



**Mid-term Review of Concern's Livelihoods Security Programmes in Sierra Leone**

**Howard Dalzell**  
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## Contents

	page
Acknowledgements	i
Contents	ii
List of terms	iii
Map	v
Executive summary	vi
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b><u>Concern in Sierra Leone</u></b>	1
<b><u>Concern's Livelihood Security</u></b>	1
<b><u>Interventions</u></b>	2
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b><u>Components of Value for Money</u></b>	2
<b>RELEVANCE</b>	3
<b>TARGETING</b>	6
<b>ECONOMY</b>	6
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	7
<b><u>Institutional development of Tonkolili District Council</u></b>	9
<b><u>Improvements in food production.</u></b>	13
<b><u>Markets</u></b>	18
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	20
<b><u>Appropriateness</u></b>	20
<b><u>Equality and especially gender equality</u></b>	23
<b><u>Integration with other sectors</u></b>	24
<b><u>Partners</u></b>	24
<b><u>Role of Beneficiaries</u></b>	25
<b><u>Programme Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E)</u></b>	26
<b>MAIN CONCLUSIONS</b>	27
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	28
<b>ANNEXES</b>	30
Annex 1 Terms of Reference	30
Annex 2 Documents Studied	33
Annex 3 Itinerary and People Met	34
Annex 4 Notes on Fieldwork	36

**Mid-term Review of Concern's Livelihoods Security Programmes in Sierra Leone****List of terms**

ACF	Action Contra la Faim
ACT-SL	Agenda For Community Transformation – Sierra Leone
BFV	Blue Flag Volunteers
BRACE	Building Resilience and Community Engagement
CARE	Cooperative American Relief Everywhere
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCYA	Centre for Coordination of Youth Activities
CLOFAT	Concern Local Organization First Assessment Tool
DCI	Development Co-operation Ireland (Irish Aid)
DDP	District Development Plan
DDR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EPE	End of Project Evaluation
ESLI	Enhancing Sustainable Livelihoods Initiatives
FFS	Farmer Field School
FBO	Farmer Based Organisation
GAA	German Agro Action
GBA	Gender Based Analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HMC	Health Management Committee
IAR	Institute of Agricultural Research
ILAC	Institutional Learning and Change
INGOs	International Non- Governmental Organizations
ITNs	Insect treated Nets
IRCBP	Institutional Reform and Capacity Building Project
IVS	Inland Valley Swamp
LNGO	Local Non- Governmental Organization
LGA	Local Government Act
MADAM	Mankind Activities for Development Accreditation Movement
MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MCHA	Maternal Child Health Aid
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MT	Metric Tons
MTR	Mid Term Review
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NAS	National Aids Secretariat
NRI	Natural Resources Institute (UK)
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PCN	Project Concept Note
PDED	Policy Development and Evaluation Department
PDR	Performance Development Review
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PPP	Per Person Per day
PREA	Participatory Research and Extension Approach
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBA	Rights Based Approach
RRRS	Rokupr Rice Research Station
ROSCA	Rotation of Savings and Credit Association
SASDA	Sight and Skills Development Association

SL	Sustainable livelihoods
SLYEO	Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organization
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TDC	Tonkolili District Council
TDDA	Tonkolili District Disabled Association
UN AIDS	United Nations Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome Secretariat.
UNADO	United Agricultural and Development Organization
VCCT	Voluntary, Confidential, Counselling and Testing
WDC	Ward Development Committee
WDGs	Women Development Groups
WFP	World Food Programme

Map of Sierra Leone



## Executive Summary

As Sierra Leone has moved from war to peace Concern in Sierra Leone has moved over the course of three years from emergency response work through a series of agricultural input projects to a long-term Livelihoods Security Programme currently operating in Tonkolili District but soon to expand into urban and peri-urban Freetown. Originally the projects were planned independently of a programme framework so the work is currently in a transition phase with the upcoming urban project being the first planned entirely within the livelihoods framework.

The main purpose of the review was to examine progress to date and, in the light of the findings and the current external environment, suggest any changes appropriate for the next programme phase.

The background was provided by Concern Worldwide's Strategic Plan, Livelihoods Policy, Livelihoods Programme and Concern Sierra Leone's Strategic Plan, Livelihoods Programme Plan and a series of project proposals to different funders along with associated project reports and reviews. Information on the current planning and development context in Sierra Leone was gathered in a series of meetings with government officials at national and district level and with representatives of donor agencies and international and local NGOs.

Fieldwork for the review took place in a series of visits over eight days to meet with villagers in the areas of Tonkolili District where the programme activities have been carried out over the last three years. Almost all of the many programme activities were reviewed with several groups of participants. The enthusiasm shown by villagers for what has happened and their optimism for future progress was very uniform and remarkable.

The programme projects were planned with due regard to the context at the time and overall have been very successful in delivering the intended outputs. Targeting has been very good with the programme operating in a very poor district and achieving good results from efforts to include marginalised people and especially marginalised women. The involvement of villagers has been very good but could be improved by making them more aware of the scale of finance involved and giving them greater say in the allocation of resources between activities.

Work has been implemented with good economy. However, as the activities are numerous and widespread, there could be benefit to carrying out a detailed cost review to see if economy could be improved.

The efficiency with which intended outputs have been realised and utilised by beneficiaries has been very good and probably well above average for a programme of this type. Attention is required to technical issues relating to many of the activities. The issues are detailed in the text but are generally not highly significant in terms of threatening progress.

In essence the intended effectiveness of the programme was to achieve substantial and lasting improvements in the livelihoods of the beneficiaries which would lift them out of absolute poverty. This was to be achieved by

- assisting the Tonkolili District Council to build its capacity to manage community driven development,
- stimulating lasting increases in food production
- improving access for beneficiaries to markets for their production surpluses.

An innovative support objective was to create a Learning Alliance among government and non-government agencies which could develop skills, identify reasons for success and disseminate learning widely so that it could stimulate further progress.

Relationships with the Tonkolili District Council are very good and an improvement has taken place in its awareness of key elements of programme management such as participatory planning,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However, a lack of clarity about the exact nature of capacity building needed by the Council and the Council's severe resource shortages have limited the capacity building process and much more is necessary to achieve the effectiveness objective fully.

Food production has undoubtedly risen markedly but the base level was very low due to the war and the current levels are not enough for year round self-sufficiency. Villagers are convinced that the extra production has led to better diet and better health. There are doubts about the long-term management of soil fertility, pest management, water economy and environmental sustainability. These must be addressed if the longer term objective of assisting Sierra Leone to move up the UN Human Development Index is to be realised. The food production activities have absorbed most of the energy of the programme to date. Their success is encouraging but must be confirmed by more detailed economic input/output analysis which can be used to differentiate their impact potential. There is also a need to reclassify the large number of activities into a more manageable group which will help to focus staff more on outputs than on managing activities.

Inward and outward access to markets has been markedly improved by the road improvement component of the programme. However, much of the financial benefit may be marginal. In partnership with the U.K. Natural Resources Institute progress is being made on identifying market development opportunities but it would be appropriate to develop greater understanding of the economy of the district and the finance and business development needed to reach the agricultural production capacity of what is a reasonably fertile and sparsely populated district with road access to the market of Freetown. This would enable the programme to develop an overall economic development strategy consistent with the Sierra Leone National Poverty Reduction Strategy within which marketing could fit.

The Learning Alliance has been innovative and has achieved quite a lot in the area of skill development. It still has a lot of room for improvement in setting learning targets, focusing on learning for organisational development and on disseminating agreed learning.

A lot of research has taken place to define contexts and produce baselines. Future research should focus more on social assets and include more focused analysis rather than voluminous data gathering. Programme records are good and a lot of attention has been made to monitoring outputs but more attention needs to be given to analysing the information and using the results for learning. This process would be enhanced by appointing staff responsible for it and by setting clearer, more detailed and precise long term objectives. These objectives should be updated to have very clear links to national development plans. Closer meaningful alignment with national policies and strategies and better strategic monitoring and evaluation would provide the programme with the evidence needed to influence national decision making and make it more appropriate to Concern's target group.

The programme is very consistent with Concern's policies on Targeting, Equality, Livelihoods, and HIV. It incorporates Concern approaches on disaster risk reduction, participation and is moving towards a clearer enunciation of its inherent rights approach. The programme has relationships with several other agencies but mostly at the sub-contracting level. It would benefit from a mapping and planning exercise to determine the range of relationships needed and to identify those that are long-term and strategic. The equality work carried out has been good at the operational level. It has resulted in inclusion for economically and socially marginalised people and especially women. Benefit distribution has been good with children getting more and better food and having much better access to school. However, there is much to do at strategic levels of equality as social and especially gender roles do not seem to have been seriously challenged as yet.

The main conclusions from the review are that

- implementation has been good and most outputs have been achieved. However, it is not clear that the scale of the outputs is adequate.
- the purpose and goal should be reviewed to ensure greater ambition in some areas, differential timescales for different programme components, more clarity and more awareness of the scale of change needed.



The programme should build on its success to date by continuing in Tonkolili and expanding to Freetown. The strategic relevance and effectiveness of the programme should be enhanced by adopting the following main recommendations. More details are given in the text.

- 1 The programme should adapt to the political, social and economic changes taking place in Sierra Leone and should build on successes to date while becoming both clearer and more ambitious about the scale and nature of its strategic objectives.
- 2 Research should be undertaken to develop closer understanding of social capital and organisation.
- 3 To achieve effective capacity building for Tonkolili District Council, attempts should be made to acquire project funding for the Council from resources being made available for food production through the European Union.
- 4 The project should be based on village level planning.
- 5 For capacity building with the Council to be successful specific plans should be made for it. These should be based on a definition of what capacity should be achieved and what the current capacity gaps are.
- 6 Activities and outputs should be re-organised and consolidated into a more manageable set which could help staff to think less in terms of managing activities and more in terms of progress towards the purpose of the programme.
- 7 Seek to develop an initiative such as commercial rice milling or oil processing which will connect into national markets and which will bring substantial money into the district rather than just incremental progress. This will need external support as good business development and management skills do not exist in the District Council or Concern.
- 8 Research the micro-finance demand and potential as the transition from subsistence to income generating agriculture/trading will be very slow if it depends entirely on local financial resources. Potential external advisory resources include NRI and Moringaway.
- 9 Increase learning by
  - setting proactive learning targets allied to strategic issues in the programme and geared towards greater coordination and positive interaction with other agencies.
  - promoting experiential sharing and learning
  - continuing skills training
  - employing additional staff to ensure more strategic M&E and to analyse and disseminate results
11. Introduce strategic equality objectives. Manage equality and gender progress by disaggregating outputs and budgets where possible.
12. Improve economy by analysing costs per unit input and per unit output.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2002 Sierra Leone emerged from a protracted civil war and decades of misrule. Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world with a HDI ranking of 177, high levels of severe malnutrition and 70.2% of the population living below the national poverty line. Life expectancy is a mere 41 years and the adult literacy rate is 35.1%. Spending on health and education is among the lowest in the world. Infant mortality (170/1000) and maternal mortality rates (1,800/100,000) are among the highest worldwide; nearly a third of all infants never live to see the age of five (UNDP, 2006). In 2007 and a new government took over following the second post war elections. The credible and relatively peaceful electoral process is testament to the democratic gains made since the end of the war.

There are encouraging economic prospects with inflation now under control having been double digit for most of 2007, greater macro economic stability and a GDP growth rate of a robust 7%, sustained by agricultural and mining production as well buoyant construction and service sectors. Although the overall situation continues to improve many challenges remain.

### **Concern in Sierra Leone**

Concern has been operational in Sierra Leone since 1995 with an initial focus on emergency shelter, primary healthcare (including WATSAN) IDP's, refugee and returnee centres. In 2000 the emphasis

moved to rehabilitation with education projects providing teaching/ learning materials to schools in Eastern Freetown. With security returning to some areas by 2002,

Concern began long term development interventions in Tonkolili district with a field office at Magburaka.

Concern's approach has developed as follows:

- 2002-2003 a series of activities
- 2003- 2005 a series of three year projects
- 2006 onwards a programmes approach
- 

The programme approach has been guided by the strategic planning process phase I (CSP 2005- 2007) and phase II (CSP 2006- 2010). There are country sector programmes from 2006-2010 for Education and Livelihoods in Tonkolili District and for Health in Tonkolili District and Freetown urban slums.

Concern currently operates in 323 villages in rural Tonkolili district and 6 slums in urban Freetown. There are 108 national staff and 6 expatriate staff. In light of the recent positive changes in political stability and peace, Concern has started a gradual process of transitioning these programmes from service delivery to more of a facilitative approach.

#### **Concern's Livelihood Security interventions**

The livelihoods programme is carried out in Tonkolili district. Since 2006 the projects have been melded into a programme as illustrated in the table below.

Inevitably this is a transition process with the result that original project documents and reports are in varying formats rather than in a standard programme format. Whereas the review examined work funded under different projects, the format used in the BRACE proposal of 2008 has been adopted for the purposes of this report.

Attempts have been made to integrate the livelihoods programmes with the health and education programme throughout Tonkolili District at various levels.

<b>Components of the livelihood programme</b>	<b>Year 1 2006</b>	<b>Year 2 2007</b>	<b>Year 3 2008</b>	<b>Year 4 2009</b>	<b>Year 5 2010</b>	<b>Extends beyond 5 year programme</b>
Kholifa Mabang Agricultural Rehabilitation Project	—————→					
Kunike and Kunike Barina Livelihood Security Project	—————→					
EU funded BRACE project		—————→				
Freetown urban and Peri-urban project				—————→		

The over all objective of the livelihoods programme is to promote sustainable livelihood options and reduced vulnerability of the extreme poor households in the targeted villages. The specific objectives are to:

- enhance food production levels (including improved food availability, and access for the vulnerable target families in the chiefdom reducing periods of hunger; improved access to farm input resources with emphasis on diversification)
- improve market interaction and access: improve opportunities for expanding income for target communities;
- reduce vulnerability through natural resource management schemes
- strengthen responsive institutions and policies at local, district and national level

## **METHODOLOGY**

The review was commissioned by the Concern Regional Director for Sierra Leone. The terms of reference are set out in Annex 1. In order to incorporate as much learning as possible into the review it was conducted in a participatory manner. The main stages were as follows:

- Review of Country Strategic Plan, pre-project assessments Livelihoods Programme Proposal , quarterly and yearly reports, evaluation reports, report from partnership advisor, etc. a full list is attached as Annex 2
- Meetings with key personnel: project staff, managers, ACDP, CD, beneficiaries, secondary stakeholders & potential partners with field visits to Kholifa Mabang, Kunike Barina and Kunike chiefdoms. A schedule is given in Annex 3
- Feedback workshops in Magburaka and Freetown with key Concern Sierra Leone staff on the main findings and recommendations

## **Components of Value for Money (VFM)**

The review was essentially an exercise to determine if the programme is on course to deliver good value for money. The different components of VFM are set out below

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| • Relevance       | Does the work relate well to the context?   |
| • Appropriateness | Is it of the right scale and quality?   |
| • Economy         | Concern and partner inputs and activities. Were they carried out at the minimum cost to achieve the quality necessary for good outputs  |
| • Efficiency      | To what extent did the beneficiaries use the outputs  |
| • Effectiveness   | What positive changes happened for the beneficiaries or were there any negative changes?  |
| • Impact          | Will the changes make a significant difference to the livelihoods of the beneficiaries and will then last, further develop and improve and spread to others without further project inputs? |

Economy can be related to the input and activity section of the logframe, efficiency to the outputs section and effectiveness to the end of project/programme section. If the effectiveness is good and the work is relevant and appropriate then the long term objectives of meaningful lasting change in livelihoods will have been achieved. These components and definitions have been used in structuring this report. Appropriateness will be considered alongside effectiveness deficiencies in the appropriateness of the current programme logframe may have to be addressed if the effectiveness of the programme is to be achievable and measurable.

## **RELEVANCE**

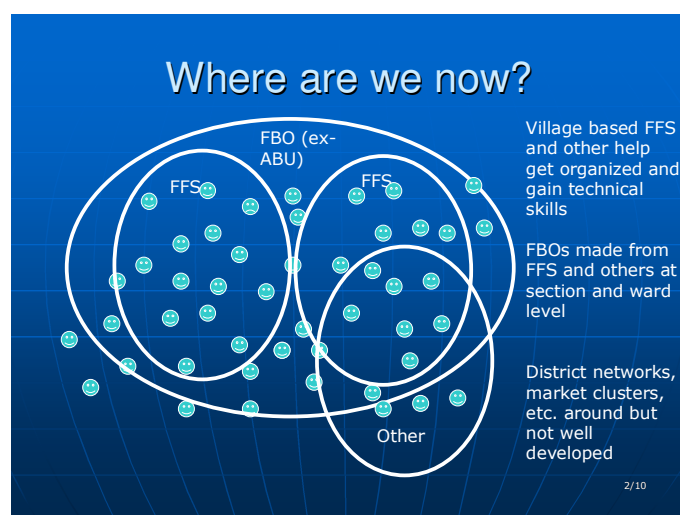
If sustainable benefits are to accrue to those living in extreme poverty then Concern's programmes must not only include them in planning and execution of work but the programmes must be planned in the context of Concern's overall policies and in the context of government policies at national and local levels. In addition programmes should be consistent with donor support.

The current agricultural development environment in Sierra Leone was reviewed by meeting the following people and agencies:

Dr. Sam J. Sesay, Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security  
 Joseph Koruma, Adviser to the Minister  
 Kevin Gallagher, FAO Country Representative in Freetown  
 Georges Dehoux, Rural Development Section, European Union Delegation, Sierra Leone  
 Dr Bangura of Njala University  
 Livelihoods Forum of the International Non Government Organisations Forum in Freetown  
 COOPI International, an Italian NGO starting a peri-urban food security project in Freetown  
 Lansana Sesay, Extension Specialist, Institute Agriculture Research (IAR) supervisor in Makeni  
 Paramonut Chief of Baikurr in Konike, Tonkolili District

There is strong donor support for government policy which essentially is that agriculture is the engine for social and economic growth and development. It can create employment and wealth. The development path is seen as agriculture leading to industry leading to services. Currently some farmers are receiving support from relatives in urban areas which is the opposite of the proposed policy. There is enormous agricultural potential nationally but currently a family of six people needs three acres of rice for self-sufficiency. This should be possible on less than one acre. Farming has to become commercial which means access to markets and farmers becoming part of the private sector. There is potential to develop peri-urban agriculture around Freetown.

The overall policy can be illustrated by the following slides taken from a presentation by Kevin Gallagher of FAO to the Livelihoods Forum of INGOs in Freetown in January 2009. They set out the current situation of a lot of work at village level with food production increases coming from Farmer Field Schools (FFS) but with little cohesion between farmer groups and no overall marketing strategies. It is proposed that FFSs become linked into district level Farmer Based Organisations which are well managed commercial marketing organisations linking FFSs at ward level. Within a district all FBOs join together in a district level organisation capable of interacting with Agricultural Business Units set up for processing and higher level marketing and with national Commodity Associations. The sorts of roles which FBOs could usefully play centre on processing quality and brand establishment and linking to national markets. Their role includes activities such as: feed for poultry / animal feed mills; sesame – pigeon pea sourcing for Bennimix which is a high quality premix food; rice bagging (Kono Diamond Brand); oil pressing; cashew packaging and oil pressing;; Kabala Pure Mountain Honey; Kono Pure Diamond Rice; Black Diamond Charcoal bagging (for more details see Gallagher op cit)

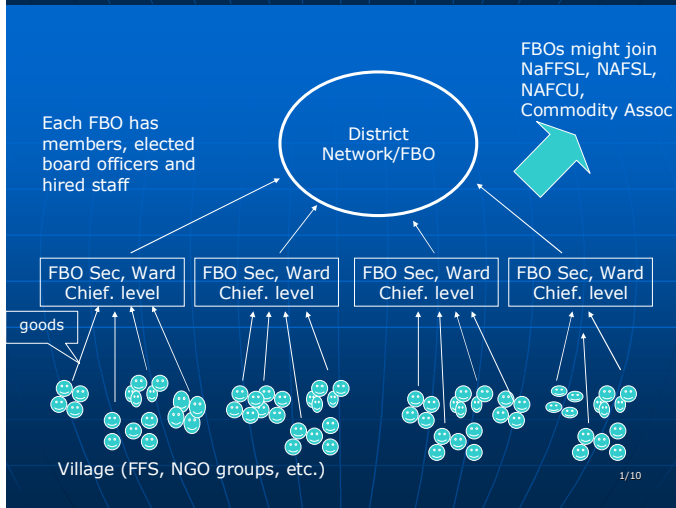


## Where are we going?

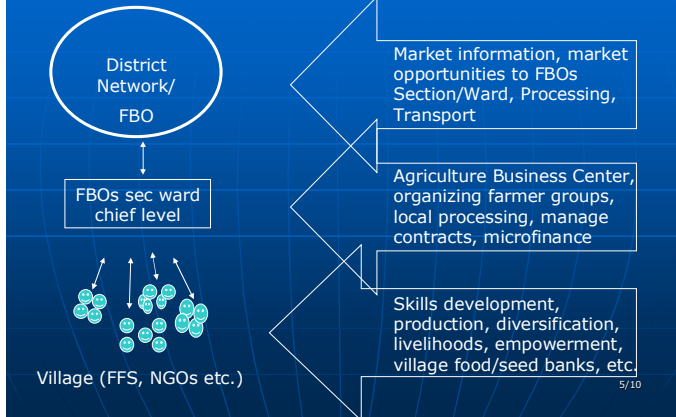
- Getting organized for market linked production
- Getting organized for better management (*under-development = under-management*)
- Going commercial – FBO Inc. (= market linked organization)

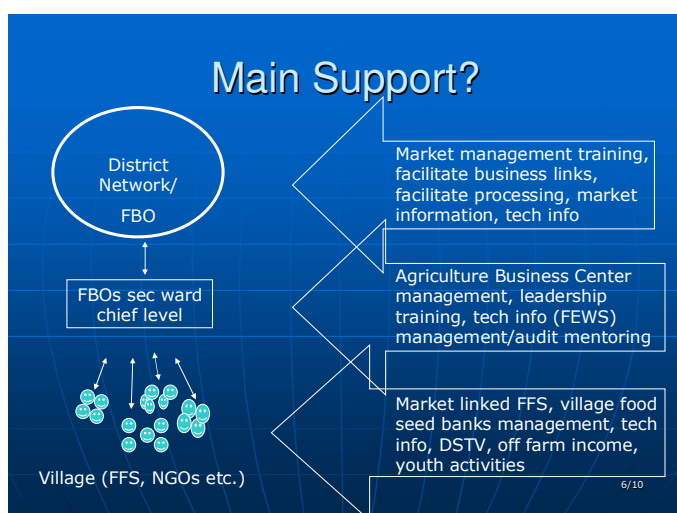
(what does it look like?)

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## Main Economic Roles?





At present the government has solid support for its overall poverty reduction strategy, and especially for its food production policy, from several major donors such as the African Development Bank (ADB), the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the European Union (EU), the International Development bank (IDB) and Irish Aid. There is funding available at present for basic food security measures and for commercial farming as envisaged by government. Much of this funding is premised on assisting a country recovering from war and on buffering it from high world food and energy prices. As time passes and world food and energy prices fall funding may become a limiting factor.

In relation to government development policy there are key roles for NGOs in:

- advocacy for support for FBOs
- assisting with farmer level training in Farmer Field Schools
- motivating and coordinating small groups to link into FBOs and the developing national system of marketing
- poverty targeting
- ensuring that beneficiaries are involved in planning

These roles fit well with Concern's overall Strategic Plan which emphasises the importance of livelihood development and with Concern's Livelihoods policy which is built around reducing vulnerability; enhancing assets such as farmer skills, social organisations and the natural resource base; and improving government policies, institutions and processes. It is a very close parallel at macro level with Concern's Livelihoods Programme Strategy of focussing on food production, income generation and market access (FIM). The programme under review has arisen out of the Concern policies. It is very consistent with them and sits very well in the context of the overall policies of the Government of Sierra Leone. The support given to Concern's programme by donors such as the Irish Government and the European indicates that it is relevant to their support for development in Sierra Leone.

Thus in broad terms Concern's Livelihoods programme has a high degree of relevance to government policies in Sierra Leone and is potentially a means of linking them to the aspirations of extremely poor people. However, as government and donor policy is developing rapidly, the issue of programme relevance will be considered again later in this report after attention has been given to programme targeting, economy and efficiency.

**TARGETING – bringing most of the benefits to people living in extreme poverty**

Concern's central value is that work must be targeted so that benefits come primarily to people living in extreme poverty. This is closely allied to the value placed on equality which directs work to be organised so that the most vulnerable people in society are included in activities and share benefits.

The process of targeting is set out in Figure 1 was used in a participatory manner in beneficiary selection. Selecting extremely poor people in very poor villages in one of the poorest districts of one of the poorest countries in the world has ensured that the programme activities are well targeted. The steps taken to ensure the inclusion of very vulnerable people were carefully thought through and have been very successful in practice. Examples are the inclusion of widows in block making and house building groups, the vulnerability assessments to ensure that livestock go firstly to disabled people and female heads of households and the provision of loans to groups of women so that they can intensify group involvement in petty trading. Impressions gained during field visits that targeting is very good were confirmed by analysis of several years of the detailed records of beneficiary selection maintained in the Tonkolili office. The efficiency of targeting could be enhanced in practice by gender and equality disaggregation of the costs of activities and output

**ECONOMY – achieving the necessary quality of work at the best possible cost**

There was insufficient time to analyse economy issue in detail. The team gave the impression of being highly motivated, working very hard, working well together and were able to answer most questions, other than those related to costs, quickly and thoroughly. They were very open in talking about problems. No substantial problems were identified in relation to work organisation.

The programme encompasses a large number of activities spread over a large area with very poor road development. Concern operates health and education programmes in the same area. The complexity of managing day to day activities is complex. It seemed that the organisation and management of this complexity is very competent.

However, and although no obvious lack of economy was apparent, it would seem appropriate that an internal review of transport cost and vehicle usage is undertaken to ensure that the mileage covered yields the maximum output possible and that there is minimum duplication of team effort and indeed of demands on villagers for meetings.

There was a lot of evidence to show that most activities are carried out to the quality needed to achieve the desired output and that villagers are well aware of what is intended. Although their are accounting records which show how much each activity cost team members did not seem to be aware of the unit costs of inputs e.g. how much is the cost per kilometre of road development, the cost per person of adult education, the cost per person of the livestock scheme. It is recommended that more attention is given to awareness of unit costs and analysis of them so that they are well managed and so that they can be assessed in relation to the probable benefits and can be compared with alternative opportunities.

Some of the activities depend on inputs from more than one party and this can result in considerable coordination issues. As an example the livelihoods team may motivate a group of villagers to work hard for several weeks in the dry season to convert a footpath into a motor-able road. The motivation is enhanced by anticipation of benefits such as opening up possibilities of inward and outward trade, safe and easy access to schools and health services especially in times of emergency and improved security. If the external contractor responsible for the construction of culverts does not complete work before the onset of the rains then the road may effectively be of no more value than the old footpath with the result that villagers will lose motivation. There are similar issues relating to other infrastructure such as well development and to coordination of activities between the Health and the Livelihoods Programmes.

**EFFICIENCY** – did the beneficiaries value and use the outputs?

Efficiency was assessed as a result of a series of visits to villages and meetings with the District Council management team, the Department of Agriculture management team, members of the Learning Alliance and a senior manager at the Institute of Agricultural Research and a representative of the National Resources Institute of the U.K. The village visit covered all activities in the programme and involved the relevant team members. Detailed notes on the visits and meetings are presented in Annex 4.

Until recently the programme was in fact a series of projects and as such there is no consolidated list of programme outputs. However the outputs for a series of years are shown below and indicate that a huge amount has been achieved even if it was as a result of a piece-meal approach.

In broad terms for most activities the desired outputs have been achieved. The outputs have been used valued by the intended beneficiaries. While this is a very positive outcome, which reflects well on the team, there are specific questions for several outputs and these are dealt with under the relevant output heading below. There is an issue about the way in which activities are described and listed. This results in a list of twenty three outputs. Such a list has several disadvantages;

- There is a lot of overlap between outputs which can lead to a lack of clarity and repetition
- Lists of more than seven points are difficult to remember and tend to be unwieldy
- Reports become very long and can easily become output focussed
- Staff lose focus on the overall purpose of the programme

The programme would benefit from a consolidation of the outputs within the three existing headings for objectives. In presenting findings in relation to efficiency outputs have been merged to avoid repetition. However the original headings have been retained. In the recommendation section of the report, a suggestion is made for a more concise and logical reorganisation of outputs. The programme seeks to achieve three main types of output: Institutional Development of Tonkolili District Council and Learning to Assist with this Development; Improvements in Food Production; the Development of Markets.

Firstly it is difficult to help develop capacity to do something which is not clearly articulated and which may not be in line with Concern's objectives and there are doubts about the Council's commitment to community driven-development. Secondly there does not seem to be a mutually agreed definition of what capacity should be built and what the baseline capacity is. Thirdly, as Concern's resources are far in excess of those of the Council, there is a danger that Concern will run a high cost programme in poor areas of the district and the Council will run a low cost programme in other parts of the district.

If the objective is to be fully met then Concern should seek to ensure that the Council has adequate funding to run high quality replicable programmes. This would enable Concern to make sure that the capacity building of the Council is financially possible and can become an exercise based on practical project planning and implementation rather than a series of imaginative training courses carried out in a practical vacuum. Any training necessary could be built on a clear definition of the different components of capacity required and current gaps in relation to them.



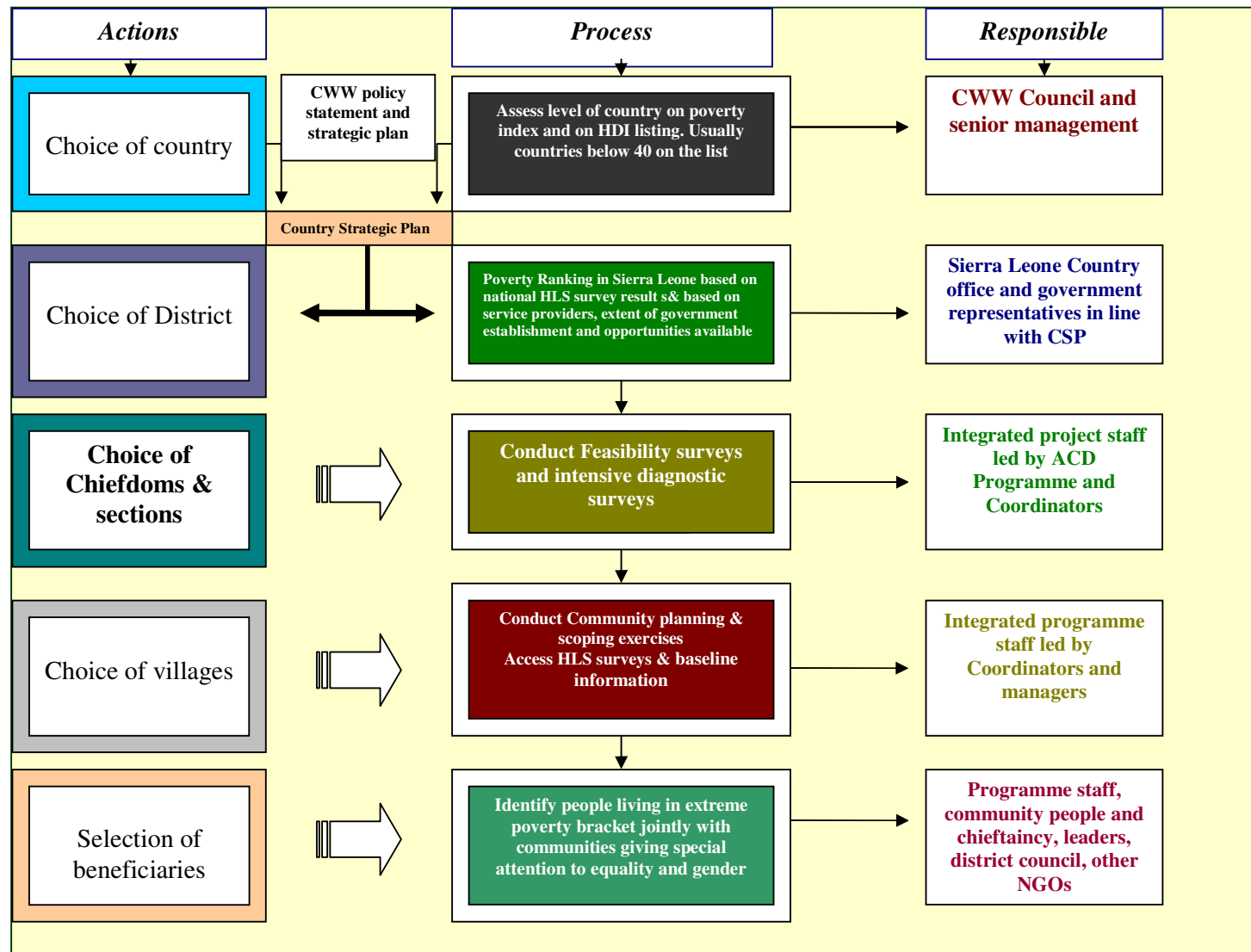


Figure 1 Targeting Process

### **1. Institutional development of Tonkolili District Council**

There are two output objectives contributing to this development

**1a Output objective: To strategically improve the corporate and individual capacity of Tonkolili District Council (TDC) to undertake its devolved responsibilities, particularly with respect to community-driven development.**

The chairman and senior staff members of the Council value the high level of cooperation they have with Concern and especially with the Livelihoods Programme team. They quoted examples of cooperation in field visits and gave examples of joint training courses such as those on Taxation and Project Cycle Management. They had found the training courses useful. They have made efforts to discuss Council plans with villagers although there was no evidence to show that they had taken villagers needs into consideration before they made their plans.

The Council has an ambitious long term plan and as a result of the national decentralisation policy is now receiving enhanced resources. However, the plan is somewhat lacking in terms of clearly specified objectives and indicators and there are still very big resource gaps against those needed to fully implement the plan. These two caveats create problems for Concern in relation to the objective. Firstly it is difficult to help develop capacity to do something which is not clearly articulated and which may not be in line with Concern's objectives and there are doubts about the Council's commitment to community driven-development. Secondly there does not seem to be a mutually agreed definition of what capacity should be built and what the baseline capacity is. Thirdly, as Concern's resources are far in excess of those of the Council, there is a danger that Concern will run a high cost programme in poor areas of the district and the Council will run a low cost programme in other parts of the district.

If the objective is to be fully met then Concern should seek to ensure that the Council has adequate funding to run high quality replicable programmes. This would enable Concern to make sure that the capacity building of the Council is financially possible and can become an exercise based on practical project planning and implementation rather than a series of imaginative training courses carried out in a practical vacuum. Any training necessary could be built on a clear definition of the different components of capacity required and current gaps in relation to them.

**1b Output objective: To identify and make available for up-scaling the institutional learning and change (ILAC) lessons associated with the capacity strengthening processes**

The main output in relation to this objective has been the establishment of a Learning Alliance consisting of representatives of the Council, the Department of Agriculture and many of the NGOs in the district. During the review many of the members attended a meeting to discuss the usefulness of the alliance. Generally they were very satisfied. Sharing of information between agencies had been found useful. Many cited training and skills development which had been useful to them e.g. improvements in report writing, better financial reporting, more comprehensive M&E. Some agencies produced evidence of how their institutional behaviour had changed as a result of learning from the alliance. Changes included:

- one organisation reduced their area of operation so as to be able to work more comprehensively in the remaining areas
- learning about other programmes led to a reduction in duplication by agencies
- the development of a Peoples Forum
- incorporation of rights thinking into planning

	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>
1	Distribution of Seeds and Tools		
	Rice	15mt	25mt
	Groundnut (15metric tonnes)	26mt	25mt
	Cutlasses	2000	1400
	Hoes (Large and Small)	4000	2800
2	Community Demonstration Plots	9	8
3	Training in integrated pest management and organic farming and rural banking	8	0
4	Construction of post harvest infrastructure development		
	Seed Stores	5	0
	Drying Floors	6	7
	Tarpaulin distribution	10	20
5	Improve access		
	Roads	15km	8
	Bridges	2	0
	Culverts	22	8
	Feeder road improvement	18km	0
6	Animal Restocking (Sheep and Goats )	104	96
7	Fish Pond construction (Pilot nursery pond)	1	0
8	Periodic market construction	1	0
9	Tree planting: Forest trees (10,000), Cash Crops (2,000)	12,000	0
10	Environmental awareness raising workshops	1	0
11	Domestic energy conservation: Construction of 700 eco stoves	700	0
12	Formation of Green Club (Environment)	1	0
13	Formation of Women Development Groups	4	5
14	Formation of Community Based Organisation	1	5

Summary of sub programme key activities 2007		Direct Male	Direct Female	Indirect Male	Indirect Female
1	Distribution of improved seeds (90MT rice, 25MT groundnut) and tools (2000 large hoes, 2000 straight cutlasses) to 2500 vulnerable households in Kunike and Kunike Barina Chiefdoms	5,925	6,575	2,245	3,100
2	Distribution of 336 bundles of improved planting materials (potato vines) to 8 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in Kunike chiefdoms	1,000	600	428	605
3	Distribution of 25kg 'Nerica' rice seeds to 5 FFS in Kunike	625	375	106	219
4	Distribution of 72 bundles of cassava cuttings to 8 FFS in Kholifa Mabang	375	200	251	298
5	Farmer field school training (4 trainings conducted in 4 sections) in Kunike	500	300	165	209
6	Training of 18 Community Para vets in the BRACE sections in Kunike	38	52	252	467
7	Contracted road improvement (bridges and culverts) in Kunike (4 feeder roads)	408	632	503	821
8	Self-help road improvement in Kholifa Mabang	245	125	74	26
9	Harvesting of 4 bee hives in Kholifa Mabang	165	75	12	63
10	Re-distribution of Livestock Offspring in Kunike (1 Community)	13	22	39	67
11	Monitoring of 12 rehabilitated household fish ponds in Kunike	100	150	168	319
12	Monitoring of 10 rehabilitated household Inland valley swamps in Kunike	100	150	123	198
13	Participatory learning and Action Workshop on Inland valley swamp 'Nerica' rice production in Kunike	245	180	305	50
14	Monitoring of Gender based violence (GBV) community log books in 3 communities in Kholifa Mabang	12	18	159	226
15	Learning Alliance meetings with key stakeholders in Magburaka	168	12	5678	8500
16	Community Stakeholders meeting in Kunike	150	95	4,351	7,433
17	Training of trainers (ToT) leadership workshop for 15 community development groups in Kholifa Mabang	75	175	387	529
18	World Environment Day celebration with 3 School Green Clubs in Kunike chiefdoms	250	350	480	695
19	Adult Literacy training for 3 women groups in Kholifa Mabang	-	300	217	354
20	Training in improved crop production practices	112	88	560	440

21	Celebration of World Literacy day with six women groups	-	128	110	300
22	Training in basic animal husbandry & health care				
23	Training on vocational meeting on brick making and masonry skills for 50 youths	180	70	216	179
24	Commence restocking of 200 small ruminant stock				
25	Refresher training for Para-vets	44	6	220	30
	<b>Totals</b>	10,730	10,678	17,049	25,128

Summary of sub programme activities 2008	Direct		Indirect	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>1. Enhance food production levels</b>				
Distribution of improved groundnut and seed rice (50MT ) to 2500 and 900 vulnerable households	5,820	6,600	2,328	2,640
Support trainings, tools and improved planting materials to 24 Farmer field schools (FFS)	1000	600	400	240
Training of 150 farmers in improved crop production practices in the BRACE sections in Kunike Chiefdom	435	315	174	126
Food processing and preservation training for 4 Farmer field schools in Kunike Chiefdom	-	500	100	100
Rehabilitation of 20 acres of Inland valley swamps (Replication)	40	60	16	24
Rehabilitation of 20 fish ponds (Replication)	45	55	18	22
Distribution of 600 tarpaulins in Kunike Chiefdom	7,180	6,295	2,872	2,518
Training of 200 Seed and Store management training in 4 sections in Kunike Chiefdom	600	400	240	160
Training of 550 livestock beneficiaries in basic livestock management and health care practices	1,390	1,360	834	544
Support to Para vet extension volunteer activities with 38 bicycles	90	10	-	-
Support to livestock farmers [Livestock husbandry training and restocking of 200 goats and 350 sheep	1,390	1,871	834	544
<b>2. Improve market interaction and access</b>				
Contracted road improvement (54 km and 33 culverts) in Kunike Chiefdom				
Self-help road improvement (78km) in Kunike Chiefdom	3,600	2,400	2,160	960
Bee keeping in 2 communities in Kholifa Mabang Chiefdom	145	105	58	42
Training of 50 youths in brick making, masonry and carpentry skills in Kholifa Mabang Chiefdom	1050	200	84	16
<b>3. Reducing vulnerability through the promotion of effective management of natural resources</b>				
Training of 400 women in Eco stoves production and management practices		2000		800
Training of Green Club members in the production of eco-stoves	245	205	25	15
Radio campaign against wild bush fire in Tonkolili	3000	2000		
World Environment Day Activities				
Establishment of tree nurseries and agroforestry plots	25	15		

<b>4. Strengthen responsive institutions and policies at local, district and national levels</b>				
BRACE Project stakeholders review workshop in Magburaka	78	27	1,560	540
Peoples Forum meeting with ward committee members, Ministry and Tonkolili District Council officials	57	39	1,140	780
Learning Alliance meetings with key stakeholders in Magburaka	12	3	180	45
Training of 32 Learning Alliance members in Project Cycle Management skills	28	4	168	72
Support to women development groups training in micro-enterprise development skills	6	1,125		450
Adult Literacy training for 3 women groups in Kholifa Mabang	-	300	217	354
Training of 250 youths in HIV/AIDS education and Gender Based Violence	710	540	284	216
<b>Totals (avoiding double counting)</b>	<b>30,746</b>	<b>30,229</b>	<b>14,772</b>	<b>11,928</b>

**1b Output objective: To identify and make available for up-scaling the institutional learning and change (ILAC) lessons associated with the capacity strengthening processes**

The main output in relation to this objective has been the establishment of a Learning Alliance consisting of representatives of the Council, the Department of Agriculture and many of the NGOs in the district. During the review many of the members attended a meeting to discuss the usefulness of the alliance. Generally they were very satisfied. Sharing of information between agencies had been found useful. Many cited training and skills development which had been useful to them e.g. improvements in report writing, better financial reporting, more comprehensive M&E. Some agencies produced evidence of how their institutional behaviour had changed as a result of learning from the alliance. Changes included:

- one organisation reduced their area of operation so as to be able to work more comprehensively in the remaining areas
- learning about other programmes led to a reduction in duplication by agencies
- the development of a Peoples Forum
- incorporation of rights thinking into planning

Concern had benefitted in gaining lots from local knowledge and had asked local agencies to review the BRACE Proposal. For Concern the Alliance had helped to build a good relationship with government and was a useful forum in helping to reduce suspicion between agencies and between agencies and government. All members felt that the Alliance will continue when Concern withdraws from Tonkolili District as it has a steering committee and members currently meet their own costs of attending meetings. They would need resources for training courses but feel that they could raise these from donors.

While this feedback is positive there are issues arising from progress to date:

- most of the training is based on the development of individual skills for task management rather than on the development of institutional strategic capacity.
- most learning is defined on looking back and reviewing problems rather than on analysing reasons for success.
- there has been very little formal publication of learning so it may not be widely disseminated and may easily be lost
- agencies normally share their experience in a classroom type setting. The 'reporting' agency is inclined to talk about issues important to them and this means that the 'listening' agencies get what they are given. If the context was based on exchange visits and contact with beneficiaries the recipients could identify lessons based on what they see and what is important to them.
- The alliance has not set a learning agenda on researching issue proactively e.g. what is happening to water levels in reclaimed swamps?, are there any dangers from road development because traders sell antibiotics without adequate prescription?
- Dissemination of learning is not well developed.

Initiatives to address these issues are given in the recommendations section of this report.

**2. Improvements in food production.**

Most of the outputs under this heading are related to production of food which will contribute to better household food security. The outputs intended under the heading of improvements of markets will also contribute to better food security.

**Output Objective 2: Widespread improvements in household food security effected through increased crop & livestock production, improved post-harvest practices, and sustainable use of the natural resource base.**

There are eleven activities contributing to this objective.

## **2.1 Baseline community and institutional mapping, well-being ranking, resource mapping, needs assessments and prioritisation etc for diverse wealth groups including vulnerable households.**

A lot of baseline data has been collected although at times the analysis of it has not been as thorough as it might have been. However, the main criticism of the baseline information is that it is weak on the collection and analysis of social capital data. This is a problem because community driven development cannot be achieved without changes in the relationships between formal and informal social organisations and between social organisations and government. Particular examples are the links between chiefdoms and civil government and in urban/peri-urban areas the issue of which social groups control the economy. The baseline data also tends to be weak in the collection and analysis of quantitative data e.g. there are objectives about improving crop yields and on reducing child malnutrition but there does not seem to be reliable quantitative data on current yield or malnutrition levels. It is appreciated that for some objectives it may be difficult to measure quantitative outputs accurately and that proxies may be necessary. In such cases there should be proxies in the baseline.

### **Output 2.2 Community mobilisation, group identification of lead farmers and motivators, and 'engagement' in skills training exercises.**

It was clear from discussions with villagers and from observation during village visits that this output has been successfully achieved across the programme. Examples of the achievement are the success of Farmer's Field Schools, the confidence shown by Block Making and Builder groups, the cohesion of Women's groups for income generation and the outcomes of the training programme for para-vets. Success in meeting this output should not be under-rated as it has been fundamental to the achievement of most other objectives.

### **Outputs 2.3 and 2.4**

- **2.3 Planting material distribution (improved rice, groundnuts and other legumes) and establishment of community seed recovery, re-distribution and monitoring systems.**
- **2.4 Establishment of community based seed multiplication and evaluation.**

Evidence that these outputs have been achieved on a large scale was provided by groups of villagers in almost every village visited. Among the benefits acknowledged were the ready availability of seed material which allows timely planting, good germination resulting in good crop stands, improved disease resistance and better yields. The introduction of short duration rice varieties has enabled double cropping in some areas. The seeds distributed and multiplied have been non-hybrid so it is possible for farmers to select and retain their own seeds without risking loss of the improvements in production. Their did not seem to be any of the negatives often associated with high yielding varieties such as poor cooking quality or poor taste.

### **Outputs 2.5 -2.8**

- **2.5 Farmer Field School approach led assessment and validation of crop diversification and soil fertility enhancement for uplands.**
- **2.6 Community led planning of Inland Valley Swamp (IVS) development (to ensure access).**
- **2.7 Self-help IVS development.**
- **2.8 Farmer Field School approach (FFS) led assessment and validation of crop diversification and soil fertility enhancement practices for IVS. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8. I V Swamps**

These outputs are all based on the development of Farmers Field Schools. A school is the agreement by a group of up to twenty farmers to jointly farm a piece of land and to trial new crops, improved seeds and new cultural methods. They then use the most promising techniques on their



own farms and distribute any seeds they have multiplied. The schools are much better than externally managed demonstrated plots as the school fields are subject to all the risk aversion of the farmers and are managed within all the resource constraints which the farmers experience. Some schools focussed on swamp production and others worked on upland crops.

There was unanimous enthusiasm for the field schools in all villages in which they had been organised. There can be little doubt that they have been the main driver of widespread increased food production. Many of the farmers are continuing to schools to continue the development of their farming and many other farmers admit to following the techniques learned in farmer schools. In spite of this significant success there are several issues requiring attention if the progress achieved is to be maintained and indeed enhanced. Some of them will not be noticed in the short term but may be difficult to address when they become apparent after several years.

The first issue is the maintenance of soil fertility. Very few farmers use bought in inorganic fertiliser and although some use animal manure and compost the quantities used are low. Traditionally soil fertility has been maintained by shifting cultivation and by burning the fallows to return mineral nutrients to the soil. Due to increasing population the fallow period is being reduced on upland and swamps are being farmed perennially. Together with enhanced yields, equivalent to removing more nutrients from the soil, this reduction in fallow period inevitably means an ongoing reduction in fertility which will be reflected in reduced yields.

Concern should work with the Ministry of Agriculture and the research institute to address this issue. It is unlikely that recourse to inorganic fertiliser will be the main strategy. More appropriate will be combinations of intercropping, cereal/legume rotations and green manuring and more use of composts and animal manures. The availability of large areas of forage means that the livestock population could be increased dramatically without causing any environmental threat while producing manure and food. There is a wealth of literature on these subjects and the FFS provide an excellent vehicle for trials on them.

The second issue is that of pest management. As farming becomes more intensive so pest problems are likely to increase. Bought in chemical pesticides are not readily available and are expensive. Some traditional control techniques, such as picking pests of the crops, are being used but according to farmers are inadequate. There is thus a major need to develop systems of integrated biological pest management. This could include such techniques as cutting paddy close to the ground to stop the carry over of pests, grazing ducks on paddies to control pests and to help with manuring. As for soil fertility control there is a lot of literature available on integrated pest management.

A third issue is that of water economy in swamps. The higher the crop yield taken off the swamp the greater is the volume of water used in its production. The establishment of water control bunds and drains inevitably means that more water flows through the swamp. If fields are totally drained during production to help with pest control then the water demand will be further increased. In time this could result in the swamp drying or at best being able to support a lower area of irrigated crop. The extent to which this occurs will depend on local topography, soil type, water supply and farming intensity. It is important that Concern take steps with villagers to monitor the water economy of various swamps over a period of several years and learn how to manage it. This is a very good example of the sort of pro-active learning which could be undertaken by the Learning Alliance.

The fourth issue is that of environmental sustainability. The three issues discussed in the preceding paragraphs are part of this issue. So is the issue of increasing the livestock population although this could initially be beneficial. Road development has been shown to be very popular with villagers but the increased outward trade, especially of forest products and crops means increased resource depletion. The learning Alliance could usefully begin to monitor the situation in several

vulnerable areas. Such and exercise would best be done jointly by several agencies and with government support.

In spite of the caveats mentioned in relation to substantial improvements in crop yields it is clear that the Farm Field Schools have been a resounding success. The idea is not new but earlier attempts to implement it were not nearly so successful. What is not clear from the current experience is why they have been so successful. It would be good for Concern to analyse this issue and document and disseminate the results. Some Concern field staff members have some definite ideas but without formal analysis they will remain just that - ideas and not learning.

### **2.9 Strengthening Natural Resource Management practices. School green clubs and pilot orchards.**

Green clubs are gardening clubs organised in secondary schools and are intended to promote knowledge about gardening and enthusiasm for it among young adults with the hope that they will start at home and encourage others to do so. The one school visited was not actually very impressive although there were some mitigating circumstances. It was by far the weakest activity visited but this finding should not be taken to indicate a systematic failure.

In spite of its weakness the Green Club visited was cultivating a limited number of fruit trees. If the livelihoods programme wishes to make a serious contribution to reducing malnutrition then fruit tree cultivation has a great deal to offer. There are many mango trees growing in the programme areas though they are not systematically managed and there does not seem to be any input into varietal improvement. However, there is huge potential to improve the production of mangoes and to use them for improved nutrition and for sale for income. There is the further possibility of processing them locally to chutneys, juice, etc. to add value. In addition it should be possible to develop a programme of year round fruit production using a combination of mangoes, citrus, papaya and other trees along the lines being promoted by the International Centre for Research in Agro-forestry (ICRAF) in Kenya. Concern is collaborating with ICRAF in this work and the programme in Sierra Leone should contact the Agricultural Adviser in Dublin about it.

Wood and charcoal are the main sources of energy for cooking. There is a substantial and developing trade in charcoal for export to Freetown. In time this will result in a serious problem of deforestation. The programme has attempted to address this by the promotion of eco-stoves which are produced locally from clay but are not hardened by firing. Many women have been trained centrally to produce the stoves. They have produced many stoves in their own villages and have trained others in production. Many women were happy to demonstrate the use of stoves and are aware of the benefits; using less wood and thereby reducing the rate of deforestation; reducing the time spent collecting wood; reducing the smoke generated and thus making cooking less difficult; limiting damage to galvanised sheets used in kitchens and reducing the risk of accidents caused by the unstable traditional three stone fires.

Many of the victims of such accidents are children. However, the stoves are often used in the open and are damaged if they get wet by rain. Replacing them is a time consuming. As a result many women do not use them at all or use a mix of eco-stoves and three stone fires. If the full potential of the stoves is to be reached then some efforts will have to be made to either overcome the wetness problem and/or to encourage women to cook indoors with all the change of culture and potential costs involved.

### **2.10 Women's groups and vegetables**

The dynamics in the groups seem to be good and some are growing a surplus of vegetables over their own family needs. One group has used the cash generated from vegetable sales to fund the education of girls from the village. Overall the outcome seems to be positive but it is not clear how

far the purpose is to build the confidence of women, to improve family nutrition, or to generate meaningful income. Of course it could do all three but to achieve the third will require more focussed management and probably greater financial inputs.

### **2.11 Livestock and Poultry Restocking**

This activity illustrates the careful thinking, typical of the programme, which has enabled progress to be made on equality and especially gender equality. Thus the elderly, widows and female heads of households have been put at the top of the list to receive animals. This is a very good example of understanding how to make equality thinking improve the targeting of the programme and include marginalised people without a great deal of complex analysis and obscure arguments!

To minimise veterinary problems a series of training courses were organised to create a cadre of para-vets. While this was eminently sensible it has to be accepted that their efficiency will be limited by a lack of veterinary supplies and especially drugs and vaccines. The para-vets seem to be well received by villagers – probably because they provide their services free of charge. This will have to change if the scheme expands and the rates chargeable will depend on the quality of services. Altogether some 216 small ruminants have been distributed. The scheme requires each beneficiary to pass on the first offspring to another person and so on. There is a preference for goats as they seem to be hardier than sheep. The benefits appear to have been quite good in terms of people being able to sell sheep or goats for which they get a good price. Due to the good benefits per beneficiary the scheme is popular. However, there are several problems which have to be overcome if the full potential of the scheme is to be met.

Firstly there is a disease problem largely related to Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) also known as Goat Plague. It is a disease related to Rinderpest or Cattle Plague. It is highly contagious, there is no cure and prevention is by vaccination. The vaccine chain must be secure as the vaccine is heat susceptible. Mortality may be as high as eighty per cent of affected animals. Thought should be given to try to select animals from parts of the country where there may be some goats with resistance to PPR. The ultimate answer, especially if a decision is taken to substantially increase goat and sheep numbers, will be to work with the Department of Agriculture to arrange vaccination. This will only make sense economically and technically if the vaccination scheme is universal and not just related to programme animals.

In some years overall animal mortality has been as high as twenty percent. This figure may be skewed as the total programme population is quite small but it is a cause for concern and more investigation is needed to discover the full causes, in addition to PPR, and to try to reduce it. The programme should consider a cost recovery scheme for the supply of basic veterinary medicines and could consider trying to encourage pharmaceutical traders to carry some basic veterinary supplies when they visit villages to sell medicines for humans. This trade has increased recently with the development of feeder roads.

Secondly there is a potential breeding problem. If the beneficiaries continue to breed among their own stock then before long there will be inbreeding depression as all the offspring will be related to each other. It is therefore important to manage the breeding so that other bloodstock is introduced on a regular basis from outside the 'scheme herd'. This can be overseen by the para-vets trained in the scheme. Thirdly the programme has made no attempt to provide fodder for the animals. This may not be too serious at present as animal stocking rates are very low but as more animals are introduced it may be worthwhile improving the forage available by introducing some legumes such as *Styloxanthes* species to improve the protein quality of the diet.

Strong attempts should be made to manage these three problems as the scheme should be expanded to realise its undoubted potential to produce high value food, generate substantial income and to make available a lot of manure to help maintain soil fertility. The larger and more productive the

animal population then the easier it is and the more economical it is to address the veterinary problems. Some attempts have been made to introduce improved strains of poultry. Hybrid hens are unlikely to thrive. Hence the best option would appear to be the use of better cockerels to upgrade the indigenous poultry population. However, the impact of such an initiative is likely to be low and the success cannot be guaranteed and hence it is not recommended that the programme should put a lot of investment or effort into it. As suggested in the section above on outputs 2.5-2.8 there may be a better return from increasing the duck population.

### **Women's Literacy**

This is not a topic in the BRACE proposal but is an element of the wider programme. There is a lot of evidence in the global development sector to show that it is extremely important. In the one village where a literacy class was visited the work was very impressive. The group include women of widely differing ages but there was a lot of support by women for each other, a lot of determination to succeed, a lot of understanding of the potential benefits and a great deal of enthusiasm and progress. Literacy development is popular and could be expanded and not just among women.

### **Information sharing at public level**

While the programme participants are well informed about what is happening neither Concern or the Learning Alliance are very good at disseminating information about lessons learned to other people in the district. At the same time programme participants and others could benefit from better access to information about government initiatives, extension advice and market prices. Perhaps one of the best avenues for such information spread is the community radio station which has been supported by the programme.

At present this station is being relocated to enable it to have day long public electricity supply. It probably needs future support and support which enables it to become independent of charity i.e. to earn enough money from advertising to be self-sufficient.

### **3 MARKETS. Understanding of, and opportunities for, deriving income from on- and off-farm activities through access to and participation in markets increased.**

#### **Output 3 Income and markets.**

3.1 Identify main economic activities, both farm and non farm, within the three different location types.

3.2 Identify the key players in the market.

3.3 Identify factors, both internal and external to the community, driving Income Generating Activities.

3.4 Identify constraints, solutions to the constraints, and wider opportunities

There is a great deal of overlap in these four market related activities. A lot of surveys and analysis has taken place both within the programme and in Sierra Leone at national government level. The work being done in collaboration with the U.K. Natural Resources Institute is good and has made progress towards identifying a clear initiative which is probably worth pursuing. However, the programme does not yet have a clear overall strategy to commercial development of farming including marketing and financing. This should be developed as a matter of urgency before progressing to a further programme phase. Without it there is a danger that the programme will end up by creating marginal increases in cash generation which will bring beneficiaries close to self-sustenance but will fall short of creating sustainable livelihoods which can withstand normal seasonal environmental shocks and market fluctuations. The strategy should be cast in the light of government plans for commercialisation of farming around the creation of Farm Business Organisations and Agricultural Business Units.

**Output 3.5 Capacity building of technical staff in the district and other local researchers.**

There can be little doubt that the technical staff in the District Council and Department of Agriculture should be competent in implementing and monitoring and developing market policies. However, they are never likely to become either interested in or very competent in small business development. Government departments in Africa and worldwide have tried and failed and it is generally admitted that it is not really their responsibility. However, if farmers are to migrate from sub-subsistence to surplus generating they will need business awareness and the programme must grapple with how to ensure it is available.

**Output 3.6 Community planning for contracted bridges & culverts.**

This activity seems to have been reasonably successful in that communities are aware of what is involved in dealing with contractors. There was not sufficient time to investigate the subject in detail. However, there are problems in many areas with contractors not performing diligently. Perhaps the best way to deal with this issue is to make the budget available to the community so that they make the contracts and control the payments to the contractor.

**Outputs 3.6 and 3.7 Self-help road improvements.**

For communities involved in it this was a very popular initiative. Although they get assistance with bridges and culverts, communities have to put a lot of effort into the work to convert a footpath into a road wide enough for a car and to keep doing so for maintenance. Even so they are very clear that the benefits are substantial and include

- Improved security for travellers
- Better access to schools
- Inward access for traders bringing clothes and medicines
- Faster and less arduous access to markets for people who have to walk and carry goods
- Car and motor access means that bigger loads can be moved easily
- Better travel for people needing urgent medical treatment and especially for pregnant women.
- Better social and business communications between neighbouring villages

**Output 3.9 Rehabilitation of fish ponds.**

This is a popular activity in villagers with adequate water resources even though there have been some problems in relation to water management. These may be solved by installing more permanent pipes and valves but of course that will increase costs. It is clear that the fish command a good price in the market place and of course they also improve nutrition.

It is not clear why this output should be in this section as opposed to being in the section on food production along with crops and other animals. Both crops and livestock are used as food or sold for income.

**3.10 Engagement in policy discourse with MAFS and key stakeholders PRSP/ private sector/ agribusiness etc.**

There does not seem to have been much progress against this output. No doubt good relationships have been established with other NGOs, with government at district and national levels, with some key politicians and with donors. However, there is little evidence as yet of this resulting in policy influence or even of influence on policy implementation.

If meaningful policy discourse resulting in change is to occur then it is almost certain that the programme team, and possibly with the assistance of the Learning Alliance, will have to document programme experience which exhibits a deficit in policy or policy implementation and which shows a practical policy initiative. The policy development environment must be quite good at present with a lot of funding around for food security and for commercialisation of farming in Sierra Leone and with the state decentralisation programme underway. The fund availability will not last for ever and could dry up within two to three years if world food prices stabilise or fall back.

It would be unfair to expect the current team to carry out much policy dialogue as they are kept fully busy with operational inputs. If the objective is to be reached then Concern will have to make human resources available for it. It is a key aspect of building the capacity of Tonkolili District Council to manage community driven development. (see Output 1above)

Whereas the programme is benefitting many people little consideration seems to have been given to advocacy on social protection which may be the best option for livelihood development for the most marginalised people.

**EFFECTIVENESS– are the outputs leading to lasting changes in the livelihoods of the beneficiaries and are they really useful?**

The beneficiaries are generally very happy with the results to date. During fieldwork they were asked to rank the outputs and the resulting changes which had occurred in their lives. There was widespread agreement that the best outputs were enhanced food production and the improvements in access to villages. These had led to more food availability, better health. Due to a combination of easier access and the availability of cash from crop and animal sales, children find it easier to get to and from school and more children are attending.

In response to forceful and persistent questioning about the sustainability of change most answers indicated confidence that food production increases and road improvements could be maintained locally and that indeed farmers now know how to keep learning so as to achieve continual crop improvement. There is reality about the technical problems being experienced e.g. livestock disease and crop pests and about shortage of money for capital intensive projects.

Overall it does look as though some lasting change has occurred and can be built upon. There is a real sense of achievement in most villages and a feeling of optimism. This is good and encouraging and the programme staff should be proud of their success to date.

That is not to say that the livelihoods of the people participating in the programme have uniformly reached a level permanently above the absolute poverty line. If the programme is to move in this direction of such an achievement the logframe will have to be clarified and some of the activities will have to be made more strategically appropriate. There will also have to be more attention to issues of equality, partnership and integration with other sectors which impinge on livelihoods.

**Appropriateness**

The logframe for the programme is taken as a core statement of intent. This section of the report analyses some aspects of it to draw attention to lack of clarity and gaps in it. This is done so as to suggest that the entire logframe should be revised to introduce more clarity, precision and ambition into what should be another phase of a very worthwhile programme.

**Upper level of the Livelihoods Programme Logical Framework**

Goals:	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification
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Poor households in the intervention areas in Sierra Leone achieve adequate and sustainable access to and control over resources to enable them to achieve their livelihood rights without undermining the natural resource base.	Increased GDP -Improved human development index -Peaceful local & general elections -Free press & judicial observance of human rights	Press reports, international observers (of elections) reports, court records, UNDP human development report, data from office of statistics etc.
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Verifiable Indicators</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
Promote sustainable livelihood options and reduced vulnerability of extreme poor households in targeted villages	-Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day -Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age -Proportion of 'poor' households reduced -Proportion of 'food poor' households reduced	Peer review of country programmes  District Council records  GOSL statistics

The goal and purpose are very similar but the indicators differ. A thoroughly well run programme may not result in increased GDP, an improved human development index, peaceful local & general elections and a free press with judicial observance of human rights. Even if such indicators were achieved it would be difficult to attribute them to the programme and in any case they could be achieved with little or no contribution from the programme.

The purpose could well be elevated to the goal level. However, the indicators do not include a vulnerability indicator. They are somewhat imprecise and would be difficult to measure. They are unlikely to be verified by the means shown in the logframe.

The outputs are in the right subject areas but lack precision and especially in relation to quantification. With some tighter definition they could be much more useful. However there are gaps between them and the purpose.

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Verifiable Indicators</b>
<b>Output 1:</b> Enhance food production levels	- Increase in period of time vulnerable households are food secure. - Reduced under-5s malnutrition - Increased surpluses (crop & poultry produce) entering markets. - Increased crop yields with labour requirements available and acceptable to farmers. - Communities have secure seed supplies.
<b>Output 2:</b> Improved market interaction & access	- Increase in the number of beneficiaries with off-farm incomes - Increase in the number of people with greater capacity to interact with the market - Changes in the surface access roads utilized by the poor - Increased access roads to isolated communities
<b>Output 3:</b> Reducing vulnerability of	- Increase in the number of CBOs actively providing welfare support & services to their members;

the extreme poor households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Membership of groups inclusive of women, youths &amp; weak lineage families;</li> <li>- Areas under agro forestry initiatives increased;</li> <li>- Extension of low land improvements (IVS);</li> <li>- Increased soil fertility and areas of forest vegetation cover</li> </ul>
<b>Output 4:</b> Strengthened & responsive institutions and policies at local, district & national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in the number of functioning institutions (local &amp; District) meeting development needs of the poor</li> <li>- Transfer of central GOSL grants to District Council &amp; local revenue generated</li> <li>- Change in national level policy that results in adherence to PRSP targets;</li> <li>- Functioning networks &amp; coordinating bodies;</li> <li>- Number of participatory/ consultative forums involving councillors &amp; community representatives;</li> <li>- Chiefdom level extension mechanisms established by MAFS</li> </ul>

Gap 1. Linkages. There is no linkage to the government plans for commercialisation of agriculture so that it drives national economic growth. There is no mention of the nascent farm Business Organisations or the Agricultural Business Units found in national plans. While there can be no doubt that the natural resource base of the programme area can be exploited to sustainably generate wealth it is not clear that the programme has found mechanisms to link production in the area to the national marketplace.

The potential for crop processing to add value has not really been analysed even though there is evidence from some bee-keeping initiatives that product quality can be markedly improved quite simply and that this is likely to improve profit margins. It is unlikely that long term stable livelihoods will be generated entirely on the internal district market. Yet there is no major activity which will provide a big impetus to the livelihoods of people in the district. Perhaps rice production allied to milling and the export of high quality rice to Freetown could be one such initiative. Perhaps it could be honey production.

These are the sort of issues that should be the end point of the project and which would take the current outputs and use them to achieve what is currently the purpose. Planning for them would provide an excellent process for collaboration with the District Council and hence for their capacity building in an area of central importance to the district.

Gap 2. Scale. All of the outputs achieved are welcomed by the users. However, apart from anecdotes, it is not clear how much difference the combined outputs have made to livelihoods or which have contributed most. For example there is not a sense of income generating groups for women generating meaningful surpluses in relation to family needs. One example is that of a vibrant group in Caklesu village (see Annex 4) which was given a loan of two million Leones and within six months has generated enough money to back half of it and retain a surplus of one million Leones. This is impressive in absolute terms but the accounting behind it is not rigorous enough to know if it is a real profit. Even if it is it has to be divided among 54 women so each gets some L18,500 annualised to L37,000.

The women estimated the cost of sending one child to school to be approximately L50, 000 per annum. So the scheme could take most of a mother's full time work but not enable her to pay school fees for one of her children and she probably has three or four children. The question arises as to whether or not the scale of the outputs is appropriate. Is the activity one which will provide a marginal increase in food security or one which will make a substantial contribution to achieving a



sustainable livelihood outside absolute poverty? More clarity is needed about the intention of reaching the output and then this should be backed by more precision in the indicator.

Obviously not all outputs will be 'big bang change' ones and when several are combined they may make significant differences. Further more it is reasonable to argue that substantial change may only come over a long time period. That may be so but the programme should develop some differentiation between what is expected from each output and over what time scale. This would result in programme phasing with different priorities and with short, medium and long term targets. For example high ambition should be giving to very substantial increases in crop production over the next three years. Livelihood changes from animal production are likely to take longer and from agro-forestry longer still.

This process of prioritisation would also answer the questions of whether or not the programme is trying to carry out too many activities and whether it would be better to have greater focus on fewer activities. Programme phasing would help to deal with the question of exiting. The guiding principle should be that the programme should exit from an activity when the development objective has been met or when it has been shown to be un-achievable

Gap 3 Accuracy and attributability. It is very good to see a food production programme with an indicator relating to the quality of nutrition. However there does not seem to be an accurate baseline for current levels of malnutrition and there does not seem to be a definition of malnutrition. This is an area where coordination with the health programme is essential. Even then it must be accepted that enhanced local food production may not result in a reduction in child malnutrition and that a reduction in malnutrition may be partly attributable to other factors e.g. cash remittances from workers out side the area.

An important output is enhanced food production as indicated by increases in soil fertility and in areas of forest vegetation cover. Surely improved soil fertility is a contributory factor to increased crop production. An increase in forest vegetation cover would be very hard to measure in a district where slash and burn agriculture is common. Even if it could be measured with reasonable accuracy it may contribute little to enhanced food production.

An increase in the period of time vulnerable households are food secure is also used as an indicator of enhanced food production. In almost all villages visited people stated that they had reduced the hunger gap. However, there was very little precision about the definition of the hunger gap or indeed the current length of it. For some people it may be a time when rice is not available even though its place in the diet is taken by another staple such as cassava and nutrition is adequate. For others it may be a time of a reduction in the number of meals per day, the quantity and quality of those meals and a period when energy and protein intakes fall below the level set by government as adequate for a normal healthy life.

In the foregoing analysis of some weaknesses in the logframe the intention has not been to quibble over terminology. Rather it has been to suggest that, given the undoubted though not easily accurately measured improvements in food production and in knock on health benefits, the programme should be more ambitious, should be clearer about exactly what those ambitions are and should be more precise in the definition of indicators. That precision should be both qualitative and quantitative.

### **Equality and especially gender equality<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Equality is one of the cross cutting issue to be considered in all Concern programmes. Others are Social Protection, Partnership, Rights Based Approaches, HIV and DRR. Partnership is dealt with later in this report and Social Protection is something which should be covered in policy dialogue which is a programme output. Seemingly adequate attention is being paid to HIV in this programme and in the education and health work. The programme is addressing rights in areas of disability and women's rights and is working with the council on land rights. Given that it addresses so many rights issues such as food, education, non-discrimination, etc it seems inappropriate to substantially rethink it at present but it would be

A key requirement of all Concern programmes is that they address issues of equality. This programme has been very good at doing so and as mentioned earlier (in the section on Efficiency 2.11. Livestock) is an excellent example of how to do so practically. It is working well in practice although it is not dealt with in theory. There is a risk that introducing theory into it will overcomplicate it and destroy the current pragmatism being displayed. However there are four important reasons why more needs to be done:

- Equality is not mentioned in the logframe. Given the centrality of progress in equality to achieving elimination of absolute poverty there should be a strategic equality objective in the programme
- The success to date has been largely in the inclusion of women and marginalised people in activities. However that is operational rather than strategic. There were worrying signs when villagers analysed the gender benefit of the outputs e.g. women can get goods to market more easily, women can get to the forest more easily to collect firewood, eco-stoves mean that women have to collect less firewood. These examples illustrate that the concept of equality based on fairness in the allocation of responsibilities is not being addressed. This is a strategic issue and is obviously more complicated than the targeting issue dealt with so far by the programme.
- Another apparent area of success is in relation to Gender Based Violence. However, this success may be apparent rather than real. There should be further analysis to determine which the case is. If it is real it should be documented and disseminated. If it is a case of no real change but a change in reporting, then a different approach is required
- The benefits to date are not being fully captured and thus cannot be used in learning. Hence there is a need, as mentioned earlier for more equality disaggregation of data and analysis of it to generate learning. An ideal topic for proactive learning in the Learning Alliance.

### **Integration with other sectors**

In discussions with villagers it was impossible to keep conversations strictly to questions about Council effectiveness, food production, and markets. They constantly brought in issues such as health improvements arising from better crops but deficiencies in health services, better education for children arising from better roads but deficiencies in education services. They see life as an integrated whole and not as a series of stand alone programmes.

They also fail to see how improvements made to date in some areas are limited by lack of knowledge in others. Thus they are happy with an increase in the volume of food they have to eat but are not very well aware of the deficiencies in their diet brought about by a focus on starchy food and a lack of regular fruit and vegetables. There is an obvious need here for integration of livelihoods and health work.

The progress being made in better agricultural practice and better access to markets is undoubtedly limited by a lack of literacy. The motivation to take literacy seriously seems to exist. To address the issue will require more integration between the livelihoods and education programmes.

Of course it would be easy for each programme to plan for more work and to have closer integration with other programmes. However this would inevitably mean more demands on the time of beneficiaries. The best way to develop the needed integration is probably to start with the concept of community driven development. Village level planning could take place with staff from all the programmes and would thus work to set priorities and the linkages most appropriate to the needs of villagers. This planning would be at the strategic level and not involve detailed health surveys, crop yield baselines, etc. It should include the Council and Chiefdom and thus would provide a really

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good to have a one day review to see if rights analysis and actions could be used to sharpen up effectiveness. The programme is very much focussed on addressing asset deficiencies; government policies and institutions; and vulnerability from natural disasters and economic shocks. Given this and the fact that Concern Sierra Leone is a pilot country for Concern's DRR initiative this report does not consider DRR as a specific heading.

practical platform for building their capacity. It would also force practical decision making about how best to deploy limited resources

### **Partners**

The strategy to build local capacity is and raises the question of working with partners. There are other agencies involved in programme implementation and mainly as contractors. Thus private contractors carry out culvert and well construction, local research institutes carry out baseline surveys and a local NGO organises adult literacy classes. Added to this is the cooperation of a range of agencies in the Learning Alliance. And of course there is the capacity building work with the district council. In the planned peri-urban project there will be close cooperation with COOPI which is an INGO.

There can be little doubt that all these arrangements are appropriate and none fall outside Concern's relationship Policy. It is not clear whether or not there is a clear plan for each relationship in the longer term. A mapping exercise to define all relationships with other organisations would be helpful. It would develop a current inventory and identify plans for each relationship over the next five years. It would also identify gaps which other organisations might usefully fill. The Concern Partnership adviser could provide assistance in such an exercise.

The Natural Resources Institute from the U.K. plays an important role in the programme by assisting in the development of plans related to markets and of the district council and civil society. What is being done through this partnership appears to be appropriate but it should not be seen as the only initiative necessary. By way of example Concern has good access to expertise in the development of micro-finance services and these could probably be utilised in further programme development.

### **The role of beneficiaries**

Concern is a member of the Humanitarian Accountability project and as such sees the role of the beneficiary as critical to programme success. Key aspects of accountability are providing information about Concern and the programme publicly; working with local social structures; involving beneficiaries in making decisions; empowering beneficiaries to register complaints and have them adequately processed; and treating beneficiaries with the same respect as to oneself and to others.

Performance in most aspects is pretty good but there is one cause for concern and one opportunity for significant progress which would further the progress of the programme. The cause for concern is in the area of respect. Drivers and programme staff do not show much respect to beneficiaries in that cars do not slow down to allow pedestrians to stay on the road. Given that villagers remember the recent war when a rapidly driven car meant trouble from fighters and that many of the roads have been developed by villagers, this is not good and could easily be rectified.

The opportunity for progress is that of financial planning. Both Concern and the District Council have difficulty in allocating restricted financial resources across a large number of villages and activities. If they were to include villagers in the decision making process not only would allocations be more community driven but the capacity building process for the council would be greatly enhanced. What is being suggested is not detailed line item budgeting for Concern and the Council at village level but putting budget availability into the village planning process suggested earlier in this report. Villagers would then understand the choices they were making in relation to the money available to the village.

### **Programme Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

The monitoring and evaluation system is a mix of monthly field progress reports, monthly integrated programme review meetings, quarterly programme reports, quarterly planning meetings, annual programme reports, a mid-term review evaluation and an end of project evaluation. The intention is to make M&E as participatory as possible and the tools used include PRA / PLA, surveys, case studies with an emphasis on audio visual methods.

Perusal of programme records in the Tonkolili office showed that documentation is comprehensive and detailed. In the course of fieldwork it became apparent that Concern staff had very good command of programme activity detail and could answer questions promptly and accurately. While they were aware of broad output results there was less command of the scale of change taking place and the relevance of that change to people's needs. For example knowledge was approximate on the meaning of changes in the length of the hunger gap, actual crop yields and incomes from marketing groups. This seems to indicate that staff members think more in terms of activities rather than of programme impact. It also seems to indicate that more attention is paid to gathering data than to analysing it.

These criticisms are common to many NGO programmes. They are probably due to the programme structure which ensures that there are sufficient staff members to run operations and that they are highly motivated and kept very busy. They constantly seek to improve the standard of activity delivery. However, due to this operating emphasis they have insufficient time to reflect on the outputs and their contribution to longer term impacts. There is no detailed analysis of the linkages between the programme and external agencies and there is insufficient time to fully develop the Learning Alliance.

As mentioned in the section on policy discourse the way round these time problems is to employ one or two extra staff members. This is not to suggest that the extra staff member(s) should do all the monitoring. Rather their job would be to ensure that monitoring is carried out at the output and emerging impact level and that programme staff and beneficiaries are centrally involved in it. The M&E staff could carry out the work of documenting and disseminating findings.

## MAIN CONCLUSIONS

1. Implementation is generally good. Many outputs have been achieved or exceeded and there is substantial progress towards achieving the other planned outputs.
2. Beneficiaries are satisfied with the outputs and are confident that they can sustain many of the benefits. Their outlook is very positive.
3. Although data exists on unit costs of inputs, it has not been used in analysing activities or outputs on a cost basis and hence it is difficult to compare the value for money being achieved by different activities. More cost analysis is required if the replication potential of the programme is to be defined and realised.
4. The programme is broadly relevant to political, social and economic circumstances in Sierra Leone. However these circumstances are changing rapidly in the post-war environment and the next phase of the programme will have to take such changes into consideration.
5. There has been a lot of collection of baseline information. However some of the analysis of it has not been very focussed and there is a lack of good data on social assets and networks.
6. As the programme develops and based on its success, it is important to become more ambitious in some areas and to prioritise activities in terms of scale, focus and time horizons. This will mean revising the logframe to make it more precise and ensuring that the objectives are SMART. It will be necessary to include several quantitative indicators.
7. The programme conforms closely to Concern's policies on Targeting, Equality and Livelihoods. It is consistent with Concern policies on HIV and DRR. There is scope to make more progress in relation to Concern's policies on Social Protection and Relationships with other Organisations
8. The approach to equality has been very pragmatic and is very effective at an operational level. However, there is room for further development at a strategic level.
9. Capacity building of Tonkolili District Council is hampered by the Council's lack of resources.
10. The Learning Alliance is valued by its members but could be more effective in coordination, in setting learning targets and in disseminating learning.
11. Analysis of programme success and its translation into learning has been hampered by the absence of staff responsible for it.
12. While progress towards achieving most outputs has been good there are some technical issues arising. These are discussed in the efficiency section of the report.
13. There has not yet been much effective influence on government policies.
14. The programme is very top heavy with activities. These could be condensed to make reporting more concise and to force staff to concentrate more on achievements rather than activities.
15. Monitoring and evaluation is sound at implementation level but more attention is needed to monitoring and evaluation of strategic progress.
16. Closer integration between the programme and Concern's health and education work could consolidate benefits and reduce the demands being placed on cooperating villagers. This is especially so in relation to the reduction of malnutrition and to realising the potential of adult education and especially for women.
17. Involvement of villagers in financial allocations could enhance programme focus and further develop the capacity of the District Council to manage community driven development

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are made on the basis of the conclusions and the intention to expand the programme with the addition of a peri-urban and urban project in the Freetown area. They assume that sufficient funding is available. If funding becomes restricted the recommendations aimed at advancing the strategic purpose of the programme should still be implemented and probably by reducing the number of villages and some of the activities.

- 1 The programme should adapt to the political, social and economic changes taking place in Sierra Leone and should build on successes to date. Such adaptations should include more ambition for some objectives such as enhanced crop production. The logframe should be revised to make sure that:
  - there is greater specific integration of the programme into the overall Sierra Leone policy of developing district level Farmer Based Organisations.
  - the purpose is more specific and both it and outputs are attributable to the programme and SMART
  - indicators are more realistic
- 2 As part of this adaptation research should be undertaken to develop closer understanding of social capital and organisation and including rural chiefdoms and economic groupings in Freetown. These are very significant in relation to how civil society is organised and how it relates to government. Without such knowledge it will be difficult to help government to promote community driven development.
- 3 To achieve effective capacity building for Tonkolili District Council attempts should be made to acquire project funding for the Council from resources being made available for food production through the European Union. This would enable it to operate a scaled up programme big enough to demand improved capacity. The project should be based on village level planning.
- 4 For capacity building with the Council to be successful specific plans should be made for it. These should be based on a definition of what capacity should be achieved and what the current capacity gaps are (as illustrated in the table below). The Concern team in Tonkolili may need some assistance for this planning process.

Capacity areas (examples only)	Current level	Level by the end of 2010	Level by the end of Brace 2
Policy development			
Long term planning			
Coordination of govt, chiefdoms, villagers, NGOs, and private sector,			
Participatory Planning			
M&E			
Leadership			
Staff development			
Tax collection			

- 5 Activities and outputs should be re-organised and consolidated into a more manageable set along the following lines and based on recognising the difference between cultural techniques; location and context; target group; and extension methodology. This could help staff to think less in terms of managing activities and more in terms of progress towards the purpose of the programme.

<p><b>Output 1:</b> Enhance food production levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crop production including vegetable and household fruit trees.</li> <li>▪ Animal production including small ruminants, poultry and fish</li> <li>▪ Forestry production</li> </ul> <p>For each production type details can be developed for :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. contexts such as swamps and upland production</li> <li>a. techniques such as seed type and multiplication, soil fertility control and water management</li> <li>b. the people to benefit such as women heads of households, farmers</li> <li>c. extension methodology such as Farmer Field Schools.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Output 2:</b> Improved market interaction &amp; access</p>
<p><b>Output 3:</b> Reducing vulnerability of extremely poor households</p>
<p><b>Output 4:</b> Strengthened &amp; responsive institutions and policies at local, district &amp; national level</p>

- 6 Seek to develop an initiative such as commercial rice milling or oil processing which will connect into national markets and which will bring substantial money into the district rather than just incremental progress. This will need external support as good business development and management skills do not exist in the District Council or Concern.
- 7 Research the micro-finance demand and potential as the transition from subsistence to income generating agriculture/trading will be very slow if it depends entirely on local financial resources. Potential external advisory resources include NRI and Moringaway.
- 8 Increase learning by
  - setting proactive learning targets such as: researching and doing trials on soil fertility management by green manuring; pest control by integrated means e.g. better cleaning of paddies and biological control such as ducks; monitoring water regimes in swamps.
  - promoting experiential sharing and learning such as; analysing reasons for success and publishing what made FFS's work; cross agency visits to see what others are doing rather than just hearing from them what they are doing.
  - continuing skills training e.g. log-frame training.
  - employing additional staff to ensure that operating staff members and beneficiaries carry out more strategic M&E and that the results are analysed and disseminated.
  - continuing to support the FM radio station.
13. Introduce strategic equality objectives. Manage equality and gender progress by disaggregating outputs and budgets where possible.
14. Improve economy by analysing costs per unit input and per unit output.
15. Make efforts to reach the potential of eco-stoves either by overcoming their vulnerability to rain and/or by encouraging women to cook indoors with all the change of culture and potential costs involved

## ANNEXES

### **Annex 1 Terms of Reference for Mid Term Review of Concern's Livelihoods Security Programme in Sierra Leone (2006 - 2010)**

#### **1.0. Country Context:**

In 2002 Sierra Leone emerged from a protracted civil war and decades of misrule. Civil war intensified the decline in social indicators rendering it one of the poorest countries in the world with a HDI ranking of 177. Poverty is endemic and severe with 70.2% of the population living below the national poverty line. Life expectancy is a mere 41 years and the adult literacy rate is 35.1%. Spending on health and education is among the lowest in the world. Infant mortality (170/1000) and maternal mortality rates (1,800/100,000) are the highest worldwide; nearly a third of all infants never live to see the age of five. (UNDP, 2006). In 2007, the second post war elections were concluded peacefully and a new government took over the charges. The credible and relatively peaceful electoral process is testament to the democratic gains made so far. The overall situation continues to improve, however, many challenges remain. There are encouraging economic prospects with inflation now under control after remaining above double digits for most of 2007, greater macro economic stability and a GDP growth rate of a robust 7%, sustained by agricultural and mining production as well buoyant construction and service sectors. However, with a HDI ranking of 177, economic reforms have fallen short of alleviating widespread poverty despite some overall improvements.

#### **2.0. Concern in Sierra Leone:**

Concern has been operational in Sierra Leone since 1995 with the focus upon emergency shelter, primary healthcare (including WATSAN) targeting IDP, refugee and returnee centres. Since 2000 the emphasis has been away from emergency interventions to rehabilitation with an initial education projects providing teaching/ learning materials to schools in Eastern Freetown. With security returning to the Provincial sites by 2002 Concern began its long term development interventions in Tonkolili district with a field office based at Magburaka.

Concern has shifted its approach in the past 4- 5 years from a series of activities (2002-2003; to a series of three year projects (2003- 2005); and now to a program approach (2006+). This has been guided by our strategic planning process phase I (CSP 2005- 2007) and phase II (CSP 2006- 2010). This has now resulted in the development of 5-years long (2006-2010) country sector programs for Education and Livelihoods (all interventions currently limited to Tonkolili District); and Health (Tonkolili District and Freetown urban slums). Concern is currently operational in 323 villages in rural Tonkolili district (education, health and livelihoods) and 6 slums in urban Freetown (only health programme). We have 108 national staff and 6 expatriate staff. In light of the recent positive changes in the country context (political stability and peace), Concern has also started a gradual process of transitioning of its programmes from a service delivery approach to more of a facilitative approach.

#### **3.0. Concern's Livelihood Security interventions in Sierra Leone:**

The Concern livelihood program intervention area is located in Tonkolili district where a three-year (2003-2005) Multi Annual Programme funding through Irish Aid in Kholifa Mabang and a new five-year (2006-2010) program commenced in Kunike and Kunike funded by Irish Aid, Depfa, General Donations and recently by the European Union. All three projects operate with a larger Livelihood Programme setting. This program is closely integrated with the health and education programs throughout Tonkolili District at various levels.



Programme Objectives

The over all objective of the livelihoods programme is to:

Promote sustainable livelihood options and reduced vulnerability of the extreme poor households in the targeted villages by the end of 2010.

The specific objectives are:

1. To enhance food production levels (including improved food availability, and access for the vulnerable target families in the chiefdom reducing periods of hunger; improved access to farm input resources with emphasis on diversification)
2. To improve market interaction and access: improve opportunities for expanding income for target communities;
3. To Reduce vulnerability through natural resource management schemes
4. To strengthen responsive institutions and policies at local, district and national level

With a team of nine led by a programme coordinator, a number of activities designed to achieve the above results continues through 2008 (see programme annual plans). Njala University of Sierra Leone conducted two sets of baselines surveys in Kunike in 2006 and 2008 respectively. The report on the latter is at the finishing stage.

**4.0. Objectives of the Mid Term Review:**The overall objective is:

To review the progress of livelihoods programme of Concern in Sierra Leone against the programme objectives and set the future direction of the programme for more sustained and improved performance in the remainder of the current Country Strategic Plan period (2006-2010) and beyond.

Specific objectives:

- To assess the way the livelihoods programme has been implemented in all its key aspects.
- To draw key lessons and learning from the present programmes and set a clear direction for the future; and make suggestions on how the programme can be more sustained and improved in the remainder of the current CSP period (2006-2010) and beyond.

**5.0. Key questions to be addressed:**Targeting: Have Concern and the local NGO partners targeted the neediest areas in which to work?

- Have Concern and the implementing partners targeted the most vulnerable and marginalised people through their livelihoods intervention?

Appropriateness:

- Are the types of activities carried out the most appropriate and relevant in the circumstances (wider context of food insecurity) and in line with community priorities, Country Strategic Plan; programme logframe, institutional arrangement and capacity for quality and sustainability; national policies and strategic plans for Livelihoods and Food Security; priorities of relevant Line Ministries/Departments/District Council plans in terms of design, approach and implementation process; and assumptions raised in the program? Are the activities linked with outputs, and the impact objectives

Efficiency:

- How well are the activities carried out in terms of the approach adopted, timeliness, quality, community participation and cost effectiveness?
- How has been the financial management of the programme in terms of systems and the way they are being implemented?
- How has been the coordination between different stakeholders?

Effectiveness:

- What has been the impact of the activities on the target population?

- Are there likely to be sustainable benefits as a result of the programme? What mechanisms are in place for sustainability? To what degree the interventions in building capital, human & social assets in the targeted communities (and with various institutions) can be sustained and what are the nature and scope of follow up support that may still be required;
- How effective has been the integration of livelihoods programme with education and health programmes?
- How effective has been the strategies employed and implemented by livelihoods programme?
- To what extent the various cross cutting issues have been mainstreamed into the programs such as equality, prevention of Gender Based Violence, RBA, HIV/AIDS, capacity building, environment and advocacy;

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- How well are the activities and impact monitored? What kinds of systems are developed? What systems and mechanisms are in place to ensure a clear link between activities, outputs and the impact objectives?

Partnership Issues:

- What role partnership has played in the program to date at grass roots, district and national level (recommend how this might be built upon in the future)
- How good has been Concern's partner identification, partner selection, processing of proposals, ways of working, monitoring projects and supporting partners in the programme? What kinds of systems are developed for internal learning among partners and Concern?
- Capacity Building Issues:
- What are the areas in terms of capacity building of the community institutions, government bodies, partners that Concern programme has been successful?
- What are the key issues related to technical and managerial capacities of Concern and partners' team for effective implementation of livelihoods programme? What are the suggestions/recommendations to address these issues?

Exit Strategy:

- Comment on the current plans for an exit strategy from Kholifa Mabang and provide critical appraisal where required

Learning/Innovations:

- What are the innovations/best practices set up during the implementation of the programme?
- What are the key lessons and learning can be drawn?

## **6.0. Methodology:**

We anticipate that the reviewer will be as independent as possible, however, this will be very much a participatory review and learning exercise for our program team, thus, requires the consultants to be experienced in participatory approaches to learning and enquiry especially in seeking the views and perceptions of target beneficiaries. This may involve:

- Literature review of documented work/ proposals/ log frames/ assessment reports/ donor reports; (Country Strategic Plan (2006-2010), Livelihoods Programme Proposal (2006-2010), quarterly and yearly narrative and financial reports, donor reports, earlier evaluation reports, report from partnership advisor etc)
- Meetings with key personnel: project staff, managers, ACDP, CD, beneficiaries, secondary stakeholders & potential partners with field visits to Kholifa Mabang, Kunike Barina and Kunike chiefdoms;
- Use of quantitative and qualitative data where applicable
- Feedback workshops in Magburaka and Freetown held with key Concern Sierra Leone staff on main findings and recommendations;

## **7.0. Expected Output:**

1. At the end of the review, held a workshop and give feed back to Concern staff and partner agencies; at this stage the reviewer should present a written summary of the main findings of the review on which workshop should be held.
2. A Final report addressing above mentioned objectives;

3. The report should systematically answer the key questions posed;
4. It should fairly and clearly represent the views of the different actors;
5. It should give the conclusions of the reviewer that are clear and substantiated by the available evidence;
6. The report should have a table of contents, give references, map showing locations etc.
7. The consultant is responsible for submitting a draft report (hard and electronic copies) within one week (7 days) of completion of the programme review. The feedback will be provided within one (1) week after the submission of the draft report. The final report will be produced in one week (7 days) of submission of the comments. It will include changes/modifications, agreed between Concern Sierra Leone and the consultant.

### **8.0. Reporting:**

Reporting directly to the Assistant Country Director Programmes and working very closely and as required with the Livelihood Security Coordinator and Livelihoods Programme Manager.

### **9.0. Duration:**

14 days (10 days in country, 4 days for report writing plus travel days)  
 2 days – discussing and clarifying the ToR/meeting with relevant Concern staff/literature review  
 2 days – Meeting with relevant stakeholders of livelihoods programme – government/INGOs/Donors/local NGO partners  
 5 days – field visit  
 1 day – Feedback workshop with staff/debriefing with ACDP/CD  
 4 days – report writing

A detailed itinerary would be prepared for the review in consultation with the consultant

## **Annex 2. List of documents studied**

### **Guiding Documents**

Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan  
 Concern Sierra Leone Strategic Plan 2006-2010

### **Proposals and reports**

Concern Sierra Leone Livelihood Security Programme Proposal 2006-2010  
 Building Resilience and Community Engagement 2006-2008. Proposal submitted to EU  
 Concern Sierra Leone Multi Annual Programme Scheme Report 2008  
 Concern Sierra Leone Annual Report 2007  
 Livelihood Security Programme Proposal Kholifa Mabang Chiefdom January 2003 – December 2005  
 Peri and Urban Community Action for Food Security \programme Proposal December 2008  
 Building Resilience and Community Engagement. Trip report February 2008 Richard Lamboll NRI  
 Building Resilience and Community Engagement. Trip report February 2008 Ruth Butterworth NRI  
 Improving Food Security and Access to Agricultural Markets through Grain Banks, Inventory Credit and Producer Marketing Groups. November 2008. Ruth Butterworth NRI  
 Learning Alliance Workshop on Project Cycle Management for Performance Improvement. Nov 2008.

### **Surveys**

Diagnostic Survey Report of Kunike and Kunike Barana Chiefdoms in Tonkolili District July 2005  
 Baseline report for Tonkolili District 2008. Njala University  
 Rapid Assessment of Household Livelihood Systems in Selected Urban and Peri-urban Settlements of Freetown, Sierra Leone. August 2008

### **Evaluations**

End of Project Evaluation Kholifa Mabang 2003-2006. Dom Kihara-Hunt  
 Observations on Best Practice. Dom Kihara-Hunt

## Annex 3.

Itinerary for Mid-term Review of Livelihood Security Programme in Sierra Leone March 4 <sup>th</sup> – March 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2009			
Dates	Day	Activity	Lead person
4 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	a.m. Discuss TOR with Country Director and presentation by LS Coordinator in Freetown  Meet Kevin Gallagher, FAO Country Representative in Freetown (2pm)  COOPI International (Italian NGO) in Freetown (4pm)	Manoj  Tayo
5 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Meet Dr Bangura of Njala University  Meet Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (Dr. Sam J. Sesay) (3:30pm)	Tayo
6 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	Attend LS INGO Forum Meeting hosted by Concern in Freetown  Depart Freetown at 1:30pm (4hours drive to Magburaka)	Tayo
7 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	Field day 1: <b>Kholifa Mabang</b> , Group discussion with bee keeping group and a mixed Community Based Organization; seed store and seed committee in Rokankarr  Field day 2: <b>Kholifa Mabang</b> Group discussion with women group (small business enterprise Mamanso Kafla), adult literacy group and youth vocation group (Mathinkalol) and the community radio station in Mile 91.	Dennis + Tayo
9 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Field day 3: <b>Kunike</b> a.m. Discuss with Wana Farmers Association (2 <sup>nd</sup> level of FFS) in Petifu Mandugu Up scaling of Fish Ponds in Machian; Group discussion with Livestock & Eco stoves beneficiaries in Bongay and road rehabilitation works across. Seed Store committee in Mamanso Sanka .	Dennis + Tayo
10 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	Field day 4: <b>Kunike</b> a.m. Meet Tonkolili District Director of Agriculture and Team in Magburaka  p.m. Discussion with self help road beneficiaries in Massaba - Rogbum; Group discussion with Farmer	Dennis + Tayo

		field school inland valley swamp (IVS) members at Magbafth; Maconteh women's group and Eco stoves; and road rehabilitation works (Culvert works)	
11 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	Field day 5: <b>Kunike</b> a.m. Group discussion with Ground nut farmers in Makoni Line and Komrabai Makema; Visit IVS + PVSR plots Fothaneh Bana ; discussion with female household head in Magbanabom Youth group IVS;	Dennis
12 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	Field day 6: <b>Kunike</b> a.m. Visit Green Club in Makali; Livestock succession beneficiaries in Mafulka; Discussion with beneficiaries of Fish Ponds in Mamansi; Household IVS in Makama;  P.m. Meet Learning Alliance Members and Ruth Butterworth	Dennis
13 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	Field day 7: <b>Makeni</b> a.m. Meet with Institute Agriculture Research (IAR) supervisor in Makeni p.m. Review with livelihood team staff in Tonkolili including few Ministry staff Writing up	Tayo
14 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	a.m Meet Georges of European Union in Makeni.  Mid day: Travel to Freetown	Tayo
15 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday	Writing up	
16 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	a.m. Feedback to country management team in Freetown;	Manoj Kumar, Mark, Tayo Alabi and Waimiriu Munyinyi

**Annex 4. Notes on fieldwork****7<sup>th</sup> March 2009 Kholifa Mabang**

1. **Narrow Bridge constructed to link Matuku 1 & 2.** With assistance from Concern a pedestrian/motorcycle bridge was constructed to make a dangerous stream crossable all year round. This avoids a detour of several kilometres. We met several users including women taking goods to markets, a local councillor, school children and local male farmers. All were regular users of the bridge and assured us that, in addition to the convenience, the bridge enabled children to go to school and that safety was no longer an issue. There had been several fatal accidents in before the bridge was built and many of the users showed us scars from injuries they had received when crossing the river at flood times. The Councillor was confident that the community would maintain the bridge.

2. **Grain Store at Rokankrr.** Concern started work in Rokankrr in 2003 and built a community seed and grain store in 2005. At the store we met 23 villagers of whom 8 were women. During the long discussions the women participated enthusiastically and frequently. The store-keeper, who acts voluntarily, demonstrated very clearly his ability to keep adequate records and identify individual villager's stored product. The store was well managed with no hint of stale air, dampness or vermin. There has been no need for repairs yet but the villagers were confident that they would pay for repairs as and when needed.

The main changes to production since the store was built are

- avoidance of fire, pest and dampness leading to minimisation of seed loss and to better seed quality
- increases in acreage sown as seed loss is reduced and higher yields per acre as germination percentage is higher than previously.
- increases in income by being able to store crops safely and sell at times of good market conditions. Some 80% of those attending were sell rice and some 50% sell peanuts. As they have good storage facilities and good control over produce, they now separate varieties and this enables them to get better prices.
- Better quality produce as they can minimise stone contamination of the rice by using the drying floor in front of the store.

In addition to these benefits the villagers have been given agricultural training and in 2004 were supplied with high yielding non-hybrid rice variety. They do not use pesticide or fertilisers due to cost and lack of supply and credit. They claimed to have increased yields and reduced vulnerability by timelier planting and weeding, better trapping of pests, and diversification of planting to include cassava and groundnuts. A community group has been trained in improved bee keeping and provided with basic but essential safety equipment. They currently have 14 improved hives which yield 10litres of honey each and they extract the honey in an improved filter which maximises quality. Honey of this quality sells at L 4,500 per litre. Villagers claimed that honey is used in treating wounds and as a general health tonic. The realisation of the economic and health benefits of honey has played a significant role in stopping deforestation around the village. Although they were not aware of the role of bees in pollination they had noticed an improvement in vegetable yields close to hives.

Villagers seemed convinced that the efforts of the livelihoods programmes have led to a reduction in the hunger gap to three months from six. The Concern health programme has also operated in this village. In a participatory exercise the attendees listed and ranked benefits from Concern's inputs as follows (descending order):

- decrease in the hunger gap
- improved water supply
- improved sanitation
- strong community spirit
- food processing

They felt that there ranking understated community spirit as that had been important in common projects such as grain storage, water and sanitation and beekeeping. They maintained that women have had more benefits from the programmes to date although they are still more vulnerable than men. During the visit the easy interaction between the sexes in was quite striking.

In spite of the clear and significant improvements in social and economic terms there are still problems of food gaps, water shortages and physical access to the local market.

### **3. Support to Community Radio FM91.**

This community owned radio station broadcasts in Tonkolili district for eleven hours a day. It carries local news and is a potentially very strong means of communicating development materials such as HIV information, farming education, market prices, etc. It is currently relocating to a new site which will enable it to get a very reliable power supply to replace its unreliable and expensive generator supply. The new supply will be provided by a cell-phone company which will be paid in air-time.

Concern is helping to finance the shift and will get repaid by a package of air-time over the next two years. There should be good mutual strategic benefit in a long-term development partnership between Concern and FM 91.

### **4. Youth Training for Employment. Meeting held with a group of ten men and two women at Mathinka Lol.**

Altogether 50 youths, defined as people between age 17 and 35, have been trained in sun dried clay block making and basic building techniques including carpentry. The large group come from four villages. Altogether four women and twenty one men were trained in Mathinka Lol with a similar gender split at another centre. The women spoken to were very confident in their newly developed building skills. Two of them are widows and all have been trained to ensure inclusion in the economic activity of their village. One of them, whose husband died in the war and who has seven children, said she will support her family through her work and will be able to work because her older children will assist with looking after the younger ones.

The training has been approved by the Government Trade Centre and the graduates will be given government certificates. Following joint training the trainees were split into five groups. Each group has been registered with the Ministry of Social Welfare and has opened a bank account. The groups have a chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Each group has appointed a woman as treasurer because they have the reputation for better management of money.

The groups, now competent in basic house building, have already started work on building the new FM91 Community Radio Centre and have carried out some water and sanitation work in nearby villages. They have contracts lined up for a community centre and twenty two room houses for a tobacco company.

The confidence of the group was impressive. They all participated in discussions and were proud of their skills and the enhanced status which this has given them in their community. Empowerment was palpable. The sub-group names exude some of this confidence:

- Sorbeh – hard work
- Samakar – they are waiting for us
- Sappa – we said it

They do not see shortage of work as a danger. Rather they say that demand is building and that they will train some of their neighbours to help meet this demand and bring about economic improvement. One man claimed to have saved money by repairing his own latrine and others said they are confident they will be able to meet the costs of sending their children to school.

When questioned about the dangers of family break-up and/or HIV when working away from home for extended periods the group members said they were aware of the dangers but were clear that they wanted their economic opportunities to strengthen their families and not to destroy them.

### **5. Women's Adult Literacy group at Masimo Village.**

This is one of eight villagers in the adult literacy programme. We met sixteen women from a group of twenty four. The group has an age range from late teens to mid-forties but are happy that the dynamic works well with the younger women helping the older ones. The two teachers are men. Only one of the women had been to school but that was twelve years ago. They have just completed the first phase of six months training and are starting the second phase of a further three months.

The interactions and confidence levels in the group were very positive and encouraging. Most of the women spoke and the commonly agreed benefits were:

- Confidence as exemplified by being prepared to speak at meetings
- Ability to read, write and count – signs in Freetown, under-five health charts, etc.
- Improved ability to trade in Freetown. They can label and track their products.
- Ability to monitor their children's progress in school and to assist them with lessons. All the women send their children to school whereas most of them did not go.
- Awareness of further benefits of getting health and farming literature as their reading skills improve.

The group said there is encouragement from their husbands who see benefit in the support given to school going children and the better trading skills being developed. Some men want to join the group. The women claimed that literacy for them will result in better employment opportunities that literacy for men – mainly because the lower level jobs they will qualify for jobs that men would normally do e.g. petty trading.

As a group they farm together. This practice started before the Concern support but they say that the improved group dynamic has helped to improve their farming.

### **6. Women's Micro-enterprise Group at Caklesu Village.**

We met fourteen women of varying ages. They are members of a group of fifty four women who have formed an income generating group and taken a loan of Leones 2 million (US\$1 660) from Concern. They are ready to pay back the first half of this loan on time having made a surplus of Leones 1.1m during the last six months.

The large group has an account in the bank at Mile 91 but split the loan equally among three sub-groups each of which has a chair and a treasurer. The groups used the money as follows:

- Group 1. Bought and smoked fish and sold in the big market at Mile 91. After the fish season they bought and milled rice for sale at Mile 91 and then traded palm Oil. They made a profit of Leones 300,000
- Group 2. Bought flour in Waterloo and baked bread for sale locally and at Mile 91. They also traded vegetables. Their profit was Leones 400,000
- Group 3. Petty trading locally including producing and selling soap. They made a profit of Leones 400,000

The groups have used their profits to buy rice and to pay school costs. They could expand their business if they had more capital but interest on bank loans is high and then bank is loathe to give loans as they had bad experiences with loans to farmers.

The confidence of the women and their togetherness were outstanding as was their appetite for further business development. However they have a problem paying back a groundnut seed loan to government as the second groundnut crop has failed. This is a big problem in the area. Clearly they



have potential to be self-sufficient but may need more support for a longer time and need to move to more reliable forms of finance even if it is on an interest bearing basis.

### **Field visit to Kunike 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

#### **1. Mamanso Sanka Seed Committee**

The voluntary committee has seven men and six women. The committee is elected by the entire village. We met most of the committee along with many villagers with women in the majority. The committee improved varieties (ROK 3 and ROK 10) short duration rice seed from Concern in 2008. It stores the seed until distribution just before planting. Storage is in a pest free room but stacking could be improved.

One hundred and fifty kilos were distributed and so far 137 kilos have been recovered with full recovery expected soon. The recovered seeds will then be given to new clients. Clients are selected on the basis of being highly vulnerable heads of household with criteria such as, blindness, disabled, widowed, elderly and dumb people. The work of planting is carried out by their dependents. The villagers have agreed this system and there is no jealousy from richer people.

Yields were low prior to introduction of the new varieties but are reported to have increased up to 5-fold with the added advantage of the shorter duration allowing a second crop. The seed is non-hybrid and thus can be saved for production for several years. The taste is not as good as the traditional rice but there is an advantage that it swells well on cooking.

The emerging impacts are those families can repay the loan and still have seed for next year and a shorter hungry period – i.e. a period without rice. Even then they are eating more than before. They hope to eradicate the hunger gap by growing a bigger area, double cropping and continuing to improve seed quality. They can continue the seed process without Concern but unlike Concern intend to make a small interest charge – those who do not return seed or fail to pay interest will be locked out of the scheme. Altogether a good group with a clear mission built around equality and seemingly good organising skills.

#### **2. Self Help Road Groups on roads between villages.**

Villagers have been provided with picks and shovels by Concern and have widened the original footpath between their villages to a motor-able road with tree trunk bridges across small streams. We witnessed two groups at work. They do minor maintenance on the road weekly and a major job just before the rains. They obviously put a lot of work into it and see important benefits in terms of safer easier access to school for children, less danger from snakes, easier travel out for women in labour or people who are sick, traders coming in with medicines (we met one carrying a large battered suitcase stuffed full of drugs), and access for cars or motor bikes to buy grain. The road also gives them good access to Concern staff for training and programme planning. The most strident support for the road came from children on their way home from school.

This road scheme seems to be a good low cost and self-sustaining input.

#### **3. Petifu Madugu Farmer's Association.**

This association has 70 members of whom thirty are women. It arose from the Concern organised Farmers Field School set up in 2007. It is now registered with the Ministry of Social Welfare and has been promised training assistance by the Ministry of Agriculture. We met some 30 people of whom twelve were women

The association collects rice from members and also has a monthly money collection. Currently they have Leones 950,000 (\$320) in their account and some 3 tonnes of rice in store – storage could be better. They intend to sell the rice to poor people in their village at a reduced price during the hunger gap.

The Farmers Field School was a joint trials plot of one acre planned and managed by almost forty farmers. They tried new varieties, new crops such as soya beans and tried new cultural methods. The benefits claimed by the farmers were improved yields: better seeds multiplied and distributed: cash crops such as peppers planted systematically and yielding much more; better cultural methods for rice production including nursery management, plant spacing, weeding timing; better tillage for groundnuts, introduction of cassava as a hunger gap crop; etc.

They claim that their hunger gap has fallen to 3 months from 5-6 months and hope to eradicate it soon by better farming. Among the changes they quoted to show the impact of farm improvement were the purchase of chairs instead of poor quality benches, fees of more than \$30 paid for each child sent to school and better health as evidenced by skin quality. The latter is a first to me as an indicator and seems absolutely solid! Several people have bought radios and phone and two now have bicycles. They did admit that they still have some farming problems such as pest attacks. They claim that they need a rice mill.

The mill would help with producing good quality rice for sale and would reduce transport costs of getting produce to market. They could mill for several nearby villagers. They agreed to start some research in costs and other aspects of feasibility. Concern could usefully provide technical advice on this project.

As with almost all groups we met there did seem to be a very good spirit of cooperation and a real sense of hope about post-war life. As with other groups money for children's education was a big issue for them.

#### **4. Bongay Village. Animal stocking and eco-stoves groups.**

Forty five people, of whom twenty were women, attended the meeting. They began by explaining the animal scheme in which they were one of 216 groups participating. In 2006 ten people in their group each received either a goat or a sheep. The eight who received females had to give the first offspring to another person selected by the group and so on. Concern trained 20 para-vets to help with health management.

Animal recipients were selected by the scheme committee on the basis of their poverty level and included, widows, elderly people and female heads of households. This poverty basis continues for further distributions.

Production and fertility has been good and the incomes have been high. An adult goat sells for up to \$ 330 or the equivalent of 100kilos of rice. Foot rot is the main disease but generally the animals are thriving.

Among the benefits quoted are an increase in animal numbers, manure for composting, purchase of rice and money for school fees.

The same village had an eco stove project with one woman trained in how to make them and in turn she trained five people. We saw the stoves in operation. There is a drawback in that, as they are made of clay, they do break if left out during rain. However the benefits far outweigh this drawback and include, much lower use of wood, less smoke, quicker cooking, less time spent collecting wood ( enabling children to go to school, less pressure on woodland and greater safety as pots are more stable on the stoves than on rough stones.

In a participatory ranking exercise the villagers indicated preference for activities as follows:

- Seeds and tools
- Livestock
- Sanitation
- Stoves

They did not see any major bias in gender distribution of benefits. However they agreed that all activities were important in reducing the hunger gap - down from 5.5 to 3 months. Their plans for eradicating it centred on better cropping along the lines suggested by the Farmer Field Schools.

#### **10<sup>th</sup>. March 2009. Meeting with the Tonkolili District Ministry of Agriculture Team.**

The meeting was attended by the Director and his team of nine men and one woman. The secretary of the Council Agriculture committee also attended. While all spoke very favourably of Concern and the livelihoods work they said they had serious problems of lack of funds which meant very poor mobility and lack of inputs such as fertiliser, pesticide, medicines and seed. Only the Water Division official had a definite proposal to work with Concern as part of his work plan. The Women's Development Officer was the only one to be critical in stating that she felt Concern had missed an opportunity not to use the vegetable training section of her department with women in villages. The impression gained was that the staff members have reasonable technical knowledge but the paucity of resources has made them understandably conservative in what they attempt. There is a challenge for Concern in trying to stimulate them to look for 'what can be done' as opposed to accepting what cannot be done. For example the district farmers are crying out for soil fertility management which is practical but not based on inorganic fertiliser.

There is probably an issue of Concern being in danger of running a parallel service for poor villages but with much greater resources.

#### **Field visit to Kunike 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**1. Masamba and Rogbum (BRACE)** The meeting was attended by sixty people of whom 13 were women. The villages are three miles apart and the villagers have worked on a self help road project, suggested by Concern, to connect them. There is a problem with flooding and so some culverts are required. As with other road projects the benefits are increases in inward and outward trade, easier journey's to school for children, the use of hired motor bikes to take pregnant women to hospital for complicated deliveries and medical emergencies. Trade include selling in their villages of clothes, medicines, salt and shoes.

There was consensus that social cohesion between the villages has increased substantially because of the more regular interactions between people. Villagers viewed the social and economic changes arising from the roads, livestock, seeds and tools, well and sanitation projects as highly significant they ranked the benefits from the various projects as:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Number of people who felt the project was the most beneficial</b>
Seeds and tools, agricultural training	26
Roads	16
Livestock	13
Sanitation	2

This is consistent with feedback from other villages that the first priority is to produce more food for home consumption, then to generate income for school fees and health care. Following this money can then be spent on house improvements and consumer goods. There are six communities up to eight miles beyond Rogbum which are not yet connected by feeder roads. They are in the next phase of the road project but the villagers have already started work without assistance. The residents of Rogbum and Masamba see this as a good development as it will bring additional trade to them

**2. Farmers Field School at Magbrff Village. (MAPS).** The meeting was attended by 46 people of whom most were women. The villagers had a very difficult time during the war and left for another district. House had been burnt, relatives killed, food and cash looted and women raped.

They came back in 2005 and the school started in 2006. At that time they had few tools, no seed, poor housing and no food to keep them going while they planted crops. Concern assisted with rice and groundnut seeds, tools and hygiene education. Twenty five men and fifteen women formed the farmers' school which enabled them to share experience and try new cultural practices and seed varieties on a jointly farmed four acre plot. They then applied their learning on their own fields. A cluster of villagers were involved in the school. Among the new practices as row planting, more control over plant populations, better management of rice nurseries and more attention to timing of operations. They have also diversified cropping to include maize, sweet potatoes, cassava and soya beans.

The improvements in crop yields were very significant for all crops and for rice were up to 2.5 times previous yields. There are problems with monkeys and bush cows and they are not allowed to use guns as they have been banned post-war. Even so they are substantially better off. They claim to have reduced their hunger gap from five to three months and to be paying school fees and purchasing medicines. They think they can eliminate the hunger gap by increasing the area under cropping, further improving yields, additional diversification and processing to earn more money. The FFS was in addition to a road project which has enabled them to move big loads to the road junction without the restriction of carrying head loads only. They plan to register their school as a joint group. They have a committee of four men and four women and have a meeting every Wednesday. They still operate the joint plot and are very confident that they can keep the school going without help from Concern.

They ranked the benefits from the various projects as:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Number of people who felt the project was the most beneficial</b>
FFS, Seeds and tools, agricultural training	26
Well	16
Roads	13

Twenty one people said they thought most benefits came to children, twelve said men benefitted most and six thought women got the main benefit.

**5. Meeting with Meconteh Women's group working on Livestock and Eco-stoves.** All thirty members of the group attended. Before Concern's intervention the group began as a farm working group to earn money for school fees. They planted groundnuts and sold them to buy palm oil for trading. Concern helped them to organise properly with a committee and an executive group. They now pay a monthly membership of Leones 2,000 each, raised by individual petty trading, and have developed a reserve of 500 litres of palm oil worth which cost some Leones 600,000 but is now worth at least Leones 1,500,000. They also have a cash fund of Leones 980,000 and 750 kg of rice. They will use some for seed but sell 90% of their rice. They work at a subsidised rate on each other's farms but charge the full rate if they work on non-member's farms.

They have used their income to pay school fees for seven girls in junior secondary school and twenty five girls in primary school. They will not pay for boys to go to school. They have given loans to poor people for medicines and for burial cloth and have given loans to members for house improvements. They now have a community social mission which includes improving hygiene in their village and helping settle domestic disputes.

They showed me their group account and meeting book which verified all that they had told me. This book is written up by a male teacher as they are all illiterate. They hope to learn to read and write soon. They also want help with grain storage and a delivery room for mothers.

The strengthening of the group was seen as the biggest benefit from Concern's work but road development was a close second followed by a well, livestock and eco-stoves as joint third with HIV

training sixth and the provision of tarpaulins for grain drying last with only two women rating it best. They are confident that their association will survive Concern.

They had the same analysis of eco-stoves as the women of Bongay (see above). A point they highlighted was that the better safety of eco-stoves is very good for children who are often close to the fires when mothers are cooking. Clearly the vulnerability of eco-stoves to damage by rain is a major problem to be overcome if their undoubted safety, fuel efficiency and environmental protection benefits are to be achieved

**11<sup>th</sup>. March 2009. Meeting with Tonkolili District Council.** The meeting was attended by the Council Chairperson, C.E.O. Development Director and the District Coach. Generally the Council were very positive about the livelihoods work. They seemed to value the Learning Alliance and quoted the work done on Project Cycle management and Revenue Base and Collection. When probed as to whether or not this had led to change of practice and behaviour they gave examples such as the setting up of an M&E system for the district plan following training in Project Cycle Management and exclusion of Chiefdom Sections from grants if they were in arrears of tax.

The constraint thwarting the translation of capacity building theory into practices is that of lack of resources leading to immobility of staff and lack of finance for the implementation of practice. Concern will have to try to address this constraint if it is to be effective in capacity building.

#### **Field visits to Kunike 11<sup>th</sup>. March 2009.**

**1. Visit to Makone Line (BRACE).** Of the 32 people attending fourteen were men. The main activity of the group was groundnut farming but they had also had assistance with livestock restocking and culverts. They claimed to have reduced their hunger gap to 2-3 months from 5 through the sale of groundnuts. They live close to the main road and this must help with sales of crop. This proximity to facilities also helps for school going children. The meeting split into four groups and ranked activities in order of usefulness. Seeds and tools came top with health services second followed by livestock provision and roads. The main benefits were agreed as extra food, and better health

**2. Visit to Fothanehbana Village. (BRACE).** This village is a section headquarters village and the meeting was attended by almost one hundred people. The purpose of the meeting was to review the benefits of the FFS. They claimed that following their trials they have been much timelier in their farm operations, have planted groundnuts deeper, have planted in rows with better spacing and have introduced maize and sweet potato and cassava. Yields have improved and they are confident they can maintain the higher levels. The hunger gap has fallen from six to three months and they now have a range of alternatives to rice. They seem convinced that the improvements in yields are due to the FFS education and not just something that would have happened because the war ended. They are aware that with higher yields and double cropping fertility may drop but they are confident they can cope with this by using manure, compost, rotations and intercropping.

The most popular activities were the FFS followed by the road construction. The biggest benefit was more food and this was followed by better health. There was agreement that children benefitted most followed by women and then men. However, the improvement for women was that their workload was easier as they had better road access for collecting wood and for getting to market. It was thus an efficiency advantage rather than a role change or a responsibility/ respect gain.

**3. Visit to Magbanabom Village.** This visit was to look at an Inland valley Swamp rehabilitated by the youth of the village working with MADAM which is a local agency carrying out work for Concern. Some eighty people attended the meeting and they were mostly men. The project is now in its third year. It consists of 4.5 acres divided into 18 user plots. Older vulnerable people got the use of it for two years and it is now being used by the younger people who did the rehabilitation work. The younger people using it are relatives of the original users.

The idea for rehabilitation came from Concern, the Dept. of Agriculture did the survey and technical plan and the youth (aged 20-35years) did the work of building bunds and digging drains.

The people farming the land have used new seed and cultivation techniques as taught by Concern. Yields have improved with the result that there is more food and some crop can be sold for cash to help pay school fees. Farmers can retain good quality seed for the next year.

They seem to be aware of the danger of reducing soil fertility and one person suggested that they should start saving money to buy fertiliser. This was not a very popular idea as many farmers have fears that inorganic fertiliser ultimately causes problems. The idea that the swamp might dry was new to them but they said it had always had water all year and did not seem to think it would change – a good place to have some monitoring pits.

Other programme inputs in the village have included the introduction of cassava and groundnuts, tarpaulins for crop drying, a drinking water well, livestock distribution, fish pond development road development, latrines, bed nets and health training. In addition to the food and education benefits villagers suggested that there was now less dysentery and lower maternal mortality. In a straw poll they listed food as the biggest benefit with seeds and training as the best inputs, roads as second best and health as third. They said that children benefit most and women next.

When the first meeting was over there was a follow up with a group of ten women who are heads of households and who have been involved in a seeds and tools scheme. They had received groundnut seed and had planted the first crop in uplands. They were able to save seed for a second crop in the swamp lowland. They now have extra food, a source of income and a good seed source. While they appreciated the extra crop they felt that ultimately some youths will have to move out of the village to get full time jobs in surrounding towns. On the whole they held that this would be a good thing.

These women have also been involved in the health programme and some have been trained as traditional birth attendants (TBAs). There are now five TBAs for the two hundred women in the village and they are assisted by a full time trained nurse, paid by government, who works in the health post. There has been a health clinic in the village for two years and it will soon move into the new building built by Concern. The women are confident that this will lead to lower disease incidence and safer deliveries.

#### **Field visits to Kunike 12<sup>th</sup>. March 2009.**

**Visit to the green Club at Mahali Catholic Secondary School.** The school has four agriculture classes a week for all pupils. Two classes are theory and two practical with students learning vegetable and fruit trees planting. The aim is to teach practical gardening and build environmental awareness.

There are forty children from forms 1-3 in the club membership of which is voluntary. There are 19 girls and 21 boys. The current intake is new and they have not yet learned much. Their knowledge about compost, which they said they had learned about, was scant and not very practical.

The club members were split into three groups to brainstorm what they thought were the most important issues they had learned. The results are in the following table.

<b>Group 1. Led by Moses.</b>	<b>Group 2 led by Ibrahim</b>	<b>Alhassan</b>
Eco-stoves	Cashew and Acacia tree planting	Vegetable production
Tree planting	Eco-stoves	Eco-stoves
Vegetable production	Compost making	Tree planting

Very few children have eco-stoves at home. More than half of the members claim that they now plant vegetables at home. Twenty five said they make compost at home and all said they have planted some fruit trees.

Overall the club was not impressive. The students lacked confidence and the school garden was not well managed. Two girls asked if Concern could provide extra tools as the school equipment gets locked up and the club cannot always use it. The teacher was not very forthcoming but seemed to have been a temporary stand in for the normal Green Club teacher.

So the idea is good but the implementation seemed to be poor. However, it may be that the children were nervous in front of a foreigner and it must be accepted that one poor outcome does not mean that all Green Clubs are poor. In fact we did pass by another club but did not have time to stop and review their activities but they were cultivating a swamp and at first sight it looked quite good.

#### **Visit to Mafulka Village (BRACE).**

The meeting was attended by twelve men and nine women. They had lost 16 bushels of rice that morning as a result of a bush fire.

The main point of discussion was the programme of distributing livestock. This had been carried out by Concern but in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture which had trained para-vets. The para-vets help to train animal recipients. One para-vet was in the meeting and had received stock. To date eight animals had been distributed and there were now six offspring.

Pre-war most people had animals but all were stolen. This means that they have experience of looking after animals. They had asked for animals because they need to generate cash and know that animals are a good income source. Targeting had been through a process of identifying vulnerable people and then holding a ballot among them. Those who got animals in the first distribution have to pass on offspring to other people based on the result of the ballot.

They are confident they can keep the scheme going as they have experience of animal keeping and now have the help of the para-vet. They are confident that they have enough fodder even if the herd numbers expand markedly. One woman was extremely optimistic. She has just handed over the first kid to another beneficiary and is looking forward to income starting soon. Her own child is undernourished and she needs money to feed it properly and for school fees in due course. Although the scheme members are positive they ranked roads and bridges as giving the best benefits with better crop production second and livestock a poor joint third with the drinking water well and just ahead of fish production.

**4. Visit to Manamase Village.** The visit was to look at the rehabilitated fish ponds. Eight women and seven men attended the meeting. There were fish ponds in the village before the war and there had been technical assistance from the Government Fish Pond Station at Makale. The villagers asked Concern for help in rehabilitation and in developing extra ponds and this started in 2007. It included tools, pipes to control water flow, fertiliser to control water acidity and nets. The villagers had to do a lot of work. Concern arranged for training for villagers in fish pond management.

The fish reared are Tilapia with fingerlings are available from Makali. Food is a mix of rice bran, potato leaves and termites. There are problems of predation by snakes and birds. Fencing is a costly and incomplete control method and so the options used are to catch predators in traps, kill them and to deter them by keeping the borders of the ponds clean. There are other problems and most notably water control and marketing. Concrete works around the ponds could solve the water control issues and culverts on the roads would help to solve marketing problems.

There are now some 150 ponds in the village and three were built newly by concern for vulnerable people. Each pond is 200sq.m. and each can be harvested three times a year with catches of 30 kgs or more each time and an income of some Leones 450,000 per annum. Apart from the income benefits villagers eat fish and this has a big beneficial effect on diet and health.

**Visit to Makami village.**

The purpose was to review the development of the inland valley swamp. Nine women and ten men attended. The swamp existed before the war and for many years they had been given assistance by Chinese people but all the Chinese left during the war. With the interruptions to cropping caused by the war the bunds fell in to disrepair and there was no fertiliser available. Concern helped with food for work and tools to rehabilitate 40 acres.

When asked why they needed help with something they already knew the villagers said that they had lost tools and had no seed. Concern helped with composite high yielding seeds which give better yields in spite of not using fertiliser. The produce tastes better than the older varieties and so they get a better price. They can now get two crops a year instead of the one before rehabilitation.

They are confident they can minimise soil depletion by rotations using beans and groundnuts and by deep ploughing. They do have pest problems and especially grass-cutting worms, rats and toads. They also had problems pre-Concern with poor seeds.

The initiative was theirs with support from the Concern community worker. The benefits are more food and sales of crop for income. They have started to build a mosque and are giving loans at low interest to others for school fees. They will use the surplus cash to extend the area under the swamp.

The main benefits are the extra food and greater crop diversity which has helped to reduce the hunger gap from 6 months to its pre-war level of three months. In spite of the benefits they still need tarpaulins for crop drying, road development and fish ponds and livestock.

**Meeting with local members of the Learning Alliance in Magburaka.**

Twenty people attended including representatives of the District Council, The Department of Agriculture, MADAAM, SASDA, TDDA, SLRCS, BASAL-MADA, the UK Natural Resources Institute and Concern.

Each agency commented on the learning they had had from the Alliance. Among the significant topics raised were:

- Awareness of the implications of climate change
- Situational analysis
- Basic management such as long term planning, financial reporting, M&E, narrative reporting
- The importance of adult literacy
- The need for the Council to show continuing commitment to the People's Forum
- The value of sharing information and of inter-agency coordination
- Inclusion of the disabled
- Food as a right
- How to stimulate community participation

While this is very positive not many Alliance members offered examples of changed organisational behaviour arising from the sharing. Their benefits were largely how to do existing activities better. There were also issues about changes in personnel meaning that there was discontinuity in Alliance membership and hence a loss of learning when new members came and did not know what their organisation had learned previously. This is worrying as one of the main purposes is to enhance member capacity rather than improve the individual skills of members. When pressed some agencies did provide examples of changed behaviour such as a reduction in the area of operation to focus on better quality – having learned how to plan and implement better.

Even then the level of discussion was generally not very strategic and did not focus on how to develop positive interactions between agencies on issues which they can not manage optimally by themselves



e.g. influence on Council policies, building economically viable commercial farming organisations, linking to national development plans.

Two other slightly disappointing features of the Alliance were the absence of any long term learning programme around issues which are of substantial importance to development prospects e.g. environmental degradation, animal disease and the minimum amount of published material which might disseminate learning.