

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (NED)

Evaluation Report

January 1 – 31, 2006, Report Due February 28 2007

Grant Agreement No.	2006-090.0
Project Title:	The Extension of the Leadership Training on Corruption for Religious Leaders in the Ninety-four (94) Chiefdoms of Sierra Leone
Grantee Name:	National Accountability Group (NAG) 18 Dundas Street Freetown, Sierra Leone
Effective Date of Grant:	<u>February 1, 2006</u>
Expiration Date of Grant:	<u>January 31, 2007</u>
Total Amount of Grant	\$ 50,000
<u>Reporting Period Covered</u>	<u>Reporting Due</u>
February 1 – March 31, 2006	April 30, 2006
April 1 – June 30, 2006	July 31 2006
July 1 – September 30, 2006	October 31 2006
October 1 – December 31, 2006	January 31, 2007
January 1 – 31, 2007, final period report (Including evaluation report)	February 28, 2007

SUMMARY

The British left Sierra Leone with very effective, efficient and independent democratic institutions that were systematically destroyed by President Siaka Stevens, which enabled him to establish and build a one party dictatorship in Sierra Leone for more than two decades. He was succeeded by Major General Saidu Momoh, who in a half hazard way tried to introduce a multi – party system and was overthrown by a military junta in 1992.

Of the three countries in the Mano River Basin, Sierra Leone seems to have made more progress in terms of democratic consolidation. It has held two multi party democratic elections. Even though the opposition is weak, it is allowed to operate, engage and criticize the government. However, the huge influx of international assistance from bilateral and multilateral donors channeled through weak, ineffective, inefficient and corrupt bureaucratic institutions and structures has reinforced corruption rather than minimize it.

Despite the huge natural resources of the three countries, bad governance, mismanagement of these resources and massive corruption has made over 70% of the population of these countries to live below the poverty line.

Transparency International (TI), a Berlin-based global coalition against corruption, conducts the CPI on an annual basis, a study which measures expert and business people's perception about the state of corruption in a country. The annual study is widely regarded as one of the most standardized measures of corruption used internationally and the 2005 CPI ranked Sierra Leone 124th out of the 159 countries included in the study, placing Sierra Leone on par with such corruption-riddled countries as Niger, Afghanistan and Uganda. Among West African countries included, only Liberia, Cote d' Ivoire and Nigeria ranked lower. In 2006 CPI ranked .Sierra Leone 123, which means it went one step higher with Chad going lower.

The implications for lack of improvement in corruption levels are dire, as corruption continues to undermine economic growth and sustainable development as Sierra Leone struggles to meet its Millennium Goals of halving extreme poverty by 2025. Such an achievement can only be made possible through a concerted effort on everyone to effectively tackle corruption.

Thus NAG came to the realization that there is need to intensify public awareness about the negative effects of corruption so that there is zero tolerance for it. As part of the organization's Public Education, Awareness Raising, and Coalition Building, the organization decided worked with Religious Leaders to identify the causes and negative effects of corruption and encouraged them to take a leadership role in the campaign against corruption using their religious places of worship.

As part of its activities, the organization conducted a Leadership Training on Corruption and Local Governance for sixty-two Pastors and Imams throughout the Mano River Union (Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia) in June/July 2005. The training built and improved the leadership skills of not only the 62 religious leaders, but also that of a group of other religious leaders, who have been very committed to educating their congregation and disseminating information on transparency, accountability and corruption.

However, from the evaluation program conducted by NAG, it was discovered that the number of religious leaders trained in Sierra Leone was inadequate considering the number of districts and chiefdoms in the country. Also in recognition of the importance of fighting corruption and the substantial impact already made by the 40 religious leaders, NAG decided to extend the training to one hundred and eighty-eight (188) religious leaders from eighty-six chiefdoms and eight wards in Sierra Leone, in order to increase the number of religious leaders that would further enhance the campaign against corruption. In preparation for the training therefore, the Program Assistant and the Regional Coordinators, held Focus Group discussions with the already trained religious leaders from the twelve district headquarter towns of Bo, Makeni, Kenema, Moyamba, Kailahun, Pujehun, Magburaka, Kabala, Port Loko, Kambia, Kono, Bonthe and Freetown in April 2006.

The two-day Leadership Training on Corruption, Local Governance, Accountability and Budget Monitoring for Religious Leaders held in the three regions of Freetown, Makeni Town and Bo Town in June/July 2006, attracted religious leaders from ninety four chiefdoms in the Districts of Bombali, Kenema, Moyamba, Port Loko, Kailahun, and Bo Districts in Sierra Leone. The training took the form of discussions, group work and presentations, which bordered around issues such as:

- Definition and Contextual Analysis of corruption,
- Effects of corruption and Linkages
- Pillars of Integrity and Best Practices
- Threats to Pillars of Integrity
- Coalition Building
- Convention against Corruption
- Dissemination of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy
- Decentralization Process and Local Governance

The training also included discussions on values such as, the virtues of honesty, equal rights, justice and self-examination.

After the training in July 2006, the religious leaders engaged themselves in the dissemination of messages on corruption. Their activities which took the form of discussions, teachings and preaching, were carried out in their mosques, churches and other religious and social gatherings. Topics focused on included, the meaning and types of corruption, alongside its effects and consequences.

Background

Corruption has been and still is a serious problem in Sierra Leone. It has proven a major stumbling block for the establishment of an effective and modern state, increased poverty and hindered progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. For example, Sierra Leone is richly endowed with natural resources – gold, diamonds, titanium ore, bauxite, rutile, iron ore and fertile agricultural land – yet she has been classified by the UNDP Human Development Index as the least developed country in the world for the last four years. The level of corruption is nearly impossible to assess, but it is safe to say, based on our own survey as well as the work of the Anti-Corruption Commission, that corruption is endemic in Sierra Leone. Surveys conducted over the past five years have shown that a majority of Sierra Leoneans think

corruption is rampant throughout society, especially within government¹. In 2000, a Corruption Perception survey indicated that 94% of respondents thought corruption was widespread. Also the results of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) study for 2005 released 18th October 2005 indicate that the Sierra Leone has made a minimal progress against corruption over the past year and that corruption persists at rampant levels. The 2005 CPI ranks Sierra Leone 124th out of the 159 countries included in the study.

Corruption has been widely acknowledged as a principal factor in the socioeconomic decay, poverty and instability of Sierra Leone², as well as a major cause of the decade-long civil war³. The state's inability to utilize resources, collect taxes and exercise a monopoly over the use of force in the country is a result of the 'personalization' of government and its services. The emergence of a shadow state that uses the apparatus of formal government for informal or personal uses was a key factor in the collapse of the state in Sierra Leone.

Post-war Sierra Leone, like most countries emerging from conflict, has been physically, politically and economically devastated by long years of centralized dictatorship and conflict. Political and economic institutions have been destroyed and the social fabric of society torn apart. Most of the horizontal institutions of accountability created to check government excesses have disappeared or been rendered ineffectual. Post-war reconstruction has brought together an unusually wide range of economic, political and social actors in response to the situation on the ground. However, the resources provided by these actors have been flowing through weak institutions and inefficient, ineffective government, public service bureaucracies and civil society groups, characterized by a lack of administrative, financial and management skills. This has resulted in enormous problems for the country and created innumerable opportunities for corruption.

Corruption in Sierra Leone has gained momentum during post-war recovery, seeping into virtually every aspect of political, economic and social life. Cultural values and expectations have become distorted, and a system of perverse incentives and behaviors has emerged. Massive corruption within all sectors of society has become a threat to the country's fledging democracy, rule of law and the protection of human rights, economic development and national stability.

The government has undertaken a range of different donor-sponsored initiatives to combat corruption. The Governance Reform Secretariat has introduced a code of ethics for the private sector, which spells out both experience inspiring expectations and repercussions for non-compliance. It has also initiated work for the construction of a decentralized framework of government, and has instituted performance appraisal systems. Also, the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey has exposed overall discrepancies between money allocated to line ministries and money received at grass roots levels. Moreover, controls are being introduced to the finance ministry especially in the budget process. Ministries in the face of both anti corruption agencies, and public sector reform mechanisms however, are already flouting these controls. The judiciary, the public accounts and public expenditure committees, and other integrity pillars have

¹ Dr N.L Lappia; E.A.R. Gaima; F.H. Konteh and A. Jalloh, *Survey Report National Perspective and survey and attitudes Towards Corruption in Sierra Leone* August 2000

² Fredrick Konteh, Abdulai Jalloh and Andrew Alieu, *Governance and corruption study 2002* prepared for the World Bank under DfID funding by Conflict Management and Development Associates. Freetown 2000 p.30

³ Alice Jay and Momoh Taziff Koroma. *From 'crying' and clientelism to rights and responsibilities*; Study for the Government of Sierra Leone/EC on Accountability in Sierra Leone. Freetown 2004 May p.5

received training, rehabilitation, and resources from donor agencies, yet they still lack the required impetus to have a real impact on investigating and discouraging administrative abuses and other forms of corruption.

In response to the negative impact of corruption on the past and more importantly on the future of the country's development, the current administration has sought to take active steps to address this pervasive problem. One major step was the enactment of an Anti-Corruption Act in 1999, which provided for the creation of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to prosecute individuals who are involved in corrupt practices.

The National Accountability Group, which is Sierra Leone's only civil society organization with a corruption focus, has a mission to empower the citizenry of Sierra Leone through information, education and participation, to demand accountability, transparency and integrity from government, business people, civic leaders and society in general.

Objectives:

- To increase the number of a core of religious leaders well-informed on the causes of corruption, its impact and damaging effects on governance in Sierra Leone, and to encourage community participation at the district level.
- To continue to build and improve the leadership skills of a core of religious leaders in the fight against corruption, and encourage them to take a leadership role in the campaign
- To reach a large proportion of the people living in the 14 districts with concise and strong messages against corruption
- To facilitate the widespread delivery of corruption-related sermons in mosques and churches nationwide
- To reinforce the concept of corruption as an ethical problem; giving it a moral face in the campaign

Evaluation of the Activities of the Religious Leaders

An evaluation process on the work of the religious leaders in promoting the anti-corruption campaign is essential to enable the religious leaders become an effective tool for combating corruption in their communities, the results of which will promote public confidence in them. Evaluating the work of the religious leaders will take time though because combating and preventing on corruption demands a change of attitude.

Response to the Questionnaire

In a bid to fulfill the above, the Program Assistant and the Regional Coordinators administered a total number of 500 questionnaires to the religious leaders and members of the congregation in the different chiefdoms

From the questionnaires administered it was found that many people received the message on corruption during the work of the religious leaders in the chiefdoms. More Christians received the message preached than Muslims (12,000). This was because of the many Christian settings available for preaching. There were a lot of Christian ministrations such as crusades, seminars, revivals, and camp meetings and these, with the many church services, provided a lot of opportunities for preaching corruption sermons.

Impact

Many task force groups were developed by the religious leaders as fora for developing proactive solutions to the issue of corruption in the chiefdoms. These carefully carried out their work to ensure tangible results, which enabled them to maintain community support.

Alongside their preaching activities, the religious leaders worked with chiefs and traditional leaders in peace mediation through cooperation and collaboration. This primarily brought about the exchange of non-controversial knowledge and experiences regarding priorities for settling disputes over issues like land and marriage or problems of tax evasion, etc.

The sermons and teachings on the issues of corruption in the places of worship made considerable progress in helping to change the climate in which corruption was practiced in the chiefdoms.

The references from both the Bible and the Koran encouraged followers from both faiths to view the practice of corruption as a breach of God's law, which would lead them to damnation. This, to a large extent has reduced the rate of corruption in the churches and mosques

Another big success is that the work of the religious leaders in the anti-corruption campaign has fostered a continuous dialogue between civil society, the community and chiefdom elders.

The posters and stickers produced by NAG and the religious leaders consisted of messages for the purpose of public awareness-raising about the problem of corruption in Sierra Leone. Their widespread dissemination in the places of worship and the communities as a whole was intended to create spiritual awakening of moral integrity in the lives of the people and to evoke a response and discussion from the chiefdoms at large. The posters and stickers have also been made available on NAG's website.

The Way Forward

The religious leaders have taken a principled stance to promote the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Even though they have not yet met with the Executive branch of Government due to the pending general elections that could usher in a change of government, they in collaboration with NAG are working out strategies to dialogue with the next government through the

Sierra Leone Parliamentarians Network against Corruption (SALPAC), which is the chapter of the African Parliamentarians against Corruption (APNAC).

Conclusion

The program has made a tremendous impact on the perception of the people with regards to corruption issues. It has contributed foster a greater awareness on the part of the stakeholders to practice and promote integrity, accountability and transparency in their daily lives.