THEME OF EDITION:
Border Livelihood Challenges

FRENCH STORY
KOINDU : MAINS À PART, VOIX SILENCIEUSES ET ÉNERGIE DORMANTE.....pages 9-10

PROSPECTS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AT ROKUPR RICE STATION

Cover Story
Pages 1-5
EDITORIAL NOTE

This is the fourth of four editions of the BORDERLINES magazine published as part of the REGIONAL YOUTH INITIATIVE OF THE WORLD BANK SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CIVIL SOCIETY FUND (CSF). It is implemented by Pampana Communications with the support of the World Bank, the UNDP and the Mano River Union Secretariat.

The Magazine is among other activities of the REGIONAL YOUTH INITIATIVE intended to draw the attention of policy makers to the salient voices, views and concerns of vulnerable youth residing along the volatile post-conflict Mano River border communities which had served as intensive conflict zones and flashpoints during the war and peace keeping periods in the three Mano River Union countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The theme for this edition ‘BORDER LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES’ has been chosen based on the strong consideration that youths in the three countries in general and those along the borders in particular, have been the largest single group who have been most associated with conflict and peace in the Mano River Union sub-region; that the livelihoods of these youths have been an underlying cause of the conflict.

During the 14-year conflict period in the sub-region, the youth constituted over 90% of the fighting forces and were mostly recycled in cross-border battles across the three countries. Even before the war, the youth were faced with wide ranging problems that hindered their individual and collective participation in governance and development. With the end of the war, there have been minimal efforts to approach the youth crisis in the three countries from a regional vantage point. Most youth support activities in the sub-region have been confined to the individual countries.

In this regard, the BORDERLINES magazine is among the rare efforts in the Mano River sub-region aimed at addressing youth concerns and welfare by looking beyond national frontiers to act within the broader framework of the Mano River Union.

ÉDITORIAL


Le magasin est entre d'autres activités de l'INITIATIVE RÉGIONALE de la JEUNESSE prévue pour dessiner l’attention des gouvernements aux voix saillantes, les vues et les soucis de la jeunesse vulnérable résidant le long des volatiles communautés d’après-guerre dans la frontière du fleuve Mano. Ces communautés avaient servi comme de zones et de points d’inflammabilité intensifs pendant la guerre et après la paix dans les trois pays qui consistent l’union du fleuve Mano: la Guinée, de la Sierra Leone et du Libéria.

Le thème pour cette édition est des DÉFIS SOCIAUX de la FRONTIÈRE ', qui parle des questions étendues de développement social et des engagements sociaux des jeunesse résidant le long du volatil communautés d’après-guerre du fleuve Mano qui avaient servi de zones et de points d’inflammabilité intensifs de conflit pendant les périodes de guerre et de maintien de la paix dans les trois pays qui constituent l’union du fleuve Mano: la Guinée, de la Sierra Leone et du Libéria.

Pendant la période de conflit de 14 ans dans la sous région, la jeunesse constituée plus de 90% des forces de combat et ont été la plupart du temps réutilisé dans les batailles frontalières à travers les trois pays. Même avant la guerre, la jeunesse a été confrontée aux problèmes étendus qui ont généré leur participation individuelle et collective au gouvernement et au développement. Souvent manquant de l'information et des opportunités, les jeunesse sont devenues les cibles faciles pour le recrutement dans la guerre. A la fin de la guerre, il y a eu des efforts minimaux d’approcher la crise de la jeunesse dans les trois pays d’une position avantageuse régionale. La plupart des activités qui soutiennent la jeunesse dans la sous région ont été confinées aux pays individus.

À cet égard, le magasin FRONTIERES est parmi les efforts rares dans la sous région du fleuve Mano visée a adresser des soucis et le bien-être de la jeunesse en regardant au delà des frontières nationales pour agir dans le cadre plus large de l’union du fleuve Mano.
PROSPECTS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AT ROKUPR
BY AIAH STEVEN NGAUJAH, PLANT BREEDER, RICE RESEARCH STATION, ROKUPR

WITHIN SIERRA LEONE’S SMALLEST DISTRICT OF KAMBIA WHICH BORDERS WITH GUINEA, THERE
IS WEST AFRICA’S OLDEST RICE RESEARCH STATION LOCATED IN ROKUPR. HAVING SURVIVED
VARIOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL UPHEAVALS SINCE 1934, THIS STATION STILL HAS HIGH
POTENTIALS TO CONTRIBUTE TO FOOD SECURITY IN THE SUB REGION AND TO PROMOTE RURAL
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN SIERRA LEONE. AIAH STEVEN NGAUJAH, CURRENTLY PLANT BREEDER
AT THE STATION, REPORTS.

The Rice Research Station is located at Rokupr in the Kambia District, 20 nautical miles from the
Atlantic Ocean along the Great Scarcies River and 112 miles from Freetown by road.
The station has gone through four phases of institutional growth and development.

Phase I (1934-1953): The station was established in 1934 and up to 1953, carrying the name Rice Experimental
Station administered by the Sierra Leone Department of Agriculture under British colonial rule. This was long before Sierra
Leone gained independence from the British in 1961.
Phase II (1953-1964): The station’s responsibility expanded to include other English speaking countries in West Africa and became the West Africa Rice Research Station (WARRS) in 1964.

Phase III (1964-1971): The station was attached to the Faculty of Agriculture at Njala University College of the University of Sierra Leone and renamed the Rice Research Station, the name it bears to date.

Phase VI (1971 - to date): From 1971 to date, the Rice Research Station is made a semi-autonomous institution with a Board of Management and a Director to spearhead its management.

The current mandate of the station is to conduct research into constraints limiting crop production in all agro-ecologies – specifically rice, sorghum, pearl millet and recently, vegetables, plantains and bananas.

The station also conducts investigations into farming systems and research in the North Western, North Central, Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Area Agricultural Regions.

The station’s goal is to develop high-yielding and resistant or tolerant crop varieties and sustainable food production systems which could be readily adopted by the farming community in Sierra Leone.

The Rice Research Station is one of constituent institutions of the National Agriculture Research Coordinating Council in Sierra Leone.

The station’s programmes include: Varietal Improvement and Plant Health (VIPH), Resource and Crop Management Program (RCMP), Seed Technology (ST), Farm Mechanization and Post Harvest (FMPH), Vegetables, Plantain and Bananas (VPB), and Administration and Finance.

Presently, the station has field stations in Bo (Bo District), Blama (Kenema District), Hendubu (Moyamba District), Lokomasama (Port Loko District), and Newton in the Western Area.

The objectives of the various programs are listed below:

**Variatel Improvement and Plant Health programme**
- To develop (through selection and cross hybridization/biotechnology) high-yielding crop varieties, resistant/tolerant to diseases, pests and soil stresses, with acceptable consumers’ preferred qualities.
- To produce Breeders’ seeds for the Seed Technology Programme.

**Resource and Crop Management Programme**
- To investigate into present farming systems and identify constraints to increase food production.
- To develop appropriate cultural/ agronomic practices to improve and conserve soil fertility while increasing productivity of crop varieties.

**Seed Technology Programme**
- To produce Foundation and Registered seeds from Breeders’ seeds.
- To maintain seed purity and multiply seeds for certified seed production by both RRS contract seed producers and the Seed Multiplication Project at Kobia, for farmers’ use.

**Research and Extension Liaison Programme**
- To facilitate the transfer of new crop varieties and their accompanying improved production technologies through Research- Extension-Farmer linkages, hence complimenting the efforts of the Extension wing of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS).

**Farm Mechanization and Post Harvest Programme**
- To fabricate basic farm tools/equipment or develop labour- saving devices and reduce post harvest losses.

**Vegetables, Plantains and Bananas Programme**
- To develop new varieties and improve upon the existing production technologies in order to maximize returns.
- To disseminate the new varieties and their accompanying production technologies in collaboration with REL.

**Administration and Finance:**
- To ensure personnel competence and efficiency and optimum utilization of funds and other resources sourced from government and donors/collaborative partners within and outside Sierra Leone.
FACTS ABOUT THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF RICE*

In addition to its importance in production, rice plays a central role in food consumption and trade. Large quantities of white rice are imported into Freetown where much of it is also consumed, though some imported rice makes its way up country where it competes with local rice. Despite its lack of polishing, local rice commands a price premium, primarily for its taste. Relatively little local rice is found in Freetown, and that which exists is considered something of a luxury good.

Local rice is also exported to neighboring countries, notably Guinea which is just across the border from some of the main rice growing areas. As argued in the previous chapter, this reflects market realities and undoubtedly makes sense to the individuals concerned – both traders and farmers – and therefore should be reflected in national policy. As is now well-understood internationally, food security does not imply food self-sufficiency.

That said, local rice production is rebounding strongly with the help of a number of production initiatives. However, rice paddy is still largely processed by hand pounding. This is laborious and produces a product that, though appreciated for its taste, is not well suited to urban demand for a convenience staple food. Displacing imported rice depends critically on meeting its specifications for cleanliness, color, and rapid preparation. This can only be accomplished with improved processing technology.

In the mid-1970s, there were over 350 small rice mills operating in Sierra Leone, concentrated mostly in the small towns. They processed between 60 and 70 percent of the paddy that was milled annually, producing rice that was 20-40% broken, which would compete well with imports. These small mills are no longer operational.

Small rice mills are found widely throughout the rice growing regions of West Africa. There appears to be no reason why modern versions of these smaller rice mills should not be made available for sale and servicing throughout Sierra Leone. This not only would contribute to the processing of rice that could compete with imports in Freetown but also would help to encourage rice exports to neighboring countries. At present, close to 400 rice mills and hullers are to be supplied by donors.

At issue is how these mills will be distributed and paid for. In principle, they should be sold rather than donated, to ensure that they go to those most likely to establish viable commercial ventures. It will also be important that spare parts supply and servicing networks be established to maintain these mills. One option might be leasing, with the leasing company purchasing the mills and providing repair and maintenance services.

*EXCERPTS FROM THE WORLD BANK SPONSORED SIERRA LEONE DIAGNOSTIC TRADE INTEGRATION STUDY
OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN ROKUPR

The major resources of Rokupr are its harbor, vast swamps, the rice research station, proximity to the Guinea border and the Barmoi periodic market, reveals “The Sierra Leone Youth and Employment Study” sponsored by the World Bank.

Many youth have acquired skills training in hairdressing, gara-tie dyeing, carpentry, soap making and road construction. However, most of these skilled youth are unemployed. They lack tools, and the market for their trades is small.

Accessing farming inputs, seeds and fertilizers, is very difficult. Moreover, access to land for farming is also difficult as landowners demand 40% of harvest as land fees.

Debt refund during the harvest season is also considered high. As a result, youth see farming as an exploitative enterprise that benefits the elderly. Youth say that the lack of alternative occupation forces them into farming. Many youth have masonry and construction skills. However, their work is mainly voluntary without support or remuneration. Locals are rarely employed by non-community based contractors and those who are often not paid as promised. Contractors are perceived to be exploitative non-fulfillers of promises and contracts.

Lack of certificates by skilled youth also hinder their employment prospect. Upon completion of skills training, many youth do not have the resources to pay for certificates, thus, they are employed as low-paid menial unskilled workers.

Most petty traders receive goods on credit from across the border and other business people. General poverty, however, delimits the market for retail goods. Periodic markets (lumar) provide great opportunities for people with large quantities of goods. Benefiting from economies of scale, lumar market sellers can sell at lower rates than the small time retail traders. Thus, the small time petty/retail trade women find it difficult to compete.
CONSTRAINTS OF PLANTATIONS OWNERS IN KAILAHUN DISTRICT

PLANTATION OWNERS IN THE BORDER DISTRICT OF KAILAHUN BELIEVE THEY ARE THE PRIDE OF THE EASTERN REGION ‘WITH TREES GROWING LEONES’. CURRENTLY THEY FEEL THEY CANNOT MAINTAIN THEIR PLANTATIONS. THEY NOW HARVEST LESS COMPARED TO THE PRE-WAR YEARS. KAILAHUN HAS COCOA AND COFFEE PLANTATIONS, BUT STILL STRUGGLES WITH A VERY POOR ROAD SYSTEM. THESE FACTS ARE REVEALED IN “THE SIERRA LEONE YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT STUDY” SPONSORED BY THE WORLD BANK.

Labor costs for some plantations are now very high, costing as much as 5 million Leones for some plantations. Since many of their children are no longer providing labor, plantation owners have to resort to contractual arrangements considered as very exorbitant. The plantation owners perceive youth as lazy; they start work late (midday) and break off early (3 pm). The additional costs of labor contribute to their increasing debts and low returns. As a result, some of the plantations are left unattended, because plantation owners cannot afford to pay for labor.

Other constraints the plantation owners are facing include high debts, lack of access to tractors, and rodents and pests (especially monkeys) are eating away their crops and they lack labor to control these numerous pests.

Plantation owners are not happy with the quality of leadership of their association executives. They are particularly bitter about not knowing the market prices their leaders negotiate on their behalf for their crops. They perceive their intermediaries as people who collude with produce buyers to sell their produce at low prices.

In order to enhance employment opportunities in the district, plantation owners look forward to benefiting from initiatives that would enable their youth to demonstrate effective work ethics.

They also look forward to receiving new skills from experts for the effective management of their plantations. They believe their old skills and experiences are inadequate. They therefore look forward to training from experts and some experience sharing or study tour to other countries to learn about new methods and techniques for planting, harvesting, maintaining, curing and processing and preservation of crops.
EXPORT: A KEY TO GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION

IN A COUNTRY OF LESS THAN SIX MILLION PEOPLE WITH LIMITED PURCHASING POWER AND A SMALL DOMESTIC MARKET TO DRIVE GROWTH, EXPORTS MUST BE MADE TO PLAY A VITAL ROLE, BUT THE QUESTION IS: WHERE TO START AND HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF THE LIMITED HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY AVAILABLE? THE RECENTLY COMPLETED SIERRA LEONE DIAGNOSTIC TRADE INTEGRATION STUDY (DTIS) PROFFERS SOME SOLUTIONS.

THE FRAMEWORK

The Sierra Leone Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) was prepared under the Integrated Framework for trade related technical assistance to least developed countries in response to a request from the Government of Sierra Leone.

The Integrated Framework is a multi-agency and multi-donor program established to promote the integration of the least developed countries into the global economy. The participating agencies are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Trade Center (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The ultimate objective of the study is to build the foundation for accelerated growth in Sierra Leone by enhancing the integration of its economy into regional and global markets.

THE STUDY

The study does not provide a growth strategy or a poverty reduction strategy. Rather, it identifies the role which trade might play in such a strategy, by (1) analyzing the key constraints to expansion of trade, (2) providing a sense of priorities for maximum impact of trade on poverty reduction, and (3) developing a targeted Action Matrix of policy and regulatory reforms, technical assistance and investment projects.

The study is primarily about export development, as Sierra Leone has already adopted a relatively liberal import regime. The study also serves to strengthen the trade and growth dimension of the PRSP and ideally contributes to building a consensus on the way forward.

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural exports offer the most important potential for a major increase in incomes in rural areas, where the majority of the poor reside. Sierra Leone used to export a wide range of agricultural products, albeit in modest quantities, and many of the trees are still there, albeit in poor condition. Cocoa holds particular promise for fairly rapid growth in the next ten years which could bring direct benefits to more than 140,000 households, many of them very poor.

It is already the most important agricultural export, in spite of negligible support. The experience of Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana offers ample proof of the potential. International market conditions remain sufficiently robust to absorb whatever Sierra Leone might produce for the foreseeable future provided reasonable quality standards are met.

Cocoa expansion could help absorb some of the labor which will be released from artisan mining over the next ten years. As the Government’s capacity to drive agricultural export production is extremely limited for the moment, this study’s first and most important message is: “get the cocoa sector working again”.

Farmer field schools and other stakeholders should be supported through the development of a protocol to serve as the principal vehicle for the multiplication and distribution of improved plant material, and technical advice regarding planting, maintenance, and rehabilitation.
THE NICHE
With its very limited capacity, it is vitally important that Government focuses its energies on areas which no one else can do. These include formulation of an overall agricultural strategy; establishing an enabling environment for NGOs, private sector investment, and farmer organizations; assuring plant and animal protection; supporting agricultural and livestock research; and providing for the acquisition, multiplication, and dissemination of new and improved plant and animal material.

NGOs have proven particularly effective at disseminating information on new techniques and technologies. Farmer organizations also have an important role to play in this dissemination, as well as in helping to develop markets, storage, finance, and other ancillary services.

PRIVATE SECTOR
The private sector should be encouraged to build its capacity to deliver a wide range of services.

A better knowledge of market conditions must be obtained by investigating the regional market for garri, rice, palm oil, palm kernel oil and cashews to see what quantities can be offered and what are the quality specifications.

Another priority is a tree crop survey of the distribution, demography, and condition of the major tree crops: cocoa, oil palm and cashew.

FIELD SCHOOLS
Farmer field schools and other stakeholders should be supported through the development of a protocol to serve as the principal vehicle for the multiplication and distribution of improved plant material, and technical advice regarding planting, maintenance, and rehabilitation.

The media should be used to disseminate best practices. With the need to import new varieties of plant material, it is imperative that a strong phytosanitary policy and a quarantine system for imports be established.

MINING
Sierra Leone’s export sector has traditionally been dominated by mining, and will remain so in the immediate future even as it pursues the essential diversification of its economy.

Export revenues from mining reached $143 million in 2005, regaining the previous peak achieved in 1991.

With the reopening of rutile and bauxite mines, and the prospect of new modern gold and diamond mines, annual mineral export revenues could exceed $370 million. The Government of Sierra Leone faces several challenges.

It must attract more foreign investment and keep that which has already been attracted while extracting a fair share of the rents, and using them for the benefit of the wider population.

The Government and the private companies also need to ensure that the communities in the immediate vicinity of the mines receive their fair share of the benefits.

The Ministry of Mineral Resources must extend its extension services on diamond identification, sorting and basic techniques used in valuation to enhance miners’ knowledge and bargaining power. Similar services are required for improved reclamation of mined-out sites.
FACTS ABOUT THE SIERRA LEONE RURAL PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The objectives of the Sierra Leone Rural and Private Sector Development Project of Sierra Leone are to improve efficiencies along the value chain of agricultural commodities with higher benefits flowing to the producers. The project has four components.

Component A is the Domestic Marketing Improvement which aims at improving domestic distribution channels for selected agricultural products to improve the ability of farmers and traders to market their goods in Freetown and other large domestic markets.

Component B is the Agricultural Export Promotion which will provide the necessary tools and services for promoting agricultural exports of commodities such as cocoa, coffee, cashew, oil palm, cassava and ginger. The component will support an export promotion initiative for these commodities identified as promising for export by the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS). Target beneficiaries include agricultural producers, agricultural exporters and other private enterprises in the value chain.

Component C, Support to Farmer-based Organizations and Technology Improvement, aims at increasing farmers' access to improved agricultural technology and practices to support quality improvement of commodities supported under Components A and B and strategic studies to identify support for additional commodities and markets. It will target rural producers.

Component D, Policy Regulations, Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, will finance the development of key policy regulations, the project management function and monitoring and evaluation.

FOR DETAILS VISIT: www.worldbank.org/sierraleone
KOINDU : MAINS À PART, VOIX SILENCIEUSES ET ÉNERGIE DORMANTE

PAR ALPHA AMADU BAH

Mon voyage de l’octobre 2007 à Koindu était une déception. J’ai été choqué pour trouver une ville complètement différente du Koindu animé et plein de vie que j’ai connu depuis des années. Cela ne m’a pris aucun temps de voir les larmes sur le visage de chaque bâtiment endommagé pleurant pour la délivrance de n’importe où.

La ville a eu les cicatrices vives et douloureuses de la guerre. Au centre j’ai été salué avec des carcasses d’une station-service brûlée de carburant. D’autres choses que j’ai noté complètement brûlées étaient deux mosquées, un marché et de nombreuses maisons. Les maisons inhabitées avaient accru les grandes herbes, plus grandes que les maisons elles-mêmes. Les maisons habitées ont eu les peintures usées avec tellement la poussière sur elles qu’il était difficile de discerner si elles avaient été jamais peintes.


J’ai découvert que le seul centre de médico-social à Koindu n’a qu’un seul personnel médical, une infirmière et deux sages-femmes, excessivement insatisfaisantes pour les besoins de santé de Koindu. Beaucoup de résidants de Koindu doivent compter sur l’hôpital de Foya, mieux équipé en personnel et drogues, une dix-septaine de kilomètres au Libéria pour des services médicaux. Les patients voyagent de Koindu à l’hôpital de Foya chaque jour sous des conditions difficiles. La plupart du temps, en l’absence des véhicules, des patients en états de secours ont été étendus dans des hamacs et à pied portés à Foya sur les épaules des jeunesse.

Les routes raboteuses de gravier sont indescriptible déplorables. Une distance de trente quatre kilomètres de Kailahun à Koindu assure plus de deux heures. Arrivé à Koindu de la ville provinciale de Kenema est encore plus mauvaise, prenant une journée entière avec plus de soixante fosses.

Les équipements de l’eau et d’hygiène sont également déplorables. Il y a seulement une pompe à main fonctionnelle fournie par GTZ et un emplacement de gestion des déchets servent une communauté de plus de 7000 habitants.

Le groupe de jeunes, le plus organisé à Koindu est l’organisation de la jeunesse de Toli, établie en 2002. Ce groupe tient des réunions générales tous les quinze jours et ce qui dans le langage local s’appelle les sessions de ‘Blow Mind’, On l’appelle “Blow Mind”, et « nous ont pu construire deux pensionnaires, vingt stalles du marché, un emplacement de gestion de déchets solides et un centre social avec l’appui de la Commission nationale de l’action sociale NaCSA) financée par la banque mondiale ». c’est une réunion où les jeunes gens sont accordés l’occasion de parler sincèrement et franchement leurs soucis et ce qui est dans leurs cœurs.

La source du groupe de finances principale est aide personnelle des patrons dans la ville. D’autres groupes qui incluent : ‘Sisters Unite’, l’association de commerçants mais ces groupent sont des organismes simplement nominaux. Ils n’ont aucun bureau et ils n’organisent rarement des activités dans la communauté.

Les jeunesse fournissent traditionnellement certains
services communautaires. Selon Falla Gborie, son président, organisation de la jeunesse de Toli engage gratuitement normalement aux activités telles que la construction de route, la cultivateur de terre et dans la grande nettoyage. Il a cité la réparation des fossés sur les routes liant Koindu, Kailahun, Yenga et Foya en 2003 en tant qu’un des accomplissements de son organisation.

Jusqu’à présent l’autorité locale avait tâché d’obtenir le placement du gouvernement central aussi bien que les agences de distributeur pour des projets visés à améliorer l’état déplorable de région. « Dans les trois dernières années », dit le Conseiller Tengbeh, « nous ont pu construire deux pensionnaires, vingt stalles du marché, un emplacement de gestion de déchets solides et un centre social avec l’appui de la Commission nationale de l’action sociale NaCSA) financée par la banque mondiale ».

Le Conseiller dit, « la construction de ces structures a été rendue possible également par la coopération d’une équipe stratégique de la jeunesse de dix homme établie pour chacun des projets ». Cette équipe, le Conseiller a expliqué, « était principalement responsable de fournir la surveillance de travail et d’autres requis pour le travail ».

Mais, rarement les efforts de la jeunesse semblent recevoir une main aidant. « Nous avons besoin de nos aînés dans le gouvernement local et central aussi bien que leurs partenaires de développement tels que des O.N.G.s pour nous aider à venir ensemble et travailler pour le développement de la ville », Falla Gborie a dit.

A travers toutes ces lamentations et appels il semble qu’il existe un manque de compétence de mobilisation de la communauté et de volonté collective pour effectuer l’amélioration significative sur les perspectives de cette ville ravagée par guerre. J’ai été déconcerté quand j’ai appris que les gens étaient revenus à Koindu depuis que la guerre a fini il y a cinq ans et ne pourrait pas venir ensemble à au moins faire une remontée du visage sur certaines des reliques cauchemardesques de guerre, comme d’autres communautés avaient fait à leurs villages et villes ravagés par guerre pendant leur première année de retour sans aide d'extérieur.

Il est évident que les habitants de Koindu ont besoin désespérément de plus des voix plus fortes parmi eux-mêmes pour établir la confiance et pour effectuer une action collective. Ils ont besoin d’un certain catalyseur pour soulever leurs énergies à une taille suffisante pour l’action collective.

Pour soulever Koindu de son sommeil et pour la restauration de ses infrastructures de bases et ses services sociaux d’avant-guerre il est également nécessaire d’avoir plus d’organismes comme l’organisation de la jeunesse de Toli et beaucoup de ressources financières.


Start-up capital for cross border trading is at least 500,000 Leones (US$170). The women raise start-up capital through savings from harvests, salaries, sale of cattle, and sales from gara-tie dying. Some women have used micro-credit from Finance Salone. The community has a cooperative with 52 members (three men and 49 women). Started in 2004, the cooperative is now able, through a revolving credit scheme, to loan members up to 600,000 Leones (US$200) for a period of six months.

Most of the women market their goods in periodic markets (lumar). The Barmoi lumar held on Saturday and Sunday is the largest and most popular. Other lumars are held at Sumbuya on Wednesdays and Madina on Fridays. Barmoi is an international market with traders coming from Guinea, Senegal, Liberia and Gambia. Commodities are often bartered in the absence of cash. Foreigners mainly buy rice, cola, spice and marijuana. The foreign traders sell onions, furniture, clothing, electronics, oil, zinc, nails and cement.

Women are perceived as more patient than men in the working environment. The war provided women the opportunity to acquire more skills. Many women were forced into cross border trading which they now dominate. Since women have to take care of the household, they are perceived as better managers of resources.

Constraints for cross border trading are limited access to start-up capital, high custom tariffs, inadequate transportation and difficulties in debt collection. Given the overall poverty levels in the community, many customers buy commodities on credit and fail to pay debts to the women. In Guinea, the female traders face sexual harassment; they are prone to being robbed and have to pay bribes. To avoid some of these constraints, women travel in groups to Guinea. Women give money to a male driver at the start of the journey to give to the Guinean police and soldiers at the numerous checkpoints between Conakry and the border.

Women who are involved in prostitution and who lack education are seen as the poorest in the community. Women in rural areas are poorer than those in urban areas.

Men still have a greater political voice than women. However, since more women are involved in cross-border trading, coupled with NGOs raising awareness of women’s rights, more attention is now being paid to them.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN BUMPEH IN KONO DISTRICT

MINING AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES ARE THE PREDOMINANT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BORDER DISTRICT OF KONO. FOR WOMEN, IT IS PETTY TRADING AND VEGETABLE AND FRUIT PRODUCTION, SAYS THE SIERRA LEONE YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT STUDY SPONSORED BY THE WORLD BANK.

Mining and agricultural activities are the predominant employment opportunities in Kono. For women, petty trading and vegetable and fruit production are the predominant activities. Mining is male-dominated and mining firms do not employ women. Driving and bike taxi riding are becoming prominent occupations for male youth. There is a general feeling that Kono lacks formal employment opportunities because of the low level of education.

There are few skills training centers in Kono. A number of youth have been trained as carpenters and masons, but are unemployed. The Bike Riders Association has initiated a program to train female bike taxi riders. Youth would like training in food preservation and processing, computers, basic business management skills and capacity building of community based organizations. The blind are requesting an ensemble (a collection of musical instruments); polio victims are interested in radio and electronic repairs, blacksmithing, and arts and crafts.

Business development is hampered by limited access to credit, low education level of youth and lack of market centers. The road network in the district is so dilapidated that some border chiefdoms trade more on the Guinean side of the border and use Guinean currency for transactions.

The poorest are the physically and mentally challenged, widows, the aged and orphans. The richest are those engaged in diamond dealing and commercial enterprises (Lebanese, ‘Marakas’, Malians and Gambians) and the authorities. They own big cars, live in beautiful houses, send their children to the best schools and can afford to assist others.

Youth have no voice and feel threatened by the police and the chiefs. The sharing of party symbols that allowed candidates to participate in local elections favored older men. Elders are perceived to deliberately create disunity among youth in order to rule and control.

“The poorest (in Kono) are the physically and mentally challenged, widows, the aged and orphans. The richest are those engaged in diamond dealing and commercial enterprises (Lebanese, ‘Marakas’, Malians and Gambians) and the authorities. They own big cars, live in beautiful houses, send their children to the best schools and can afford to assist others.”
Borderlines is sponsored by the World Bank Civil Society Fund under its Regional Youth Initiative.
Among the women in Kabala, vegetable growing is a prosperous and profitable business. The women hired an expert from Guinea to receive training in growing Irish potatoes. Tailoring, gara-tie dyeing, carpentry, masonry, sand mining, stone breaking and bike taxi riding are also predominant employment opportunities. The very few formal work opportunities available are mainly in government ministries and a few NGOs.

In Kabala, the level of education is low. Various NGOs facilitate skills training programs. Unfortunately, most of these have ceased operation. There are no permanent skills training centers. Participants recommend the training of youth in surveying, swamp development, masonry, crop preservation and veterinary skills. The participants also recommended the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Musaia Veterinary Station.

Though this district is renowned for agriculture, there is no consistent distribution of agriculture machinery to benefit Kabala. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) started the Agro-Business Units (ABU) to supply seeds; however, the quantities of seeds were insufficient. Participants feel that Koinadugu is treated like a “waste pipe”.

The closing of forestry industries has hampered the expansion of furniture manufacturing. A poor road network reduces access to markets and consumers. The women believe, given appropriate support they could contribute to making Sierra Leone self-sufficient in food. The women would require the timely provision of inputs, appropriate seedlings, affordable fertilizers and machinery for large-scale farming.

Another constraint for increased employment opportunities is that offices set up in the community usually bring their own staff, given low education levels in the community. Participants state that many people do not like to work in Kabala since it lacks basic communication facilities.
While agriculture is the primary source of employment in the district, few programs have been targeted at improving and engaging youth in agriculture. Agricultural inputs supplied through the National Farmers Association rarely reach youth. Adults own cattle and control cattle rearing. Cattle driving to transportation centers provide lucrative employment opportunities for male youth. Youth also form labor gangs to increase their employment prospects.

The overall low educational level of youth limits their employability in the formal sector. Lack of access to capital hinders the possibilities of particularly youth and women to develop a business. The Drivers Union extorts money from drivers without any tangible benefits, and bribes to police officers increase transportation costs. Bike taxi riders also complained about high custom duties and the length of time it takes to receive licenses and number plates. Participants recommend training in food processing and preservation.

Families own land and chiefdom lands are controlled by the chiefs. Youth and women find few barriers to ownership of land. There is also access to sand and stones.

Participants believe no attempt has been made to tap the tourist potentials of the district: cool climate, beautiful mountains, lakes and nature reserves. Vegetable growers recommend a cold room to facilitate their business. Most participants request the rehabilitation of the Musaia Veterinary Center. FGD participants believe the introduction of mechanized farming in Koinadugu would solve Sierra Leone’s food problem.

Participants say political influence is great in Kabala and those with connections (mainly adults and older people) are preferred when it comes to jobs and contracts. Widows, old women and unemployed youth are perceived as the poorest.
Every year the World Bank sponsored World Development Report focuses on a chosen theme reflecting the most crucial global development issue of the year. For 2007 the focus was on youth, and specifically, the theme has been “Development and the Next Generation”.

Owing to the peculiarity of the Mano River Union youth situation, the report for 2007 can be found to be apt, relevant and timely. Youth groups, youth serving agencies and youth policy makers in the three countries can benefit from the World Development Report if they are keen to access a copy, digest its contents and act upon its recommendations.

With concrete empirical evidence, the report says that developing countries which invest in better education, healthcare, job training and job creation for their record numbers of youth could produce surging economic growth and sharply reduce poverty.

With 1.3 billion young people now living in the developing world—the largest-ever youth group in history—the report says there has never been a better time to invest in youth because they are healthier and better educated than previous generations, and they will join the workforce with fewer dependents because of changing demographics.

However, failure to seize this opportunity to train them more effectively for the workplace, and to be active citizens, could lead to widespread disillusionment and social tensions.

The report says that most policymakers know that their young people will greatly influence their national, social and economic fortunes, but nonetheless face acute problems in investing more effectively in their youth.

The World Development Report identifies three strategic policies that may enhance investment in young people: (1) Expanding opportunities, (2) improving capabilities, and (3) offering second chances for young people who have fallen behind due to difficult circumstances or poor choices. These policies should be considered against five fundamental transitions facing young people and affecting their whole economic, social and family life, namely, getting education, finding work, staying healthy, forming families, and exercising citizenship.

The report also identifies opportunities, capabilities and second chances for youths. On opportunities the
report says with broadened chances for better education and healthcare, young people can acquire life skills to navigate adolescence and young adulthood safely, while improved vocational training will help them compete in the workforce.

The report says youth political participation and involvement in social organizations is also essential for fostering young people’s civic life in their own communities. Without opportunities for productive civic engagement, young people’s frustrations may boil over into economic and social tensions, creating long-simmering disputes. For example, the ongoing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka between Sinhalese and Tamils was initially caused by the frustration of Tamil students shut out of university and denied other avenues for civic involvement.

On capabilities, the report says providing information to young people and developing their decision-making skills, especially to stay healthy and appreciate continued learning, is important.

Armed with the right information and incentives, these young people can make good decisions. Analysis of India’s Better Life Options program, which provides information on reproductive and health services and vocational training to young females aged 12-20 in urban slums and rural areas, shows that youth in the program were significantly more involved in key life decisions than those who were not.

On second chances the report says countries need targeted programs for young people who have fallen behind due to difficult circumstances or poor choices. These can be school drop-outs, drug addicts, criminals, ex-combatants, ex-convicts or people without jobs.

Second chances help young people rebuild their future, which has a long-term beneficial effect on society as a whole. Rehabilitation is costly, but the payoffs are highest for young people who still have a lifetime of potential productivity ahead of them.

Mano River youth groups interviewed, are elated by the fact that their state of joblessness, among other problems, has reached the highest point of lobby. “We are confident than ever before that concrete steps will now be taken to float up more programs that directly involve and benefit youth”, says youth activist Larry Fofanah.

Government and developing countries are encouraged to invest in youths by adopting youth friendly policies that expand opportunities, enhance capabilities and provide second chances for young people.

A cross section of youth serving agencies interviewed received the report with pleasure. “We are optimistic that the World Bank commitment will turn around fortunes of young people who constitute the bulk of the citizenry”, says a youth leader in Makeni. In the wake of the release of this report, it has been revealed that registration of youth groups by both the Ministries of Youth and Social Welfare is on the increase.

In the words of Mano Bangura, an Executive of Banana Water Youths Development Organization in eastern Freetown, “we have been inspired to register by an official of GTZ who assured us of support”.

Whilst commenting on positive strides made in other countries to change the dismal situation of the youths, co-author of the WDR 2007, Mamta Murthi says “youth will influence the outcomes of the global fight against poverty over the next forty to fifty years”.
INTRODUCTION TO THE MANO RIVER UNION COUNTRIES
EXCEPT FROM MANO RIVER RESOURCES (www.manoriver.com)

THE MANO RIVER UNION WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1973 BETWEEN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE AND WAS JOINED BY GUINEA IN 1980. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE UNION WAS TO ESTABLISH A CUSTOMS AND ECONOMIC UNION AMONG ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO IMPROVE LIVING STANDARDS AS WELL AS CROSS BORDER TIES AND TRADE.

The Mano River region has great natural resources: fertile soil, rich forests and mineral resources, and an abundance of water, together with close cross border links through shared language, culture and history. Adequately harnessed and administered, these assets could be a powerful driving force for economic growth in the West African region as to pursue the ongoing disarmament process in the sub-region: to support the Mano River Women Peace Network with its efforts at restoring and consolidating peace and stability in the sub-region. They also expressed their commitment to seeking the necessary financial support in order to make all the organs of the MRU operational.

Regional conflict in the area halted development of the union for more than a decade, but with peace now consolidated in Sierra Leone and restored to Liberia, efforts are underway to fully engage in the terms of the Union. A one-day summit of Heads of State of the Mano River Union was held on 20th May 2004 in the Guinean Capital, Conakry, with the three leaders of the Mano River Union States, Presidents Lansana Conte of Guinea, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and Chairman Gyude Bryant of Liberia expressing their commitment to support all initiatives aimed at the promotion of confidence-building measures and security in the sub-region, in order to strengthen cooperation amongst member countries and speed up their integration and sustainable development.

The 2004 report from the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone indicates that the Government has made significant strides in facilitating the consolidation of peace in the country and the overall security environment has remained stable. The Mission provides training to the Sierra Leone police to raise professional standards and new recruits have been trained and deployed. The UK has provided $5.1 million to support the communication and logistical needs of the army. State administration structures are being decentralized and the establishment of local councils nationwide has improved the system of local government. UNAMSIL, the UN country team, and the Government have put in place a repatriation programme for the reintegration of Sierra Leonean combatants returning from Liberia. Particular attention is being paid to the repatriation and

“Within Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, there is now confidence that adequate security arrangements are in place, not only to ensure continued peace and stability but also to allow economic activities to recommence throughout the sub-region.”

On August 23rd 2001, defense and security ministers from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone agreed on the deployment of joint border security and confidence building units to involve all the people of the MRU and discourage the proliferation of arms and armaments. They further agreed to create material and psychological conditions that would encourage the repatriation of refugees; to re-establish in the secured areas, the free movement of goods and people; to create an effective programme on information education and communication for the benefit of their respective populations on the culture of peace and the objectives of sub-regional integration; to establish a network of frequent contacts and exchange of security intelligence among member states; to encourage member states
reintegration of child soldiers, and the process of family tracing and reunification has begun. The human rights and justice system has gradually improved. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is on course and the chances of it completing its assignment on schedule look promising. A law reform commission has been established to review existing laws and made recommendations for the repeal, amendment, or enactment of new laws. In June 2003, the UN ban on the sale of Sierra Leone diamonds expired and was not renewed. The Government has continued to expand its control over diamond mining. Official exports of diamonds from January to July 2004 totaled US$81 million compared to US$ 42 million in the same period in 2003. It was recommended that the mandate of the UN Mission to Sierra Leone be extended to June 2005 to ensure the further stabilization of the country and sub-region.

In Guinea, the overall security situation remains calm, since Guinea has stabilizing factors that distinguish it from its neighbours. These include the restructuring of the security forces, the absence of hate media and a sense of nationalism.

On August 11th, 2003, under U.S. and international pressure, President Taylor of Liberia resigned office and departed into exile in Nigeria. Businessman Gyude Bryant became president of a new power-sharing government. Since then, the first of two years of the current transitional government have passed remarkably well. There has been positive progress made towards stabilizing the country and creating the necessary conditions for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Despite sporadic fighting, the disarmament exercise is deemed a success. Since November 2004, possession of illegal arms has become a criminal offence, and disarming and demobilizing combatants has been almost completed, apart from some remote pockets of fighters patiently waiting for their exchange deal. The deployment of UNMIL (United Nations Peace Mission in Liberia) forces throughout the country is also nearing completion.

The Mission’s new phase of operations will focus on: rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants; community development; the restoration of State administration nationwide; the strengthening of the rule-of-law institutions and restructuring of the security sector; promotion of the process of recovery and reconstruction; and the organization of free and fair elections in October 2005. These will be the first near-perfect elections in Liberia’s 150 years of existence. Economic activity is expected to pick up further from the relatively slow 2004 recovery, as there is optimism that not only this episode of civil war and regime change is definitely past, but that the parameters are there to ensure longer term development the like of which has not been seen since the 1970s.

On September 3rd 2004, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Guinea reiterated their resolve to launch a common currency, the Eco in 2005. President Lansana Conte of Guinea is chairman of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ), formed in 2000 to try to establish a strong stable currency for the sub-region to ease cross-border payments, trade and investments. The eventual goal is for the CFA franc and Eco to merge, giving all of West and Central Africa a single stable currency.

Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea all provide the basic rights to mine and export minerals, hold foreign exchange in foreign bank accounts without restriction, and allow duty free importation of mining equipment.\n
**CONCLUSION**

Within Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, there is now confidence that adequate security arrangements are in place, not only to ensure continued peace and stability but also to allow economic activities to recommence throughout the sub-region.
MEMORY LANE: BORDER CROSSING POINTS AS CONFLICT FLASHPOINTS

THERE IS HARDLY A BORDER CROSSING POINT IN THE MANO RIVER BASIN NOT REMEMBERED AS A BATTLE THEATRE INVOLVING YOUTH IN THE SUB-REGION’S CONFLICT. AGIBU JALLOH RECOUNTS.

1. Liberia’s Nimba County border with Cote D’Ivoire will always be remembered as the springboard for the initiation in 1989 of the Charles Taylor rebellion in Liberia which later spilled into Sierra Leone and much later into Guinea, threatening the sub-regional stability of West Africa.

2. Kailahun’s border with Liberia’s Loffa County and Guinea’s Gueckedou Region is remembered as the place where the first guns were fired and the last set of ex-combatants disarmed with the reference to Sierra Leone’s eleven years of brutal and devastating war.

3. Pujehun District’s border with Grand Cape Mount County will always be remembered as the launch pad of Liberia’s LURD rebels whose onslaught on Monrovia in September 2003 led to the exiling of Charles Taylor and to paving way for UNMIL deployment.

4. Kambia District’s border with Guinea is the axis from where Guinean forces in 2000 pounded the Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone from the air, inducing the greatest single cause of massive UN troop deployment in Sierra Leone which contributed to an accelerated disarmament of former rebel fighters.

5. Kono District’s border with Guinea is where the Donso refugees returned in arms from Guinea in 2000 to launch a military counter offensive against Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front rebels, inducing the greatest single cause of an accelerated disarmament in Sierra Leone which led to the end of Sierra Leone’s war in 2002.

6. The border axis where Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone meet is remembered for its famous pre-war cross-border trading; and now for playing host to Yenga, a disputed village in Sierra Leone currently occupied by Guinea in the aftermath of the Mano River Union war.
BORDERLINE PRODUCTS AT THE GBALAMUYA CROSSING POINT

A TRAVELLER ABOUT TO CROSS SIERRA LEONE’S INTERNATIONAL BORDER TOWN OF GBALAMUYA INTO GUINEA CAN BE FASCINATED BY A SERIES OF BORDERLINE PRODUCTS, NAMELY, ‘THE BORDERLINE GUEST HOUSE’, ‘THE BORDERLINE SHOP’ AND ‘THE BORDERLINE RELAXATION CENTER’ - ALL MEANT TO RESPOND TO TRAVELLING TRADERS’ DEMAND FOR LODGING, FOOD AND DRINKS, ESPECIALLY TRADERS WHO WAIT FOR POLICE AND CUSTOM CHECK ON THEIR OVERLAND CARGOES. AGIBU JALLOH REPORTS.

The users of Gbalamuya’s borderline products are mostly Fulani traders whose chartered overland cargo trucks spend three days to a week at the Gbalamuya Custom Post which stands next to the Borderline Guest House and its associated shop and pub.

The trucks which are usually detained for searching and checking at the custom post are always full of tradable items meant to be transported from Sierra Leone to Guinea or vice versa. While in transit for the custom officers to check for relevant tax documents and contraband commodities, the travelers would often engage Nana Kamara’s Borderline Guest House or Shop or Pub, for periods ranging from an hour or a day or from days to weeks, depending on how long they would wait.

As a passer-by journalist having little time to investigate the procedures and bureaucracies of the custom post, I was particularly intrigued by the business Nana Kamara and her Borderline staffs make out the traders’ delay. “We offer them (the traveling traders) rooms to rest and sleep, a grocery shop to purchase needed items and a pub to relax and drink”, Nana told me, “and in so doing, we as young people have carved out a job for ourselves”.

Borderlines is seed sponsored by the World Bank Civil Society Fund under its Regional Youth Initiative
The BORDERLINES initiative is seed sponsored by the World Bank and implemented by Pampana Communications with manpower support from the Mano River Union Secretariat and UNDP in Sierra Leone

The CONTENTS OF THIS MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POSITIONS OF ITS SPONSORS