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**ENHANCING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND
EMPLOYABILITY IN A COUNTRY EMERGING OUT OF
WAR: THE CASE OF SIERRA LEONE**

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DEDICATION

To the youth who died during the war. They were part of a neglected group and their souls can only rest in perfect peace if the appalling condition of the living youth is improved through relevant skills and decent employment opportunities. Till then the youth are not the 'Future Leaders' but a lost generation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	i
Acknowledgement.....	ii
Acronyms.....	vi
List of tables.....	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Statement of the research problem.....	1
1.2 Justification of the study.....	3
1.3 Objectives.....	4
1.4 Research questions.....	4
1.5 Theoretical and analytical framework: development challenges in nations emerging out of war.....	5
1.6 Research methodology and sources of information.....	7
1.7 Limitations of the study.....	8
CHAPTER 2: THE WAR, THE ECONOMY AND IMPLICATIONS ON EMPLOYMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.....	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 The war: a historical account and implications.....	9
2.2.1 Misrule in the country.....	10
2.3 Profile of the economy.....	11
2.3.1 Effects of the war on the economy and on employment.....	12
2.3.2 Impact of war on youth employment.....	14
CHAPTER 3: REBUILDING THE NATION-STATE AND THE ECONOMY AND RAISING EMPLOYABILITY: ARE THE STATE AND THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS UP TO THE CHALLENGES?.....	17
3.1 Introduction.....	17
3.2 The government in post-war Sierra Leone.....	17
3.3 Education and training systems in Sierra Leone.....	19
3.3.1 Accessibility.....	20
3.3.2 Relevance.....	22
3.4 Education during the war.....	22
3.5 The impact of education and training reforms on employability.....	24

CHAPTER 4: ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD: A PRESENTATION OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES.....27

4.1 Introduction.....27
4.2 Employment situation of youth within a policy framework.....27
4.3 Employment and skills acquisition programmes.....28
4.3.1 Youth Micro-Enterprise/Credit Scheme.....29
4.3.2 Youth in Crisis Project (YCP).....29
4.3.3 Youth Reintegration, Training and Education for Peace Project (YRTEP).....30
4.3.4 Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP).....31
4.4 Social and psychological rehabilitation.....31
4.4.1 Skills Training and Employment Generation (STEG).....31
4.4.2 Skills Training and Employment Promotion (STEP).....32
4.5 Evaluation of the programmes.....32

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM: CAN SIERRA LEONE LEARN FROM OTHER EXPERIENCES?.....36

5.1 Introduction.....36
5.2 The case of Uganda.....36
5.2.1 Reintegration programmes.....37
5.2.2 Agriculture and Food Security Measures.....38
5.2.3 Public Works Programmes.....39
5.2.4 Formal Education, Vocational Training and Small Enterprise Development Programmes.....39
5.2.5 Social Reintegration.....40
5.2.6 Special Programmes.....41
5.2.7 Assessment of training programmes.....41
5.2.8 Lessons.....43
5.3 The case of South Africa.....44
5.3.1 Aspects of life skills under consideration.....45
5.3.2 Orientation about the World of Work.....46
5.3.3 Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET).....46
5.3.4 Social Skills.....47
5.3.5 Basic Management.....47
5.3.6 Assessment of training programmes.....48
5.3.7 Lessons.....48

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....50

6.1 Summary of major findings.....50

6.2	Youth employment and employability: policy suggestions for Sierra Leone.....	51
6.2.1	Improving the quality of education and training through increased funding.....	51
6.2.2	Making training relevant to local needs.....	51
6.2.3	Life skills through National Youth Service (NYS).....	52
6.2.4	Establishing a formal structure for apprenticeship.....	52
6.2.5	Life long learning.....	53
6.2.6	Economic recovery.....	53

REFERENCES.....	55
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ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
APC	All Peoples' Congress
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DDR	Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JASPA	Jobs and Skills Programmes for Africa
JYAK	Ja Ya Kupatanisha
KFW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MYES	Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports
NA	Not Available
NCDDR	National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NYC	National Youth Council
NYS	National Youth Service
OTI	Office of Transition International
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UVAB	Uganda Veterans' Assistance Board
YRTEP	Youth Reintegration, Training and Education for Peace

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: GDP sectoral breakdown-value(Lc.mn.) + percentage by industrial origin at Constant 1990/91 prices (1990-99).....	13
Table 2.2 : GDP growth (percentage annual change).....	14
Table 3.1 : Primary and secondary school enrollment.....	20
Table 3.2 : Female education as a percentage of total school enrollment.....	21
Table 3.3 : Educational imbalances.....	21
Table 3.4 : Full time students in undergraduate courses in the university.....	22
Table 3.5 : Public expenditure on education (during the war).....	23
Table 3.6 : Educational expenditure in some West African countries (1994-1997).....	24
Table 3.7 : Budgetary allocations to education and Tech/Voc.1995-2002 (Le).....	25
Table 4.1 : Beneficiaries of YRTEP.....	30

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the research problem

The plight of youth in terms of employment and employability globally is a major concern especially in developing countries. Little wonder that in some countries in the developing world youth unemployment can be twice as high as that for adults (O'Higgins, 2001). The age parameter for youth can start as early as 9 years in some countries and as high as 35 in other countries. In Sierra Leone a youth is somebody who is within the age group of 15–35 (Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports (MYES) 2000). According to the United Nations (UN) definition, youth comprises of people within the age bracket of 15-24. This is the internationally accepted definition despite the fact that it varies from country to country (O'Higgins, 1997). In this paper the UN definition will be used. O'Higgins (Ibid.) observes that youth unemployment rates are general higher than the rest of the working population around the globe and therefore should be given serious attention by national governments. A country's youth makes up the future human resources and should therefore be developed as a foundation for future development. A poorly educated and trained youth has serious repercussions for a country's future economic, social and political spheres of life.

The population of Sierra Leone estimated at 4.9 million (World Bank, 2001:6) is youthful with over 60 percent below the age of 25 years (Abdullah, 1999:18). Since independence in 1961 the economy depended on the mining sector as a major export earner and a small industrial sector producing mainly consumables. The agricultural sector has been dominated by subsistence farming due to its neglect for mining. The education and training systems were modeled to that of the British system with little relevance to local needs. The systems emphasized formal and academic education orientating the minds of students to white collar jobs and wage employment. Little priority was given to technical and vocational education and training which were stigmatized as avenues for the academically weak and poor students. Youth who dropped out of school could hardly find jobs in the small formal sector to which their minds were orientated at school.

Politicians exacerbated the problem by exploiting the youth in order to gain political power. They were recruited, given handout, drug and alcohol for political campaigns, which was brutal and marred by violence. The bulk of the youth wing of political parties was unemployed, uneducated and unskilled. These youth developed the culture of praise singing and idleness in place of education, skill acquisition and hard work for self-realisation.

Awareness on the need to recognise the special needs of young people became nationally felt only after the Declaration of the International Decade of the Youth by the United Nations (UN) in 1985. Even there, it was only in 1997 that a National Youth Development Programme and Strategy was produced through the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). According to available statistics on labour (MYES, 2000) by 1990, the youth accounted for 55% of the unemployed. The situation is even worse now after a decade of war. Youth unemployment is common even among university graduates, with their lack of relevant skills required by employers in the shrunk formal sector due to closure of businesses in most parts of the country for security reasons. Public sector reforms in line with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies in 1993 led to the downsizing of the civil service. Although it affected employment generally, the junior civil servants, mainly young school leavers were most affected, as they could hardly find alternative sources of employment with little or no skills in a country with a deteriorating economy.

The bulk of the rebel recruits were young men and women. According to them the war was not only a means of acquiring material wealth but also primarily a way of overthrowing and replacing the system responsible for their plight. This period in an individual's life deserves special attention. Conditions must be created to prepare young people with skills, attitudes and abilities to shape their own future and in so doing, the development of their country. They should be provided with life skills so that they have or can create choices in life and are aware of the implications of those choices. This was what was lacking in the country leading to the taking up of arms as the best option. In a desperate bid to address the youth problem, ad-hoc programmes

are been effected which have only short term effect, supply-driven and depending on the availability of donor funds. The sustainability of most of these programmes in addressing youth employability and employment leaves much to be desired.

1.2 Justification of the study

It is no hidden secret that the country has witnessed one of the most brutal wars in the history of mankind. The war has a negative impact on the youth. Young people were conscripted into the war in large numbers, while others were forced out of their homes and school and separated from their families. Youth were orphaned, maimed, physically and psychologically affected. Many youth have taken to outright criminal behaviour including theft, prostitution and drug abuse in a bid to survive. A local newspaper in Freetown (Concord Times, 2002) expressed concern about the crime rate and social problems in its editorial: "*all over the city it is common to see youngsters, male and female in ghettos smoking marijuana and sniffing cocaine. Drug habits induce violence and criminality.*" The ex-combatants, mainly youth are suspects for the wave of crime rate in the city.

It is clear in Sierra Leone today that massive unemployment, especially among the youth is one of the greatest tragedies facing the country. This problem has been made worse by the fact that economic performance is not conducive to generate new jobs in sufficient quantity to absorb the very large number of unemployed young people and adults. The economic woe is heightened by the war and the coup d'état of May 1997, which have destroyed the economic foundation of the country. Thus average annual rate of growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 1990-1999 was -4.8 percent (ILO, 2001:18). Youth employment and employability need to be seriously addressed through efficient and effective policies and programmes in order to avoid the mistakes of the past. The situation on the ground is still fragile and serious attention should be paid to the youth. According to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, Behrooz Sadry (Sierra Leone News, 2002a) if the UN troops are to leave the country it could lead to an economic shock as much of the economy is supported by the estimated \$2 million (mn) a day spent on the peace keeping effort. This could be a recipe for chaos where unemployed youth may again be recruited into

armed rebel groups. “ *We are not talking about the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) doing something again, we are talking about the youth.* ”

There is need for the country to learn from the experiences of other countries and see which ones it can adopt as a way forward in the quest to generate employment and enhance the employability of the youth. It is against this background that the need for a project seeking to examine youth employment and employability in Sierra Leone about which little data is available becomes timely.

1.3 Objectives

This study intends to achieve the following:

- (a) To look at the problem of employment and employability with an insight into the Conflict, the State, and the education and training systems.
- (b) To critically examine the process of rehabilitation of the youth in the economy based on existing reintegration programmes.
- (c) To suggest sustainable programmes and policies after assessing those of other Countries that have gone through similar experiences.

1.4 Research questions

1. What is the contribution of the ten-year war to the problem of youth employment and employability and to the general state of the economy.
2. What has been the contribution of the education and training systems to youth employability.
3. To what extent have youth employment and development programmes been effective in addressing the plight of youth nation wide.
4. What efforts have been made so far at rehabilitating former young fighters
5. What lessons can the country learn from programmes and policies of other countries.

1.5 Theoretical and analytical framework: development challenges in countries emerging out of war

Conflict is seldom given the desired attention by those who write about development and rarely surfaces in theoretical texts dealing with development issues. War is not adequately incorporated into the interpretation of development. Unwin (2002) observes that this may have something to do with the idea of 'development' which invariably refers to progress in one form or another. Conflict deters such progress, hence an antithesis to development. Thus in development-oriented theoretical issues conflict is mostly ignored. It should however be realized that conflict affects development and should be given much attention in development discourse. Armed conflict is on the increase globally in developing countries and it is a major stumbling block to development and human progress (ILO, 1998). Most internal conflicts arise due to poverty and inequality. Murithi (2002) points out that extreme inequality in a country leading to inaccessibility of economic opportunities may cause stress between groups escalating into violent conflict. Development challenges in conflict-affected countries are enormous as they are characterized by social deprivation and poverty, destroyed infrastructure, massive displacement of people and a breakdown of social services among others (ILO, 1997). Several authors (Maroodi, 1998; Date-Bah, 1997; Hakemulder, 1997) indicate that resources should therefore be directed at building sustainable peace, restoring civil life and improving the material and social conditions of the citizenry.

The end to such conflicts raises the expectations of participants in the conflict. High expectation of an independent sustainable livelihood is prevalent amongst them. Emergency financial rewards are only a temporal remedy, a stopgap, especially for the youth who lack relevant skills for self-sustainability. Skill acquisition could therefore be a far-reaching attempt at meeting the aspirations of young people in post-war situations. Employment promotion and life-long skills training for self-realisation are crucial in the reintegration efforts of such people. Youth are amongst those adversely affected through physical, psychological and emotional damages. They are young and in a situation like this they have a double disadvantage; a destruction of their youthful life and a bleak future (Kingma, 1999).

As mentioned by Todaro (1997) neoclassical development theorists emphasize the role of market forces as decisive in the development aspiration of countries with State intervention limited to that of a regulatory body intervening only when market forces fail. The role of the State is underplayed in such conventional thinking on development. Furthermore because of its economistic nature conventional thinking on development tends to neglect social factors in its analysis. It should be realized that though market forces are not irrelevant, they do not come out strong in a country emerging from war. Enhancing the role of the State should supercede the economy. A strong nation-state is necessary to build social cohesion, which does not have immediate market value but necessary for sustainable peace. Neglect of social factors leads to war and should therefore be adequately addressed in post-war situations.

Macroeconomic conditions are very unstable in such countries with high inflation and huge deficit in the balance of payments. In the reconstruction of the economy, macroeconomic policies are tightened in order to stabilise the economy, the consequence of which is increased unemployment in the public sector (ILO, 1998). In Maroodi's (1998) view orthodox stabilization policies applied in non-conflict countries should be avoided in remedying the imbalance as they do not necessarily serve as a guide for policies in conflict-affected countries. The terms for macroeconomic assistance should be flexible taking cognizance of the effects on the war weary people. In effect it should yield a peace dividend.

Education and training are crucial in making an individual employable and in increasing employment opportunities. *"Education and training are a major investment, if not the instrument for enhancing the employability, productivity and income earning capacity of many disadvantaged people in the labour market, and also for promoting equity in employment outcomes"* (ILO, 2000:13). Thus training equips these people with vital skills, knowledge and information, which enables them to find productive employment or to manage a micro-enterprise. Life skills training helps in overcoming the social impacts and reduces psychological stress. Education and training systems serve as venues for enhancing employability within a context of clear economic policies and actions that will lead to clear situations. Basic education

at affordable cost is indeed a high investment for improving the human resource base. Furthermore education is important in doing away with regional and tribal divides. This is crucial in building a nation-state.

Acquiring relevant skills can be a source of self-employment, reducing the tension on the government and increasing the potential for political stability. Commenting on this situation, Kingma (1999:7) points out that *“large numbers of young people without schooling and job opportunities could in general be seen as a time bomb under society and the peace-building process. Particularly people with military skills and without stable livelihoods are easy to mobilize, even for vague political purposes.”* Education should not be provided on the basis of cost-benefit analysis, as the people are impoverished and highly unlikely for them to have the means to pay. International aid mobilization should focus on them, as this might not be the case in normal development discourse.

Education and training have the potential of creating human capabilities and competencies in the individual at the cognitive, affective and motivational levels. An increase in cognitive abilities is crucial to the individual and the effective effects of training are in relation to socialization through molding attitudes, values, norms and behaviour. They also have a positive mark on the psychological and motivational spheres. For young people in particular the choice of selection for training and the attention accorded them can trigger huge motivation and ginger up their morale. The important effect of enhancing the capabilities and competencies of youth emerging out of war is that of human development. Once human capabilities are developed, it sets the mind free from economic, political and social barriers hitherto existing in life. This paves the way for existing opportunities in these economic, political and social sectors. The individual feels empowered thereby helping to shape his life (Nubler, 1997).

1.6 Research Methodology and sources of Information

The data that will be used in this study is secondary data. Books, articles, journals and other documents from the Institute of Social Studies library. In addition the internet

will be sourced as well as other libraries in the Netherlands. Government documents and reports, newspapers and journals from Sierra Leone will form part of the information source.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The availability of data is a major constraint in this research. Most parts of the country on which the research is based have been inaccessible for more than five years until recently. Data available may not reflect the situation of the entire country due to the problem above. Furthermore some vital information centres were burnt down in the course of the war. Another problem is the perception most Sierra Leoneans held in the past that youth refers to young men, thereby excluding young women. Youth programmes, when they were available were biased in favour of young men. This becomes a constraint in reflecting on the situation of the youth. The country is presently in transition from war to peace, with the government trying to address several issues at the same time with very limited resources. Conclusive statements on certain sectors in transformation may be difficult. Time and space constraints may also deter some analysis.

CHAPTER 2: THE WAR, THE ECONOMY AND IMPLICATIONS ON EMPLOYMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the deteriorating socio-economic situation of the country that led to war. It is clearly indicated that inequality in society led to State collapse and the unfortunate plight of the youth. The impact of the war on the economy and youth employment is also examined.

2.2 The War: a historical account and implications

On the 23rd of March 1991, a group of armed men numbering around a hundred crossed from the Liberian border into Bomaru in Kailahun District, Eastern Sierra Leone. They attacked the police post killing some policemen and civilians, sending the entire town into disarray with people running helter-skelter for dear life. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) claimed responsibility for the attack. Their leader a Corporal Foday Sabanah Sankoh made it known that they were bent on overthrowing the All Peoples Congress government. Initially made up of Sierra Leonean exiles, Burkinabe and Liberian mercenaries, the RUF quickly swelled in number after a few months by conscripting unemployed and socially excluded youth roaming the countryside (Richards, 1996:4-6, Abdullah, 1997:68; Alie, 2000:15).

The RUF used the fear factor against its conscripts to increase its numerical strength through propaganda. Young conscripts were tattooed and told that if they defected government soldiers bent on extinguishing the rebel force will kill them. The only option was to remain and fight with the RUF. Positive inducements were also used to buy loyalty to the movement through material gifts. For instance a conscripted young lady when asked why she decided to stay with the RUF said they offered her a choice of shoes and dresses. She had never had a decent pair of shoes before (Richards, 1996:28). Poverty and inequality due to more than a decade of misrule is the main cause of the war. However the Liberian civil war motivated the rebels as it provided a safe corridor for the launch of their attack into Sierra Leone.

2.2.1 Misrule in the country

Despite the fact that the country is richly endowed with natural resources: diamond, gold, bauxite, rutile, iron ore, marine resources, fertile soil and a good climate, it is one of the poorest countries in the world (Kpundeh, 1995:28; Davies, 2000:349). Thus with such abundant natural resources poverty is an irony. During the National Consultative Conference in Freetown in April, 1999 the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold commented on this sad state of affairs: *"the tragedy of Sierra Leone is that her people are among the poorest in the world, while the country is among the richest. The reasons for this are entirely man-made. Other countries in the world are poor because of natural disasters, few resources, unfertile territory, or bulging populations. Not so in Sierra Leone. God bless this land with an abundance of resources. Just a relatively few people are responsible for the misery and hardship suffered by so many"*(as in Alie, 2000:29). Sierra Leone was ruled for over two decades by one party dictatorship of the APC, first by defacto between 1968 and 1978 and then through constitutionality from 1978 till 1991 when a multi-party constitution was enacted by an Act of Parliament followed by a nation-wide referendum latter in the year with a 75% support for the implementation of the constitution (Fyle, 1993:9; Abraham, 2001:206).

APC rule under Siaka Stevens lasted for 17 years (1968-85). Within this period corruption, nepotism and fiscal mismanagement reached its peak (Zack-Williams, 1990:26; Davies, 2000:353). Bribery at all levels though unofficial became widespread, and civil servants squandered government funds with impunity. Thus financial scandals like 'voucher gate' (where names on pay vouchers were inflated) were revealed during this period in which civil servants defrauded the State of huge sums of money (Richards, 1996: 41; Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2000a). Society became divided into two; with the few 'haves' and the majority, the 'have not'. The 'haves' entrenched themselves in power controlling State resources whilst the 'have not' wallowed in abject poverty thereby becoming second-class citizens in their God given homeland (Bayraytay, 2000:98).

The mismanagement of State resources at the expense of poverty stricken citizens reached its peak during the hosting of the 1980 Organization of Africa Unity Summit. Millions of dollars were spent on preparation for the summit during which cabinet ministers and senior public servants made fortunes out of the loan secured for the august gathering of Heads of State. The sum of Le100mn. about \$100mn. was budgeted for the conference but the government spent Le200mn. No explanation was made to the public for the double expenditure (Alie, 2000:30). All sections of society began to feel the impact heavily in the mid 1980s with social services dwindling and discontent mounting among mainly the youth and low-income families (Sesay, 1995:170).

Siaka Stevens handed over power to a hand picked successor, Joseph Saidu Momoh in November 1995. Unfortunately, Momoh like his predecessor could do no better and the country further deteriorated socially, politically and economically. The salary of teachers became a mere pittance under the austerity measures and accumulated for months as backlog. Students lost interest in school and some engaged themselves in petty trading and mining while others had nothing to do. Water supply in the city continued to be inadequate and the city became the darkest in the world due to frequent power cuts that could last at times for weeks on end (Reno, 1995:95). This had severe consequences on industry and production. A household survey in 1989 and 1990 indicated that 82% of the population lived below the poverty line (CSO, 1991). According to Fyle (1993:8) “ *there was a hopelessly drifting populace generally unaware of its rights and privileges, blaming the State for its troubles and ready to jump into unrest as a way of venting feelings of hostility at the economic hardship.*” As a face saving gesture, the government under increasing pressure organized a referendum in 1991 for a return to multi-party democracy in order to win donor support. However the RUF invasion started before the scheduled multi-party elections in 1992.

2.3 Profile of the economy

The economy of Sierra Leone is a typical third world economy with a very low growth rate since independence due partly to external market forces and mainly as a result of an institutionalized system of bribery and corruption coupled with a high level of mismanagement, as earlier mentioned. At independence and until about the mid-1970s, Sierra Leone enjoyed one of the highest growth rates in Sub-Sahara Africa, at 7.5% annually. The growth rate remained positive up to the early 1980s and thereby became negative for most of the years, reaching -8.1% by 1999 (World Bank: 2001). In Weeks (1992:41-51) view mismanagement is not the main cause of poor economic performance but that of external shock caused by a slump in primary commodity prices in the 1980s. Thus the World Bank and IMF SAP for economic reforms were premature and not necessary at the time. This may have worsened the country's economic woes. The economy depends mainly on mineral and agricultural resources. The pace of economic development is therefore determined by external factors, chiefly the demand for raw materials like diamond, gold, rutile bauxite, coffee and cocoa. The mining and manufacturing sectors together with a narrow wholesale and retail trade are foreign dominated as the indigene lack adequate capital to invest (Cleeve, 1997:1).

2.3.1 Effects of the war on the economy and on employment

The decade year war has had a negative effect on the dwindling resources of the country. Government was running a huge budget deficit within this period leading to a recommendation by creditors of a reduction in state employment in order to reduce the deficit (Reno, 1995:19). While the rebels looted about a \$250,000 in diamond and agricultural produce, the government of Sierra Leone remained starved of much needed revenue to run the state effectively (see table 2.1).

Table 2.1: GDP sectoral breakdown-value (Le.mn) + percentage by industrial origin at constant 1990/91 prices (1990-1999)

						Revises				Projection
	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (%)	82,602 45.5	58,432 36.3	57,874 38	64,067 39.8	66,245 43.1	67,570 48.7	69,664 47.9	69,724 59.8	65,393 55.7	65,733 58.4
I Industry (%)	34,887 19.2	57,003 35.4	45,245 29.7	50,988 31.7	39,625 25.5	30,912 22.3	32,480 22.3	17,431 14.9	19,815 16.9	18,712 16.6
Mining and Quarrying (%)	20,271 11.2	40,157 25	28,873 19	33,377 20.8	20,493 13.3	12,983 9.4	14,040 13.1	11,641 10	10,204 8	7,776 6.9
Manufacturing and Handicraft (%)	11,603 6.4	12,589 9.8	14,050 9.2	13,698 8.5	13,945 9.1	13,352 9.5	10,080 6.9	3,859 3.3	8,572 5.6	6,517 5.8
Electricity and Water Supply (%)	407 0.2	311 0.2	196 0.1	108 0.1	683 0.4	708 0.5	1,120 0.8	701 0.6	968 0.8	1,311 1.2
Construction (%)	2,606 1.4	3,945 2.5	2,127 1.4	3,805 2.4	4,143 2.7	4,059 2.9	2,240 1.5	1,230 1.1	2,107 1.8	3,107 2.8
Services (%)	59,716 32.6	40,665 25.3	43,121 28.3	38,858 24.2	41,368 26.9	33,354 24.1	35,647 24.5	24,352 20.9	27,082 23.1	24,638 21.9
Trade and Tourism (%)	29,165 16.1	21,507 13.4	24,540 16.1	22,103 13.2	23,694 15.4	16,727 12.1	16,406 11.3	10,305 8.8	11,329 9.6	10,042 8.9
Transport Storage & Communication (%)	16,419 9	9,802 6.1	9,498 6.2	8,254 5.1	7,354 4.8	5,293 3.8	9,871 6.8	7,976 6.8	8,193 7	6,329 5.6
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate (%)	5,801 3.2	2,001 1.2	2,107 1.4	2,257 1.4	4,381 2.8	4,789 3.5	3,244 2.2	1,878 1.6	1,936 1.6	2,008 1.8
Government Services (%)	6,123 0.9	6,637 0.4	5,814 0.8	5,233 0.6	5,065 0.6	5,047 1.1	3,742 1.6	2,586 1.4	3,396 1.9	3,271 2.9
Other Services (%)	1,649 0.9	717 0.4	1,161 0.8	1,011 0.6	873 0.6	1,498 1.1	2,324 1.6	1,607 1.4	2,229 1.9	3,027 2.7
Less Imported Financial Charges (%)	1,673 0.9	1,580 1	1,229 0.8	1,185 0.7	966 0.6	973 0.7	644 0.4	586 0.5	652 0.6	824 0.7
GDP (%)	181,624 100	160,859 100	152,332 100	160,332 100	153,849 100	138,680 100	145,549 100	116,656 100	117,487 100	112,485 100
Deflate by Official Exchange rate (period average mid-rate)	1,228	547,14	305,28	280,8	253,88	183,93	158,04	118,8	75,17	61,88

Source: Table 5.1 in Report of the Sierra Leone National Consultation on Women and Men in partnership for post conflict reconstruction p.186.

The year 1995 was a major turning point in the country's economy in the course of the war. In January 1995 an RUF attack in the southern provincial mining town of Mobimbi led to the closure of Sierra Rutile (Ltd.) and Sierra Leone Iron Ore and Metal Mining Company plants, the two companies mining rutile and bauxite respectively. This led to a further loss of tax revenue for the government to the tune of

\$12mn and more than 2,000 jobs. The two companies generated 15% of GDP and were responsible for 57% of official export earnings (Reno, 1995:20). After 1995 until the disarmament of the combatants in 2001, most economically active regions in the country were under the control of the RUF with the government dependent mainly on foreign aid and customs duty for her expenditures. During the rebel invasion of the city in 1999 at least eight factories were set ablaze leading to the loss of over 5,000 jobs (Ministry of Trade, Industry and Transport, 2000). GDP growth rate which was 1.2% per annum between 1980-1990 reduced drastically to -4.8 between 1990-1999 (ILO, 2001:27). The economy became constrained in fighting a war, servicing debts, balancing State budget and contending with high unemployment.

Table 2.2: GDP growth (Percentage annual change)

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
4.8	-8.0	-9.6	0.1	3.5	-26.6	4.8	-17.6	-0.8	-8.1	n.a

Source: Table 2-18 in African Development Indicators 2001, World Bank Africa Database.

There has been a significant reduction in the standard of living, leading to a massive brain drain unprecedented in the country's history with professionals leaving the country for greener pastures. This has severely depleted the human resources base of the country. Sierra Leone ranked last amongst the 174 countries surveyed globally; a position that has been maintained since then as indicated by the 2001 and 2002 reports.

2.3.2 Impact of war on youth employment

It is clear without any doubt that the war has destroyed the economy of Sierra Leone and has marginalized the young people who now have a bleak future. The marginal status of young people economically in the country has led to the invention of the phrase 'Youthman' meaning someone who does not have any economic independence because of the lack of opportunities within the system. Thus they are highly unemployed and inclusive of people well above the age usually associated with youth (Abdullah, 1999:18).

At an early age employment builds confidence in the individual as having a sense of belonging to the society. Longer time unemployment makes the person lose confidence in himself and the system as a whole. According to an employment survey (CSO, 2001) youth unemployment after the war stands at approximately 75%. This is a result of the disruption of life in the main economic regions of the country. Due to the unavailability of data especially on youth employment, sectoral and gender composition of this group of people cannot be analysed. According to the ILO (1996:58) the labour force participation rate of male youth is 85% whereas that of female youth is 42%. This is an indication that there is a major gender imbalance in employment outcomes in the country.

The closure of the rutile and iron ore mining companies in the Southern province as well as disruption of life in the diamond mining districts of Kono, Pujehun, Kenema and Bo in the Eastern and Southern provinces are contributing factors to the plight of the youth. Although the mining sector is financed mainly by direct foreign investment and is not a major form of formal sector employment, diamond mining was a major form of informal sector employment for the youth (Cleeve, 1997:89). The rich diamond deposit areas were not only mined out by the rebels to finance the war but they also planted land mines making these places unsafe for mining even after the war. Furthermore the youth are at present too traumatized to venture into these areas and prefer to stay in the cities despite being unemployed.

Youth employed in agriculture have been the most affected by the war. On the eve of the war, agriculture, which has a youth workforce, employed 70% of the population. Farmers abandoned their farmlands and went to relative safety in big towns. These young men are now reluctant to return to their farmlands because of the lack of social services in the rural areas. They cling on to the hope of finding jobs in the modern sector in the cities where they have become attracted to the basic social services lacking in the rural areas. Those who choose to return have a difficult task in starting farming due to lack of agricultural equipments, tools and seedlings.

Commerce has been a major employer after agriculture and was responsible for 17% of the employed labour force by 1990. The dominance of these two sectors is due to the simple reason that a greater proportion in these sectors are self-employed; the bulk of them underemployed or in disguised unemployment (Cleeve, 1997:89). This group of self employed mainly youth who had little faith in the banking system lost their wares and cash in the course of the war. The hope of resuscitating their economic livelihood through government and other forms of assistance seems very unlikely under the prevailing economic climate. A way out could be through education and training that can make them self-reliant and increase their prospects for employment.

CHAPTER 3: REBUILDING THE NATION-STATE AND THE ECONOMY AND RAISING EMPLOYABILITY: ARE THE STATE AND THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS UP TO THE CHALLENGES?

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the economic recovery programmes of the government and possibilities for social cohesion are analyzed. Education and training systems dating back to the pre-conflict era are examined to assess the impact on employability and the relevance to labour market demands.

3.2 The government in post-war Sierra Leone

Disarmament of combatants ended officially at the beginning of the year marking the end of the war under the leadership of President Ahmad Tejan Kabba. He later went on to win the presidential elections for a second five-year term. Given the battered state of the economy, the government has an enormous task in rebuilding the economy. The priorities of the government include poverty reduction, food security, tackling corruption and rapid economic development. In order to attain these the government in a Letter of Intent (IMF, 2002) outlines the policies it intends to implement for economic recovery, a summary of which is given below:

- Redirecting government economic actions to areas that promote poverty reduction and improve on the provision of services to poor people. This will include mainly educational, health, agricultural and resettlement needs.
- To enhance financial management control system by linking expenditure control to the accounting and commitment control system. The new system will be completely documented, allowing access to an increased number of staff. It will gradually be extended to cover line ministries and district administration.
- Containing inflation and increasing the gross foreign exchange reserves of the Central Bank. In this regard net bank credit to the government will be reduced considerably to about 1.0% while gross foreign exchange reserves are expected to increase to the value of 1.9 months of import cover.

- To reduce government cross debts with public enterprises as well as that of debts within various public enterprises.
- Expanding tax base by encouraging more economic activity. The trade system will be further liberalized. Excise duties will be removed from all imports except for tobacco, alcohol and petroleum products.
- To maintain a liberal foreign exchange regime linked to the foreign exchange auction as a premise of a market determined exchange rate. The Central Bank will have a limited role in its intervention primarily aimed at maintaining an orderly market and achieving its gross foreign exchange objectives.

The major challenge for the government is to harness the abundant natural resources to eradicate poverty and create decent employment for the people. In spite of the above policies economic recovery is far from been a reality. The bottom line is institutionalized corruption. Corruption seems to be a cankerworm that has eaten into the fabric of the Sierra Leonean society. Indeed it is like a national security problem that cannot be eradicated by the government alone. Monies budgeted for Ministries are not utilized for the intended purposes and there is no effective monitoring mechanism. The situation has become so alarming that international donors like the British government and the IMF have threatened to withhold further assistance to the country if government does not minimize corruption. The sad reality is that the government can finance development if not misused.

A deciding factor in post-war Sierra Leone is the role of the State as a tool for social cohesion. This does not mean that the State should be the sole agent but that it has to play a leading role. Rural peoples resentment of a distant government should be addressed in a bid to build a sustainable peace. In the words of the President “...*high unemployment, poverty, lack of social programmes for the youth and the failure of the judicial system killed loyalty and any sense of belonging to the state. All these created a deep-seated cynical attitude towards government, politics, politicians and the public administration apparatus*”(as in Alie, 2000:34). This is an indication of the awareness of the Head of State of the social ills that

led to State collapse. The question of whether the structure of the State is adequate to address the issue of social cohesion remains to be answered.

For a start government has to take full control of the geographical borders to claim sovereignty over her territory and to consolidate the fragile democracy. This is yet to happen with continual reliance on international peacekeepers. Weak political leadership and special interests on the part of government remains a problem. This stems from the fact that the Head of State lacks a political constituency as he hails from a minority tribe and heads a party dominated by a majority tribe. The government is plagued with infighting and self-seeking agenda at the expense of programmes aimed at consolidating peace. The State should groom institutions for the safeguard and respect of the rule of law, conflict management and peace building. These institutions include civil society, the police and the judiciary all of which neglected their role in the past (Davies, 2000). In addition the need for wider political participation through decentralization of power is eminent. The advantage is that locally expressed needs can easily filter into national programmes and contribute to making them more sustainable. Government's snail pace efforts in this direction is a lack of commitment of politicians and civil servants. It is indeed doubtful whether the government has the ability to take the State to safer shores. The country desperately needs a strong and astute leadership to tackle the ills of society. Although the present government has a strong mandate as was manifested in the elections, it seems to be politically incapable of holding the State as a social entity. This is necessary to safeguard the role of the State as a vanguard to creating employment opportunities for the people and as a tool for social cohesion.

3.3 Education and training systems in Sierra Leone

At independence in 1961, the literacy rate in Sierra Leone was 9% (Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL), 1961:2) and by 2000 it had barely increased to 15%. The youth unemployment problem can be partly attributed to the poor system of education and training. Two identifiable contributing factors to this performance are accessibility and relevance.

3.3.1 Accessibility

Many school age children do not have access to school or any form of training. Percentage of school-age children enrolled in primary school was 48%, with total secondary enrollment at 38% in 2000 (Global Coalition for Africa, 1999/2000:61).

Table 3.1: Primary and Secondary school enrollment

Projected Enrollment (000)	PRIMARY			SECONDARY		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Years						
1992/93	340.7	239.7	580.4	328.1	195.6	523.6
1993/94	350.5	246.6	597.1	340.3	103.0	543.4
1994/95	360.2	253.5	613.7	353.1	210.8	563.9
1995/96	370.6	260.7	631.4	366.4	218.9	585.3
1996/97	381.6	268.5	650.2	380.2	227.3	607.4
1997/98	393.1	276.6	669.6	394.5	236.0	630.5
1998/99	404.8	284.8	689.6	409.4	245.1	654.5
1999/00	418.6	294.5	713.2	424.9	254.5	679.4
2000/01	428.3	301.3	729.6	434.7	260.4	695.1
2001/02	438.2	308.3	746.5	444.7	266.4	711.1
2002/03	448.3	315.4	763.7	455.0	272.6	727.5
2003/04	458.7	322.7	781.4	465.5	278.9	744.3
2004/05	469.3	330.2	799.4	476.2	285.3	761.5

Source: Planning division, MYES

Education is expensive despite been subsidized by the government. Students drop out of school because of the cost of education in the form of textbooks, uniform, tuition, and training materials especially in the rural areas where 76% of the population live below the national poverty line (ILO, 2001:17). Secondary schools are mainly located in urban areas and big towns in rural areas, which make entrance to these schools very competitive. Young people in rural areas inaccessible to schools have to walk on foot for miles to attend school in big towns. The girl child is affected most when the crucial decision is to be made as to whom to send to school due to financial constraints (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Female education as a percentage of total school enrollment (2000)

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
45	39	20

Source: African Social and Economic Trends pp.64-66

The percentage of youth in educational institutions is very low, an indication of the problem of inaccessibility to education and training.

Table 3.3: Educational imbalances

	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
Primary: Pupil/Teacher Ratio	32.08	32.09	32.10	NA	32.01	32.00
Secondary: Pupil/Teacher Ratio	17.89	17.90	18.28	NA	18.22	18.24
Secondary Technical enrollment (as % of total secondary)	5.69	7.01	7.10	NA	7.15	7.16
Tertiary Natural and Applied Sciences enrollment (as % of total tertiary)	3.00	3.00	3.00	NA	3.01	3.01
Youth enrollment: Secondary (as % of total youth population)	37.61	36.89	36.44	NA	39.03	39.41
Youth enrollment: Tertiary (as % of total youth population)	29.23	28.84	28.65	NA	30.17	30.85

Source: Planning division, MYES

Technical and vocational education was looked upon by both parents and students as inferior, for those who are academically weak and for the poor. The attitude was that general education pays more than technical and vocational education as has been reflected for a long time in the pay structure in the civil service. University education is provided by three constituent colleges of the university of Sierra Leone, two of which are located in the city and the third in the Southern province but presently relocated in the city due to the war. Students have to reside in the city in order to acquire university education. This makes it inaccessible to some students in the rural areas who either do not have relatives in the city or cannot meet the cost of living and studying in the city.

Table 3.4: Full time students in undergraduate courses in the university*

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Male	1216	1303	1076	1163	1009	NA	981	920	1170
Female	350	323	293	300	210	NA	190	110	320
Total	1566	1626	1369	1463	1219	NA	1171	1030	1490

***Fourah Bay College only**

Source: University of Sierra Leone

3.3.2 Relevance

The relevance of the system of education and training to the world of work is questionable in Sierra Leone. There is no effective coordination between the labour market and the education and training systems. Starting from primary school, the system is intended to produce candidates who go on to the next level. Those who cannot make it either repeat or dropout of the school system. The school curricula have very little practical input. Thus students from rural areas where agriculture and mining are predominant are orientated to white-collar jobs instead of to the needs of the local setting. This problem continues through to university. There is little link between what is taught and the skills required in the labour market. Labour market information system is ineffective. Job vacancies are filled through personal connections and are hardly advertised which makes it difficult to ascertain adequate skill needs in the inefficient economy. However from the little information available employers demand graduates in the natural and applied sciences, human resources and accounting and finance, but the demand far exceeds the supply. Because of this acute shortage government has launched an 'operation return home' campaign; an appeal for the return of skilled Sierra Leoneans living abroad to help in reconstructing and rebuilding the country.

3.4 Education during the war

Education was severely affected during the decade long war, ranging from infrastructure, personnel and learning materials. The catastrophe that started in the provinces gradually spread over the entire country. Students, teachers and lecturers were captured and recruited by the rebels, signaling an end in the academic career of

some while some became overage of their class levels when the rebels released them years later. This led to a massive population movement leading to an uneven distribution of teachers and students in regions where educational services were available. This displaced population brought with them to the classroom the psychosocial trauma and shattered lives due to war. According to the 1992 census of schools and teachers (Department of Education, 1995: xii) the rate of educational enrolment declined rapidly with primary enrolment at 35% and secondary at 11%. This became the basis for the country to be ranked as the last in human development. The rebels from the bush lacked accommodation in the towns thereby using the schools for accommodation with no regards for its implications. It is estimated that 70% of educational infrastructure and facilities were destroyed with tens of thousands of children missing school (Wurie, 2001:161). Thus the absorbing capacity of remaining schools was overstretched beyond limit in an effort to accommodate displaced students. Educational materials became inadequate to cope with the pressure dampening the quality of education and the needs of thousands of school-age children went unmet, leading them to roam the streets. Educational expenditure within this period became half of what it used to be ten years earlier (Department of Education, 1996).

Table 3.5: Public Expenditure on Education (during the war)

Year	As a % of GNP	As a % of Govt. Expenditure
1990/91	1.4	13.3
1991/92	NA	NA
1992/93	NA	NA
1993/94	2.0	13.1
1994/95	3.12	16.91
1995/96	1.8	12.6
1996/97	1.49	12.60
1997/98	NA	NA
1998/99	1.32	11.20
1999/2000	1.35	11.71

Source: Human Development Report 2002, 2000, CSO.

Expenditure on education gradually decreased as indicated in above table and on average became lower than that of many West African countries (see table 3.6).

Table 3. 6: Educational Expenditure in some West African countries (1994-1997)

Country	As a % of GNP	As a % of government expenditure
Burkina Fasso	3.6	11.1
Ghana	4.2	19.9
Togo	4.5	24.6
Senegal	3.7	33.1
Gambia	4.9	21.2
Guinea	1.9	26.8
Mali	2.2	NA
Niger	2.3	13.0
Nigeria*	0.7	11.5
Liberia	NA	NA

*Central government only

Source: Human Development Report 2002, 2000.

Teachers became poorer and morale was low. Many left the country for safer places in neighbouring and western countries, a major setback for quality education and training in the country. By September 2000, 50% of pupils who had sat to the National Primary School Exams could not get access to secondary schools because of the destruction during the junta misrule and the 1999 invasion of the city by junta and rebel forces. Thus an estimated 17,000 teenage boys and girls went out of school (UNESCO, 1997).

3.5 The impact of education and training reforms on employability

The inefficiency of the education system led to a review culminating into the birth of a new education system in 1993 known as the 6-3-3-4 system (Department of Education, 1995). Primary School was reduced to 6 years with the introduction of pre-vocational subjects, secondary schooling to 6 years; the first 3 years in Junior Secondary School with compulsory technical and vocational subjects and at the end of the third year an external exam is taken to determine continuation either into Senior Secondary School (academic or technical stream) or in a Trade Center for 3 years. An external exam is again sat to at the end of the third year of Senior Secondary School. The last 4 years is either spent in college or a Polytechnic. Successful students in the academic streams proceed to college, and those in technical streams to a Polytechnic while those who do not make the grade in the exams enter Technical/Vocational institutions.

So far the reforms in the education system at various levels have had limited effect in addressing youth employability. Government is the main institution for the provision of education and training in the country. Unfortunately, the year of the inception of the 6-3-3-4 system was the same year the government signed with the IMF and the World Bank to adopt the SAP in a bid to reverse the deteriorating economic trends in the country. One of the conditions of the SAP was the removal of government subsidy on post-primary education. Not much financial commitment has been made to technical/vocational education as emphasized in the 6-3-3-4 system.

Table 3.7: Budgetary allocations to Education and Tech/Voc.1995/2002(Le)

Year	Education	Tech/Voc	Budget on Tec/Voc education (%)
1995/96	16,598,297,102.00	536,247,943.00	3.23
1996/97	33,879,887,394.00	2,099,423,024.00	6.11
1997/98	15,749,266,865.00	922,421,807.00	5.86
1998/99	48,073,797,960.00	2,600,311,637.00	5.41
1999/2000	58,656,311,749.00	2,921,452,549.00	4.98
2000/2001	60,241,800,420.00	3,102,581,220.00	5.1
2001/2002	61,948,650,112.00	3,120,369,774.00	5.0

Source: GOSL, MYES, 2002.

To support and uphold the expansion of technical education and training, 5 Polytechnic institutions were established by an Act of Parliament in August 2001 (GOSL, 2001). The lack of adequate infrastructure and trained and qualified staff are key amongst the numerous problems plaguing these infant institutions. Frequent power cuts is also a big obstacle for practical training in mechanical, automobile and woodwork workshops where heavy machines are used. Parents, staff and pupils still view entry into technical and vocational education as mediocre.

Two of the three constituent colleges of the University of Sierra Leone, Njala University College and Fourah Bay College introduced Access Courses in 2000 to alleviate the post-secondary school dropout rate of youth. It is ridiculous to note that the cost of the programme; Le800, 000, approximately \$400 (US) is twenty times the average monthly income in Sierra Leone. Only the children of well to do families are benefiting from the programme. People see it as a means of raising funds by the cash strapped colleges instead of as a way of enhancing youth employability through

expanding tertiary education. The new system is yet to make any meaningful contribution to youth employability, as was the case with the old system. The ILO observes that developing the potential of youth as human capital has been seriously hampered in recent times in developing countries through cut in education budgets and the introduction of cost recovery measures for social services. These reforms have negative effects especially at the lower level of the education strata resulting in high drop-out and increased illiteracy rates. *“But even if the youth reach higher levels of the pyramid, reflecting an advanced level of educational achievement, their prospects may be far less glamorous than expected. They may well find that their knowledge and skills are not appreciated in the labour market, as the relevance of much of their education and training is widely perceived as limited”*(Kanyenze.et.al, 2000:24). I hold a different view with regards the Sierra Leonean case. In my opinion, an improvement in education and training with emphasis on the relevance to labour market needs as mentioned earlier will have positive effects on all fronts especially in the area of employment opportunities. Indeed this is the state of government and education system. Any programme focusing on youth will assume that the State is a strong one.

CHAPTER 4: ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD: A PRESENTATION OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers various youth employment and skills formation programmes with background information on youth employment. An assessment is made to throw light on the extent of the effectiveness and sustainability of the programmes.

4.2 Employment situation of youth within a policy framework

Quantitative data on employment generally and in particular for the youth in Sierra Leone is hardly available. However a survey by the CSO in the early 1990s put the unemployment figures at 28% with youth unemployment constituting 55% of the total unemployment figures. This figure is considered to have increased rapidly in the post-war period due to the declining economic trends. Unemployment and its attendant social impact as earlier stated is a major problem for the youth. Young men and women are without jobs or any reliable source of income. In addition they lack the relevant skills that could increase their chances in an economy with very little opportunities. At this crucial stage of the nation's history, the government should be focusing on enhancing employability of the youth, as they are the future of the country. The rhetoric of 'Future Leaders' by politicians should be transformed into concrete policies and programmes to arm young people with skills pertinent to the country's development and self-actualization. Many of the youth are inexperienced and cannot be employed in jobs requiring expertise and relevant work experience. This surely excludes them at present from any form of decent employment, relegating most of them to informal jobs with poor working conditions. The youth have very little access to education and training which has become a barrier to work. Enhancing employability through education and training in order to increase employment opportunities for the youth cannot be overemphasized in the prevailing circumstances.

Unfortunately the country does not have an employment policy. It is very recently that the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Social Security set up a task force to draft a policy document. However in a Draft Revised National Youth

Development Policy (Braima, 2001) it is indicated that employment is crucial to the positive contribution of youth to nation-building and emphasizes that the Ministry should endeavour:

- To promote quality training through on the job training.
- To provide access to sustainable livelihood for the youth through gainful employment in and out of the public sector.
- To provide employment and supervise, monitor and evaluate job placement and holiday jobs for youth through the relevant ministries.

The ministry is incapacitated by a very low demand for labour in the economy, lack of qualified personnel and inadequate flow of information from other ministries and the private sector. Economic reform in the post-war era is yet to have any meaningful effect on employment. It should be realized that employment generation cannot go without economic growth. Weak administrative capacity inhibits economic growth. The government should be able to create a conducive economic environment in order to accelerate growth. This can be enhanced through a stable macro-economic framework, a pathway to investment thereby creating jobs and ultimately economic growth. An enabling environment free of institutional bottlenecks and political stability is a necessary condition.

4.3 Employment and skills acquisition programmes

Meaningful programmes for youth development were initiated as late as 1998 through the collaboration between MYES, International Organizations and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). According to the Ministry (MYES, 2000) these programmes are geared towards addressing the problems of the youth in a way that young people can put their great potential into positive use for them to enjoy a sustainable quality of life through skill acquisition and decent employment. Investing in young people will lead to greater social and political stability. Targeting young women and men to benefit from programmes aimed at employment creation, education and training for skill development is socially and politically expedient.

The fundamental focus of rehabilitation of the youth especially the ex-combatants is to equip them with productive skills and options for employment as effective means

to a successful transition to civilian and normal life. Employment and skills acquisition programmes are therefore intended to promote the growth and development of the informal sector to establish the foundation for transformation to the formal sector. Such transformation and expansion from informal to formal sector promotes the capacity of the private sector to act as an engine for economic growth thereby reducing the dependence on inadequate government resources and insufficient assistance from donors. It will further contribute to broadening economic opportunity base for the youth, hence increasing their stake in the economy (National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR), 2000).

4.3.1 Youth Micro-Enterprise/Credit Scheme

This programme was established by the MYES in 1998 in a bid to empower the youth. It targeted the western area and some districts headquarter towns. Youth organizations were given financial, material and technical assistance under either the micro-enterprise or the micro-credit scheme. The direct recipients of the micro-enterprise support were between 300 and 350 youth from 20 youth groups in the western area. Under the micro-credit support scheme some 7 youth organizations amongst which the direct beneficiaries were 1000 youth, who were given soft loans to undertake skills training in order to increase the chances for job opportunities in Freetown, Port Loko, Bo, Kenema and Lungi. About 30% of them are now in gainful employment.

4.3.2 Youth in Crisis Project (YCP)

The project was launched in June 1998 by the MYES in collaboration with other line ministries and NGOs, with financial support from the World Bank. At the initial stage the implementing partners; MYES, Action Aid (SL), UNICEF and Conciliation Resources initiated the idea of carrying out an in-depth consultation process on the situation of the youth. The ultimate aim was to design a strategic framework that will enable the youth acquire education and skills necessary for them to realize their potential and eventually attain meaningful livelihoods. After effective consultations by the partners pilot projects were identified in the areas of skill development and

employment, education, recreation, health education and sensitization. These specific youth projects were then implemented.

4.3.3 Youth Reintegration, Training and Education for Peace Project (YRTEP)

The YRTEP was launched in 2000 by the Office of Transition International (OTI) /United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with World Vision (SL), Management Systems International (MSI), NCDDR and MYES as implementing partners. It is a non-formal education approach that integrates reintegration orientation and counseling, life-skills training, vocational counseling, agricultural skills development, civil education and functional literacy training. The programme has a two-pronged approach, targeting reintegration of communities devastated by the war and at the same time focusing on providing remedial education for youth who were unfortunate to have been by-passed by formal schooling for nearly ten years. Education for nation building is the second phase of the programme targeting public and private sector leaders through non-formal education. The training programme for each participant lasts for about a year and comprises five modules covering literacy and numeracy, conflict resolution, agriculture, health and civic participation, all within the framework of self-reliance. A week training course is conducted for learning facilitators from the various districts and the western area. Gender balance is a major consideration through the use of surveys conducted from time to time. Between 2000 and 2002; 47,000 war-affected youth and ex-combatants have participated in YRTEP (see Table 4.1)

Table 4.1: Beneficiaries of YRTEP

Location	Learning Facilitators	Participants	Total
Northern Region	1,040	8,400	9,440
Southern Region	1,000	10,000	11,000
Eastern Region	1,060	8,600	9,660
Western Area	1,320	13,200	14,520
Total	4,420	40,200	44,620**

** This number does not indicate the groups that have been discontinued due to displaced populations and other unforeseen circumstances. The monitors estimate an 8-10% attrition rate. Each group consists of 20 participants and two Learning

Facilitators. Participants are ex-combatants and war-affected youth. Approximately 18% of programme participants are officially discharged ex-combatants with DDR ex-combatant numbers, but a substantial number of participants are without DDR ex-combatant numbers admit to participating in the fighting.

Source: USAID/OTI: Sierra Leone Report.p3.

4.3.4 Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP)

This programme, which is geared towards increasing self-reliance and economic development through the acquisition of business skills, was launched in February 2002, with funds provided by OTI and implemented by Action Aid (SL). The workshops targeted ex-combatants and war-affected youth in different parts of the country. After the completion of the first workshop, which lasted for two weeks, a network association EXCEL was formed by the participants to serve as a coordinating and supporting body. At present this body is working on a proposal on livestock restocking and food production, which will later be implemented if funds are secured from the European Union or Action Aid (SL).

4.4 Social and psychological rehabilitation

Anybody who was in Sierra Leone during the course of the war has in one form or another suffered from trauma including the author of this piece of work. During the rebel siege on the city horror incidents like amputation of limbs and arms and the setting of people ablaze are hard to overcome. According to Edward Nahim, (HRW, 2000b) the country's only psychiatrist *"the war will continue in peoples minds for decades and generations. Addressing only material restoration and physical needs of the populace will continue to hurt their shattered emotional worlds. This will leave unaddressed the broken and shattered moral and spiritual effects of the war."*

4.4.1 Skills Training and Employment Generation (STEG)

This programme is geared towards complementing the gains made by YRTEP by supporting social rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants and war affected youth through various community-based strategies. These include skills development, employment, cooperation, dialogue and psychological support. The overall aim is to enhance life skills and promote social reintegration between former young fighters

and members of local community through working together in civil works project. USAID finances and manages the project with financial contribution from UNDP and implemented by the Catholic Children's Fund. With the cooperation of the participants civic work projects were implemented as was planned in four communities in Koinadugu district, northern Sierra Leone. Young ex-combatants of Fadugu were given psychological training as a foundation to start participation in civic works. A four-kilometer stretch of road was rehabilitated by the youth and a bridge was constructed as part of the road rehabilitation project. In Kabala area consultations were made with the Kabala Water Works in the Ministry of Energy and Power to rehabilitate the source of the spring water. It is expected that when the project is accomplished it will benefit about 10,000 residents. Funding is still sort to accomplish the project. Psychological training was also provided for the youth in six communities in Bombali District between March and June of this year.

4.4.2 Skills Training and Employment Promotion (STEP)

Also concerned mainly with social rehabilitation and reintegration of war-affected youth in the Eastern and Southern parts of the country. World Vision (SL) is the implementing NGO with financial support from USAID. STEP embarked on public works projects with priority for road and bridge rehabilitation. Attention was also paid to projects that have the potential of generating immediate economic benefits to participants such as markets, training centers and roads to farms and markets. The ongoing projects are the rehabilitation of Ngiehun Community Center and a skills training center in Guala. Other projects that await implementation due to the unavailability of funds are the rehabilitation of the Bunumbu-Manowa road that links Peje-West and Peje Bongre Chiefdoms in Kailahun District. Funds are also eagerly awaited from the NCDDR for a skills training center that will provide training for 112 youth in carpentry/joinery, construction/masonry, blacksmithing and tailoring in Koribondo, Southern Sierra Leone.

4.5 Evaluation of the programmes

The problem of the youth is multifarious and diverse. Any attempt at tackling them has to be holistic and coordinated. The various programmes aimed at enhancing youth

employability and employment are a major step for youth development in the country if only they can be sustained. Though not far reaching, the training programmes have improved social relationship between young ex-combatants and youth affected by the war, who before now had a negative impression about the ex-combatants. Such a gap between young people would not have augured well for the future development and prosperity of the country. According to the Principal of the Intermediate Technology Transfer Center, (USAID/OTI, 2002:3) in Freetown, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 99 participants that recently concluded a five-module course are ex-combatants. They confessed that they felt ashamed to associate with other people before the training but that YRTEP has helped in shaping their behaviour and reintegration into society through the sponsorship provided for them to undertake the training. They now feel confident to interact with other people after the training.

Not much emphasis is made at social and psychological rehabilitation in the various programmes been implemented. This has counted negatively on the effectiveness of the programmes. Ex-combatants hardly submit to codes of conduct in training institutions and many of them leave early to waste time in drug spots. Infact, many of them are attracted to the programmes because of the monthly allowances. When allowances are paid at the beginning of the month, they disappear from training only to wait for information about the next payment of allowances. Delay in the payment of such money looms disaster with threats of either holding paymasters to ransom or burning of training centers. These are people who are used to free money through the barrel of the gun. Trainers can hardly do anything about such unfortunate circumstances. A similar situation occurred in Mozambique. Due to the evident absence of psychological rehabilitation for the bulk of the victims of the 16 year war, the healing process has been slow and painful with communities developing their own coping strategies when very little was forthcoming from the government (Castelo-Branco, 1999:33). Part of the problem is that the essence of acquiring the training and skills for their future survival is not adequately put to most of them by letting them go first through psychological rehabilitation.

The lack of coordination between the various programmes is a problem. Training in few trades becomes saturated with very little employment opportunity for trainees. Training for young men is concentrated in carpentry, auto-repairs, bricklaying and welding and for women; hairdressing, gara-tie and dying, soap making and tailoring. The supply in these trades far exceeds the demand and hence a great need for diversification into other trades so as to increase opportunities for trainees. Attempts at self-employment are often met with financial constraints to start own business. Packages given in the form of cash after training by some programmes is inadequate to buy tools, equipment and material in an impoverished country.

Training provided by technical and vocational institutions has been disappointing. No proper screening is done to ascertain the academic background of trainees. They are enrolled into levels above their capabilities because of the high fees and related charges paid to the training institutions by the financing organizations of the training programmes. On average youth sponsored under the rehabilitation and reintegration scheme is charged five times more than other students enrolled for the same course in a technical or vocational institution. The institutions see it as an opportunity to raise funds to upgrade and improve on their infrastructure. The trainees on the other hand can hardly cope with the inflexible courses and only a few go through the training successfully. The allowances keep them interested in the training. According to Nubler (1997:19) paying training allowance may attract the wrong people who are not in high spirit for the programme, which may dampen the effectiveness of the training.

The rate of repayment of the loans in micro-credit schemes is very low, about 30% of loans between 1998-2000, thereby deterring the expansion of the scheme. The problem has been that many of the recipients do not have business acumen to utilize the funds meaningfully, inspite of small-scale enterprise workshops organized by the youth organizations. The youth see the scheme as government funds distributed to them as compensation for losses suffered due to the war. Furthermore the youth have their project proposals prepared by other people with the beneficiaries having no knowledge in the enterprise they want to start. Some presented proposals for fishing projects because they thought they could get funding for it, when in fact they had no

idea about fishing. Nubler (1997,19) notes that programmes for small enterprise development should attract people who have motivation to start their own business.

The training programmes to a large extent are gender stereotype. Training designed for women are mainly in the lowly paid and less considered trades in the country such as soap making, gara-tie-dying, food processing and tailoring. The ILO (1998:37) points out that such shortcomings in programmes can lead to the exclusion of women in the more viable sectors of economic life. Furthermore funding is mainly through foreign assistance with little input from within in the form of land for building training centers and other local input. The problem however is that when there is a lull in donor support due to political or other reasons, programmes are not completed as scheduled. Some are implemented on a piecemeal basis because of the lack of funds. With the exception of YRTEP that has provided training for more than 40,000 people, the scope of the other training provided is narrow in a country with a youthful population.

It is important to note that there is a limit to skills acquisition by youth leading to better jobs, about 60%. Beyond that, employment opportunities depend on aggregate demand. Macro-economic factors are important in creating sustained employment opportunities. There should be training interventions that should be mainly demand-driven (Levine and Mangundhla, 2000: 42). Increase in the supply of skilled labour does not in any way stimulate demand. Training in vocational skills for wage employment in the formal sector in many developing countries has led to high unemployment and low human utilization rates without recourse to other factors. Therefore training of ex-combatants for direct employment should be based on labour market studies and primarily demand driven (Nubler, 1997:18). The programmes are good but have not gone beyond the surface in dealing with the problem. There is need to develop an intervention package; in developing which the country can benefit from other countries.

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM: CAN SIERRA LEONE LEARN FROM OTHER EXPERIENCES?

5.1 Introduction

This chapter forms the crux of the study by examining youth reintegration programmes in Uganda and South Africa, countries that have gone through similar experience. Lessons are drawn from the strengths and weaknesses of their programmes.

5.2 The case of Uganda

In a study by Muhumuza and Poole (1997) on the various training, employment and life skills programmes for ex-combatants and war affected youth in Uganda, there are various lessons that could be learnt by other countries emerging from armed conflict. The authors base their report on experiences from other countries in Asia, Central America and Africa that have been affected by war. A case study method of selected reintegration programmes is used wherein strategies, services and programmes adopted by various institutions to undertake life skills and vocational training as well as employment generation through the provision of credit; for conflict affected youth and ex-combatants are used.

After gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1962, Uganda experienced economic and social boom under the regime of Milton Obote. Nearly a decade later the country was thrown into chaos after a military coup d'etat that brought Idi Amin to power in 1971. Earlier economic and social achievements by the previous government were lost as the economy collapsed due to a drastic fall in GDP by 25%, exports by 60%, imports by at least 50% and inflation rates reaching an all time high of over 200%. This period marked the dawn of internal conflict and lawlessness in the country that lasted for two decades. The country's population is youthful with 75% of the country's 16.7 million people under the age of 30.

Unemployment rate is high among the youth due to disruption of agriculture by the war. This sector employs 70% of the youth. The country's SAP is another

contributing factor to the joblessness of the young people. The agricultural sector employs mainly youth without formal education who are also employed in the construction sector. However these sectors do not provide decent employment for the youth, as the wages are low. Educated youth prefer wage employment in the formal sector in urban areas. This has resulted in high rural-urban migration in search of jobs, which are not available. Only a few eventually succeed in getting the required jobs. Majority of them end up in lowly paid jobs in the urban areas. Those employed in the informal sector in the urban areas are lowly paid and because of the lack of capital, they can hardly start their own business. They end up as apprentices with low remuneration in comparison to experience and older counterparts. Young women are the worst affected as they are poorly remunerated for equal work in comparison to young men.

The level of youth education in Uganda is very low, the reason for high incidence of youth employment in the agricultural sector. By 1989 for instance less than 70% of children aged between 6-14 years were attending school. This is even worse for regions with on-going conflict where the education of young people has been seriously affected by the conflict. The various fighting factions recruited the youth within their rank and file either forcefully or voluntarily due to their deplorable condition as orphans. These young fighters were very active as spies, information gatherers and messengers. The youth have suffered a lot for the better part of their youthful life from violence in various forms. This has led to disability of some losing limbs, ears and private parts. The youth also suffer from emotional disabilities brought about due to atrocities such as rape; mutilation, displacement and killing of loved ones in their presence. The worst affected are the youth who actually participated in carrying out these atrocities. They remain haunted by their past deeds. A bitter experience that is traumatizing to them is separation from their families and loved ones. Some will have to grow without their parents who have been killed in the cause of the war.

5.2.1 Reintegration programmes

It was expected that by 1997 about 45,000 soldiers mostly young fighters would have been demobilized to be reintegrated into civil society. A Veterans' Assistance Board

(UVAB) was established in 1992 by the government to help in formulating and coordinating government programmes for the smooth transition of the veterans into civilian life. Thus, in line with other development partners, a menu of different social and economic reintegration programmes were made available to the ex-combatants and conflict-affected youth. This includes the following broad classifications:

1. Agriculture and Food Security measures.
2. Public Works programme.
3. Formal Education, Vocational Training and Small Enterprise Development programme.
4. Social reintegration.
5. Special programmes.

5.2.2 Agriculture and Food Security measures

(a). The Demobilized Veterans' Reintegration Project (DVRP) was a two year project (1996-98) funded by USAID and implemented by Africare, targeting female veterans, wives of veterans and orphans of veterans in the Kasese and Kabarole districts. A thousand demobilized soldiers were targeted to benefit from production, processing and marketing of agricultural products on a small-scale. An initial step was taken through enrollment in Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance for training and the acquisition of improved production technologies. Assistance was made for access to credit in order to finance small-scale projects that could eventually generate capital. In the first year, Africare provided inputs in the form of seedlings and technology and the participants were expected to take over the responsibility the following year.

(b). The Uganda Demobilization and Reintegration Project (UDRP) which lasted for two years (1994-96) was funded by USAID and implemented by Appropriate Technology International (Uganda) ATU in the Lira, Apac, Soriti and Kotido areas. Agricultural technology in the form of hand operated oil seed presses and credit programmes was the focus of the project. High oil content sunflower seeds were also provided to feed the presses. Training in maintenance and repair of the presses formed part of the programme.

(c). Another programme in the same vein was the Veterans' Integration Component (VIC) implemented by CARE in the Nebbi and Arua districts spanning two years. It

was intended to provide agricultural and rural enterprise training for ex-combatants and their families.

5.2.3 Public Works programme

The Feeder Roads Veterans' Project was implemented by the Ministry of Local Government with funds from *Kreditanstalt Für Wiederaufbau* (KfW) of Germany to the tune of DM 5 million to upgrade feeder roads in ten districts in the east of the country between 1995-97. The project provided employment and training for over 1,500 ex-combatants on the 600km stretch of feeder roads.

5.2.4 Formal Education, Vocational Training and Small Enterprise Development programmes

(a). The Enhanced Education and Training Programme (EETP) was financed by UVAB to provide vocational training, practical skills development and formal education to young ex-combatants. It was an extensive project, which benefited about 2,810 youth by the end of 1996 in various trades such as carpentry and joinery, tailoring, motor vehicle mechanics, building and concrete practice, and welding and metal fabrication. Others received training in some aspects of agriculture, food production and home economics. The trainees were enthusiastic about training received, as military training in the past had never prepared them for civilian life. Some were able to start their own business after the training. A major constraint however was the lack of tools to start life after training. It was also realized that the training was basic lasting for about six months as compared to most vocational training, which lasts for 2 years. The trainers had not been provided with the required training to cope with people used to military discipline and way of life.

(b). A local NGO The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) implemented the programme for the training of trainers in conflict prevention, management and resolution. Other life skills training acquired included community development, office management and decision-making. The programme indirectly targeted the youth through the training of influential people in society; mainly women such as lawyers, police officers, teachers, trade union leaders, journalists, NGO workers, community leaders, government representatives, and student leaders. Life skills training were

given to them and they were encouraged to pass on the acquired skills to their community members in which they live and work.

(c). The Gulu Vocational and Community Centre was established by Jamii Ya Kupatanisha (JYAK) to provide vocational training and peace education for youth in order to develop them into responsible citizens. Eventually they were expected to become economically independent and to make the community self-reliant. Training was provided in carpentry, welding, building and concrete practice, motor vehicle mechanics and metal works, typing and office management. Between 1991 and 95, 360 youth completed the training programme. It was however realized that they should incorporate peace education into the programme.

(d). The Ministry of Gender and Community Development in partnership with the Gulu District Administrative Department of Community Services implemented the training programme to enhance employment of youth affected by the war. The training, which was in the form of workshops (3-4 days) between 1993-96, included entrepreneurial skills, project design and management. Life skills in the form of HIV/AIDS education and counseling formed part of the training. A major weakness of the programme was its gender insensitivity. Out of the 150 trainees only 31 were women. Furthermore it used the top-bottom approach in the planning process thereby excluding the participants.

5.2.5 Social Reintegration

A social, political and economic reintegration programme for veterans and their wives was implemented between 1996-98 by Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (VOCA). The project affected 16 districts and was aimed at providing skills and resources for the families to be able to establish productive and sustainable businesses for their livelihood. Training was initially provided for trainers who in turn trained the veterans and civilians in business skills and project development. There were veterans' representatives in each of the districts under consideration to provide support to individuals. Approved business plans were subject to further assistance in the form of technical support, production and marketing. Life skills training in the form of nationalism, living with other people and forgiveness and reconciliation formed part of the training. Trauma therapy counseling was incorporated into the

programme due to the fact that the trainees had been traumatized by the war. The manual skills acquired in various trades proved to be very useful as the recipients were lowly educated. A major constraint was the availability of funds and tools for trainees to start their own business after the training. However a revolving loan scheme was established to alleviate the situation.

5.2.6 Special programmes

(a). JYAK in a bid to promote peace provided educational training to community leaders in peace and reconciliation. It also organized youth exchange visits between various communities in order to remove the negative perception held by various groups against each other that sometimes led to violent conflicts.

(b). In the views of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), peace and community development have a relationship. MCC is of the belief that as long as young people are gainfully employed they cannot be target for military recruitment. The committee instituted youth exchange programmes aimed at bridging tribal gaps and organized peace discussions with community leaders and other stakeholders in society in the role of conflict, its prevention and management. In furtherance of its objectives, MCC recruited peace volunteers who are also skilled in business, appropriate technology, agro-forestry and food processing from America. They provided training for various communities such as Soroti and Rukungiri districts where women received training in business management and adult literacy and peace education, agro-forestry health-care and food processing.

5.2.7 Assessment of training programmes

The training, employment and life skills programmes were quite successful but not without shortcomings.

Strengths

- At the planning stage the enthusiasm and willingness of the recipients of various programmes was quite remarkable coupled with the support of the government and other implementing partners. It is worthwhile to note the

efficient manner in which the UVAB as a government agency implemented the programme. Most of the skills taught in agriculture became very marketable in a country with fertile land and a rich climate for agriculture. Conflict affected youth who chose rice growing, horticulture and produce buying have been quite successful and those in other areas have been able to find employment.

- Life skills training in the form of trauma counseling through therapy and traditional methods have been quite helpful to traumatized youth. Many former young fighters no longer have nightmares.
- In order to assess the success of the programmes UVAB set up a database to do socio-economic monitoring of the youth. This can also be useful for future benefits for trainees.

Weaknesses

- The main weakness was the lack of resources to undertake the programmes. Uganda depended on foreign donor support, which was not forthcoming some of the time leading to the collapse of some programmes.
- Some programmes did not involve the youth in the planning process leading to the wrong type of training, which was not useful to the local environment. Some conflict-affected youth for instance received training as electricians when there was no electricity in their district.
- The communities were not adequately sensitized about the reintegration programmes. For instance people usually think that psychosocial trauma therapy is only for crazy people. If the community is not sensitized about the suffering of the youth the community will tend to mock and isolate them further deepening the psychosocial trauma.
- Planning did not accommodate the different needs of every youth and were gender insensitive. For example only 20% of the Gulu District Administration training programme were female.
- The length of training was short for most programmes ranging between a few weeks and six months. The trainees complained about it and UVAB also

realized that six months was too short and that only basic and elementary skills could be taught and learned.

- Trainers were not adequately orientated to the training programmes and the type of people benefiting from the training.
- There was no pre-discharge counseling as well. Many of the ex-combatants were not adapted to civilian way of life and could hardly succumb to civilian leadership and work methods taught during the training.
- Despite the fact that a number of trainees were successfully reintegrated, quite a number are still unemployed. In a number of instances the programmes focused too much on skills training and little on employment creation.

5.2.8 Lessons

- The success of programmes implemented to provide training, life-skills and employment depends not only on the availability of funds but mainly on the cooperation and support of the government and the trainees who are the direct beneficiaries. The target group, the youth should be supportive and willing to undertake the programme. Furthermore there should be the political will of the government. This does not necessarily mean only those at the top, but at all levels of government decision-making that directly and indirectly affect the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programmes. The local community and family members of trainees should also be enthusiastic about the projects to be undertaken in their localities. If support from these stakeholders is lukewarm, projects are bound to fail.
- The life skills component of the training should not be underestimated. It helps ex-combatants and war-affected youth to cope with the changing environment. Through life skills training, trainees should be orientated to know that conflict is part of life and that no matter the pain and atrocities there is need for reconciliation to heal the wounds of war. This should be handled tactfully through peace education. It may also yield dividend in the long run if peace education is incorporated into school curricula at various levels of the education system. Where possible life skills training should be integrated with

technical programmes so that the trainees can attach importance to it. The trainers should not make that part of the training examinable. The rationale is for trainees not to forget about it after passing the exams, as it is part of their life.

- The education and training of trainers as a separate programme goes a long way to equip and prepare them well to undertake the training of trainees. Such training programmes should not be ad-hoc in nature but should be given sufficient time and undertaken by experts in various fields under consideration. It prepares the minds of the trainers and gives them confidence and increase their morale when teaching trainees.
- Programme implementers should involve trainees in the planning process. They should also take the extra mile to assist trainees acquire jobs after training. This could take the form of employment promotion opportunities for the youth through recommendation and reference letters to employers. This could increase their chances of securing jobs. Another way out is by directly approaching employers and appealing to them to employ youth who have gone through the required training for the available jobs.
- Trauma counseling of young ex-combatants is crucial for their survival and living meaningful lives in the future. They need the attention of specialist trauma healers if they are to benefit from training programmes. It is therapy for confidence building and the healing of emotional wounds inflicted in the course of the war.
- Training programmes should be gender sensitive. Women as a group suffer a lot during conflict. Not only should they be part of mainstream vocational training programmes, but also specific programmes are to be designed to provide training for women and young girls. Where possible at the initial stage trainers should be mainly women to reduce the fear the young girls who have been victims of rape may have for men.

5.3 The case of South Africa

Lobner (1997) focuses his study on life skills training for the world of work, which he considers crucial for countries emerging from armed conflict. Like the Uganda case,

the author highlights the role of life skills training in integrating people emerging out of conflict. It is not a substitute but a complement to technical training. It develops peoples potential and helps towards reconstruction of communities.

The conflict in South Africa dates back to the 17th century when Dutch and British settlers instituted an apartheid system of government in the country. This was reinforced in the 1950s and 1960s through legislation, pushing black people to the margin of society in their fatherland. Discrimination against blacks was manifested in all facets of life: economic, social as well as political. They were restricted to homelands, which were not recognized outside South Africa and had to carry passes, with white settlements as no go areas for them. The climax of the conflict witnessed the banning of all groups opposed to apartheid. This included mainly the African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The bulk of the core members of these political organizations operated in exile. Uprisings against the apartheid regime were crushed violently as was the case of the 1976 Soweto massacre and the township protects in the mid-1980s. This state of affairs left a greater proportion of blacks especially the youth uneducated as schooling was interrupted due to the protects and the draconian laws of apartheid. Intra-racial conflicts also escalated in the course of the struggle; which became another recipe for violent deaths. There were 20,135 reported murders in 1992. Though the apartheid regime was eventually dismantled with the first multi-racial elections in 1994, the violence continued throughout the length and breadth of the country. Thus decades of violent conflict has left the country with an enormous task with high unemployment amidst low educational backgrounds. The lack of opportunities for these people makes the situation in the country volatile and a recipe for further unrest.

5.3.1 Aspects of life skills under consideration

“Without life skills, people lack a vision and the management skills to implement this vision” (Ibid: 10). Four components are examined; a summary of which is given:

5.3.2 Orientation about the World of Work

Young people lack the vision about career paths because of limited opportunities during the years of conflict. Employment opportunities are very low for young blacks with a mere 1-2 percent getting formal employment. There is the need for guidance and counseling for them to be aware of the reality in their environment and for them to adjust accordingly. Programme implementers include the Departments of Labour and Education, Career Research and Information Centre (CRIC), Lead the Field Africa, and the Institute for Race Relations. Young people are orientated about the world of work through assistance in focusing on career development and its requirements, steps in applying for a job, coping with unemployment and trade union relations. It was realized that helping young people achieve their expectations in life could reduce their frustration. The counseling was done indirectly by training trainers who were then expected to reach out to their communities. This was due to the cost involved in individual contacts. Young people were very receptive to the training due to the realization that it was a necessity to the world of work. It was recommended that the programme be extended to cover greater number of young people and that the orientation should also include communication skills and other requirements to increase job prospects.

5.3.3 Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)

This programme is essential for young adult black South Africans who have been bypassed by formal education in order to prepare them mentally to be able to cope with technical training. It is the opinion of the implementers that literacy in more than one language increases the efficiency of the trainee. Basic education in literacy, reproductive health, violence, sexual relationships, street law, basic health and nutrition are therefore included in the outline of orientation courses. Numeracy, practical skills and life skills form the highlights of ABET programmes to enhance an integrated learning approach. The intention is the inclusion of life-skills in the core training programme so that aspects such as the right of citizens, State welfare (pensions and the like) and elementary management can be grasped. Thus ABET is incorporated into various levels of the National Qualifications Framework, eventually contributing to the General Education and Training Certificate of the adult learners.

The National Literacy Cooperation formed between 1984-86, is a consortium of about 120 NGOs, which is the forum for them to discuss development in programme implementation and related issues. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and other trade unions were also active in the 1980s and 1990s in raising political awareness through literacy campaigns.

5.3.4 Social Skills

This includes a plethora of interrelated fields; conflict resolution, work ethics, decision making, team work and assertiveness. These are of importance nationally in integrating the country peacefully and for the individual in awareness rising for fulfillment of individual desires in the community. It is the premise that such skills are developed within family circles but in a country torn apart by conflict, education and training are the sole agents of transmitting social skills. In a country with different races even if the family and community units are intact, the dividing line between people is always present. Violent conflicts are the outcome of the environment in which the different communities live. The expectations of young blacks after the fall of apartheid and the inception of a black majority government was that of decent jobs. Facing the reality of no job opportunities coupled with low educational backgrounds has fuelled the frustration of a bleak future. The programme is in the form of teaching of social skills in educational and training centers at all levels. Emphasis is on orientation for the world of work amongst others.

5.3.5 Basic Management

This is a foundation management programme that provides business training for future entrepreneurs. Besides its future importance, its immediate benefit is for demobilized ex-combatants. It helps them to manage their budget well as they have been used to a non-monetised environment before the demobilization. They can make use of the training to manage their demobilization packages. Basic management is a life skills training that is useful to the world of work generally and can be used by people in rebuilding their shattered communities. These are a supportive tool to technical skills. The programme is in the form of basic business skills with simulation games used to teach and screen people for higher training. In some cases people were

trained to manage personal budgets. The setting up of a framework to manage community development programmes formed part of the training.

5.3.6 Assessment of training programmes

Providing life skills for the conflict affected people and in particular the South African youth has been crucial in the post-apartheid era.

Strengths

- Basic education provided for those who were by-passed by formal education proved to be very useful. The basic education on the political transformation from apartheid to multi-party elections was a success. People felt empowered and applied the training effectively during the elections.
- Life skills training in management was also used efficiently by the youth to solve domestic problems in their communities on a day-to-day basis.

Weaknesses

- The lack of funding was the main setback of the life skills training programmes.
- There was a lack of coordination between educational and technical training institutions in programme implementation. They could hardly complement each other.
- Training needs were not specified according to the needs of different groups thereby marginalizing disadvantaged groups like female and disabled youth.
- Peace skills did not prove useful for the youth in black townships. They have no examples of peaceful conflict resolution within their environment where violence is dominant.

5.3.7 Lessons

- There is usually a lack of integration of technical training with life skills training. Also trainers are not aware of any other service they could offer to the trainees to complement their training. It is therefore vital for there to be a link between life skills, training providers and the education system. Life skills

should form part of the educational programme, as it is fundamental for everyday life. Special training programmes should be provided for trainers to enhance their capability for delivery of training to trainees.

- Monitoring and evaluation should be integrated into various projects. The strength and weakness of a project can be determined through these processes. The extent to which a project has reached its intended aims and objectives could be ascertained.
- Basic management skills which young people possess during the time of conflict can be developed during post-conflict era through mainly practical training. Such skills can become very useful for the individual at home and for the local community in which he lives.
- It is vital to include work ethics in all training programmes for conflict-affected youth. Despite the training provided in various fields, if the individual does not have value for work the training could not be beneficial to him and society.
- Training programmes should be gender sensitive.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of major findings

Based on the objectives of this study, enhancing youth employment and employability in a war torn country is a rather complex task in the light of prevailing economic, social and political conditions. A summary of findings could serve as an insight into possible policy recommendations.

- The state of affairs in the country prior to the war became a breeding ground for social and economic ills, which culminated into the war. The consequences have been grave especially on the youth whose marginal status reached a very low ebb. There is every reason for post-war reconstruction and reintegration programmes to focus on the youth.
- Economic recovery and social cohesion should emanate from a strong State having the political will to harness the enormous natural resources to achieve these goals. The government is far from ready to take up this challenge as it is riddled with endemic corruption.
- Education and training systems contributed very little to youth employability with little relevance to jobs in local demand. Educational reform in the 1990s was in the right direction but is yet to have any meaningful impact on employability of the youth because of the lack of resources to implement various programmes. Although the policy document prioritizes technical and vocational education, on average only 5% of educational budget is allocated to this form of education.
- Training and employment programmes for youth reintegration though in the right direction are plagued with a lot of weaknesses ranging from lack of commitment of trainees and skilled personnel as trainers, reliance on foreign funding, and gender insensitivity. This puts into question the efficiency and sustainability of most of the programmes.
- There are important lessons the country can learn from the experiences of Uganda and South Africa. This could be very useful in the ongoing process of reintegration.

6.2 Youth employment and employability: policy suggestions for Sierra Leone

From the major findings of this study I will attempt to suggest policies, which may not be conclusive but could serve as an insight to youth organizations, the government and other development partners.

6.2.1 Improving the quality of education and training through increased funding

It goes without saying that inadequate financing has dampened the quality of education. In providing quality education at affordable cost the government should start by increasing educational funding. This was a major weakness for the Uganda and South Africa programmes. In addition to that, it should provide supportive services at various levels of skills development, and regulatory services that could enhance the quality of training such as curriculum development, testing and certification (World Bank, 1993:106). There should be an integrated approach to training at various levels to minimize the duplications and to improve and maximize the use of workshops and training instructors. The Ugandan case study strongly notes the essence of integrating programmes. There should be a threshold across the board on the issue of certificates, which should be upheld and maintained by all education and training partners. This can begin with the introduction of similar entry requirements into institutions operating at the same level. Mechanisms should be put in place to periodically audit training programmes as a quality control measure.

6.2.2 Making training relevant to local needs

Training should be in accordance with jobs in local demand in order to increase opportunities for the youth. This is a lapse in educational and training institutions. Practical aspects of education and training should be emphasized at an early stage of training. It could raise the self-esteem of the trainee as been able to do things at the end of the training. In the case of Uganda training for locally defined jobs in demand was the climax of recommendations made to the government. Vandemoortele (1986:54) believes that vocationalising the content of education and training could be backed by a constant monitoring through tracer studies of graduates from various institutions. To me this may not be easy in a country with a poor ability of record keeping even in educational institutions. This fear is confirmed by Livingstone

(1986:62) about the absence of adequate tracer studies of technicians in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus training of youth is undertaken as a matter of faith. However an advantage of this is that it could act as an insight in the direction of reform of curricula from time to time by increasing training opportunities in areas of high local demand. This can enhance employment of trainees.

6.2.3 Life skills through National Youth Service (NYS)

Improving access to training of youth, particularly female youth, school dropouts, illiterates and unskilled youth through formal and non-formal programmes are worthwhile. An aspect of the training should be aimed at promoting a sense of responsible citizenship and leadership, HIV/AIDS awareness, conflict awareness, prevention and resolution, against the background of motivating their own development, communities and the country. For instance the life skills training to increase political awareness proved very useful to the youth in the post apartheid national election in South Africa. A means could be through the establishment of a NYS. This will help to increase practical skills, discipline and patriotism which is at the moment a deficiency in the Sierra Leonean youth. Mulenga (1999:9) identifies NYS as a means of providing skill programmes, including life skills for youth in some African countries. These life skills include discipline and patriotism in a group of people (youth) considered as a 'disruptive social group.' Thus the outcome of such training was the molding of their behaviour thereby preventing social explosion that might emanate from their actions.

6.2.4 Establishing a formal structure for apprenticeship

A time frame should be set for the length of apprenticeship and a form of remuneration for the trainees taking cognizance of the minimum wage. In the case of Philippines wage levels are set at 75% of the minimum wage with apprentice period limited to six months (Baud, 1996:13). While the time period should not be restricted to six months, it could on the other hand depend on the type of training and should be clearly set out through legislation for both the trainer and apprentice to know the mutual contractual obligation. The idea of bosses paying stipends to apprentices in a country where such opportunities for learning skills are scanty may discourage some

of them in recruiting apprentices. The government and other stakeholders can intervene through a National Youth Council (NYC) by subsidizing up to a certain percentage of the wage to be paid. This can serve as an incentive to trainers in imparting skills to trainees on the notion that a third party has keen interest in the skill development programme. For instance in Chile the wage subsidy of an apprentice is about 60% of the statutory minimum wage of \$100 per month. There is a set limit to the number of apprentices; usually not exceeding 10% of permanent employees. The subsidy is approved by a branch within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security known as the National Training and Employment Services (Espinoza, 1997:9). Youth who acquire training through apprenticeship should be provided credit to purchase tools, equipment and materials. Alternatively these items could be bought and given to them for payment by installment spread over a reasonable time frame. The effect is that of a sense of responsibility and commitment for the trainees. One way out is the establishment of a youth enterprise/trust, which can operate on a revolving basis monitored by a NYC. Lillis (1994:169) identifies the ILO scheme (Skill Development for Self-Reliance in East and Central Africa) of cost reduction of tools as another way out. For example, carpenters in training make their own tools whilst in training which becomes theirs after the training. Making such tools means devotion and commitment to the training.

6.2.5 Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning should be encouraged and developed in public and private sector organizations to help people who acquire training to keep abreast with changing trends imposed on the work organization due to globalization. This is pertinent if skills acquired are not to become obsolete. Lifelong learning is a universal phenomenon irrespective of the level of development of a country. Wirt warns that it may cause inequality: “ *if lifelong learning does not happen there is a real risk that the workplace of the future will be led by an educated elite trained to lead a growing but expendable army of casual and part-time workers* ”(as in ILO, 1999:15).

6.2.6 Economic recovery

Implementing various programmes will depend on a revitalized economy to provide

the necessary funding. This means that the government has to create the enabling environment to encourage foreign investment and stimulate domestic growth. It should start by taking a hard line approach to stamp out corruption. The establishment of an Anti-Corruption Commission last year without any scaling down of corrupt practices is a mere lip service to the problem. Kingma (2001:37-38) observes that it should be easier for governments in peacetime to convert resources that were used for fighting the war, both human and material into reconstruction and development initiatives. Indeed it is ridiculous to note that countries that have fought wars requiring massive resources rely on foreign resources for post-war rehabilitation. In Sierra Leone both before and after the war corruption was and remains to be the most single threat to development. The government and the people should take this challenge seriously by harnessing the vast resources in an accountable manner for economic and social recovery.

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