

EBOLA RECOVERY IN SIERRA LEONE

BUILDING PEACE AND PREVENTING CONFLICT



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Over 18 months, the project will boost both national and local capacity to prevent conflict, by strengthening early warning and quick response systems and by supporting a set of networks and initiatives to identify and mediate disputes and build consensus on divisive issues.

Expected results:

Establishing and strengthening a national and local early warning early response system, by building the capacity of key state and non-state bodies to monitor, analyse and act on the causes of conflict, and support to district and community networks to warn against and mediate disputes and planning for nationwide conflict analysis and prevention exercise.

Local governance structures better able mediate and facilitate dialogue, through systematic capacity building efforts, community engagement and support to improving the justice sector.

Improved collaborative leadership capacities on issues of national priority that emerged from dialogue, through capacity building with youth groups, political parties and inclusive structures for dialogue.

Enhancing social cohesion through strengthening and the effective use of media, support independent media to better investigate, report, broadcast and boost dialogue and accountability.

UNDP will work with the Office of National Security, the West African Network for Peace building, the All Political Parties Association, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Youth, the National Youth Commission, Provincial Security Committees (PROSEC) and District Security Committees (DSC). UNDP will build on existing partnerships with key civil society organizations and media organizations with extensive reach.

Why it matters:

In terms of UN peace building support to Sierra Leone, 2014 was marked by the transition from the UN Integrated peace building Mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) to the UN Country Team and the sudden onslaught of Ebola.

Sierra Leone made significant strides in achieving greater social, political and national cohesion in recent years, but the Ebola outbreak exposed the country's structural fragility and precipitated several incidents of violence and tension, raising questions about overall social cohesion across the country.

These tensions have been exacerbated by a number of contributing factors such as:

- The ability to resolve household conflicts has been hit as many heads of families became victims of Ebola.
- Sierra Leone's social fabric disintegrated through trauma associated with mass burials and the non-ceremonial disposal of bodies.

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- The ban on traditional practices such as caring for the sick, funeral rights, secret societies and public gatherings.
- The continued isolation of survivors and possible survivor's guilt.
- The introduction of the ABC rule (Avoid Body Contact), which goes against the values of friendship, hospitality, trust and openness.

Sierra Leone registered 2,000 survivors in 2014. The majority are women (51%). A recent survey found that 96% of survivors experienced some form of discrimination, and over three quarters of the respondents would not welcome an Ebola survivor into their community. Stigmatization is of major concern and a challenge as Sierra Leone tries to build back.

While Sierra Leone already has a national early warning and response mechanism, it may need to go beyond security agencies and integrate the providers of basic services. It should also be expanded to cover the border areas to ensure a multi-dimensional response, should another crisis unfold.

The enhanced early warning and response mechanism should also monitor conflict indicators, such as growing social discontent, before it leads to violent public demonstrations. It should also apply mitigation measures as swiftly as possible.

Ebola created a drive for all Sierra Leoneans to unify, and join hands to stamp out the virus, bringing even fractious political parties together in the national interest. Harnessing and capitalizing on this unity and goodwill could help start a constructive dialogue around key issues, both now and in future.

Project activities:

The 18 month project will be implemented at the national and local levels, covering 3 districts affected by Ebola, namely Kono, Kenema and Pujehun.

The project will use a multi-pronged approach to strengthen national capacities on conflict prevention and peace building by reinforcing Sierra Leone's internal early warning and response capacity, anchored at grass-roots level and by building communities' internal mediation capacity to foster open and constructive dialogue.

The dialogue would identify and build consensus around key issues of public discontent and potential drivers of conflict. The issues identified will be further discussed with relevant stakeholders at various levels of Government to identify possible remedial actions and the best methods to boost social cohesion between communities and strengthen trust in the government. The project will support collaborative leadership capacities to deal with the key issues and will build the capacity of the media.

1. Strengthen national and local early warning and response system

- Strengthen the capacity of the Office of National Security (ONS) and District Security Committees on early warning early response as related to conflicts and tensions.
- Support cooperation and the coordination of national level multi-stakeholder groups with the ONS and other relevant state and non-state actors for conflict analysis and monitoring conflict indicators.
- Support the existing local network of facilitators (with women and youth as priorities) nationwide (chiefdom level) to be trained to provide basic psychosocial support and mediation of inter-group and inter-community tensions.
- Strengthen existing conflict indicators to be monitored over time as needed.

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- Strengthen existing reporting formats and mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on conflict indicators linking national level mechanisms with local level monitors.
- Building the capacity a of network of facilitators and the national multi-stakeholder group on conflict analysis, conflict monitoring, dialogue and facilitation;
- Planning for the conduct of a national level conflict analysis exercise in 2016 for longer-term engagement in conflict prevention.

2. Local governance structures better able mediate and facilitate dialogue.

- Give local network members mobile phones to ensure the timely reporting of critical issues,
- Support the conduct of a client satisfaction survey and community feedback on the quality of justice services.
- Support justice service improvement planning and the setting of local quality standards to meet public expectations and promoting dialogue between service providers and users.
- Facilitate mutual accountability processes, including the use of citizen charters, actual performance measurement systems and improved quality of service delivery.
- Boost local accountability by supporting transparent public budgeting and spending.
- Ensure three district councils work in a conflict sensitive way, including security structures, and programming through training local officers.
- Strengthen the government's outreach and build trust in the government through developing the capacity of district security structures on dialogue and facilitation.
- Conduct an assessment on the impact of Ebola on Sierra Leone's formal and informal conflict resolution capacities. A long-term initiative will be developed based on this assessment.

3. Improved collaborative leadership capacities on issues of national priority that emerged from dialogue.

- Support the existing 50 insider mediators to conduct constructive dialogue around issues of national interest including the impact of Ebola and stigmatization.
- Support the National Youth Commission to build the capacity of youth in dialogue and facilitation, including the youth wings of political parties.
- Support the building of the capacity of political parties and civil society on collaborative leadership and on key issues of national interest.
- Support spaces that promote multi-stakeholder dialogue around key national issues and engage with the Parliament.

4. Strengthening social cohesion through the effective use of media.

- Support the procurement of outdoor broadcasting equipment for the Independent Radio Network.
- Support the Sierra Leone Association of the Journalists in establishing a self-regulatory system to improve the quality of reporting and abide by international codes of conduct on broadcast reliability.
- Build the capacity of the media to improve quality of investigative journalism, advocacy and real time reporting.
- Facilitate discussions between the media and government around key issues to inform government policies and strategies, better inform the public and build trust between in the government.
- Develop the media's capacity as a facilitator of dialogue on key issues.

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Budget:

	Activity	Budget US\$
1	<i>Strengthen national and local early warning and response system</i>	1,200,000
2	Supporting local governance structures with increased capacity for facilitation and dialogue	800,000
3	Supporting collaborative leadership capacities on issues of national priorities	300,000
4	Strengthening social cohesion through the effective use of media	1,500,000
	TOTAL	3,800,000

Why UNDP?

UNDP's Security Sector Reform program was built to fill the void left by the departure of the UN mission in Sierra Leone in 2013.

UNDP has built up a strong working relationship with the security agencies and in particular, the Sierra Leone Police (SLP). A number of programs are ongoing including those relating to HR, Asset Management, Command and Control and Gender Mainstreaming.

Police specialists from the UN Standing Police Capacity have further strengthened the Rule of Law team. UNDP is actively involved in establishing the Independent Police Complaints Board and reviewing the 1964 Police Act, which will further legitimize the SLP as the main agency responsible for internal security in the country.

UNDP has placed a particular focus on border management and oversight and accountability of the national services. Complementary cross-border initiatives with Guinea and Liberia are essential therefore, UNDP are working closely with the Mano River Union to support border communities on both sides of the border and with UNDP Country Offices to ensure cross border engagements are complementary, strengthen border security and empower border communities

UNDP has an excellent working relationship with the Office of National Security who are the agency responsible for coordinating border security in Sierra Leone. UNDP provided technical support to development of the Sierra Leone Internal Security Strategy including their first Border Management Strategy in December 2014 and UNDP has conducted joint border assessments over the last 18 months.