QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

Youth at Risk as Resources for Community Resilience and Peace Building

Second Quarter Report 2023

Youth - Duty Bearer Dialogue on security and elections in Kenema

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Project summary

The Youth at risk project is generally intended to ensure that Youth at risk (women and men) are empowered and included in decision-making processes in their communities. To make sure this happens, NaCCED is using innovative means to empower youth at risk. The project therefore, aimed to support youth at risk in Tonkolili and Kenema districts to reintegrate in their community and families, and at the same time, advocate for institutional reforms that address the core question of recruitment of youth into cliques and gangs. The project is not only to mitigate the gang and cliques' activities and their impact on youth at risk in the target areas but to address factors that drove youth to join gangs and cliques. Youth empowerment and inclusion is therefore promoted through civic education, livelihoods generation, and political participation in decision-making spaces.

Civic education and counselling activities are promoted to enable the reintegration of youth at risk into families and communities and their participation in decision-making processes enhanced. Activities carried out are to ensure that youth at risk have better understanding of their rights, responsibilities and possibilities to participate as citizens. More so, youth at risk will develop leadership skills and abilities to engage with authorities, including local and traditional authorities and security agents in a non-violent manner. Some key achievements included;

1. Training workshops on civic rights, responsibilities and obligations to the state as well as active participation in governance. several training sessions were held during the duration of the project in the beneficiary communities. Beneficiaries from the 25 communities (18 old and 7 new communities) participated in trainings on conflict resolution and non-violence, Peace Education, Civic Skills and Responsibilities, Civic Disposition, and Participation to name a few.
2. Training of Peace ambassadors on basic conflict resolution and peacebuilding skills.
3. Open Space Edutainment Sessions provided –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.
4. Media engagement – radio discussions 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.
5. Production and Dissemination of IEC materials to promote peace and national cohesion messages (Radio jingles, posters, banners etc) - an audio jingle was produced in the dominant languages in the communities (Mende, Themne, and Krio) and broadcasted on the identified radio stations each quarter reinforcing the key messages of peaceful coexistence and youth participation. In preparing for peaceful elections, t-shirts and posters were produced and disseminated
6. Youth – Duty Bearer Dialogue Session – Chiefdom and District youth leaders (male and female per chiefdom/district where applicable) dialogue on a Youth issue in the respective Districts - chiefdom youth-duty bearer dialogue sessions were held in each of the target chiefdoms to understand the power relationships between Youth at risk and community duty bearers and their approaches to leadership in the communities. Project beneficiaries (male and female) from

each of the 9 (nine) beneficiary communities and duty bearers, including a representative each from the District Youth Council (DYC), Chiefdom Youth Council (CYC), Local Council, Paramount Chief (PC), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health or DHMT, The security sector (Police, ONS, RSLAF) Election management bodies (ECSL, PPRC) and Local Councilor were invited to the dialogue session. Agreed action point were followed up by the regional team.

The youth at risk as resources for community resilience and peace building project is welcomed by youths and the wider communities for its positive behavioural change. The Y@R project has help in transforming once difficult youth to critical community stakeholders. The Y@R have changed attitudes and behaviors, with a reduction in anti-social behaviors such as drinking and smoking, gambling and 'rudeness' (at least in during the youth – duty bearer sessions), as well as less stealing and less prostitution. Youths can now party and have games without any fights occurring, which had been common in the past. Beneficiaries in general confirm an increased participation in decision-making and other community activities

69% of project activities have been implemented and the remaining 31% will be implemented in September 2023. The Y@R project will continue creating the platform for youths to engage their duty bearers to ensure they are active participant in the development process of the country. Moreover, Youth ambassadors will be supported to organise outreach activities in their various communities to identify and help resolve conflict but also help in settling minor disputes in their groups to ensure they stay as a unite and carry out project activities

Project Results

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-shits, 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 peacebuilding

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. Three hundred and ten (310)participant in all benefited from the trainings. Of this 310 participants, one hundred and fifty six (156) were 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 and after the election period. It is the right of every citizen above 18 years 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 Gaindema 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.

Post training evaluations show that the trainings were relevant and timely as they created understanding on civil rights and responsibilities as well as citizens obligations in maintaining the peace of the state. Participants promised to maintain the peace and resist violence

Activity 2: Duty-Bearer Dialogue Forum

Chiefdom level duty bearer dialogues were first organized and later cascade to district level. Concerns from the chiefdom 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 chiefdom levels as well as district level. The chiefdom level dialogue took place in Dam chiefdom and Kholifa Rowalla chiefdom in Kenema and Tonkolili district respectively. Two hundred and thirty five in total participated in the dialogue, which included two hundred and twenty five beneficiaries and ten duty bearers. Of the 225 beneficiaries, 125 were females and 100 were males

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. Several action point were agreed upon, which were followed up to ensure there was transparent and peaceful elections process. Duty bearers present thanked the organisers for the platform to engage youths, which they acknowledged was invaluable to ensuring peaceful and credible elections

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 chiefdom 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	Action point
1	**Electoral Commission, Sierra Leone**	▪ 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	▪ All voters to go home after voting and allow security forces to do their work ▪ As long as you are registered you will vote ▪ Voter education app shared with beneficiaries
2	**Political Parties & PPRC**	▪ 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	▪ No political party colours and supporters allowed at polling stations ▪ Don't believe everything on social media. Listen to credible information from the election management bodies
3	**Security Sector: Police, Military & ONS**	▪ 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.	▪ Security forces undergoing trainings to manage elections ▪
4	**National Youth**	▪ Marginalization of youth	▪ Opportunities for youth

	Commission	▪ Limited livelihood opportunities for youth	empowerment
5	**Human Rights Commission & Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion**	▪ Stigmatization, prejudice and discrimination against youth, particularly persons with disabilities ▪ Negative perception that youth are trouble makers ▪ Youth always considered as suspect category	▪ Polling stations will be disability friendly and there is provision for tactile ballots papers for the vision impaired
6	**Civil & Traditional Administration**	▪ 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 ▪ Limited accountability of locally generated revenue	▪ Youth to be involved in politics
7	**Cross Cutting Issues**	▪ 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, two in each district. 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, which help draw out communities to listen to youth, community stakeholders and facilitators reinforce key messages and testimonies. The events attracted over five hundred people mostly youths. Messages to maintain the peace before , during and after elections were central but also respect for the rule of law was also emphasised. Drug free and non-violence messages were also aired

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. These radios cover the entire district and beyond and evening listenership is usually very high. It is estimated that over 5,000 must have listen to the discussions in each district. Key messages included; Non-violence elections, Drug free youth, Elections are your civil rights but maintaining rule of law and peace are your responsibilities

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, 12 females and 15 males (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. Training topics included; Human rights, civic rights and responsibilities, diversity, leadership and elections, Rule of law, Non-violence and peace building as well as peaceful coexistence and gender roles

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

Gender equality, and empowerment of women, youth and persons with disability

Conscious effort was made to ensure that there was equal participation of males and females and in some instances we had more females than males. Premium was given to female to engage duty bearers in our dialogue fora to articulate women's issues. The women beneficiaries were more active in Kenema district than in Tonkolili district as there are more group leaders and peace ambassadors that are female in Kenema than in Tonkolili district. This might not be unconnected with the successes of the Kenema district in terms of progress made in their Village loans and savings associations and their farming activities. More youth are starting their own independent businesses and others are getting involved into farming

Key Challenges:

Although the project is considered very successful so far, there were challenges that impacted the smooth execution of the project. They include

1. The participants of the new communities added were elderly females, who were mostly farmers and traders and can't read or write. The facilitator had to rely on someone to interpret every statement during the informal civic education training.
2. Fund disbursement for implementation of activities are mostly delayed, which puts unnecessary pressure to implement activities
3. Delays during inflationary period reduce purchasing power and real monetary value of the Leone. This affected the quantity of fuel for vehicles and other logistics

Project Risks and Issues

#	Description	Impact & Probability	Risk Treatment/ Management Measures	Treatment Timeline

	Enter a brief description of the risk. It should include future events and potential causes.	(1: Not Likely; 2: Low Likelihood, 3: Moderately Likely, 4: High Likely, 5: Expected) Enter **impact** based on a 1-5 scale (1: Negligible, 2: Minor, 3: Intermediate, 4: Extensive, 5: Extreme)	What actions have been taken/will be taken to manage this risk? (For one risk, there can be more than a treatment. Thus, include as many as treatment needed)	(dd.mm.yyyy)
1.	Politicians and other people who use the groups for selfish reasons could try to keep doing business as usual. This will undermine participation and consequently project achievements.	4, 5	Regular engagement with critical community stakeholders including representatives from all groups to fully understand personal and national benefits of the project.	June 2023
2.	Participation of gangs with national structure could be influenced by superior members in the capital city. This will undermine progress and cause delay of activities and overall accomplishment.	3, 5	Identify and engage heads of such groups and if possible get them involved with community outreaches.	June 2023
3.	Insincerity on the part of the target groups due to loyalty to their cause and desire to maintain identity could undermine project objectives.	4, 5	Establish trust through participatory community dialogue sessions	June 2023
4.	Other categories of community groups not targeted by the project could feel left out. This will get them jealous and consequently antagonize beneficiary groups.	3, 4	Regular engagement with critical community stakeholders including representatives from all groups to fully understand the scope and objectives of the project.	June 2023

Lessons Learned

The non-formal civic education trainings were well organised with active participation of project beneficiaries. Similarly, the Youth-Duty bearer dialogue sessions as well as the edutainment sessions were well organised and youth were able to ask critical questions and received satisfactory responses from the duty bearers present. The successes of these events were partly due to the active involvement

of the District youth council, who were charged with the mobilisation of youth and the Regional coordinators of NaCCED, who also ensures the presence of duty bearers. We have learnt that effective collaboration has to delegate task and ensure follow ups. Also because the beneficiaries were allow to own the process, they participated in the radio discussions after receiving trainings and were confident on air disseminating peaceful, nonviolence and drug free messages. We learnt that when beneficiaries are empowered, they can take action to change more youth in their communities and the district

The youth at risk as resources for community resilience and peace building project is welcomed by youths and the wider communities for its positive behavioural change. The Y@R have changed attitudes and behaviors, with a reduction in anti-social behaviors such as drinking and smoking, gambling and 'rudeness' (at least in during the youth – duty bearer sessions), as well as less stealing and less prostitution. Youths can now party and have games without any fights occurring, which had been common in the past. Beneficiaries in general confirm an increased participation in decision-making and other community activities

The problem of cliques and gangs is nation-wide. High unemployment and pervasive poverty constitute the dominant motivating factors that push youth to join cliques and gangs. Given the lack of economic opportunities, association with groups is often perceived as a source of income. Experience worldwide indicated that demobilization and reintegration of members of violent gangs are based on processes of empowerment that includes education, economic inclusion and political participation. IF youth at risk are empowered through civic education and counselling on prevention/treatment of substance abuse and are included in decision-making processes in their communities. Then the incentives for youth at risk to join gangs and cliques will reduce significantly. This will mitigate the exploitation of youth at risk for political gains and of young women for sex work and SGBV; and the voices of youth in decision-making will become stronger; thereby contributing to sustaining the peace and social cohesion in Sierra Leone. Because the un-mitigating power of cliques and gangs is recognized as threat to national security and peace. It is a major force behind sexual exploitation of girls with the number of sex workers now exceeding 200,000.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The Y@R project has help in transforming once difficult youth to critical community stakeholders. The Y@R have changed attitudes and behaviors, with a reduction in anti-social behaviors such as drinking and smoking, gambling and 'rudeness' (at least in public), as well as less stealing and less prostitution.

Y@R activities to be scaled up to include several districts in Sierra Leone as the problem of cliques and gangs is pervasive. A strong civic education component should be emphasized in any future endeavor. Civic education and counselling activities should be promoted to enable the reintegration of youth at risk into families and communities and their participation in decision-making processes enhanced. Civic education ensures that youth at risk have better understanding of their rights, responsibilities and possibilities to participate as citizens. More so, youth at risk will develop leadership skills and abilities to engage with authorities, including local and traditional authorities and security agents in a non-violent manner.

The Y@R project will continue creating the platform for youths to engage their duty bearers to ensure they are active participant in the development process of the country. Moreover, Youth ambassadors will be supported to organise outreach activities in their various communities to identify and help resolve conflict but also help in settling minor disputes in their groups to ensure they stay as a unite and carry out project activities

Financial Status

Donor	Budget NLe	Expenditure during the Reporting Period	Cumulative Expenditure	Budget Balance (NLe)	Percentage of Delivery
UNDP	NLe1,380,860	NLe 948,580	NLe 948,580	NLe 432,280	68.69%
Total	**NLe 1,380,860**	**NLe 948,580**	**NLe948,580**	**NLe 432, 280**	**68.69%**

Annex-Result Framework

(As attached in the LOA/RPA, please report the achievement under each indicator)

Expected Outputs	Indicators	Baseline	Target	Achievement/Actual				
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Output 1:	1.1:							
	1.2:							
	1.3:							
Output 2:	2.1:							
	2.2:							
	2.3:							
	2.4:							
Output 3:	3.1:							
	3.2:							
	3.3:							
	4.4:							

Additional Communication and Visibility (Photos/Media Links).

https://www.nacced.gov.sl/2023/08/22/national-council-for-civic-education-and-democracy-engages-communities-in-tonkolili-and-kenema-destrict/