

SIERRA LEONE IRELAND PARTNERSHIP

Éire i gComhar le Sierra Leone
Registered Charity CHY13975



The Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership

Annual Report and Accounts

2012/13

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Foreword

The Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership is one of the longest established country advocacy committees in Ireland. It is also one of the most effective. Since 2005 the Irish Government has invested €75 million in Sierra Leone, and we are confident that this involvement will continue and deepen. SLIP had a major role in bringing this about and hopefully will continue in building this partnership.

At the recent St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Freetown this was acknowledged by the Sierra Leonean Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Samura Kamara when he paid a generous compliment to the Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership.

I think it is important that those who have an interest in Sierra Leone, including the members of SLIP itself, realise how successful SLIP has been. It is clear from last year's activities and the plans for this coming year that SLIP will not be resting on their laurels.

On behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone I would like to thank the Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership for its advocacy for Sierra Leone, especially in the early dark days when Sierra Leone had few friends.

Joe Manning

Sierra Leone Hon. Consul General to Ireland

Our identity – Who we are

Sierra Leoneans living in Ireland

Irish people who have worked in Sierra Leone

Irish people with an interest in Sierra Leone

Civil Society Actors in Ireland

Civil Society Actors in Sierra Leone

Our mission – What we do

We keep the needs of Sierra Leone to the forefront in Ireland – with government, business people and development agencies

We are a point of contact about issues pertaining to Sierra Leone for the mass media

We offer advice to people visiting or moving to Sierra Leone

We organise events to bring together people with an interest in Sierra Leone

We support projects in Sierra Leone

Introduction

2012/13 has been a busy year for Sierra Leone, Ireland and the Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership (SLIP). From a Sierra Leonean perspective the year got off to a bad start with the Cholera epidemic in early 2012. The outbreak was the largest reported in Sierra Leone since 1970. At the end of 2012, 293 fatalities had been reported. The challenges of long term development for Sierra Leone were acutely exposed by the outbreak where, for example only 55 per cent of the population have access to clean water and only 13 per cent have a latrine¹. On a positive note, the parliamentary and presidential elections passed off without any major incidence in the last quarter of 2012. This was the third peaceful election to be held since the conclusion of the country's civil war in 2002. The elections very much serve as an indicator of the progress that the country has made along the road of recovery and development.

From an Irish perspective the period 2012/13 saw the country continue to grapple with a recessionary economic climate. This has resulted in a further reduction in the Overseas Development Aid budget. Despite this Ireland continues to play a leading role on the international scene as evident by its presidency of the European Union (EU). As part of the rotating presidency mechanism of the EU, it was Ireland's turn to take over the presidency for the first six months of

2013. This presented SLIP with the ideal opportunity to lobby the government on issues which it felt was impacting negatively on the lives of ordinary Sierra Leoneans. One such issue was the EU position on biofuels.

In early 2013, SLIP, in association with DÓCHAS, held a consultation with various stakeholders on the emerging issue of land acquisitions by foreign companies in Sierra Leone. The consultation was attended by two key note speakers, Joseph Rahall and Dr. Majda Bne Saad. Mr Joseph Rahall of the Sierra Leone environmental organisation, Green Scenery, provided a comprehensive local perspective on what has been happening in Sierra Leone, whilst Dr. Majda Bne Saad, writer and lecturer, on food security, outlined a more global picture. Discussions at the seminar emphasised the need for urgent action and, in particular, targeted the EU as a significant influence given its support for bio-fuels which has had the effect of incentivising many of the large scale land acquisitions currently taking place in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. The seminar culminated in a position paper that was presented to the Irish government.

As Sierra Leone geared towards elections in the last quarter of 2012, SLIP had the honour of hosting a talk by the eminent Sierra Leone academic, Tunde Zack-Williams. The talk was used as a platform for Tunde to launch his latest book, *When the State Fails: Studies on Interventions in the Civil War in Sierra Leone*. Despite the fact that Tunde's talk was held on a rainy and cold Friday evening in October, in

¹ Government of Sierra Leone Cholera Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Sierra Leone 2011

excess of 50 participants came to the talk, indicating once again that Sierra Leone has a resonance amongst people in Ireland.

The start of 2013 saw Sierra Leone's World famous Refugee All Stars take to the stage in the National Concert Hall in Dublin. Personally, I really enjoyed the night and I was delighted to see the band perform in Ireland. Speaking of the All Stars, I was delighted to be part of a pre-concern panel discussion that discussed Sierra Leone's past, present and future trajectory.

As I end this introduction to SLIP's annual report, I must make mention of a former committee member, Ibrahim Bah. Ibrahim has been a staunch supporter of SLIP over the last number of years. It was with great sadness that I learnt of his decision to move to South Africa and hence resign from SLIP. I think I speak on behalf of all members of SLIP when I say that Ibrahim will be sorely missed by the organisation. Finally, I want to thank the committee members for all their hard work and commitment over the last year.

Kai Matturi

Chairperson, Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership

The Annual Sierra Leone Independence Day Celebrations

SLIP celebrated Sierra Leone's fifty-first year of independence with the usual annual reception. Once again, the evening proved a success when many who had worked in Sierra Leone in various capacities, as well as Sierra Leoneans living in Ireland, renewed acquaintances and reminisced about their time there.

SLIP committee member, Seán Farren, addressed the gathering and spoke about the problem surrounding the large scale acquisition of land in Sierra Leone by large agri-businesses. Seán noted that much of the land is being acquired in order to grow crops for biofuel production. However, in doing so, local communities are being displaced, their rights ignored, and land is being lost to food production. Seán mentioned that SLIP would be using the period of Ireland's presidency of the European Union in 2013 to lobby on the issue and that it intended to organise a seminar to highlight the issue.

Incoming Chair of SLIP, Kai Matturi used the occasion to introduce himself and to stress that SLIP would continue to play an important advocacy role on behalf of Sierra Leone in Ireland.

Book launch by Professor Tunde Zack-Williams

So why did our people go to war with their tormentors? Put another way, why did the young people of Sierra Leone seek to ensure in the language of Frantz Fanon, that: 'The first shall be the last and the last first'?

This quote from Professor Zack-Williams's book launch at the Irish Aid centre in Dublin captures the essence of his talk on the theme, '*When the State Fails: Studies on Interventions in the Civil War in Sierra Leone.*' The talk was attended by a broad spectrum of people, from academics to members of Irish Aid. According to Professor Zack-Williams, the war was the product of a number of inter-locking factors:

- Poor Governance
- Poverty of Leadership
- Marginalisation and mistreatment of young people, depriving them of opportunities and rights of citizenship
- Marginalisation of some geographical areas of the country for almost thirty years of APC dictatorship. This is true of the South and East of the country under the prolong rule of the APC
- The destructive effects of World Bank and the International Monetary Fund imposed Structural Adjustment policies, which decimated the local 'infant

industry' as well as the nascent middle class

- Politicisation of the Police, Civil Service and the Armed forces



Kai (left) welcomes Professor Zack-Williams (right)

For the speaker, the war that broke out in 1991 should have come as no surprise to any keen observer of the Sierra Leone scene. Indeed, the surprising thing was the false image of 'business as usual' that surrounded the coronation of Momoh as successor to Stevens after the latter decided to hang up his political boots. Stevens had sensed trouble from the series of economic adjustments which had not only weakened the economic and social fabric of society, but also civil society.

“There was broad consensus that poor governance and mismanagement of the economy were pivotal casual factors in Sierra Leone’s decline”

The talk was followed by a questions and answers session which sought to unpack the arguments Tunde put forward in this talk. Not everyone in the audience agreed

with Tunde's political economy approach for explaining Sierra Leone's descent into chaos during the 1990s. However, there was broad consensus that poor governance and mismanagement of the economy were pivotal casual factors in Sierra Leone's decline. These are issues that the current political elites in Sierra Leone, along with their international partners, must remember when designing and implementing policy.



The question and answer session

After the talk Professor Zack-Williams signed copies of his latest book, *'When the State Fails: Studies on Interventions in the Civil War in Sierra Leone.'* For SLIP, the talk and book launch represented the first in what will hopefully be a series of seminars by well-known and respected Sierra Leonean and Irish researchers and academics on contemporary Sierra Leonean politics, economics and society. Such events will allow SLIP to influence the Irish public and policy makers, amongst others by showcasing state of the art knowledge on issues relating to Sierra Leone.

Land for Food or Fuel: Who loses in Sierra Leone?

SLIP, in association with DÓCHAS, held a consultation on 15th February 2013 with various stakeholders on the emerging issue of land acquisitions by foreign companies in Sierra Leone.

As well as members of SLIP, the seminar was attended by representatives from the Spiritans, Concern, The deBorda Institute, Department of Politics and Public Administration University of Limerick, Plan Ireland, World Vision, and the Department of Foreign Affairs amongst others. Joseph Rahall of Green Scenery, a local civil society organisation in Sierra Leone, and Dr. Majda Bne Saad, a retired academic from University College Dublin, were the key note speakers at the seminar.

The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the impact of large scale land acquisitions by multi-nationals in Sierra Leone for the purpose of growing oil palm and sugar cane for the production of bio-fuels and to explore problems associated with these acquisitions. Some of the problems are the curtailment of traditional rights to land, the exploitation of local labour, the displacement of land for food production and the resultant increase in food prices, and the violation of democratic rights. The proposed outcomes of the seminar were:

- a report for submission to the Irish government and through it to the EU during the term of Ireland's Presidency of the EU

- a programme for a public awareness raising campaign for the Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership



Joseph and Majda respond to questions from the audience

The seminar acknowledged the problem which faces the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL). It is dependent for 50% of its revenue on foreign aid and wants to reduce that dependency. It is trying to do so at a time when donor countries are cash strapped themselves.

The GOSL revenue source which is attractive to foreign investors, since the Sierra Leone Trade & Investment Forum held in London in 2009, is land. The seminar highlighted the gap between the promises made and their delivery by the companies involved in the land lease deals, with GOSL, such as the absence of benefits in infrastructure to the local community, and employment on a daily wage basis, at minimum wage rates.

“Besides the silent emergency of diminishing food supplies, the other international factor relevant to local land grabbing in Sierra Leone is the confused

debate about switching from fossil fuels to bio-fuels”

The seminar also considered the international context of these local developments in Sierra Leone under the heading of the causes and challenges of the global hunger crisis. The increasing food insecurity of Sierra Leone is reflected worldwide. It has been a global issue since 1973, but in recent years new triggers of crises have been added. These are climate change, oil prices, and the conversion of food crop production to bio-fuel crop production. It is being referred to as a silent emergency.



Audience members pose questions to the panellists

Besides the silent emergency of diminishing food supplies, the other international factor relevant to local land grabbing in Sierra Leone is the confused debate about switching from fossil fuels to bio-fuels. The case for the switch centres on the possibility of reducing CO2 emissions. However, the unstated case

may also be to reduce dependence on unstable fossil fuel supplies sources.

In the context of the EU, which is the area in which Ireland has most influence, the relevant EU policy in this area is the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) of 2009. The RED requires renewable energy sources to constitute 10% of final consumption of energy for transport in EU states by 2020. The official aim of the RED is to reduce European Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. An analysis of the plans of EU members for meeting RED target shows they hope to meet that target, almost exclusively, through first generation bio-fuels. First generation bio-fuels are fuels generated from crops such as maize, palm kernel and sugar cane. Thus, the EU has created an opportunity for investors to cash in on this commitment while it has only very vague terms with which the production system must comply.

The seminar contributors proposed these activities, for participants, as a way of advancing the issues highlighted:

- Advocacy at the international level
- Questioning the coherence of Irish Aid spend on food security in Sierra Leone while food production capacity is being leased for bio-fuel production
- Support for Action for Large Scale Land Acquisition Transparency (ALSLAT) and other partners
- Mobilise rural people (small framers and landless dwellers) at national level and provide them

with knowledge and information on the issue

- Lobby local, regional and national government on their behalf
- Work with International NGOs to lobby their governments and the EU

One tangible outcome of the seminar was the preparation of a position paper by SLIP on land acquisition in Sierra Leone. This paper was shared with the Minister of State for Trade and Development, Joe Costello. Minister Costello gave a commitment to SLIP that he would use his office to advocate on the need to introduce progressive policies in the area of biofuels and food security at EU level. Also, as a result of the seminar, SLIP will continue to work with like-minded civil society actors, such as Christian Aid, to ensure that the EU, through its policy on biofuel, does not undermine food security in places like Sierra Leone.

The DIOMPLOR Programme in Kono District, Sierra Leone

In 2012, SLIP made a financial contribution to the tune of 1,000 Euros to the DIOMPLOR programme in Sierra Leone.

The DIOMPLOR programme is the brain children of Sr. Teresa McKeon. To situate the DIOMPLOR programme in perspective, it might be useful to capture a profile of Sr. Teresa. At the time of Independence in 1961, the Convent with which Sr. Teresa worked with was provided with a colonial development grant to put in place St. Joseph's Secondary School. Sr. Teresa was

appointed its first Principal. Her overriding resolve was to identify and prepare a Sierra Leonean woman to whom she would hand over the baton of leadership of the school. She accomplished this in 1973 in the person of Florence Dillsworth.

Other accomplishments at the time included her support of Christiana Thorpe and Clare Stanley when both expressed their desire to become religious sisters. Today both of these women bear witness to the Christian education they received from their families and from their school-Christiana as Electoral Commissioner in Sierra Leone and Clare as Assistant General of St. Joseph of Cluny Congregation ministering in 67 countries.

Moving on from St. Joseph's, Sr. Teresa was called to a different ministry when requested by Archbishop Ganda to be the organiser of a national congregation of indigenous girls who would work specifically with women in rural Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, her efforts in this ministry in Danballa, were cut short by the onset of the civil war and had to be suspended indefinitely.

It was at this time in 1994 that the religious sisters had to leave Sierra Leone. It was a painful experience for all missionaries, but particularly for the Cluny sisters, who until then had served for a period of 139 years in Sierra Leone, thus creating a deep bond of friendship with the people of Sierra Leone. However, this experience brought a new momentum into the life of Sr. Teresa. Seeing the exodus of the Kono People cross the

border into Guinea as refugees compelled her to follow them and be with them in their anguish. This was a new ministry – very different to anything she had experienced hitherto. It was a real challenge living in a camp situation, which she did over a period of 6 years, when together with the Kono refugees a development group 'DIOMPLOR' (meaning togetherness) came into being.

SLIP are happy to support Sr. Teresa's work through the DIOMPLOR Programme and are confident that the funds provided will be put to good use in serving the needs of the extreme poor and marginalised in Kono district.

Looking Ahead

There are a number of priority areas that SLIP will be working on over the next year. These areas have been prioritised as they build on the success of activities that were carried in 2012/13. The strategic priorities for the year ahead include:

- **Furthering the advocacy work on bio-fuels and land acquisition in Sierra Leone**
- **Continued engagement with the Irish government on its aid programme in Sierra Leone**
- **Convene further talks by researchers on contemporary Sierra Leonean politics, economy and society**
- **Strengthen our engagement with Dochas**

Annex 1: Statement of Accounts, 2012/13

Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership Ltd. Income & Expenditure Year Ended 31 Aug 2012

Income

Donations	1,670
Membership Subscriptions	925
Trocaire Grant	1,000
<i>Joint Seminar Sierra Leone & Liberia 30th March 2012</i>	
- Grant Support Trocaire	1,500
- Participant Contributions	130
	<hr/>
Total Income	5,225

Expenditure

Meetings Expenses	65
Room Hire	50
Bank Charges	35
Dochas 'Act Now 2015 Campaign' Subscriptions	215
<i>Joint Seminar Sierra Leone & Liberia 30th March 2012</i>	1,774
Sierra Leone Independence Day Celebration Event	504
	<hr/>
Total Expenditure	2,643
	<hr/>
Excess of Income over Expenditure	2,582

Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership Ltd. Balance Sheet as at 31 Aug 2012

	2012	2011
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank	8,846	6,264
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
NET CURRENT ASSETS / (LIABILITIES)	8,846	6,264
	<hr/>	<hr/>
REPRESENTED BY:		
RESERVES		
Opening Balance 1 Sept 2011	6,264	7,793
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	2,582	(1529)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
RESERVES AT 31 AUG 2012	8,846	7,793

Annex 2: SLIP Committee members, 2012/13

Aisling White

Joe Manning

Geraldine Horgan

Joseph Bockaire

Mary Coleman

Celia Doyle

Elizabeth Smith

Jim Owens

Sean Farren

Ibrahim Bah

Kai Matturi

Liam McGlynn

SIERRA LEONE IRELAND PARTNERSHIP

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Registered Charity CHY13975



Friends of the Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership

Concern Worldwide

Comhlamh

Trocaire

Irish Missionary Union

Viatores Christi

Voluntary Services Overseas

Voluntary Missionary Movement

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