

Report on Implementation of Youth-at-Risk Project Activities - Second quarter 2023

Introduction

The National Council for Civic education and Democracy (NaCCED) with support from UNDP implemented the Youth at Risk for Community Resilience and Peace Building Project activities in Tonkolili and Kenema Districts that are designed to prepare beneficiaries who are mainly youth for the 24th June multi-tier elections, so that they will keep the peace before, during and after the June 2023 elections.

The intention of the National Council for Civic Education (NaCCED) was to continually engage youths and others in other communities to increase knowledge on civic education, leadership, elections and rule of law. It is our mandate to deepen democracy and good governance, promote national cohesion and sustainable development through civic education and development communication, civic engagement, community mobilization and knowledge management. Therefore, NaCCED is better positioned to engage these youths and otherwise fringe groups, with a view to improving their knowledge and understanding of the issues of state, develop their civic skills and nurture their civic disposition.

The mix of activities implemented were based on the belief that: if citizens (especially young people and vulnerable communities) are empowered to understand and constructively participate in development processes by engaging their elected leaders, it will further consolidate the peace and cohesion that Sierra Leone has continued to enjoy over the last 20 years

Project specific objectives

The overall goal was to ensure that youth (men and women) are empowered and included in decision-making processing in their communities in the target Districts. But specifically, the project intended.

- I. To increase knowledge of young and vulnerable communities on civic roles and responsibilities, elections, and leadership and
- II. To mobilise, organize and support young people and vulnerable communities into a cohesive group for an active participation towards their own development.

Description of Activities

- Provide non-formal civic education and leadership training sessions to youth at risk (Including Youths and women in 6 Additional Communities).
- Training workshops on leadership, elections, civic rights, responsibilities and obligations to the state. As well as active participation in governance.
- Media engagement- Radio discussions, production of a theme song, production and airing of jingles and production of information, education and communication materials ie. T-shirts, posters and banners

- Open Space Edutainment Sessions provided – popular artists and/or cultural group entertainment with theme messages for youths at risk.
- Support Peace ambassadors, Peers educators and CHWs to conduct outreach activities on peacebuilding, drug abuse, SGBV in other communities.
- Support to Peace ambassadors and peer educators to conduct outreach activities on peace building and drug abuse
- Youth –duty bearer dialogue sessions - Town hall meeting for interactive sessions with youths on non-violent election, drug abuse and peace building

Activities implemented

Activity 1: Non-formal civic education and leadership training

Training workshops were conducted in all beneficiary communities including the newly established communities, which were made up of purely women participants. The training focused on civil rights and responsibilities, Elections and leadership, Rule of law and diversity. The overall aim was to cultivate good citizenship and respect for diversity and rule of law especially during the election period. It is the right of every citizen above 18years to vote in elections but equally so, it is the responsibility of all to maintain the peace by avoiding violence because we believe these are what good citizens should do for their communities and country.

Communities that were trained included Simbeck, Gombu, Largo, Hangha, Talia, Mano-Junction, Combema, Giema, Konjo, Loppa and Kpandebu in Kenema District. Yoni Bana, Mathibo, Mile 91, Court Barray, Old Magburaka town, Manempeh, Rowalla, Makeni Road, Ropulun, Masanga, Masenge, Rochen and Gaidema in Tonkolili

The methodologies used during workshops were interactive and participatory with maximum recognition of the knowledge, perspectives and experiences of the participants. The essence of it was to ensure ownership on the part of the beneficiaries. During workshop sessions, facilitators used a wide range of participatory learning approaches including group work, participatory talks, questions and answers, brainstorming, role plays etc. The essence of these was to enhance active engagement of all participants, ensuring that weak participants are able to overcome their limitations and contribute meaningfully in discussions. Concerns of participants were captured for the attention of the Director of Programmes and Research. Workshop daily "checking in and checking out" were done in order to ascertain the comprehension level of the participants.



Activity 2: Duty-Bearer Dialogue Forum

Chieftdom level duty bearer dialogues were first organized and later cascade to district level. Concerns from the chieftdom level were brought to district level for duty bearers to engage youth at risk on their concerns. The sessions were interactive with broad participation. The sessions were a one day event at chieftdom levels as well as district level. The chieftdom level dialogue took place in Dam chieftdom and Kholifa Rowalla chieftdom in Kenema and Tonkolili district respectively.

The rationale was to ensure that youth at risk and other youths will participate in the 2023 elections well informed and without violence before, during and after. The strategy was to create a platform for youth at risk to engage stakeholders where frequently asked questions, suspicions and speculations by youth will be answered and doubts cleared. Dialogue was used as a peace building strategy because when youth understand the different and critical roles of duty bearers, they will ask questions and keep the peace.



Youth-Duty bearer Dialogue sessions in Kenema and Tonkolili respectively

The different duty-bearers who have the political and moral obligations and responsibilities to respond to issues raised by youth at risk at the chieftdom level duty bearer dialogue as well as the district level dialogue session are summarized in the table below:

Summaries of Issues discussed and the targeted duty-bearers.

No	Duty-Bearer	Concerns Raised by the Youth
1	Electoral Commission, Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential violence eruption at polling stations ▪ Clarity on obscure voter ID Cards ▪ Can those without voter ID cards, but with registration slips allow to voter? ▪ Limited voter education for first time voters ▪ Potential for multiple voting
2	Political Parties & PPRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tendency for corruption at polling centers on polling day ▪ Promotion of hate speeches ▪ Incitement of political party related youth ▪ Threat to public security and peace ▪ Exposure of youth to drugs and substance abuse ▪ Wearing of party colours on polling day ▪ Political misinformation and disinformation to the public ▪ Malicious political propaganda
3	Security Sector: Police, Military & ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excessive use of force ▪ Unwarranted application of MAC – P ▪ Over-subscribed presence of security personnel on the streets and at polling stations ▪ Police are most times reactive, rather than proactive.
4	National Youth Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marginalization of youth ▪ Limited livelihood opportunities for youth
5	Human Rights Commission & Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stigmatization, prejudice and discrimination against youth, particularly persons with disabilities ▪ Negative perception that youth are trouble makers ▪ Youth always considered as suspect category
6	Civil & Traditional Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth migration to urban areas due to traditional structures and systems ▪ Limited inclusion in decision-making ▪ Limited monitoring and accountability of

		youth opportunities at local level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited accountability of locally generated revenue
7	Cross Cutting Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disregard for local content ▪ Discrimination against disable people ▪ Increased unemployment

Activity 3: Open space Edutainment sessions

Four open space Edutainment activities were held in the Kenema and Tonkolili districts, 2 for each. The edutainment exercise was a way to bring the project to community people and youths who are not part of the project and it gave opportunity to beneficiaries to share their experiences and the gains they've made so far since the start of the project. Popular local/cultural artists were invited to perform at open air concerts who will help draw out communities to listen to youth, community stakeholders and facilitators reinforce key messages and testimonies.



Edutainment sessions in Kenema and Tonkolili respectively

Activity 4: Media engagement

Three (3) radio discussion programme on civic education and peacebuilding were held in 2 locations (chiefdom and district) for each district. Radio discussions were led by beneficiaries. airtime was provided for the beneficiary youth to engage their peers and to cascade the knowledge gained during the trainings to the wider community youth. Considering the media markets in the beneficiary communities, beneficiaries in the Kholifa Ruwala chiefdom engaged SLBC Magburaka, those in Yoni chiefdom engaged Radio Gbaft, and those in Nongowa and Dama chiefdoms engaged SLBC in Kenema.

Production of civic education and peace building jingle in krio, Temne and Mende. Audio jingle were produced in the dominant languages in the communities (Mende, Temne, and Krio) and broadcasted on the identified radio stations reinforcing the key messages of peaceful coexistence and youth participation. The audio jingles were aired three times a day for 42 days. In preparing for peaceful elections, t-shirts and posters were produced and disseminated. Civic education and peacebuilding theme song was also produced and frequently used during edutainment sessions and while airing the audio jingles.

Activity 5: Workshop for Peace Ambassadors and Peer Educator for Community Outreach

A two-day workshop was conducted in each district for Peace Ambassadors, community health workers and peer educators to jointly develop civic, Non-violence and peace messages. Stipend was given to 27 beneficiaries (peace ambassadors, CHWs and peer educators) for seven (7) days in each district to conduct outreach activities on peacebuilding and drug abuse in Ataya bases, public markets. Ghettos and vehicle/bike parks.

Posters and T-shirts were produced to support outreach activities of peace ambassadors and peer educator.



Workshop for Peace Ambassadors, community health workers and peer educators

In conclusion, Activities carried out were to ensure that youth at risk have better understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and possibilities to participate as citizens. More so, youth at risk were able to develop leadership skills and abilities to engage with authorities, including local and traditional authorities and security agents in a non-violent manner.