



Peacebuilding Fund

FINAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 17 MAY 2007 – 31 DECEMBER 2010

Submitted by:

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Country and Thematic Area

Sierra Leone, Youth Empowerment and
Employment

Programme No: PBF/SLE/D-1

MDTF Office Atlas No: 00066693

Programme Title:

Youth Enterprise Development

Participating Organization(s):

UNDP

Implementing Partners:

National Implementing Partners

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- National NGOs

International Implementing Partners

- International NGOs

Programme Budget (from the Fund):

USD 4,080,906.92

Programme Duration (in months):

Start date²: 17 May 2007

End date: 31 December 2010

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² The start date is the date of the first transfer of funds from the MDTF Office as Administrative Agent.

I. Purpose

Youth in Sierra Leone are confronted with a number of considerable challenges - high levels of inactivity, especially for male and urban youth, high unemployment rates, up to four times higher than for older workers. urban youth aged 15-24 are ten times more likely to be unemployed than rural youth, high unemployment for young women in both urban and rural settings, high and growing levels of employment in the informal economy, where employment is often low paid and dangerous, lack of high quality skills, lack of business experience or knowledge of self-employment as an option, limited access to information on employment opportunities or different career pathways (such as self-employment) and limited abilities to access credit and business support networks.

A pervasive lack of youth participation in political, social and economic life was one of the root causes of the conflict. Evidence suggests that the conflict led to a partial break down of the traditional patrimonial system where elders exercised strong social controls over the younger generations. This freedom has led to a large increase in self-organized social activism amongst young people, yet at the same time institutional values towards youth have changed little, and tribal elders in rural areas are once again trying to reassert their influence.

So as to provide rapid employment opportunities and income generating activities for young people, funds were provided by the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as the Government of Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and the World Bank. The Youth Enterprise Development Programme, supported by the Peacebuilding Fund, began in 2007. It aimed to increase youth employment and help youth to create their own enterprises for self-employment and to promote sustainable livelihoods for young people through entrepreneurship development, support to business development services, micro-finance, skills development and training and up scaling innovative projects, lessons learnt and successful experiences. The YES Secretariat was responsible for the overall strategic development and monitoring of the initiatives. UNDP's main partners of UNDP under the Programme were the MEYS, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, UNIDO, ILO, GTZ, World Bank, the Youth Collaborative Forum, youth groups and networks, and national and international NGOs.

II. Resources

Financial Resources:

A total of 4,080,906.92 USD was allocated from the Peacebuilding Fund in support of the project.

Human Resources:

The following Human Resources supported implementation and provided oversight:

International:

- UNV Programme Manager (Youth and Peacebuilding) – UNDP.

National:

- Programme Associate – UNDP.

III. Implementation and Monitoring Arrangements

The programme has been directly executed by UNDP in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The Programme Board, comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security, MEYS, Sierra Leone Business Forum, WB, Irish Aid and DFID, provided the overall direction and oversight of project implementation. The Board was supported by a Secretariat in the MEYS. In addition to the Programme Board, there is a Steering Committee that includes representatives from UN agencies, international donor community, the government and civil society organizations whose role is to ensure synergy among youth employment related interventions within the national programme and to steer the activities of the PBF project. Projects are implemented by collaborating NGOs, private sector actors, and both public and private technical institutions with oversight provided by the YES Secretariat in the MEYS.

An M&E Advisor provided crucial support in the areas of monitoring and evaluation. A robust M&E data collection, storage, processing and reporting framework has been created.

The project is implemented under the DEX modality, and procurement under this project has been conducted in accordance with the UNDP rules and regulations.

IV. Results

5.1 Youth Enterprise Development

In a response to a call for proposals by the YES Secretariat in August 2008, over 100 proposals were received and reviewed. After a rigorous appraisal process involving YES and UNDP, 17 projects ranging from skills development to enterprise development, agriculture and agro-processing were selected by the Steering Committee. The approved projects operated in thirteen districts (including Western Area Urban and Rural) targeting over 15,000 youth.

All 17 IPs completed the projects and submitted the project completion reports to the YES Secretariat. Official programme graduation ceremonies were held, and various local stakeholders attended. The Local Councils in the provinces commended the initiatives of youth business development and expressed high expectations that youth contribute to local economy and development through their skills and businesses. The YES Secretariat conducted M&E visits and verified the completion and outputs of each of the 17 IPs.

On-the-job training in business enterprise development

2,895 youth were trained in the establishment and management of private sector enterprises through training in business start-up, apprenticeships in existing micro and small businesses and engaging in the operations of microfranchise businesses.

Youth beneficiaries who received support from the Programme for over 12 months are now operating their own businesses. Over 53 Business Development Units were established who are now operating businesses, comprised of 3 to 8 youth. Upon completion of business development training, many of Units opened their own formal bank accounts for sustaining and expanding their businesses further. Each project established youth business associations, known as Artisan Associations, to play an advisory role to the 52 Business Development Units. These Associations are also expected to play a peer support role to the new youth business beneficiaries in the next phase of UNDP's support to youth employment in Sierra Leone.

The following were some key results of the 8 projects in Skills Development and Youth Enterprise supported by the project:

- 1) Waged employment secured for apprentices at the outset through special arrangements signed by implementing partners and artisans;
- 2) The entrepreneurial development of youth in emerging trades such as, mobile phone repairs and selling phone credit cards;
- 3) Increase in youth entrepreneurs savings and access to formal commercial institutions for business support;
- 4) Enhanced employability of youth through basic life skills training, technical training, apprenticeship and work experience.

In particular, the integrated skills trainings which all IPs applied included basic literacy and numeracy training as well as life skills and conflict management training had a positive impact on youth. It improved their social skills and gave them a positive view of life and their future. Many youth were seen in negative terms in their communities. Now, some of the youth previously perceived as 'troublesome' have been nominated as youth and women representatives of their village committees and are playing active leadership roles in contributing to development and solidarity in these communities. As a result, youth are more encouraged and motivated to further develop themselves and their communities.

Promotion of agribusiness managed by the youth

The projects in agriculture benefited 6,350 youth over the project period. These youth acquired technical knowledge and skills on agribusiness, environmental management, business planning and management, and improved agriculture production and marketing. In 10 districts, youth farmers formed into Farmer Field Schools and were subsequently provided with technical support, agricultural inputs and a system to organise storage and marketing.

These youth groups engaged in farming activities in their communities, contributing to community development and the economic growth of their family. Fact-finding tours and field visits on value-added agricultural production (improved production and marketing) were also organized and 43 new agribusinesses were established in Kono, Mattru Jong, Makeni, Kabala, Jendema, Tonkolili and the Western Area. These enterprises include poultry, cassava processing, rice-milling and animal husbandry. Trained youths and women as "lead farmers" have been linked to a range of networks, including the District Council, the Directorate of Agriculture at the district-level, NGOs, input suppliers and food processors.

By the end of 2010, the youth farmers' umbrella groups were generating increased income through crop processing. The members also received basic literacy and numeracy training to manage the capital and profit and to support them in expanding their agricultural activity to become an agribusiness. The best performing projects demonstrated the following positive results:

- 1) Encouraged the pursuit of agriculture as a business (new and existing producers' cooperatives)
- 2) Attracted urban youth to establish new agribusinesses;
- 3) Supported new and existing producers' cooperatives to maximise profit through appropriate crop selection, expansion and marketing of commodities;
- 4) Explicitly linked agriculture to industry and commerce;
- 5) Supported both producers' cooperatives and large-scale agribusiness.

One youth farmers' umbrella group, 'No. 9' in Kono, succeeded in securing a five-year contract (2009-2013) with the UN WFP to supply 50 metric tonnes of rice per year to WFP's development programme, Purchase for Progress (P4P). 'No. 9' consists of 23 youth farmers' groups (each group consists of 20-30 youth farmers) and they produce on average 10,000 bags of rice per year. Their income as a group is approximately 259,000 USD per year. As a result of their entrepreneurial spirit and high productivity, more farmer groups are moving to mechanize the production process to increase productivity and expand the agribusiness partnership within their chiefdom. Their success story has therefore encouraged other youth farmers to perceive agriculture as an agri-business.

Within the agricultural component of the programme, five initiatives were singled out as providing additional services (such as access to finance and Business Development Skills support) that expanded the potential for job creation, collectively enabling the employment of youth as waged workers, employers, own-account farmers and members of producers' cooperatives. Each category emphasizes the pursuit of agriculture as a business endeavour and if given the correct support, has the immense potential for replication and/or scaling-up.

5.2 TECVOC Skills Development Programme

The TECVOC Skills Development Programme was proposed by the MEYS as a new project in 2008 and was approved by the Steering Committee in March 2009. Upon completion of an assessment of capacity of 35 schools nationwide to provide services and tools and equipments, the Steering Committee identified 9 eligible TECVOC institutions in 5 districts to sponsor 1,530 students and provide upgraded tools and equipments to increase the overall quality of training and learning.

All 9 institutions received two sets of tools and equipments for the various skill areas, including masonry, refrigeration, welding, air conditioning, carpentry, catering, home management, tailoring and hairdressing. 1,530 students completed the first academic year of TECVOC training course. In these training areas, the trainees began generating income through services and products that they produced, particularly in the catering, hairdressing, tailoring and carpentry sectors. The average income that the students were generating was approximately 40,000 Leones

(10 USD) per student per week. This income greatly benefited youth in terms of meeting their basic needs and enabled them to procure materials to continue and expand their business activities. Overall, the TECVOC Programme supported youth by providing them with knowledge and skills through theoretical and practical coursework as well as opportunities of on-the-job training to develop their entrepreneurship and trade skills.

The Programme was also extended by six months to ensure the quality of skills learned and was supported by the Delivering as One Fund from October 2010 to March 2011.

V. Abbreviations and Acronyms

DEX	Direct Execution Modality
DFID	UK Department for International Development
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPs	Implementing Partners
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
TECVOC	Technical and Vocational
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme
YES	Youth Employment Scheme Secretariat