

INDEPENDENT YOUTH FORUM

REPORT ON

THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH

SIERRA LEONE CHAPTER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. Area : 1 Education
- B. Area :14 Youth and Conflict Prevention
- C. Area :12 Information and Communication Technologies
- D. Area : 15 Intergenerational Relations

World Programme of Action For Youth Status Report on Selected MDGs in Sierra Leone

Area 1 EDUCATION

- Primary: free for classes 1 - 6
- Secondary: free public exams – Basic Education Certificates Examination
West African Education Certificate Exams
- University: Expanded access into universities by conducting Access Programmes for candidates who can afford it.

* The school curriculum has been revised in 1992 with ushered in the 6-3-3-4 system that promotes vocational training for young people after the completion of Junior Secondary School

SUCCESS

- Reduced number of drop-outs
- Diversified educational opportunities that encourage young people to make use of other careers thereby strengthening the middle level manpower.

CONSTRAINTS

A draw back to the above is a lack of adequate infrastructure and employment opportunities.

- The National School Curriculum does not discriminate against women and that Sierra Leone is a multi-ethnic country with people speaking at least two languages.
- Government does have a commitment to life-long situation apart from the formal set up. It supports partnership with Sierra Leone Adult Education- SLADEA, Peoples Educational Association-PEA, and Partners in Adult Education Association -PADECO including the University to provide literacy programmes for young people and adults.

Government has initiated Distance Education Programmes for disserving student to continue their education abroad and more importantly for the benefit of Teachers Training Colleges to assist them mainstream potentials from inaccessible areas in the country.

The Government is promoting non-formal education and young people are getting employment.

Education is available at all levels but that the accessibility at certain levels particularly at the university level can be problematic. Government does provide some form of Grant-in-aid.

NGOs like Independent Youth Forum, Plan International, UNICEF, Action-Aid, Ministry of Youths and Sports have been actively engaged in Peer Education Programmes countrywide.

Government during and after the war in collaboration with donors initiated the Non-formal Primary Education (NFPE), Complementary Rapid Education Programme (CREP), and SABABU Education in order to accelerate the achievement of positive outcomes in the educational sector.

The absence of convenient family environment i.e. they (children) are used as instrument to bring income for their families – child labour.

Programmes exist to educate them on their cultural heritage but these programmes are not articulate and largely unsustainable.

There are little or no cultural exchange programmes, currently, but they used to exist, instance, was the Kalamazoo Student Exchange Program between the University of Sierra Leone universities in the United States.

VOLUNTARY WORK CAMPS

There are no Conflict Resolution Courses in the school curriculum, though; the University of Sierra Leone has initiated Peace and Conflict studies as a course in the University of Sierra Leone.

ACCESSING VOCATIONAL TRAINING

There are two categories of vocational/technical training: formal and informal. The formal targets school-going kids from Basic Education Certificate Examination level and the informal provides basic skills-training for mostly non-school goers and they range from carpentry, gara-dyeing, tailoring, soap making, painting to carving or sculpting.

They are both Government and NGO led, an examples are the Opportunity Industrialization ion Centre – OIC, Government Technical Institute. The job placement rate is difficult to determine as it depends on the demands from the private sector. These programmes enhanced the capacity of middle level manpower. They also enhance livelihoods systems for majority of the youth. On the other hand, accessibility and employment opportunities are limited.

Vocational training programmes are available for all youths. However, there are constraints based on certain factors like geographical contiguity in relation to choice of trade. Technical/vocational training enables young people to succeed in the job market because they normally become self-employed. The availability of government services that absorb youth in a gainful manner is very minimal.

ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights education is, indirectly, taught in schools because subject like Civic Education, Social Studies, and Peace and Conflict Studies are taught in primary, secondary, tertiary levels respectively. Youth Organisations are actively involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of human violations in their districts. They normally network and collaborate on projects implementation relating to the welfare of youths, their community and the nation at large by documenting gross human violations.

PROMOTING ENTERPRISE TRAINING

Public and private training programmes exist for individual and cooperative enterprises. The University of Sierra Leone, which is funded by Government, has programmes in small-scale business development for executive managers at the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM); similar courses are taught in Non-Governmental Institutions like College of Business Studies,

Government and non-state actors like Association for Rural Development, National Commission for Social Action –NaCSA and American Refugee Council – ARC have been providing micro financing schemes to small-scale enterprises. On the other hand, micro finance facility is limited.

ACCESSING TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Government programmes for training youth leaders are almost non-existent. Nonetheless, the Commonwealth Foundation is supporting youth courses in the University of Sierra Leone: this is a seminal process.

The public sector has limited programmes on-the-job training for young people: Civil Service and the security sector. NGOs do have on-the-job training programmes like orientation training and novel technology training. Some form of internship for young volunteer exists within the private and public sectors.

Young people in both rural and urban take part in the development and implementation of programmes through pre-contacts and phased monitoring mechanisms.

Area 14 YOUTH AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Sierra Leone as a state is signatory to international protocols protecting the use of child soldiers in conflict. In this regard the overall legal and institutional framework is amenable. There are government programmes that seek to prevent the root causes of conflict like the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

There are also NGOs programmes that support conflict prevention like, Search For Common Grounds, Independent Youth Forum, Campaign for Good Governance, and National Forum for Human Rights etc.

From the point of view of Government Youth involvement in the planning, implementation and evaluation of conflict prevention is very minimal. There are youth led NGOs whose membership are involved in all the stages.

These are Government programmes with specific focus on demobilization of child/youth soldiers and these include:

HIV/AIDS programme i.e. SHARP [Sierra Leone HIV/AIDS Response Programme],
GOAL's Programme on Commercial Sex Workers,
IRC programmes on Gender -Based Violence,
NACWAC's [National Commission for War Affected Children] programme for war-affected children. These are all services available youths in difficult circumstances.

The new education Act 2004 that federates the University of Sierra Leone is a step in the direction of community participation and ownership. Also, the new process of decentralization in Sierra Leone seeks to give decision-making power to communities to chart their own destiny in every respect. These are all programmes that flow on low term investment for communities hence the building of a strong social capital.

Area 12 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES-ICT

- There are virtually no concrete programmes/policies that address ICT and youth
- Little or no research has been done on ICT and youths with regards drawbacks and benefits.
- There are few programs that support young people in using ICT for the purpose of employment. However centers for limited beneficiaries exist in CARE and National Forum For Human Rights.
- There are little or no government programmes that teach ICT related skills to pupils
- There exist some NGO-related programmes that teach young people ICT related skills like the Methodist Resources Centre in Bo, and Defence for Children International (DCI) and Independent Youth Forum (IYF).
- The private sector like Africa Information Technology Holding (AITH) is one of the ICT actors in the private sector for they provide software and hardware training to people who can afford these services.
- There is no government policy on equal access to ICT.
- A local chapter of International Education and Research network (LEARNs), hosted in the Ministry of Youth and Sport, provides limited services to students.

- Youth Organisation like IYF utilize the ICT to forge international partnership like Global Youth Service Day, OSIWA, Reebok Foundation, World bank, VSO, DFID to foster networking for the upliftment of the less-privileged.

Area 15 INTREGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

- Government does not have any policies or programmes, which address the promotion of generation relations. The cultural milieu and traditional stereotypes do not allow for young people and women to be heard in the midst of elders.
- Young people interact with older people but the interactions are based on the felt needs of the aged. The older people must always dictate the terms of these relations.
- These relations are culturally managed and not controlled by NGOs and Government
- These are no programmes that address intergenerational relations. Supports for the aged and for those supporting the aged are basically from, casually, enshrined family members' good will.
- No programmes and services to support the older folks or people in their capacity as caregivers.

Submitted By:

John Paul Bai

Director

Independent Youth Forum

Sierra Leone