

HOPE-SIERRA LEONE

“CHANGE STARTS WITH ONE SELF”



Sierra Leone delegation at the Initiatives of Change international conference centre, Caux, Switzerland, July

SUMMARY OF 2008 ACTIVITY REPORT

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08

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a comprehensive narrative description of activities implemented by Hope-Sierra Leone during the period January to December 2008.

Hope-Sierra Leone is Non Governmental Organization registered with the Sierra Leone Association of Non Governmental Organizations and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. It started operations in 2001 through the ardent desire of Sierra Leoneans to make a meaningful contribution to peace and development in post-war Sierra Leone. Hope-Sierra Leone is affiliated to Initiatives of Change International, a broad network calling on all men and women, irrespective of their race, culture and religion, to rebuild their lives morally and spiritually through the observance of the four core moral values of absolute love, honesty, purity and unselfishness. These are the four core moral values on which Hope-Sierra Leone also operates. These values are the bedrock for a peaceful and progressive society underpinned by tolerance and love. Since the inception of the organization, it has contributed significantly in diverse ways to bring peace, reconciliation and change to the country.

In trying to achieve peace, reconciliation and change, the organization currently operates through three main departments:

- Moral Foundations for Democracy (MFD)
- Makeni Peace Farm
- Clean Elections Campaign.

As peace and reconciliation are the bed-rock for sustainable development, Hope-Sierra Leone aims to rebuild battered structures in the country by providing a basis for a fear-free, hate-free and greed-free society.

The year 2008 posed a huge challenge for the organization in maintaining peace and sustainable democracy as the country emerged from a peaceful election. The transition from one political party to the other was a cause for concern as an organization. It was essential to dialogue with all stake holders involved in order to adhere to the tenets of a peaceful democratic society. Therefore most of the activities implemented in 2008 were geared towards maintaining peace and sustainable democracy through trainings and dialogues with state functionaries including Parliamentarians, Traditional Leaders, Mayors, Chairpersons, Councillors, Police and Military. There were magnetic personal experience sharing and testimonies during these trainings and dialogues. The transition from one democratically elected government to another was a subject that preoccupied many Sierra Leoneans. Time and again it has been shown that unless and until people's mentality and attitude towards one another and the nation changes in a positive way, Sierra Leone cannot become the Paradise of everyone's dream.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leone has shown considerable success in moving from conflict and peace keeping to peace building and community reconstruction. In line with the ongoing quest to enhance reconciliation and social cohesion in post-conflict Sierra Leone, it is glaringly clear that in order to ensure durable peace, civil society organizations like Hope-Sierra Leone should make an impact on the systems, structures and perceptions of Sierra Leoneans to restore moral values and ensure change in the system.

Against this background, Hope-Sierra Leone adopted a strategic approach in addressing the problems and challenges of 2008 by implementing activities using a dual approach, targeting those in authority – the power brokers – and the general public, in order to accelerate a shift in the mind set of Sierra Leoneans. During the year, the organization undertook activities and solicited funds to implement projects with our international partners from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, United States, Norway and our most reliable local partner of the year, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). These funds enabled the organization to play a pivotal role in civil society work throughout the country. The trainings and dialogues engendered the enabling environment for a free, fair, tolerant and non violent relationship between political party supporters, the security forces and those in authority, to enhance peaceful co-existence in the country.

Moral Foundations for Democracy (MFD), a human development programme initially designed for the military, police and civil society, was used successfully throughout the trainings and dialogues. It is based on the four core moral values and the conviction that, without the hope and vision that comes through integrity, transparency and moral change, economic progress and permanent peace are going to be very hard to achieve.

ACTIVITIES

The organization embarked on well thought-out, constructive and sustained activities to remedy the challenges. The focus of these activities was multifaceted: the first phase comprised the Training of Trainers course to strengthen and increase the number of trainers for all trainings; the second phase aimed to bring a change in people's mentality and attitude through community outreach programmes; the final phase was designed to bring about a thorough engagement with state functionaries in order to help them live up to the moral expectations of Sierra Leoneans.

JANUARY – FEBRUARY

From 28th January – 6th February 2008, a Training of Trainers (ToT) course was successfully carried out at the Police Training School, Hastings with financial support from the Dutch

Embassy, Senegal. Thirty nine participants from the military, police and civil society were certified as trainers to carry out the MFD programme. This occasion was climaxed with the distribution of certificates by Hon. Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, Minister of Information and Communication. The Certificates were signed by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma. Some of these newly qualified trainers successfully facilitated the Parliamentary dialogues held in October – December 2008.

MARCH

The usual MFD training for the Military, Police and Civil Society was successfully carried out at the Armed Forces Educational Centre, Wilberforce. It was a five-day residential training with twenty eight participants present. The one-day outreach took place in Port Loko with a huge turn out of youths participating in the training.

JUNE – AUGUST

In June and August 2008, a community outreach programme, the first of its kind, was undertaken at the Kissy Ferry Terminal, Kissy in the East end of Freetown and Valley View Community, Ferguson Street in the West end of Freetown. This training was a continuation of the 2007 Clean Elections Campaign targeting areas dominated by youths that were identified as places of potential conflict. After receiving the training, many testimonies were shared by youths who promised to become agents of change and development.

H-SL is affiliated to Initiatives of Change (IofC) International, based in Caux, Switzerland. The annual summer conferences attract people from every continent to share ideas and build trust across the world's divides.

Below: Delegates at Caux including H-SL's founder and international partners



Two of the H-SL staff participated in a six-week internship programme (July-August). Two other staff attended the Tools for Change conference at the end of July. As partners in development, other Sierra Leoneans were given the opportunity to experience this wonderful place, including the All

People's Congress (APC) Party Secretary-General, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) National Administrative Secretary, two journalists from radio UN, a representative from a

partnering organization, two representatives from the Sierra Leone Police and one Traditional Ruler (Paramount Chief). It was amazing to see the political party representatives discussing and sharing ideas in a most relaxed atmosphere and speaking together on behalf of the country.

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER

In September, Hope-Sierra Leone, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), implemented a series of eight (8) three-day residential dialogues for parliamentarians, mayors, chairpersons and traditional leaders, with an average of twenty (20) participants per dialogue.

The programme was launched on 3rd October 2008 in the Parliament building. Members of the High Table included the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Parliament; Head of Governance of UNDP; a consultant to UNDP; Founder of Hope-Sierra Leone and Chairman, Hope-SL Board; and the Hon. Vice-President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. The Chairman for the ceremony was the MFD Board Chairman, AIG Francis A. Munu. Statements were made from various stake holders including a speech from an 11-year-old school girl representing leaders of tomorrow. Eighty (80) per cent of parliamentarians were present for the launching.

The first dialogue took place at Hotel 5:10 in Freetown from 3rd -5th October 2008. Five (5) facilitators were present including four from those recently trained. The second took place at Hotel 5:10 from 10th – 12th October with another team of facilitators. The third was in Bo in Southern Province, from 17th – 19th October. The fourth took place in Port Loko in Northern Province from 24th – 26th October. The fifth was held in Kono in Eastern Province, from 31st October – 2nd November. The sixth took place in Pujehun in Southern Province, from 14th – 16th November. The seventh took place in Kenema, in Eastern Province from 28th – 30th November 2008 and the eighth was in Makeni, in Northern Province from 5th – 7th December 2008. Different teams were drawn from a pool of certified facilitators for each dialogue.

During the dialogues each day started with a time of Reflection & Decision (R&D) – the lighting of a candle, reflection and sharing of thoughts in groups of five. The following modules were facilitated in each dialogue:

- Understanding and Changing Myself
- Conflict Transformation
- Standing Against Corruption
- Teamwork and Trust Building
- Searching for Values

Participants shared their experiences at the end of each dialogue which was climaxed with the distribution of certificates. All the sessions of the various dialogues were interactive which made the programme more relaxing. Team work and trust building was often the most exciting topic for the participants as they shared their experiences after the exercise. Political party representatives and councillors were also included in most of the dialogues. This completed the circle of state functionaries sitting together and interacting in a more relaxed atmosphere. The dialogues were a very big success for the organization and the nation as a whole. The parliamentarians in particular were very appreciative of the programme. Most had the opportunity to visit other constituencies and for some of them it was their first experience travelling to the provinces. The eighth and final dialogue in Makeni was climaxed with a send-off party for the participants. A detailed report on all activities can be accessed on the Hope-Sierra Leone web site www.hopesierraleone.org.

CONCLUSION

2008 presented a lot of challenges which were successfully met by Hope-SL. We look forward to the New Year when we have to face the need for restructuring and expanding our activities and operations in other areas. We are hopeful for a re-launch of the Peace Farm as one of our targeted goals for 2009.

We thank our international and local partners for their moral and financial support in making this year a very big success for us in the implementation of our activities. We are grateful as an organization for the funds received over the year.

We wish you all a Prosperous New Year.

COMPILED BY

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