. For example, returning lawyers will improve the overburdened justice system, engineers will re-design the transportation system, physicians will bring in new medical techniques, and teachers will educate Sierra Leone’s future leaders. Temporary return migration programs could potentially provide Sierra Leone all that it needs to end its reputation as least developed country in the world!

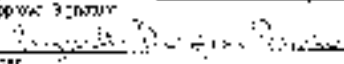
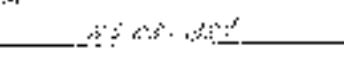
If indeed it is necessary to put a more selfish spin on the idea, Diaspora-Driven Development will improve the future operation and economic advancement of the United States and other Western nations as well. Finding ways to employ Diaspora members returning home permanently will make more jobs available to American-born citizens in a time where there the unemployment rate is skyrocketing. Diaspora members returning for short periods of time could allow for temporary workers to take their place or take advantage of furlough situations (temporary, unpaid leave with job security) many companies are offering to save money. Companies could create institutional agreements or partnerships more easily with the help of returning Diaspora members currently or previously in their employ—easing corporate social responsibility commitments or increasing consumer base. The financial input of assistance to Diaspora populations by

donors to get these kinds of programs off the ground will definitely pay off in the future as participants are able to create their own organizations to perpetuate return and generate funds. The more that members of the Diaspora are able to rely on themselves to complete the development work needed in their home countries, the less that their host countries (i.e. the U.S.) will have to contribute international workers and foreign aid.

The population of Sierra Leoneans of which this research speaks is ready to return to Sierra Leone—permanently or temporarily. The Government of Sierra Leone is ready to receive them. They have all of the skills, resources, and occupations necessary to turn Sierra Leone around. They have a cache of knowledge of the country's cultural nuances to guide them through more easily than if the work was being done by international workers. Let's step aside, give the Diaspora the support they need, push from the background, and let them do the work they need to develop the Sierra Leone of the future.

Appendix A

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH BOARD APPROVAL

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTOCOL University of Delaware												
Protocol Title:	3. Testing the Potential for Response-Driven Development Processes Among Clinical Research Researchers at the Cancer Center											
Principal Investigator: Name: Contact Phone: Email Address:	Robert L. Kohn, M.D. 736.629.2218 rkohn@udel.edu; rkohn@delaware.edu											
Authors:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Robert L. Kohn, M.D.</td> <td>Dr. Joseph E. Bland</td> <td>Dr. W. Robert Kohn</td> </tr> <tr> <td>736.629.2218</td> <td>736.629.2218</td> <td>736.629.2218</td> </tr> <tr> <td>rkohn@udel.edu</td> <td>jbland@udel.edu</td> <td>wkohn@udel.edu</td> </tr> </table>			Robert L. Kohn, M.D.	Dr. Joseph E. Bland	Dr. W. Robert Kohn	736.629.2218	736.629.2218	736.629.2218	rkohn@udel.edu	jbland@udel.edu	wkohn@udel.edu
Robert L. Kohn, M.D.	Dr. Joseph E. Bland	Dr. W. Robert Kohn										
736.629.2218	736.629.2218	736.629.2218										
rkohn@udel.edu	jbland@udel.edu	wkohn@udel.edu										
Other Investigators:	None											
Type of Review:	<input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expedited <input type="checkbox"/> Full Board											
Exemption Category:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6											
Minimal Risk:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No											
Submission Date:	5/14/2013											
HSRB Approval Signature:			Approval Date: 5/15/2013									
HSR Member:			Approval Not Expired: 1/1/2014									
<p>Investigator Assurances: By submitting this protocol, I am certifying that this project will be conducted in strict accordance with the University's policies. I will not make any modifications to this protocol without prior approval by the HSRB. Should any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or subjects' wellbeing occur, I will immediately report them to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the appropriate regulatory authorities.</p>												
<p>Signature of Investigator: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p>												

Appendix B

FINAL QUALTRICS SURVEY

Surveying Sierra Leoneans in the United States for Purposes of Diaspora-Driven Development

Participant Consent Page

Purpose/Description of Research

The United States has a very large number of motivated, skilled, and educated Sierra Leoneans within it, and now you have the opportunity to participate in a study which could set in motion the creation of large-scale Diaspora-Driven Development Projects.

Approximately 950 individuals are being invited to participate in this survey. All e-mail addresses have been collected personally or extracted from the database found on the website Sierra-Leone.org.

It is advisable to allow at least 30 minutes to complete the survey, so it is advisable that you plan out some time where you can so do.

Upon completion, you can assist the researcher further by sending the online survey link to other Sierra Leoneans in the U.S. with whom you maintain contact. In this way, the maximum number of participants will be reached and the greatest impact will be made.

With the information you provide, two databases will be created. The first will catalog your responses to the survey so that it may be analyzed for a final written report on the Sierra Leonean Diaspora in the U.S., and the second will catalog your contact information and various organizations of which you might be a part.

Conditions of Subject Participation

In order to participate, you must be over the age of 18, living in the United States, and a first or second generation immigrant. In other words, you or at least one of your parents must have been born in Sierra Leone. If you do not meet these criteria, any responses you provide to the survey will be destroyed.

Risks and Benefits

The purpose of this research is solely to be beneficial to Sierra Leoneans living within Sierra Leone and in the United States, and all potential risks have been considered and avoided. However, as a member of an immigrant population, you may feel vulnerable in regard to immigration policies within this country. With this in mind, you may choose to skip over any question which you can not answer or which you feel uncomfortable answering. In terms of analysis, it would be most beneficial to see the views of each respondent on each question, but your safety and peace of mind is most important.

It is hoped that there will be several benefits to your participation and the information you provide in the future.

These benefits are primarily social. The survey's results and analysis could:

- (1) Inform the public of your motivations and desires to develop your country yourself.
- (2) Open the door for a much larger-scale study (or census) to be conducted.
- (3) Provide the opportunity for much greater coordination among Sierra Leoneans and Diaspora Associations in the U.S.
- (4) Show the Government of Sierra Leone the kind of people that it has at its disposal during these next coming years.
- (5) Complement a survey of skills gaps and occupational needs which the Government of Sierra Leone is now planning to conduct throughout the country's public and private sectors.
- (6) Create the opportunity for projects to be started that will allow you to return to your home country or contribute in whichever way is most convenient for you.
- (7) Become the kind of study which can be imitated and duplicated among Diaspora communities throughout the world to help aid in their home countries' development.

Confidentiality

Individual responses will be collected on a secure web server. These data will remain confidential and viewed only by the researcher and her team of advisors. To protect confidentiality, personally identifiable information in the downloaded data files will be stored separately and securely from the rest of the survey response data.

At a further point, there may be an opportunity for this study's data and participants' contact information to be released to donor agencies or project implementing organizations. This will only be in the instance that its potential benefits for participants and Sierra Leone as a whole may be realized via project creation. In this instance, all study participants will once again be contacted by the researcher for explicit permission to provide such information.

The data will be destroyed when information collected is no longer deemed beneficial to the survey participants or organizations interested in creating Diaspora-Driven Development Programs.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. To leave the study at any time, close the web browser before you press the final submission button at the end of the survey. Any responses you have previously made will not be saved until you press that final "submit" button.

By submitting the survey, you will be consenting to participate.

Contact

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact the principal investigator, Robyn Mello, at rojomello@gmail.com, (609)828-0289. For questions about your rights as a subject or about any issues concerning the use of human subjects in research, please contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, University of Delaware, (302) 831-2136.

Thank you for participating.

To take this survey, you must be 18 or older. In addition, you or one of your parents must have been born in Sierra Leone. Finally, you must be currently living in the US to participate.

Are all three of the above conditions true for you?

Yes. All three conditions are true.

No. At least one of the conditions is not true.

What is your age?

18-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56-65

66 and older

What is your sex?

Female

Male

How many years of schooling have you finished?

None

1-5

6-10
11-14
15-18
19 or more
Other (please specify)

What degree(s) have you obtained? Please check all that apply.

High School Diploma
Trade School Certificate (Please specify.)
Associate's Degree (AA / AS)
Bachelor's Degree (BA / BS)
Master's Degree (MA / MS / MPhil, etc)
Doctoral Degree (PhD / MD / DO / DVM / DSS, etc)
Other (please specify)

Where did you obtain your highest degree?

Sierra Leone
United States
United Kingdom
Canada
The Netherlands
France
Belgium
Germany
Other (please specify)

What is your annual income?

\$9,999 or less
\$10,000 to \$14,999
\$15,000 to \$24,999
\$25,000 to \$34,999
\$35,000 to \$49,999
\$50,000 to \$64,999
\$65,000 to \$74,999
\$75,000 to \$99,999
\$100,000 or more

What did you study or specialize in while in school (examples: welding, psychology, cardiac surgery)?

What is your current job?

Do you feel that your education and skills are being used to their fullest potential in the United States?

No
Not really
Neutral
Mostly
Yes

Are you satisfied with your job?

Unemployed
No
Not really
Neutral
Mostly
Yes

Do you feel that your education and skills could be used more effectively in Sierra Leone than in the US?

No
Not really
Neutral
Somewhat
Yes

In which district were you born in Sierra Leone?

In which district was your mother born in Sierra Leone?

In which district was your father born in Sierra Leone?

In which district were you living before you left Sierra Leone?

What ethnic group(s) do you identify with? Please check all that apply.

Fula
Gola
Kissi
Kono
Koranko
Krim
Krio
Limba
Loko
Mandingo
Mende
Sherbro
Susu

Temne
Vai
Yalunka
Other

How many years have you lived in the United States?

Less than 2 years
2 years 1 month to 5 years
5 years 1 month to 10 years
10 years 1 month to 15 years
15 years 1 month to 20 years
More than 20 years

What is your citizenship status in the United States?

Non-Immigrant Visa
Immigrant Visa
Permanent Residency (Green Card)
Dual Citizenship (American / Sierra Leonean)
Other (please specify)

Why did you migrate to the US?

Came with parents
Born in the US
Political persecution
Civil war
Family member invitation
Economic opportunity
Educational opportunity
Diversity Visa
Job offer / professional opportunity
Other (please specify)

Why did your parents migrate to the US?

Parents never in the US
Political persecution
Civil war
Family member invitation
Economic opportunity
Educational opportunity
Diversity Visa
Job offer/ Professional opportunity
Other (please specify)

When was the last time you were in Sierra Leone?

Less than 6 months ago

6 months to 1 year ago
1 year 1 month to 2 years ago
2 years 1 month to 5 years ago
5 years 1 month to 10 years ago
10 years 1 month to 15 years ago
15 years 1 month to 20 years ago
More than 20 years ago

What is your marital status?

Single
In a relationship
Engaged
Married
Divorced
Widowed
Other

What is the nationality of your partner?

No partner of spouse
American
Sierra Leonean
Dual citizenship American & Sierra Leonean
Other (please specify)

How many children do you currently have in the United States?

0
1
2
3
4
5
Other (please specify)

How many children do you currently have in Sierra Leone?

0
1
2
3
4
5
Other (please specify)

How many individuals do you keep in touch with in Sierra Leone?

0

1-5
6-10
11-15
16-20
21-30
More than 30

Do you have any knowledge of projects where immigrants can volunteer to help develop the countries from where they came?

Yes
No

Do you have any knowledge of the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) Program?

Yes
No

Have you registered for IOM's MIDA database for African Diaspora members?

Yes
No

The following 5 questions refer to what the researcher refers to as "Diaspora-Driven Development Projects." Simply put, this is a program set up which gives immigrants the opportunity to voluntarily contribute to the development of the country where they were born.

This can be done in several ways. Some immigrants prefer volunteering temporarily on the ground in the country where they were born. Some prefer permanent return, in which they will be set up with a paying job. Others prefer to stay outside the country but would still like to contribute. They can contribute financially, or they can use technology to virtually transfer their skills and expertise. These 4 types are only the main project ideas. There are other ways, too.

Some examples:

- (1) A woman with a degree in agriculture could return for 4 months to teach young people proper planting and harvesting techniques.
- (2) A man with a degree in Urban Planning could return permanently to work in a Ministerial position.
- (3) An older man without the ability to travel could send \$20 each month to a development fund which helps set up women with micro-loans to start small businesses.
- (4) A woman with a PhD in Economics could record lectures and upload them to a website where university students in her country of birth can watch them.

Would you like to participate in a voluntary Diaspora-Driven Development Project with Sierra Leone?

Yes

No

Maybe

How likely would you be to participate in the following types of Diaspora-Driven Development Projects?

Extremely likely, Very likely, Somewhat Likely, Unlikely, Extremely unlikely

Financial contribution to a central development fund

Financial investment to a business/organization

Single short-term return project (1-6 months)

Repeated short-term return projects (1-6 months 2 or 3 times)

Permanent return (secure job placement in Sierra Leone)

Virtual transfer (stay in the U.S. and broadcast via video conference or Internet)

Consultancy or advocacy (virtual or return)

Other (please specify)

Which conditions within Sierra Leone do you feel are most necessary before you would *return* to participate in a Diaspora-Driven Development Project? Please check all that apply.

None

Economic stability

Political stability

Improved food security

Improved utilities (e.g. electricity, gas, water, plumbing, sanitation)

Improved education

Improved employment opportunities

Improved healthcare

Improved infrastructure (e.g. roads, buildings, bridges)

Other (please specify)

How important would each of these incentives be in your decision to *return* to Sierra Leone to participate in a Diaspora-Driven Development Project?

Critical, Somewhat important, Neither important nor unimportant, Somewhat unimportant, Completely unimportant, Not relevant

Assurance that citizenship / residency in the United States remains valid

A monthly stipend (living allowance) while volunteering

Round trip airplane tickets between the United States and Sierra Leone

Guarantee of job security - that my job will be available to me when I return to the U.S.

Having my partner and children come to Sierra Leone with me

The potential to be formally employed by the organization I volunteer with in Sierra Leone

Guaranteed housing upon arrival in Sierra Leone
Ability to choose the organization with which I do volunteer work
Ability to choose the location in Sierra Leone where I volunteer/stay
Travel/health insurance during my stay in Sierra Leone
Having necessary supplies purchased for me prior to my placement
Other (please specify)

Do you send money to anyone in Sierra Leone?

Yes

No

To how many individuals do you send money?

1

2

3

4

5

6 or more

On average, how much money do you transfer monthly?

\$1 - \$100

\$101 - \$250

\$251 - \$500

\$501 - \$750

\$751 - \$1,000

More than \$1,000

How do you transfer money to Sierra Leone? Check all that apply.

Western Union

International Moneygram

In-person

Postal mail

DHL

By a friend who is traveling there

Other money-transfer company (please specify)

How is the money spent in Sierra Leone? Please check all that apply.

School fees

Home repairs

Food

Small business

Clothing

Fuel

Medical care

Other (please specify)

What would make you more likely to send money to Sierra Leone? Please check all that apply.

Lower commission / fees

Instant wire transfer from bank account to bank account

Assurance that money was going towards national development

Tax deductions in the United States

Other (please specify)

Do you belong to a Sierra Leonean Diaspora Organization or Hometown Association?

Yes (Please specify the group's name.)

No

How often does this group hold meetings?

Weekly

Monthly

Every 2 months

Every 6 months

As needed

Other (please specify)

Where does this group meet? Please provide information for all possible fields.

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City

State

Zip Code

If this organization has a website, please provide its address/ URL.

If you belong to more than one Diaspora organization, please fill in the appropriate details about them here (for example, name, web site, address, meeting times, etc.).

The main questions in the survey are now completed. However, the researcher would be grateful if you would be willing to help her further in her research. Some ways in which you could be of help to her are:

(a) participating in a follow-up interview,

(b) sending the link to the survey to other Sierra Leoneans you know residing in the US,

(c) inviting her to one of your Diaspora Organization meetings,

(d) informing other organizations and individuals who may be interested about this research,

(e) contributing to a blog or web site which the researcher plans to coordinate the efforts of Sierra Leone's Diaspora organizations.

Along with these, there are plenty of ways which participants can help, and the researcher is willing to hear all ideas. For database and contact purposes, please answer the remaining questions and provide your contact information. This will make it easier to contact you in the future, should the research help to establish long-term development projects.

Would you like to assist the researcher further in this study?

Yes

No

What would you like to assist with? Please check all that apply.

Participating in a follow-up interview

Allowing the researcher to attend one of your Diaspora group meetings

Providing more Sierra Leonean contacts for the survey

Putting the researcher in contact with staff of international development organizations or other pertinent offices which may be interested in this study

Other

For database purposes and further research, could you please provide the researcher with your name, e-mail address, and telephone number? Remember that all information will be kept secure.

Last Name

First Name

Middle/Other Names

E-mail Address

Phone Number

This is the final question in the survey, and it is completely open-ended. Is there any additional information that you would like to give regarding the content of this research? The researcher may contact you for clarification, if necessary.

Upon clicking the button below, you will be finalizing and submitting your responses to the survey. If you do not wish to submit them, just exit your Internet browser and all information will be lost.

Thank you so much for participating in this survey! Without your help, research in this area could not progress. With every survey submitted, there is a greater chance that Diaspora-Driven Development Projects will grow in importance and that they will benefit you.

Contact the researcher, Robyn Mello, with any questions, comments, or concerns.
Sending an E-mail is best:
rojomello@gmail.com
(609)828-0289

Appendix C

PHONE INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

Interview #: 00

Date/time: 00/00/00

Sex of Interviewee: M/F

Phone number of interviewee: 555-555-5555

E-mail address of interviewee: sample@sl.com

1. As precisely as possible, what date and year did you come to the United States?
2. How old are you?
3. Why did you come here?
4. Where did you originally live after arriving?
5. Where do you live now?
6. Upon arrival, how did you feel about the conditions you were living in? What were they like?
 - a. What were your expectations of life in the US prior to your arrival here?
 - b. Was life here as you expected?
7. After settling in more, how did you feel?
8. Were you the first member of your family to leave Sierra Leone to live abroad?
9. Did you have relatives or friends living in the United States before your arrival?
 - a. (If yes) Did you live with them, or were you mostly on your own?
10. When you arrived, did you immediately seek out other Sierra Leoneans in your area?
 - a. (If no) Did you seek out other African immigrants in your area?
 - b. (If yes) What kinds of activities did you and these others participate in?
 - c. (If yes) How did this help you to adjust to a new situation?
11. When was the last time you visited Sierra Leone?
 - a. Would you consider this visit a vacation, or were you working?
12. Which do you consider home: Sierra Leone, the US, or both?
 - a. Why?
13. If you had a chance to go back in time to the point when you were given the opportunity to leave Sierra Leone, is there anything that you would have done differently?
 - a. What kind of lifestyle do you think you would lead in Sierra Leone if you had never left?
14. What is your current occupation?
15. Do you work full-time or part-time?
16. Is this occupation related to your field of study in college?

- a. What was your field of study?
 - b. What is the highest degree you have received?
- 17. What skills, education, and job training do you possess?
- 18. Either individually or as a part of a group, do you currently participate in anything that is working to help develop Sierra Leone?
 - a. (If yes) What are you working to do and how?
 - b. (If no) In the past, have you ever participated in any activities which were working to develop Sierra Leone? Why did you stop them?
- 19. Even if you are already participating in development activities, do you feel that you could use your skills and education to develop Sierra Leone in a way that you currently are not?
 - a. Which occupation or occupations do you think you would be well qualified for in Sierra Leone?
 - b. Realistically speaking, which occupation or occupations would you like to work in Sierra Leone?
- 20. Do you have any knowledge of President Ernest Bai Koroma's January 2008 addition to his office, the Office of Diaspora Affairs?
 - a. If so, what is your opinion of it?
 - b. In what ways do you think that the office could be strengthened or made more helpful to Sierra Leoneans living abroad?
- 21. What do you think is the number one problem which needs to be addressed in Sierra Leone to pave the way for national development?
 - a. Would you be willing to return to address this issue if you could be given the opportunity to do so?
- 22. Do you plan on someday returning to Sierra Leone permanently?
 - a. Have you thought about when that return will be?
 - b. Why are you not considering permanent return right now?
 - c. What condition or conditions are essential to be fixed in Sierra Leone for you to return, temporarily or permanently?
 - d. Do you feel that it is your responsibility to return to Sierra Leone? Why or why not?
- 23. What is your opinion regarding all of the international organizations and foreign workers who are working to develop Sierra Leone?
- 24. Do you feel that Sierra Leoneans, at home or abroad, are better equipped to handle the problems that the country is facing than international development organizations?
 - a. Why (or why not)?
- 25. Would you be willing to volunteer for a program run by an international organization which facilitated your return (either temporarily or permanently) to use your skills and education for Sierra Leone's national development and poverty reduction?
- 26. Although many Sierra Leoneans are very excited about the government's initiative to have Diasporans return to assist with development, there are many who are skeptical that any return will benefit Sierra Leoneans as a whole and would simply create a "new elite class" above everyone else. If you returned, how would you use your skills

and education acquired in the United States to improve the lives of those who have not had the same opportunities to leave the country which you have had?

Appendix D

2008 SLYEC PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Robyn Mello, one of this year's Conference Planning Chairpeople, is conducting a study with Sierra Leoneans living in the U.S. After spending last fall and winter in Sierra Leone and running a successful project which assisted the return of Sierra Leoneans in the Diaspora who wanted to volunteer their skills back home, she returned to The University of Delaware in February and has continued working with the Diaspora to keep the momentum going.

In addition to being useful for YL-SL to contact you about SLYEC's future opportunities, the information you provide in this brief survey will be very useful in strengthening the voice of Sierra Leonean youth in Robyn's work.

Her results—which will be sent to you if you provide an e-mail address—will be used in (1) a report of policy recommendations for the Government of Sierra Leone and (2) a project proposal for “Sierra Leonean Diaspora-Driven Development Projects” to be distributed to various international funding agencies.

Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your ability. All of your information will be kept completely confidential unless Robyn contacts you personally to ask permission to release it. If you have any questions or concerns—or if you would like to help Robyn's research in another way—please talk to her during SLYEC or contact her by e-mail at mello@udel.edu.

- 1. Name:**
- 2. Age:**
- 3. Sex:**
- 4. Address:**
- 5. Phone Number:**
- 6. E-mail Address**
- 7. If you are a part of any Sierra Leonean Organizations, please list them here:**
- 8. How did you hear about SLYEC?**
 - E-mail
 - Young Leaders – SL Member
 - Facebook
 - Online Newspaper (e.g. *Cokorioko*)
 - Friend(s)/ Family/Word of Mouth

Internet Forum (e.g. Salonenet)
SLYEC Website
Other:

9. University Name:

10. Degree Program/Major/Specialization:

11. Which is the highest degree you have earned?

Some High School
High School Diploma
Some College
Associate's Degree
Some Master's Credits
Bachelor's Degree
Master's Degree
Ph.D.
M.D.
Post-Doctoral Certificate
J.D.
Other:

12. How many years have you been living in the U.S?

Born in the U.S.
1 month to 2 years
2 + years to 4 years
4+ years to 10 years
10+ years to 15 years
15+ years to 20 years
20+ years to 25 years
25 + years

13. Why did you come to the U.S?

Born in the U.S.
Educational opportunity
Vacation
Diversity Visa
Join family member(s)
Fleeing civil war
Worsening conditions
To find a job
Marriage
Other:

14. When was the last time you visited Sierra Leone?

15. Which do you consider home:

Sierra Leone
Both Sierra Leone and U.S.
United States
Other:

16. What do you think is the main problem that needs to be addressed in Sierra Leone?

17. Do you feel that it is your responsibility to assist with Sierra Leone's development?

Yes

No

Maybe

Not Sure

18. Do you plan on returning to Sierra Leone permanently someday?

Yes, within a year

Yes, eventually

Maybe someday

Temporarily now, permanently later

Not now

Not permanently, but temporarily always

Don't know

No, never

19. Would you be willing to participate in a program that assisted you in returning to Sierra Leone for a couple of months to use the skills you've gained in the U.S. to train others and help with development?

Yes

No

Maybe

Not Sure

20. Do you have any knowledge of the Office of Diaspora Affairs in the Government of Sierra Leone?

Yes

No

Maybe

Not Sure

21. If so, what do you think that the office needs to work on and focus on most with the Diaspora?

Appendix E

LIST OF SIERRA LEONEAN HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS (90)

21st Century African Youth Movement	http://www.africanartville.org/
African Internet Radio (online)	http://www.africaninternetradio.com/
African Women Fund	
African Women of Substance	
AFRICARIBE Microenterprise Network	http://africaribe-info.org/
Agency for Researching Implementation of Constitutional Rights (AFRICR)	
Albert Academy Alumni Association	http://www.angelfire.com/al/academy/
All People's Congress, Inc. (APC)	http://apc.homestead.com/
Annie Walsh Memorial School Old Girls' Association (AWOGA)	
Association of Sierra Leoneans in North Florida	
Bayoh Descendants' Union (BDU)	http://mobarb.com/
Bowie State African Student Association	http://bsuasa.com/index.php
Caulker Descendants' Foundation	
Children of Sierra Leoneans Overseas (COSLO)	http://cosloweb.com/
Children's Rights Council of Sierra Leone (CRCSL)	
Cokorioko News	http://cocorioko.net/app/
Conversations on Africa Forum	http://coaforum.com/
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	http://www.fawe.org/index.php/sierra-leone-.html
Fourah Bay Community Foundation	
Friends of Sierra Leone (FoSL)	http://www.fosalone.org/
Fullah Progressive Union (FPU)	http://www.fpugeorgia.org/home.html

Gbonkolenken Descendants' Organization (GDO)	
Gerihun Descendants' Union	
International Leadership Development Institute - NEHADO	http://intleader.org/sierra_leone.html
Kololo Entertainment	http://kololoentertainment.com/
Kono Foundation	
Krio Descendants Union	http://www.kdutexas.org/
Krio Heritage Society	
Leone Club (online)	http://www.leoneclub.org/
Leone Cooperative Organization (LEOCO)	http://www.leocosl.org/
Leone Travel	
Leonenet (online)	http://www.leonenet.net/
Lesana Community Development/Rehabilitation Services	
Lunsar Marampa Development Association	
Mabohanday Social Club	
Magburaka Old Boys' Association (MOBA-NA)	http://www.moba-northamerica.org/
Magburaka Old Girls' Association (MOGA)	
Magic Penny	http://www.themagicpenny.org/
Methodist Girls' High School Alumni Association	
Miss Sierra Leone in Pennsylvania	
National Association for the Development of Sierra Leone (NAD-SL)	
National Organization of Sierra Leoneans in North America (NOSLINA)	http://www.noslina.org/
Next Generation Sierra Leone Project (NGSLP)	http://ngslproject.org/
Old Bo Boys' Association (OBBA)	
Old Boys' Association of Methodist Boys' High School	
Old Kolenten Students' Association (OKSA)	http://oksanet.org/

Old Makeni Franciscans Association (OMFA)	http://www.oldfranciscans.org/homepage.html
Patriotic Vanguard (newspaper)	http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/
People's Movement for Democratic Change, Inc.	http://pmdcsl.net/
Prince of Wales Alumni Association (POWAA)	http://powaa.org/
Salone Club	
Salone Connection (online)	http://www.saloneconnection.com/
Sam-Kam Institute	
Sierra Leone Agape Voluntary Effort (SAVE)	http://www.savesierraleone.org/
Sierra Leone American Family Club	http://slafclub.org/
Sierra Leone Association in the Triangle Area (SLAITTA)	
Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)	
Sierra Leone Club of Columbus, Ohio	http://slccoonline.org/
Sierra Leone Community Association - Washington Metropolitan Area, Inc.	http://slca-wma.org/_wsn/page2.html
Sierra Leone Community Association of Chicago (SLCAC)	http://www.slcac.org/
Sierra Leone Community Association of Georgia	http://www.sierraleonega.com/
Sierra Leone Community in Minnesota	
Sierra Leone Council of Representatives (SALCORE)	http://salcore.org/
Sierra Leone Development Outreach, Inc.	http://slrdoinc.org/
Sierra Leone Digest (online)	http://www.cads-sierraleone.org/sierraleonedigesthomepage.htm
Sierra Leone Grammar School Association (SLGSA)	http://www.regentonians-se.org/
Sierra Leone Gullah Heritage Association (SLGHA)	http://slgha.org/
Sierra Leone Kenema District Development Mission	http://kenemadistrict.org/

Sierra Leone Music Television (SLMTV - online)	http://www.slmtv.com/artists/mozilla.asp
Sierra Leone Network (SLN)	http://www.sierraleonenetwork.org/
Sierra Leone Observer (Online)	http://www.thesierraleoneobserver.com/
Sierra Leone Organization for Development (SLOD)	
Sierra Leone People's Party, Inc. (SLPP)	http://www.slppworldwide.com/index.html
Sierra Leone Progressive Union (SLPU)	
Sierra Leone Relief Development Outreach, Inc.	http://slrdoinc.org/
Sierra Leone Union	
Sierra Leone Web (online)	http://www.sierra-leone.org/
	http://slyainc.org/Home.html
Sierra Leonean Alliance Network (SLAN)	http://slanusa.org/
Sierra Leonean Association of Missouri	
Sierra Ventures	
Tegloma Federation International (TI)	http://www.tegloma.org/
Texas Sierra Stars Soccer Association (TSSSA)	
Tonkolili District Development Association (TODDA)	
United States - Sierra Leone Association (USSLA)	http://ussla.org/
Voice of African Women in Crisis	
Yahoo! Salone Discussion Group (online)	http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SALONEDiscussion/
Young Leaders - Sierra Leone (YL-SL)	http://www.youngleaders-sierraleone.org/
Youth Action Africa	http://www.youthactioninternational.org/
Youth For Sierra Leone Improvement (YSLI)	http://youthforsierraleone.com/

APPENDIX F

PROPOSAL: BOMBALI DISTRICT DESCENDANTS TRUST FUND

PROJECT CATEGORY:	Maximizing the Developmental Impact of Diaspora Remittances
SUB-CATEGORY:	Community Self-Help, Economic and Social Development, Gender Empowerment, Youth Employment, Agricultural Improvement, Educational Improvement, Healthcare Strengthening
GOVERNMENTAL BODY:	Bombali District Council
EXECUTING BODY:	Catholic Mission - Makeni
IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:	International Organization for Migration Freetown
GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE:	Bombali District, with special emphasis on areas in the far north of the District (e.g. Yana and Kamakwie)
TARGET GROUP:	First, Second, and Third-Generation Emigrants from Bombali District in Europe and North America
BENEFICIARIES:	The impoverished inhabitants of Bombali District, in particular the disenfranchised women and youths most effected by the Civil War
PROJECT DURATION:	42 Months (3.5 Years)

Executive Summary

The high motivation of the Bombali District Council and the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), together with the vast expertise of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the population's faith in the dependability of the Catholic Church, is proposing that it jumpstart its own home area's development by engaging the members of its worldwide Diaspora to contribute financially to a central Developmental Trust Fund.

The impact of remittances in the developing world is now going farther in reducing extreme poverty than any international humanitarian aid or foreign direct investment is. Millions of dollars is sent to Sierra Leoneans each year from their family members abroad, but the ability to harness this money to wholly develop areas in a sustainable manner has yet to be explored in an innovative way. The Bombali District Descendants' Trust Fund will be established to accomplish what has not yet been achieved, and it will succeed with just enough outside assistance for startup (i.e. provision of relevant information technology equipment) and capacity building.

Agriculture has the greatest potential in immediate improvement of Bombali District, with its fertile land and able-bodied population. The combination of Diaspora Contributions, the implementation of Micro-Projects to carefully selected beneficiaries throughout the district, and overall agricultural improvement will lead to myriad multiplier effects, such as (1) purchasing tools for more productive, efficient, and easy farming; (2) empowering women farmers to have their own profitable businesses; (3) employing, training, and engaging idle youths; (4) providing school fees for children and salaries for teachers; (5) allowing individuals to afford drugs and healthcare fees, and, overall, (6) bringing peace, stability, and economic improvement to the entire district.

A Project Committee will be elected to oversee the entire process, the District Council will develop micro-project concepts and budgets, the Catholic Mission will manage finances, and IOM will act as a guide, liaison, facilitator, assistant, trainer, and capacity builder wherever necessary.

Fortunately, the power of technology, community, and networking renders distance and geographical scope irrelevant in this project. Residents of the Bombali District are in the process of contacting all of their relatives abroad, and every individual who expresses interest in the Fund will be put into the project's database to ease future management. A widespread information campaign will be launched among Sierra Leonean Diaspora Associations. A website will be created so that the entire world can be made aware of the Project, contribute online, and be provided with updates for utmost transparency. International visits will be made to Diaspora Association meetings, and management expertise will also be sought from Sierra Leoneans abroad to keep the project afloat.

The support, dedication, and expertise of all those involved will combine to make the Trust Fund a successful model for other districts and other nations to imitate.

Background

Bombali District is found in the north and central part of Sierra Leone. Makeni, found in the southern part of the District, is the Administrative Center and Capital of both the District and the entire Northern Province. The district comprises 13 chiefdoms and has over 400 000 occupants. Flat lands combined with fertile swamps that create an enabled environment for agriculture characterize the entirety of the district. Besides the administrative functions of its headquarter town of Makeni, the district is the centre for business and the principal route leading to the other districts in the Northern Province. The major ethnic groups in the district are the Temne and the Limba. Unfortunately, Bombali was one of the hardest hit in the Civil War that ended in 2001, as it was a rebel stronghold and principal scene of their activities. The hallmarks of the war are still visible throughout all chiefdoms in the district.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Sierra Leone (PRSP-SL), the country's development plan, indicates that Bombali is the poorest and most insecure district in terms of food security, which should not be so considering its clearly fertile soil quality and agricultural potential. The district is also reported as having the worst health services in the country, with approximately 9600 persons per Public Health Unit (PHU), 12 600 persons per hospital bed, and 303 600 persons per doctor (DACO 2004). Access to safe drinking water is low, indicating that a significant commitment is still required in the areas of water and sanitation to increase its availability to the population.

Fifty percent (50%) of the secondary schools in the district require major repair, but there is minimal educational support provided. Damage to dwelling places has been relatively low, but prolonged lack of upkeep and support has led to major deterioration of much of the district's road network. This deterioration adds to the lack of access, insecurity, and vulnerability that the population of Bombali district faces on a daily basis.

Because of the prolonged and heavy impact of the Civil War on the district, many of the sons and daughters of Bombali fled to seek refuge in other areas of the country, in neighboring countries, and throughout Europe and North America.

The Bombali District Council is the highest political institution in the district, working with thirteen (13) Chiefs and twenty-eight (28) Counselors. Following the responsibilities delineated to the District Councils according to the decentralized governmental procedures across the country, the council is left to fend for those under its jurisdiction. Council depends largely on taxes for the development needs of the District, but the financial resources available to it are much less than those it needs to carry out its duties. Looking at the scale of the damage in the district and the resources available to bring it back to where it was before the war's devastation, council will need to call out to its Diaspora to support Bombali in overcoming all its challenges.

Money that migrants earn abroad and send home represents an important way out of extreme poverty for a large number of people. Remittances represent an enormous transfer of resources from Diaspora countries to Sierra Leone. Sierra Leoneans in the Diaspora send home approximately USD 24 million annually in remittances for domestic consumption and for small-scale community investments, which are key in driving development at the macro-economic level. Unrecorded flows can add another fifty percent (50%) or more to the recorded millions that the country receives yearly from abroad. The impact is even thought to be larger than that of international aid.

Remittances contribute towards socio-economic development and poverty reduction. While many are keen to make remittances a catalytic financial tool, their unfamiliarity with remittance management, potential contributors, technology, and regulation present a barrier.

With the Government and Catholic Mission as executors and IOM as facilitator in this project, the impact of remittances sent to Bombali will be harnessed to be utilized to the fullest potential. All three partners will provide the utmost accountability and transparency in hope that the Diaspora's confidence in the program will be ensured and increased.

If remittances are harnessed accordingly, efficiently, and transparently, their impact could be enormous—far beyond the scale of foreign investment or international humanitarian aid. Many governments and organizations have long known this to be true, but the ability to establish means for remittances to contribute wholly to development has escaped them. This project in Bombali could potentially work to become a model pilot project which other developing nations look to for guidance.

1. Justification and Relevance

The concept of “Migration and Development” is growing exponentially throughout the world today, and projects such as this to maximize remittances are exceptionally timely. The OAU requested "IOM, in partnership with the OAU, the African Development Bank (ADB), the international community and funding organizations and other stakeholders, to strengthen their activities in the continent by promoting specific development projects in areas predisposed to international migration". IOM, in cooperation with African sub-regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), and the Maghreb Arab Union (UMA), is developing partnerships aimed at reinforcing the links between migration and development in Africa.

Sierra Leone also expressed its interest in the participation of its Diaspora in its development at the Interregional Conference, organised in Dakar in October 2000 by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), with the theme “Participation of Migrants in the Development of their Country of Origin”. That meeting brought out the determination of the 16 West African States, including Sierra Leone, to put in place a

cooperation mechanism and a package of instruments together with interested partners for seeking common solutions to the international migration issues facing them. The resolutions emanating from the various Summits of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) have also underscored the importance of encouraging co-development activities by instituting programmes addressing the mobility of African Diasporas so as to pave the way for them to contribute to the advancement of their countries of origin. Additionally, the United Nations Secretary General recently convened a high-level dialogue to discuss the maximization of the advantages and minimization of the disadvantages of international migration for the first time in history.

Reaching out to the Bombali District Diaspora is a necessary first step in the right direction to its development, stability, and establishment of permanent peace. Bombali's descendants in the Diaspora are growing in numerical and intellectual strength on a yearly basis. The contribution of Bombali's descendants in their various countries of residence to their families in Sierra Leone is a point of great pride among them. Remittances are crucial to the education, livelihood, and ultimate survival of many individuals, families, and communities in Bombali. Its population is also well aware of the fact that their descendants abroad are concerned and committed to the social and economic development that will move them out of abject poverty and into prosperity. However, the mechanism for maximizing the potential of remittances to develop large areas in Sierra Leone has not been established until this time.

In a very short time period, many members of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora contributed heavily to financing the campaign of the recent election's winning All People's Congress (APC) party. Although it is very important to keep this project apolitical, the same techniques used to reach out to political party supporters in 2007 can easily be employed in guaranteeing the success of the Trust Fund for Bombali. As this project will last much longer than the campaigning process, the remittances received also have the potential to be much larger.

What has previously been the obstacle to their great intentions to contribute sustainably is the lack of accountability and transparency leading to rampant corruption in government offices. It is against that backdrop that Bombali District Council will work with Sierra Leone's Catholic Mission, under the leadership of Bishop George Biguzzy, and the International Organization for Migration, under its Migration and Development Programme, to jointly coordinate the Bombali District Descendants' Trust Fund.

The success of Europe and North America was a direct result of the hard work that natives of those lands did to improve them. If Sierra Leoneans in the country and throughout the world also replicate these values of hard work, honesty, commitment, family values, and responsibility to their homeland with the aid of those who have emigrated to Europe and North America, there will come a time when Sierra Leoneans will no longer want or need to become economic migrants.

In order to maximise the advantages of migration and minimise the disadvantages of illegal migration, the government of Sierra Leone has established a Task Force on Migration and Development and an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Migration (IMCOM), of which IOM is a part. With the continued building of the government's capacity in Migration and Development work, at both the national and district levels, the country's development potential will be boosted. Furthermore, the new President of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Ernest Bai Koroma, is a native of Makeni in Bombali District. It is believed that His Excellency's endorsement of this project will be received. With the strength of that special interest behind it, the project will then be catapulted to another level of attraction.

1.1. Decentralization

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has been working hard throughout the past few years to decentralize its responsibilities, delineating responsibilities to Regional, District, and City/Town levels. Its Councils, although young, have established development strategies of their own to improve their areas and reduce poverty levels of the people under their jurisdiction.

The Bombali District Council has pledged to do the same with many plans, but it will need some backing and partnership with outside actors to allow those expressing involved in the project to be ensured it is trustworthy.

1.2. Women's empowerment

Bombali District's population has been skewed as a result of the devastation that the war had on the lives of its men. Many women throughout are forced to raise and support families with close to nothing, and this project will first look to set up microcredit schemes with those who present promising pledges to generate income as entrepreneurs and agriculturalists.

1.3. Youth employment

One of the most evident and dangerous legacies throughout Sierra Leone, which is stagnating stability, threatening peace, and hindering development, is the astronomically high number of unemployed and drop-out youths forced to live with no livelihood and no future. Some of the funds generated from this project will also be demarcated to set up apprenticeships with existing business owners and farmers, as well as microcredit schemes for those who already possess the skills necessary to proceed on their own.

1.4. Agriculture

It is felt by all actors involved in project management that the necessary first area of development to be affected by the Diaspora's contributed funds is in the arena of agriculture. Eighty percent (80%) of the population of Bombali District is engaged in subsistence or commercial agriculture. The potential that is held for the District by the fertility of the soil and large number of people available for farming is huge, and the possible output of crops for subsistence, commodities trading, raw materials, and

processed goods could bring many within the population out of the impoverished and disenfranchised positions that they are now in.

The Diaspora Fund will first work to improve the agricultural skills, output, and intensive labor required for farming to be successful. The fund will be able to provide seeds, fertilizer, tools or materials to make them, and tractors for the people to use during harvesting season to lessen the workload and optimize efficiency. Farming co-operatives will also be more easily established where farmers can work together to maximize their labor and community ties will be strengthened accordingly. Agricultural improvement will also provide a platform and jumping point to bring in profit for other crucial areas of society, which follow.

1.5. Education

Illiteracy plagues a very high percentage of the population of Bombali District. Great distances to schools, small building sizes, enormous class sizes, inadequate teaching staff, lack of funding, unavailability of salaries for teachers, wrongfully imposed school fees, and dearth of quality teaching materials cause many children to drop out at early ages, and their futures become dark before they even have the opportunity to make informed decisions and have a hand in them.

The Diaspora Fund will provide a springboard to improve education. At first, while agricultural improvement is being focused on, each participating farmer will be required to set aside a certain amount of their output to either (a) donate to teaching staff as food or (b) be brought to market to sell for teachers' salaries. As the Diaspora Fund gains momentum, a certain amount of the collected remittances will be delineated to improving school buildings, purchasing supplies, and paying salaries of teaching staff.

1.6. Health

The district is reported as having the worst health services in Sierra Leone, with approximately 9600 persons per Public Health Unit (PHU), 12 600 persons per hospital bed, and 303 600 persons per doctor (DACO 2004). Countrywide, the previous statistic is approximately 35 000 persons per doctor, and the World Health Organization (WHO) requires the number to be 15 doctors per 1000 persons.

The Diaspora Fund will eventually provide for improved health services, as those empowered by its remittance optimization will be able to more easily afford care, and a certain amount of allocated funds will be set aside to improve healthcare facilities and attract healthcare practitioners.

2. Aim

This project aims to attract the attention of all the sons and daughters of Bombali District in the Diaspora to contribute financially to the development needs of the district.

3. Activities and Objectives

- ◆ Establish a platform for Bombali Descendants in the Diaspora to contribute to the improvement of their area of birth with an information campaign.
- ◆ Create a database of names abroad and needs in Bombali.
- ◆ Develop a strong, attractive, and easily navigable website so that individuals throughout the world can follow the project's progress, render it accountable, and contribute financially online.
- ◆ Establish a coordinating team and office in Makeni and a Trust Fund Project Committee in a focal point abroad (US or UK, for example) for proper running, information sharing, and efficiency of the project.
- ◆ Set up a mechanism linking Bombali and countries abroad in which participants in the Diaspora can contribute five dollars (\$5 USD) per month to the district.
- ◆ Open a bank account for the transparent and accountable holding of funds contributed.
- ◆ Create a funding base for development projects in Bombali District.
- ◆ Sensitize both those within Bombali District and in the Diaspora on the need to participate in the development of their home.

4. Target Group

The target participant group members in this project are Sierra Leonean emigrants—first, second, and third generation—descended from Bombali District but now resident in the Diaspora. The outreach will namely focus on the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands; however, it will not be limited to those countries alone, as many individuals in Bombali (i.e. Paramount Chiefs and family members) will be able to provide the necessary contacts of their kin abroad, regardless of the host country.

5. Strengths and Experience of Partner Actors

5.1. Bombali District Council

The Bombali District Council is a direct representative of the 500 000 residents within their District. Its members are male and female, youths and elders, from various organizations, political parties, tribes, backgrounds, and occupations. They each bring different skills, opinions, and expertise to the table, and they are willing to work together to make positive change and move their district forward in its development. They have a competent and dedicated staff skilled in several disciplines—including education, finance, agriculture, administration, IT, and research.

The fact that the Council is young should not be a reason for doubting it; conversely, it should be a reason for having faith in it. The District Council is new, motivated for change, and ready to do the work that the previous government—in its stagnation and acceptance of the status quo—was wont to accomplish.

5.2. Catholic Mission

The Catholic Mission is experienced in implementing development projects throughout the district, the country, and the world. The faith that the people of Bombali have in its

services and management capabilities is especially high, and it is believed that they will be the most capable to handle the funds that are received from the Diaspora in a transparent manner.

Additionally, the Islamic Community throughout Bombali District trusts the Christian Community and vice versa. They have assured all stakeholders that they will work hand in hand to ensure that the Trust Fund Project is a success.

5.3. International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM has over 55 years of experience managing migration, it has offices in 122 countries, and IOM Sierra Leone has a specific section dealing with “Migration for Development in Africa” programmes (MIDA) very similar to the proposed project. Currently, the MIDA office is working on a Diaspora Skills Transfer Pilot Project between here and the IOM office in The Hague in which we facilitate the temporary return of Sierra Leoneans in The Netherlands who express interest to volunteer as capacity builders, trainers, and independent consultants in specific High Priority Areas in society according to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) recommendations made by the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL). The project has been very successful in its pilot phase, and IOM is now in deliberations to make the project, Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN), a permanent and even more widespread MIDA Programme.

This endeavor in Bombali District—which would start out, at least initially, as a Remittance Maximization Project—is one in which IOM Sierra Leone can use its expertise and international connections in foreign offices to carry out and provide the utmost guidance, professionalism, transparency, and accountability. IOM would be a facilitator and provide assistance and support wherever necessary throughout this project’s upstart and beyond.

6. Priority Areas

Bombali District suffered a lot throughout the decade-long civil war that claimed thousands of lives, devastated entire villages, and separated countless families. The agricultural potential of the district suffered a downward trend. The healthcare sector’s capabilities disappeared almost entirely. The population is skewed towards women and children, as the war killed many of the area’s men and youths. As a result, gender roles have changed in many areas because war widows are living as single parents and forced to provide all income and sustenance for their families. Moreover, harmful sexual and psychosocial damage was committed against many of the women and children concerned.

The poverty situation in Bombali seems to worsen daily, due to lack of capital for investment in agriculture and petty trading. As a result, education in the district is deplorable, with drop-outs among girl-children increasing at an alarming rate, along with teenage pregnancies, early marriages, and HIV/AIDS incidences becoming ever more frequent and worrisome. Lack of employment opportunities and high drop-out rates then

foster an environment of instability, civil unrest, and crime. All these areas become linked in a vicious cycle.

The expected result of projects implemented with the contributions to the Diaspora Trust Fund will work to create a reverse cycle of positive change and provide for the way forward for the people of Bombali District. Progress will probably proceed slowly, so the responsibility of executing and facilitating agencies will be to utilize funds in the most efficient areas.

Using the knowledge that agriculture is the predominant area of employment and income; the potential that the area's fertile land has for agricultural use has barely been touched; palm oil, groundnut, rice, and cassava production dominate the agricultural sector; and processed goods are much more profitable and desirable in markets in Sierra Leone and throughout the world, the fund will first and foremost work to improve the agricultural sector. It will purchase seeds and disseminate them to impoverished farmers, work to promote cooperatives, and encourage farmers to contribute a small amount of their yield to create profit to invest in other areas (i.e. Education and Healthcare).

7. Priority Beneficiaries

Single mothers, unemployed youths, young children, and otherwise the communities within the Bombali District as a whole who are working towards utmost agricultural development.

8. Implementing Strategy

The initial implementation of the Bombali District Descendants' Trust Fund will act as a pilot project in which everything done is kept in constant track of for the benefit of future improvement, permanent implementation, national and international imitation. The Implementing Strategy will take place in three (3) phases, each of which will be monitored and evaluated closely in incremental reports for all parties involved to keep informed.

8.1. Phase One - Six Months

8.1.1. Information Campaign

The first and possibly most important aspect to ensure this project's success is its information campaign to the residents of Bombali District and its descendants in the Diaspora. Within Sierra Leone, several things will be done. Members of the Bombali District Council and other interested Bombali residents will (a) disburse press releases and articles to local newspapers and (b) hold radio interviews on local radio programs which are broadcast in several local languages. IOM will use its technical expertise, worldwide networks, and vast migration management knowledge to (a) hold radio discussions on UN Radio which is audible countrywide, (b) contact its sister missions in countries of Sierra Leonean emigration (e.g. UK, US, Canada, and The Netherlands) for assistance and information disbursement, (c) and do its part to inform the Sierra Leonean

population of ways they can contribute. The people of Bombali who will be benefiting from the Trust Fund's success will contribute to the information campaign by directly contacting everyone they know who is residing abroad and telling them about this project. All actors involved feel that direct communication with family members in Sierra Leone about the Trust Fund will be the best first step towards trust in it.

8.1.2. Selection of Project Committee

The Bombali District Council, in consultation with IOM and the Catholic Mission, will select the Bombali District Descendants' Trust Fund Project Committee. The committee will consist of representatives from all relevant project actors, organizations, and beneficiaries, to ensure that the management and reception of funds is a completely equal and informed process. The committee will house the District Council Chairman and Chairwoman, the Catholic Mission's Leader in Sierra Leone, and a representative from:

- ◆ IOM Freetown (in consultation)
- ◆ Diaspora Associations abroad
- ◆ Women's Organizations
- ◆ Youth's Organizations
- ◆ Teachers
- ◆ The Driver's Union
- ◆ District Traders
- ◆ The Disabled and Blind Community
- ◆ All Chiefdoms
- ◆ Religious Organizations
- ◆ Farmers Associations

Among these members, voting will be done to elect a:

- ◆ Project Coordinator
- ◆ Database Manager
- ◆ Secretary
- ◆ Committee Treasurer
- ◆ IT Supervisor/ Website Manager
- ◆ Public Relations Officer
- ◆ Micro-Project Monitor

Initially, it is to be understood that all Committee positions will be voluntary because one hundred percent (100%) of Diaspora Contributions to the fund will all be allocated towards the establishment of Micro-Projects in Bombali District. This will be so until and unless proper funding is granted by national and international organizations and funds (e.g. The Government of Sierra Leone's Peace-Building Fund).

8.1.3. Database Creation

All individuals in the Diaspora who are notified and express interest in the program will be added to a comprehensive Trust Fund Database. The Database will include information that each individual is willing to provide, such as:

- ◆ Name
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Occupation
- ◆ Country and City of Residence abroad
- ◆ Length of time residing abroad
- ◆ Family member(s) names and chiefdom(s) in Bombali
- ◆ Expected monthly contribution

The Database will be managed by the Trust Fund Committee's Database Manager, in consultation with the Project Coordinator and IOM Consultant. It will be used and continuously updated throughout the project's duration for utmost ease of tracking progress and participants. The information contained in the database will assist in the organization and ease of project management, and it will also help to identify the largest donors to the fund for honors, awards, and general recognition from the public. All information divulged for the database will only be used for things under the project's management, unless the contributor is otherwise notified and agrees to special circumstances.

8.1.4. Trust Fund Bank Account

When the proper management mechanisms are in place, and the project is recognized by (1) national and international donors and (2) the relevant Government of Sierra Leone ministries (i.e. Ministries of Finance and Development; Foreign Affairs; Social Welfare, Gender, and Children's Affairs, and Education, Youths, and Sports), The Project Committee will open up a reputable Bombali District Descendants' Trust Fund Bank Account. The Bank Account will only be accessible by the Project's Financial Manager (within the Catholic Mission), and all transactions will be properly recorded for auditing and transparency.

8.1.5. Trust Fund Website

The most crucial part of the Project's Implementation, Progress, and Maintenance will be the creation and periodic updating of its Website. Due to the lack of technological infrastructure and general lack of Computer Programming knowledge throughout Sierra Leone, it may be necessary to bring an expert from abroad to act as Webmaster until he or she has trained someone within the Project's scope for proper handover of responsibilities. The Bombali District Descendants' Trust Fund Website will exhibit the following project details to Internet users worldwide:

- ◆ Background information
- ◆ Goals
- ◆ Contact information of appropriate Project Committee Members
- ◆ Relevant contact and meeting information for Sierra Leonean/ Bombali District Diaspora Associations in host countries
- ◆ The ability to make financial contributions to the fund as online payments (through a service such as PayPal[®])

- ♦ Recognition of big donors
- ♦ Published reports for accountability and transparency

The website will create the proper avenue for payments to be made in an easy, “1-2-3” manner, and it will also create a “Stumble Upon” effect. In other words, individuals who would otherwise never find out about their ability to contribute to the Trust Fund may stumble upon the website and be compelled to also make contributions.

8.2. Phase Two – One Year

8.2.1. Evaluation of Phase One

Although a report will be made each month throughout the first phase of the project’s implementation, a comprehensive, lengthy evaluation will be made by all relevant actors (i.e. Committee Members, IOM, and an Evaluation Team in the Diaspora) to assess the project’s functions, its progress, and the potential need for amending the project’s scope.

8.2.2. Commencement of Contributions

No remittances will begin being deposited in the Trust Fund’s bank account until all the proper channels have been explored to ensure the project’s utmost transparency and accountability. When the first phase is accomplished and amendments have been made to the project’s scope, payments will begin. It is important to note that the information campaign and website upkeep will not cease in the first phase, and that innovative techniques will continue to be employed to ensure that interest in the project and in making contributions is not lost.

8.2.3. Launching of Initial Micro-Projects

After enough money is collected through, the Trust Fund’s initial Micro-Projects will be started. As agriculture will be the first sector targeted for development and priority beneficiaries will first be single mothers and unemployed youths, microcredit schemes, seed donations, community equipment purchases, and youth apprenticeships will be established. All beneficiaries selected in key implementation areas will have to go through a rigid and competitive application process, and all Micro-Projects will be closely monitored. The Project Committee’s members will serve as the selection team, and a member of the board will be expected to periodically travel to Micro-Project sites for monitoring and evaluation of the fund’s impact and the beneficiaries’ progress. Except in the case of small microcredit loans, cash will never be given to beneficiaries. Instead, IOM and the Catholic Mission will use their administration, financial, and project management experience to purchase project goods and equipment and then distribute them.

8.2.4. Dialogue with Money Transfer Services

Services such as Western Union and International Moneygram have had many years of experience with facilitating remittances throughout the world, so the Trust Fund could be strengthened immensely if well-established money transfer services are able to offer

additional support. However, many international money transfer services have service fees and commissions that are seen as unreasonably high to those sending and receiving the remittances, and they often discourage formal transfers. After the initial micro-projects are initiated and progress is easily visible, members of the Project Committee will be able to approach these Corporations with concrete results. In dialogue with these well-established companies, it is hoped that an agreement can be reached in which they address their Corporate Social Responsibility and reduce fees in order to also be a part of the progress that is being made through project contributions. With the partnership of International Money Transfer Services, the visibility, accountability, and worldwide potential for this project would be vastly increased.

8.3. Phase Three – Two Years

8.3.1. Implementing Development Projects Throughout the Entire District

As reports are compiled, lessons are learned throughout the initial phases, amendments are made to the project's implementation strategy, multiplier effects begin being produced, and greater amounts of remittances continue to be contributed to the Trust Fund, the area and number of Bombali residents benefiting from the project's funds will also grow exponentially. Community members will be empowered, and larger projects will be able to be started through contributions of both local communities and the Diaspora.

8.3.2. Worldwide Publicity and Marketing

After a significant amount of success is reached through this project, IOM will help to launch a widespread publicity campaign to market the strategy used for the Bombali District Diaspora Trust Fund Project to the developing world so that individuals within them and among their diasporas will become empowered—no longer so dependent on foreign donors' assistance—and remittances will finally contribute to the development of migrants' countries of origin as a whole as has been envisioned for so long.

9. Incentives

Donors to the Trust Fund who contribute a substantial amount of money over and above the requested amount, as well as those who give a significant amount of their time and energy to making the Trust Fund work in the Diaspora, will have places, buildings, parks, and the like named after them for their honor and recognition.

Members of the Diaspora who return to Makeni to visit and see the progress their contributions have made will now have a very nice place to stay. A luxury hotel with all the most modern amenities, The Wusum Hotel, is being built and opened in the very near future. It will stimulate tourism in the area and bring much needed business to the people, through job creation and agricultural needs. Additionally, it will also be a great incentive for people who already know the area to return and still have the Western style of living that they have become accustomed to. The Bombali District Council also has a twenty

(20) room guesthouse with a restaurant which it will make available at a discounted rate for project contributors looking to return.

With the advent of this fund, it is also expected that other guesthouses, hotels, businesses, and restaurants will be built in Bombali District towns to encourage visitation, tourism, and return.

10. Expected Results

10.1. Short-Term

- ◆ The funds generated by the descendants of Bombali District in the Diaspora will be used to address priority needs in the District Development Plan from the Bombali District Council, needs assessments, and survey reports.
- ◆ The entirety of the district will be positively affected by the Trust Fund, but there will also be a judicious selection of direct project beneficiaries (i.e. single mothers and unemployed youth).
- ◆ Partnerships will be created with national and international organizations, foundations, and funds; foreign governments and embassies, and money transfer services.
- ◆ Bombali District Descendants throughout the world will create a vast network of support for their area of origin, and other interested individuals (“Friends of Sierra Leone”) will also be able to contribute to its development.
- ◆ The capacity of the Project Management Committee in Bombali will be strengthened enough that IOM will no longer be necessary for project assistance and facilitation. IOM’s withdrawal from the project’s implementation will be very gradual, but its general involvement in Migration and Development projects rightly follows this basic assumption.

10.2. Long-term

- ◆ Districts nationwide will follow by Bombali District’s example, implementing Diaspora Trust Fund projects of their own.
- ◆ Members that are initially contributing financially to the Trust Fund will see the development that is occurring and be incentivized to return to their area of origin to intellectually and physically contribute as well.
- ◆ The Government of Sierra Leone’s Taskforce for Migration and Development will manage a nationwide Diaspora Trust Fund (long-term).
- ◆ The mechanism for establishing Diaspora Trust Funds throughout the developing world will be available so that other countries can design their own projects based on their own needs and abilities with the example set forth by this project.

11. Sustainability

With the above stated staff capacity, implementation strategy, and support, it is evident that this will be a sustainable development project. Lessons learned in previous community development projects—in rural areas in Bombali especially—have shown

that residents are always willing to commit themselves to their roles in terms of community developments. With the government, an international organization, and a well-respected religious institution acting as executing and facilitating actors in addition, there is no doubt that the project will be a success.

Self-reliance will be the priority of all projects implemented with the fund, and the impact of the remittances will eventually become compounded, creating undeniable multiplier effects in areas they are used for. For example, if the impact of remittances is maximized according to the plans of the project, there is a possibility that individuals living abroad will be incentivized to return to their homes permanently. Then, the contribution that physical return and financial investment of returned migrants will have is insurmountable.

12. Risks and Constraints

- ◆ Due to the lackluster quality of past developmental undertakings in Bombali District and Sierra Leone in general, Sierra Leoneans abroad are now unable to be informed adequately about how to contribute to development projects in the country
- ◆ Unwillingness of family members in Bombali District to disclose where their kin have gone due to lack of trust of executing and facilitating agencies
- ◆ Misallocation of funding by beneficiaries and programme agents
- ◆ Scope of project too large for young Council to undertake
- ◆ Information Technology infrastructural underdevelopment in Bombali District and throughout Sierra Leone

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

For a clearly stated objective, monitoring and evaluation is extremely important. This will be done with collaboration between the Diaspora Trust Fund Committee abroad and the major Project Directors and Coordinators in Sierra Leone (namely within the District Council, Catholic Mission, and IOM Freetown). The committee will then send reports by e-mail to all concerned in the Diaspora and deliver published copies to all concerned within the country.

Throughout each phase there will be evaluations and assessments made of the project's impact. For the first six (6) months, reports will be made each month updating progress and depicting problems. After the initial six months, reports will be made every three (3) months. After the first two (2) years of the project, a major report will be undertaken among all parties involved, including follow-ups and interview with project beneficiaries.

With this, changes will be easily made, amendments to the project's mandate will be possible with the informed involvement of all parties involved or their representatives, documentation for the creation of similar projects in Sierra Leone and the developing world will be available, and the utmost transparency, responsibility, and accountability will be seen by those contributing to the fund.

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