

# One day I will do something else.

Realizing the Potential of Sierra Leonean Youth

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## One day I will do something else...

### Realizing the Potential of Sierra Leonean Youth

#### Background

In March of 2009 Street Kids International, with support from the Diamond Development Initiative, began a research process to investigate alternative livelihood opportunities for youth involved in mining in the Eastern Provinces of Sierra Leone. Utilizing Street Kids' extensive background in providing alternative livelihoods for marginalized youth and with significant input from local partner the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), a workshop for engaging youth in exploring alternative livelihoods was developed and piloted with 60 youth. This work was based on findings that youth currently involved in mining want to do something different with their lives<sup>1</sup>. In a 2006 report by the FAFO entitled "Living in a Material World", Morten Boas and Anne Hatloy and their research team spoke to over 600 children and youth involved in mining in the Kono district. They found that youth dreamed of going to school, getting a better job and going abroad. Youth working in the mines hold out hope that "One day I will do something else..."<sup>\*</sup>

The following report explains the process and results of investigating livelihood options with youth miners, and presents recommendations for next steps in securing a sustainable future for the youth of Sierra Leone.

#### Who is Street Kids International?

Street Kids International a non-profit agency founded in Canada that is a global leader in developing and disseminating the strategies and tools needed to give marginalized youth around the world the choices, skills, and opportunities to make a better life for themselves. Our Street Business and Banking Toolkits are:

- Entrepreneurship and finance courses designed for front-line workers to use directly with marginalized youth.
- A financial education and personal development curriculum using visual aids including an animated story called Speed's Choice introducing five case studies of street youth facing challenges and opportunities associated with earning an income.
- Practical, interactive and participatory, youth submit their own business plan, and often receive a micro-credit loan to get them started.

[www.streetkids.org](http://www.streetkids.org)

#### Who is NMJD?

NMJD is a national civil society organization that was established in 1988 in Kenema with the aim of building a just and self-reliant Sierra Leone where the marginalized and exploited would be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge and empowered to take control of their own lives.

[www.njmd.org](http://www.njmd.org)

#### Who is the Diamond Development Initiative?

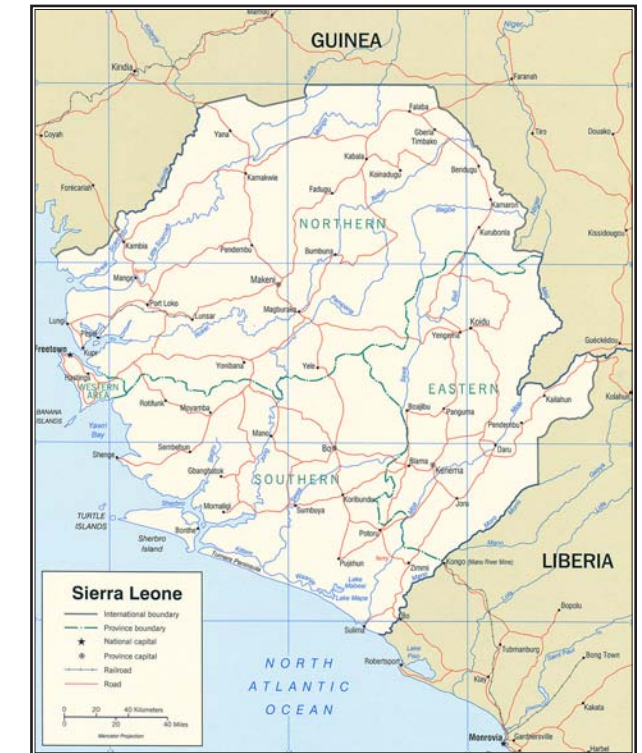
DDI gathers all interested parties into a process that addresses, in a comprehensive way, the political, social and economic challenges facing the artisanal diamond mining sector in order to optimize the beneficial development impact of artisanal diamond mining to miners and their communities within the countries in which the diamonds are mined.

[www.ddiglobal.org](http://www.ddiglobal.org)

#### Sierra Leone and Youth

Sierra Leone is a mineral rich country containing one of the most valuable deposits of diamonds in the world, but is third from last on the UN Human Development Index<sup>2</sup>. After independence was declared in 1961, steep economic decline resulted in high levels of unemployment. An increase of centralized power in Freetown and strong traditional authorities in the provinces led to growing levels of poverty and ongoing exclusion in decision-making structures. The young people who make up a large proportion of the population felt especially isolated and marginalized.

This marginalization of youth, coupled with poverty, was a key driver in Sierra Leone's eleven-year civil war. From 1991 to 2002, an estimated 70 000 people lost their life and almost half the population (2.6 million) was internally displaced. As many observers have noted, the war was particularly brutal and was characterized by atrocities and the complete destruction of villages, particularly in the Eastern part of the country<sup>3</sup>. The Eastern Provinces are home to the majority of the diamond deposits in the country and became a key battleground in the 11 year conflict.



Although the conflict is over, recovery has been challenging.

Unemployment among youth has been identified by the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) as one of the most pressing issues facing the country as it seeks to move forward. One third of the population is classified as youth (age 15-35) and an estimated 70 percent of youth are unemployed or underemployed<sup>4</sup>. The majority of young people work in the agricultural sector, and well over half of them do not get paid<sup>5</sup>. Many current vocational training programs are labour rather than market driven and girls are often steered into lower-paying jobs such as hairdressing, gara tie and dying and cooking. Compounding the issue is the fact that young people tend to have less promising employment opportunities than adults<sup>6</sup>. Youth between the ages of 15-25 are especially unprepared to transition into sustainable livelihoods because many of them grew up during the war. Ongoing peace and sustainable development in Sierra Leone will require that young people are equipped to find a way out of poverty and a meaningful place for themselves in society.

Despite the GoSL's commitment to education and a recent increase in primary school enrollment, very few young people are staying in school. Primary school is compulsory and free, however many families cannot afford the related costs for uniforms, transportation and books. A lack of qualified teachers and outdated curriculum adds to the problem and classes often exceed 100 students. Secondary school fees are out of reach for many in the country where the annual income is \$249<sup>7</sup>. Only 12 percent of 12- to 14-year-olds are in junior secondary school and only 6 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds are in senior secondary<sup>8</sup>. Not surprisingly, poverty forces many young people to work to support their families rather than attend school. In the Eastern provinces youth often turn to or are pushed into mining to support their families. In Kono, 47% of children and youth involved in mining have never attended school<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> 2009 Human Development Index. UNDP, 2009. ([www.hdr.undp.org](http://www.hdr.undp.org))

<sup>3</sup> Kaldor, Mary and James Vincent. Evaluation of UNDP Assistance to Conflict-Affected Countries: Case Study Sierra Leone. UNDP, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Sierra Leone Country Summary. Population Reference Bureau, 2008. ([www.prb.org](http://www.prb.org))

<sup>5</sup> Consultations with Youth, World Bank/ENCISS, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Acharya, Gayatri, Cunningham, Wendy, Peters, Pia and Avril Van Adams. Youth Employment in Sierra Leone: Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities in a Post-Conflict Setting. World Bank, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Annual Progress Report on the PRSP. World Bank, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Common Country Assessment in Preparation for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2008–2010. Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Boas, Morten and Anne Hatloy. Living in a Material World: Children and Youth in Alluvial Diamond Mining in Kono District, Sierra Leone. FAFO, 2006.

<sup>1</sup> Boas, Morten and Anne Hatloy. Living in a Material World: Children and Youth in Alluvial Diamond Mining in Kono District, Sierra Leone. FAFO, 2006.

\* The name of this workshop is borrowed with permission from Boas and Hatloy's Living in a Material World

Due in a large part to strong recovery in the agriculture, mining, construction and service sectors, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown between 6 and 7% in recent years<sup>10</sup>. However, the GoSL remains largely dependent on aid despite the growth in GDP. An estimated 70% of the population lives below the poverty line, adult literacy rates are low, and the maternal mortality ratio, at 1,800 per 100,000 live births, is the highest in the world<sup>11</sup>. Although the conflict in Sierra Leone has ended and human security has improved, many of the structural conditions that led to the conflict persist<sup>12</sup>.

### Artisanal mining

In 2007, Sierra Leone exported US\$141 million of diamonds, of which US\$100 million came from artisanal mining. After agriculture, artisanal mining is the country's second biggest employer. It is estimated that around 120,000 people are directly involved in artisanal mining, most of which is alluvial. Diamonds are located near the surface and are informally mined by diggers who use simple tools and labour intensive techniques<sup>13</sup>. Many more people derive their income through support functions such as petty trading and selling of food to the miners.

“We know nothing else but diamonds.”  
– Workshop participant

Sierra Leone is divided into Provinces, Districts and then Chiefdoms. The Paramount Chief is responsible for the management and administration of the Chiefdom.

Over 80 Chiefdoms in Sierra Leone are home to artisanal mining with the highest level of activity in the Eastern region. Diamond mining dominates the artisanal mining sector, but gold is also mined at a lesser extent. Mining in the Kono and Kenema (Tongo Field) districts has been ongoing since the 1930's and the search for diamonds becomes all the more tedious with successive mining ventures. Environmental degradation has been amplified over time to the point where some pits are becoming unstable and unsafe for diggers. Artisanal diggers receive very little compensation for their labour, this despite the considerable export revenue generated by the mining industry. The diamond supply chain looks much like a pyramid, with a large number of diggers at the bottom with very little bargaining power. As we move towards the top of the pyramid bargaining power increases, resulting in a concentration of profits for a small number of dealers and exporters<sup>14</sup>. Reportedly, these dealers and exporters reinvest very little of their profits back into the country.

A simplified break down of the actors involved in mining:



<sup>10</sup> Annual Progress Report on the PRSP. World Bank, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Sierra Leone Country Summary. Population Reference Bureau, 2008. (www.prb.org).

<sup>12</sup> Evaluation of UNDP Assistance to Conflict Affected Countries: Case Study Sierra Leone. UNDP, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Gberia, Lansana, Smillie, Ian and Brian Rowe. Standards & Guidelines for Sierra Leone's Artisanal Diamond Mining Sector. Diamond Development Initiative, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Gbere, Lansana and Estelle Levin. Dealing for Development? The Dynamics of Diamond Marketing and Pricing in Sierra Leone. Diamond Development Initiative, 2006.

Artisanal mining is labour intensive. Manual labour is used to move mass quantities of vegetation and earth above the diamond deposits. The industry is characterized by limited skills, low capital investment and, minimum reserves. Miners spend long hours, often sifting through gravel in knee deep water, with no access to health care, education or skills training. Diggers report a high incidence of back and chest pain, with nowhere to go for treatment<sup>15</sup>. Salaries range from Le 500 to Le 8 000 (US \$0.15 - \$2.00) per day. This amount is not enough to pay for school related fees or to support a family. Youth continue to hope for a diamond find that will allow them to leave the mines and return to education, however this rarely happens. Often, when youth are lucky enough to find a diamond, supporters will pay less than the diamond is worth. Youth continually struggle with saving enough to leave the mines to do something different.

“I grew up only knowing of diamonds, everyone has a story of someone that has improved their life by finding a diamond. So I go everyday to the mines and hope that I will find something. I receive Le 2000 (US \$0.50) and a handful of rice a day for my labour. I spend most of the day either moving gravel or sifting through gravel in the water. I have pains in my body and I know that this work is not good for me or any of my brothers.”

– Workshop Participant

The prevalence of children involved in mining practices is high. In February 2006 NMJD found that “poverty and a continued lack or non-implementation of proper policies” had pushed many children into mining<sup>16</sup>. NMJD interviewed 267 children directly and indirectly facilitating various mining activities in four diamond mining districts of Sierra Leone. Girls and women also work in and around the mines, involved in support functions such as carrying food and water and selling items. NMJD found that of 267 children interviewed in their 2006 study, 13.9% were female. Participation in support activities appears to negatively affect school enrollment for girls<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, support work in and around the mines can lead to commercial sex work as a source of income for girls and women. As reported by a representative of the United Mineworkers Union, “Girls who do selling at the mines are often encouraged to enter prostitution<sup>18</sup>.”

“Mining is just like a gamble. But mostly you lose.”  
– Workshop participant

Often youth involved in artisanal mining are categorized as unruly and predisposed to participate in criminal activity. However, studies have found that this is not at all the case. In short, they are poor but motivated young men looking for an income<sup>19</sup>. Often, youth are unaware of alternatives, and several youth diggers interviewed by NMJD for this project cited a lack of knowledge about options, opportunities or alternative livelihoods as reasons why they continue to mine. According to one youth digger interviewed:

“I am just doing this because there are no other alternatives. I do not have anything at the end of the day, but it is my only way to survive.”

The conflict in Sierra Leone and the resulting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs also attributed to the prevalence of youth mining for income. Although a major component of the DDR process consisted of skills-training programs, former fighters reportedly found it difficult to transfer their skills-training into viable employment. DDR programs led to an increase in the supply of labour in the training areas without a corresponding increase in demand for such services. Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission noted:

<sup>15</sup> Beás, Morten and Anne Hatloy. Living in a Material World: Children and Youth in Alluvial Diamond Mining in Kono District, Sierra Leone. FAFO, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Report on the Situation of Child Miners in Sierra Leone: Case Study of Four Districts. Network Movement for Justice and Development, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> In the Beás and Hatloy study, for example, only 46 percent of females interviewed were currently enrolled in school; 47 percent had never attended and 7 percent formerly attended. Beás & Hatloy, p. 45 (Table 4.7).

<sup>18</sup> Carew-Watts, Antonia, and Padraic Glaspy, et al. Digging in the Dirt: Child Miners in Sierra Leone's Diamond Industry. International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Beás, Morten and Anne Hatloy. Living in a Material World: Children and Youth in Alluvial Diamond Mining in Kono District, Sierra Leone. FAFO, 2006.

“The sustainability of [skills training] initiatives must be given greater consideration. There is a need to locate skills training in the wider context of improving the economy. Skills training should be accompanied by carefully planned follow-up mechanisms, which would allow [those] successfully trained to utilize their skills to their own economic advancement and the collective benefit of the nation<sup>20</sup>.”

There are valuable lessons learned from these programs that should be considered when designing potential interventions for marginalized youth. Considering the overwhelming majority of child and youth miners who would like to return to school or vocational training for a viable skill<sup>21</sup>, action must be taken to involve youth in determining their aspirations and developing viable interventions that allow youth to move from mining into a sustainable alternative to meet their livelihood needs.

There is a large quantity of information on child labour in artisanal diamond communities, but less exists on youth opportunities to complete formal schooling and alternative livelihood options responding to market needs. Further, research has shown that young people working in diamond communities see their work as short-term. Youth dream of finding a better job, going to school and getting married. Current situations do not prepare them with the skills to confidently address this future when the time comes. There is a lack of programming that integrates work and education, these two elements often being addressed separately where participation in one largely prohibits participation in the other. The framework presented below aims to give youth a chance to determine the skills and education they need to secure a sustainable livelihood.

### Youth and Artisanal Mining: One day I will do something else...

In response to the need for alternative livelihoods for youth involved in mining, Street Kids International proposed a youth-driven study, where young people in the mining industry would invest themselves in research about their personal ambitions, the opportunities to fulfill those goals, and the gaps and challenges that exist preventing them from reaching those goals.

In order to investigate the realities, aspirations and opportunities of youth working in the mining sector, a participatory action research workshop entitled “One day I will do something else...” (Annex 1) was developed and piloted in partnership with NMJD and Street Kids International as the first step in supporting youth in establishing livelihood alternatives. The workshop utilized Street Kids’ knowledge and expertise in accompanied livelihood, participatory methodology, marginalized youth populations and small business development with low literacy youth. The workshop was designed to engage youth to explore their livelihood aspirations and provide the tools they need to determine local opportunities for alternatives to mining to earn a sustainable income.



Characters involved in Speed’s Choice



**additional resources**

*Diamond Development Initiative: enabling positive development for artisanal mining communities:*  
<http://www.ddiglobal.org>

### Phase One: Workshop Development

A three-day orientation workshop in Freetown was held at NMJD’s offices. Eight researchers were recruited from within NMJD’s platforms across their operational district in the Eastern Provinces to attend this initial workshop. The workshop was facilitated by a representative from Street Kids International and served as a platform to strengthen the partnership between NMJD and Street Kids International. It was also a forum through which information and experiences were shared and areas of collaboration identified. The orientation saw the researchers trained on data collection and participatory facilitation. Through this collaboration, the step-by-step manual for the workshop “One day I will do something else...” was developed. “One day I will do something else...” involves youth in activities to identify their aspirations, conduct an informal market survey to identify livelihood opportunities and discuss strategies to overcome barriers to employment or self-employment. The workshop also introduces youth participants to the idea of starting a small business utilizing Speed’s Choice, an animation that follows five youth who overcome challenges to start a small business.




Participants draw their future aspirations during workshop in Tongo, August 2009.

### Phase Two: “One day I will do something else...” Pilot and Research

Additional research was conducted with 300 youth involved in artisanal mining using a standardized questionnaire. One hundred and fifty from Kono (Sandor, Nimiyama and Nimikoro chiefdoms) were interviewed. In Tongo Field, Lower Bombara Chiefdom the mining communities of Bome, Payima and Tongola were selected and 150 youth were interviewed. The data collected is consistent with similar research by NMJD, Boas and Hatloy and the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School.

#### Characteristics of 300 artisanal miners interviewed:

- 80% male, 20% female
- Age: 26-35 years 65%, 15-25 years 33%, 0-14 years 2%
- 44% single, 56% married
- Salary of \$0.50 to 3.00 USD/day
- 60% have no children
- 40% support children
- Little to no access to health facilities
- Self reported poor quality of life
- 80% interviewed
- Report that artisanal mining is not good for them or their communities
- 99% would prefer an alternative livelihood
- Not one respondent would recommend artisanal mining to a friend



**additional resources**

*Microenterprise learning, information and knowledge sharing:*  
[www.microlinks.org](http://www.microlinks.org)

“Without mining there is still hope to do something different”  
 –Workshop participant

The workshop itself was piloted with 60 youth in August of 2009, these youth were selected from group of 300 youth. During interviews with the larger group, researchers identified areas with the highest concentration of youth mining and invited participants in these areas to attend the workshop. Thirty youth participated in Sandor, Kono, (20 male and 10 female), and another 30 youth participated in Tongo (18 male and 12 female). Workshops were facilitated by NMJD staff and researchers who had attended the initial workshop development meeting in Freetown in June. As word about the workshops traveled through the communities, additional participants joined in. The workshop was well received among participants. One facilitator noted:

“The youth were very happy to have the opportunity to share their aspirations and current challenges. It is not so often that youth have this chance to speak.”

<sup>20</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Report p. 469-471

<sup>21</sup> Carew-Watts, Antonia, and Padraic Glaspy, et al. Digging in the Dirt: Child Miners in Sierra Leone’s Diamond Industry. International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School, 2009. p. 39.

One of the first activities in the workshop was facilitated by NMJD Kono and involved introducing youth to their rights and responsibilities. Next, youth were asked to express their aspirations through drawing. A wide array of aspirations were identified such as farmer, driver, teacher, lawyer, business man, nurse, trader, community worker, inspector of schools, principal and doctor. Very few participants wanted to stay in mining and those that did insisted they would only continue in mining if conditions were improved and their rights respected.



Workshop participant explains his aspiration.

“I learned a lot from the workshop, I left my home to come here and thought mining was the answer. I now know that mining is not the only way out.”

– Workshop participant

Once aspirations were presented, participants created community maps in groups to assist them in identifying employment and business opportunities in their community. Participants were then introduced to the animation Speed's Choice. As one of the facilitators explained:

*From the response of the participants it is evident that the Speed's Choice helps greatly for participants to share stories in their life time which individual participants previously failed to share with the rest of the other participants. The animation also helps generate a wealth of ideas about what participants perceive to be business. Participants discussed the fact that business is not just buying and selling but everything that one invests in with the hope of getting returns either in the short or long term, and this includes education too. This exercise actually aided greatly for participants to become familiar with story in the Speed's Choice and gave them an idea to think of their own business and the possibility of such a business.*

Female participants in the group highlighted their identification with the female characters in the animation and several commented that they were inspired to see women starting their own business. One woman in the workshop commented:

“Speed's Choice helped us realize that it is possible to start something with very little.”

The next session involved a walk around the community and local market to speak with business owners and identify additional opportunities for business or employment. The market walk was well received by both participants and business owners, who reported that they were very impressed by youth's initiative and were happy to share stories and advice about starting a small business.

In addition to taking note of opportunities, on the Sandor community walk, youth identified the following gaps in businesses available:

- filling station
- consistent stall for rice or vegetables in the market (some days rice is available, on other days it is not)
- pub or place for entertainment
- guesthouse

The community maps were then modified with the additional opportunities. The businesses visited included market stalls (vegetables, rice, assorted goods), pharmacy, motorcycle taxi drivers, petty traders, cookery shop, telecentre and cosmetics.

Discussions were then held around challenges in accessing identified opportunities. Charts were used to track the types of opportunities, skills required, feasibility of opportunities, challenges and strategies to overcome the challenges identified.

Youth cited some of the following challenges in realizing the identified opportunities: a lack of reliable power; families wanting to share in the profits of business - making it difficult to save enough to expand the business; a lack of access to capital to start a venture or invest in agricultural tools; lack of skills and education; and in the rainy season the transport of goods to market is difficult.

An example of the chart used to track opportunities and challenges:

Opportunity	Is it possible?	Skills Required	Challenges	Strategies
Farming	Yes	Knowledge of soil, seeds, timing, implements, crops, storage Processing skills Marketing skills Understanding of how to monitor crops for largest yield	Access to land Lack of capital Lack of tools Bad weather Lack of road network to get goods to market Pests	Group work (co-op) Share storage facilities Start savings circle Learn about agriculture Learn about processing and marketing of goods

As a result of his participation in the workshop, one of the participants in the Tongo workshop borrowed money from family members and went to finish his studies in Bo. There were anecdotal stories of several other youth who have already left the mines to pursue other ventures such as farming, schooling, apprenticeship and a rice farming cooperative.

“The workshop taught me to shift my attention to agriculture. I now sell mixed vegetables in the market.”

– Workshop participant

In speaking with the facilitators and community members after the pilot of the workshop, the need was expressed to use the workshop in other sections of the chiefdom and in additional mining communities. They felt it was an excellent empowerment tool that had the added benefit of sensitizing youth and the community to possibilities outside mining. However, it was strongly suggested that the workshop be followed up by the associated support to start something different such as business development skills or agricultural inputs and training.

“The workshop for me was a sign of hope that there is the possibility of an alternative to mining.”


– Workshop participant

### Phase Three: Analysis of Alternative Livelihoods for youth

Interviews were held with organizations currently involved in youth livelihood interventions in Sierra Leone such as GTZ, COOPI, Youth Employment Secretariat, Sierra Leone Youth Empowerment Organization, International Rescue Committee.

#### The following common themes emerged from discussions about current livelihood interventions:

- There is an ongoing need for business development skills, especially those tailored to low literacy
- Youth employment is a priority for GoSL but youth are becoming impatient with the lack of action and consultation
- Sensitization for employment or self-employment of girls/women should be included in any livelihood program



**additional resources**

*Children, Youth and Economic Strengthening (CYES):*  
<http://www.cyesnetwork.org>

- Rural micro-enterprise opportunities include: agriculture (cocoa, palm oil, cashew, ginger, gari, rice, chilli peppers, sorghum), small scale agriculture (mixed farming, mixed vegetables) and livestock rearing (chickens, goats, cattle), honey production, rural carpentry (unfinished furniture, roofing structures)
- There is potential to add value to rural crops by investing in drying floors, seed storage and mills
- Urban micro-enterprise opportunities include: driver, taxi (motorcycle/bicycle), vehicle washing, mechanic, common vocational trades such as hairdressing, gari, tie dying, tailoring, textile design, embroidery, carpentry

The risk and common criticism with the most common vocational trades and livelihood programs on offer is that the market cannot absorb the number of youth graduating with similar skill sets. Scalability and sustainability of current interventions were also cited as challenges. A recent World Bank publication supports the preliminary findings from this project. Youth Employment in Sierra Leone: Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities in a Post-Conflict Setting asserts that agriculture and agro-business sector has the potential to absorb a large number of unskilled youth<sup>22</sup>. The authors also recommend developing a program to support new entrants into the informal sector which includes support to identify viable business opportunities, sustainable business development plans, access to micro-credit, mentoring and business follow up. The following framework outlines useful principles and tools to develop a program that meets these recommendations and involves youth as partners in design and implementation.

### Framework for Engaging Youth in Exploring Livelihood Alternatives

Taking into account the challenges that practitioners face when designing an effective livelihood program, the framework presented incorporates principles and steps to support youth inclusion and participation in program design, implementation and evaluation. Many livelihood programs are developed without the benefit of understanding the market realities and youth's capacity to be economically active. The framework provides steps and simple tools that can assist in collecting and incorporating this knowledge into an effective program for youth. Street Kids' expertise in small business development and access to credit for youth is highlighted, for feedback or more information on Street Kids' toolkits please contact [info@streetkids.org](mailto:info@streetkids.org).

The following principles are a good starting point and are based on research on the development of effective, demand-driven livelihood programs<sup>23</sup>:

**Positive youth development:** Youth are assets to community and society and are important stakeholders in project design and implementation. Project design based on the existing capabilities, skills and resources of youth and their communities strengthens existing services and fosters positive outcomes.

**Demand-driven approach:** Demand-driven approaches start with the question of what youth and their households already have and how this might be better used or invested. This approach encourages young people and their families to be active co-investors in a new product or service versus passive beneficiaries.

**Youth segmentation and societal context:** Differences related to age, gender, ethnicity, in or out-of school status, place of living, current livelihood activities, existing asset ownership, marital/parenting status, and household economic circumstances can have a significant impact on young peoples priority needs and their capacity to co-invest (time or money) in project success. It can be useful to segment youth into cohorts based on these differences. Sensitization to gender involvement in agriculture or small business and access for female youth and youth with disabilities must be prioritized during program design.



#### additional resources

*Livelihoods Connect:*  
<http://www.eldis.org/go/livelihoods>

*Making Cents International:*  
*resources and networks to build and strengthen the youth enterprise and livelihoods sector:*  
[www.makingcents.com](http://www.makingcents.com)

**Collaboration:** A scan of the current landscape for related projects and opportunities for collaboration could assist in strengthening effectiveness and reducing replication in programming. Utilize other's expertise where possible to ensure youth have access to relevant and engaging programs that will provide the skills needed for a sustainable livelihood.

The following steps are a guide to developing youth inclusive, effective livelihood programs:

#### 1. Community outreach

Discuss the project with community members and stakeholders to share the proposed intervention and collect feedback, impressions and ideas. Involve youth in spreading the word among their community and if possible utilize local radio to communicate your upcoming plans. Sensitization workshops to promote female involvement in agriculture and small business may be appropriate depending on feedback from the community. This is an opportunity to involve local organizations in the project and communicate potential benefits, selection process and next steps to the community.

#### 2. Determine and clarify youth goals

Bring youth beneficiaries together to share, learn and inform the project design. The workshop "One day I will do something else..." is a useful tool to involve youth in identifying their aspirations and goals (see outline on page 17). The workshop takes place over 4 days and requires minimal supplies. It is recommended that facilitators are brought together for one half day prior to workshop implementation to review the workshop, practice participatory facilitation techniques and adapt activities to specific needs. The workshop is an opportunity to gain insight into what is already going on in youth's lives (current economic activities, household livelihood strategies, etc) and collect the information necessary to determine youth cohorts. Often gender can play a large role in how young people are socialized, and it may provide unique barriers in addition to novel entry points into youth livelihood development. Youth participation on the workshop will inform the design of the intervention in addition to giving youth a sense of involvement.

The data collected from this workshop can also contribute to baseline data. This is something to consider when designing the monitoring and evaluation component of your intervention. The workshop is flexible in nature and activities for the collection of additional data can easily be incorporated.

#### 3. Youth inclusive market research

The data collected from the workshop about youth's involvement in markets and their livelihood opportunities will assist to inform the design of youth inclusive market research. Youth inclusive market research will assist you in identifying a viable market for skills and determine how skills are linked to earning potential for youth. Utilize youth inclusive market research approaches to determine existing assets and decision making processes of young people and their households.

The need for on-going market research is heightened for market development programs in post-conflict environments. Markets are particularly vulnerable and easily subject to change. Development practitioners need to be able to identify these changes and adapt programming accordingly. Market research in conflict environments therefore may be more frequent but less in-depth<sup>24</sup>.

#### Useful tools at this stage include the following:

Women's Refugee Commission Market Assessment Toolkit for Vocational Training (VT) Providers and Youth: A combination of resources, questionnaires and activities to assist VT programs and youth to gather information on market demand and translate it into programming that responds to a dynamic business environment and youth needs. The toolkit offers a roadmap to VT providers, youth participants and other local and international actors.  
[http://womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/ug\\_ysl\\_toolkit.pdf](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/ug_ysl_toolkit.pdf)



#### additional resources

*Getting to "What We Don't Know We Don't Know": Using Youth-Inclusive Market Research Tools and Approaches to Develop Effective, Demand-Driven Youth Livelihood Programs (Save the Children), David James-Wilson and Veronica Torres, May 2008, Save the Children*

<sup>22</sup> Acharya, Gayatri, Cunningham, Wendy, Peters, Pia and Avril Van Adams. Youth Employment in Sierra Leone: Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities in a Post-Conflict Setting. World Bank, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> James-Wilson, D. and Torres, V. Getting to "What We Don't Know We Don't Know"; Using Youth-Inclusive Market Research Tools and Approaches to Develop Effective, Demand-Driven Youth Livelihood Programs. Save the Children, 2008.

SEEP Youth PLP guidelines for including youth in market surveys: The goal of this learning product is to help the reader better understand how to strengthen market assessments for youth workforce development programs. It considers issues, such as institutional capacity, local context, appropriate tools and approaches, and including youth in these assessments.” [http://seepnetwork.org/Resources/YouthPLP\\_Assessments.pdf](http://seepnetwork.org/Resources/YouthPLP_Assessments.pdf)

#### **MicroSave Tools and Resources:**

MicroSave promotes the development of a market-led and more client-responsive approach to delivering financial services among microfinance institutions. <http://www.microsave.org/>

Tools are most effective if they are user friendly, adapted to the cultural context and accessible for both staff and participants. Data gathered at this stage can be used to inform viable livelihood pathways for youth. If possible, share this information with local vocational training institutes and programs to advise where trainers and institutions to tighten market linkages and improve the effectiveness of training programs.

#### **4. Identify pathways for youth**

There are no static solutions that respond to youth's variable livelihood needs. Building on youth's experience and skills and data gathered from market inclusive research, identify viable livelihood pathways for youth. It is useful to have access to or develop a relevant inventory of youth programs/youth serving organizations and the programs that they offer to inform possible collaborations. Pathways should be flexible in nature and allow for the fact that many youth must balance work, education and contributions to the household. The range of pathways identified should ensure equal access by gender, disability and marginalized groups and it may be necessary to add literacy components.

Although agriculture has been identified as a viable alternative livelihood, inherent challenges include access to land for youth which may require ongoing negotiation with local chiefs and land owners. Access to credit for youth is often difficult, savings circles and partnerships with local banks could be explored. Relationships with MFIs may also be established but there is still widespread resistance to youth lending among many financial institutions.

In the diamond mining communities of Kono and Tongo, the following pathways have been identified:

##### **Agriculture**

- Explore the possibility of agriculture and small business
- Encourage crops with earning potential
- Provide youth with the skills needed to add value to produce
- Employment in agriculture: youth apprenticeship with farmers (in some cases farmers may need support in how to train youth)

##### • Cooperative farming

##### **Vocational training**

- Ensure that VT skills provided are demand driven and accompanied by small business development skills

##### Apprenticeship

- Market driven apprenticeship are most appropriate
- Support for apprentices in skills transfer and youth support

##### **Micro-enterprise/Small business Development**

- ongoing support is required the in form of mentorship, access to credit will need to be explored, business expansion support should be offered

##### **Micro-franchise**

- The International Rescue Committee is supporting youth in microfranchise businesses. These franchises are connected to a local brand, have low start up cost and are more structured than a micro-enterprise. Preliminary evaluation of the project indicates that there is potential for scalability.
- For more information on micro-franchising see the following presentations: <http://bit.ly/aw98MT>; <http://bit.ly/bNuVva>

#### **Education or accelerated learning programs**

- Complementary Rapid Education for Primary School (CREPS) and IBIS: CREPS was developed by UNICEF and the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Education and has been implemented by a number of relief institutions including IBIS (a Danish NGO) to offer six years of primary school education in three years to children and adolescents who missed out on schooling due to the war. Over 3000 boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 18 years in the Sierra Leone's diamond district of Kono, have been given access to quality basic education through the CREPS programme. Response to the programme has been very positive and the demand for the CREPS classes is presently far greater than the 75 classes IBIS is able to support due to the large number of persons between the ages of 10 and 18 in the Kono District who had never been to school. (for more information see: <http://www.ibiswestafrica.com/nv/sierra%20leone/>)

Partnership with the private sector may also be explored. Ideally the project will be flexible enough to tailor support to youth's skills and goals. Pathways may need to be tailored to ensure equal access for youth with disabilities and female youth. Choose the pathways that are most appropriate for your organization to support. The next step is to identify barriers that youth face in accessing the identified pathways.

#### **Useful tools and resources at this stage include:**

An informative case study on access to financial services and business skill development for youth: Making Cents International and Plan International:

Case Study No. 12: Making Financial Services and Business Skills Development Available to African Children and Youth: Accomplishments and Limitations of Research and Monitoring  
September 2009, Author: John Schiller, Plan International  
[http://www.makingcents.com/pdfs/resources/caseStudy10/PlanInternational\\_CaseStudyNo.12\\_September2009.pdf](http://www.makingcents.com/pdfs/resources/caseStudy10/PlanInternational_CaseStudyNo.12_September2009.pdf)

Several case studies and a review of good practices in partnering with the private sector:

Good Practice from West Africa: Building the case for business collaboration on youth employment.

Author: Drew Gardiner, YEN-WA; 2008

[http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/yen/downloads/psi/the\\_business\\_case\\_for\\_ye.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/yen/downloads/psi/the_business_case_for_ye.pdf)

#### **5. Identify barriers to entry for youth**

Once viable pathways have been identified, explore with youth what they need to access their chosen pathway. Involve youth in determining strategies to overcome barriers and provide support as needed (micro-credit support, skills training, etc.). Initiate collaboration with other organizations to provide youth the holistic set of skills they need to begin a new venture and earn an income.

#### **6. Business Development Skills training**

It is recommended that any pathway be accompanied by business development skills. After many years of working with street involved youth, Street Kids International has developed participatory and engaging toolkits in partnership with local youth serving organizations.



**additional  
resources**

*Economic Strengthening for Vulnerable Youth: Principles of Program Design and Technical Recommendations for Effective Field Interventions; February 2008, USAID, Save the Children and the Academy Educational Development. Available at:*  
[http://www.microlinks.org/ev\\_en.php?ID=21730\\_201&ID2=DO\\_TOPIC](http://www.microlinks.org/ev_en.php?ID=21730_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC)

The Street Business and Banking toolkits are:

- entrepreneurship and finance courses designed for frontline workers to use directly with street kids
- based on an animated story called Speed's Choice which retraces the personal and business lives of five characters facing challenges and opportunities associated with income generation on the street
- practical, interactive and participatory courses culminating in the development of business plans, personal goals, savings strategies and the identification of sources of capital

Over time and in response to youth needs Street Kids has also developed a mentorship module and practice business module which support youth in making the transition to running their own enterprise.

The challenges to small business development must also be examined during project design. Potential challenges and limitations include a lack of infrastructure, a lack of clear distribution channels for goods and a lack of electricity. However within these challenges it is often possible to discover business or employment opportunities for youth. Emerging evidence suggests that cost recovery for training could be an important factor in project sustainability and this is worth exploring with youth and their families.

### 7. Youth access to credit/start-up kits

Once youth have chosen a pathway and gained the skills necessary to pursue a new venture, some form of capital will be required. Start up kits have been a popular mechanism in the past however providing free provision of start-up capital often reduces the commitment to making the venture profitable. Few group or individual businesses that are completely financed by the project remain successful. It is recommended that grants and loans not be combined. Additional ideas around access to credit include:

- Involving youth in developing revolving credit opportunities (eg. OSUSU, ROSCAs or ASCAs)
- Exploring the possibility of partnering with a local bank or MFI, or local village savings mechanisms to provide microcredit loans

#### Useful tools and resources at this stage include:

The Rural Finance Landscape: A practitioner's guide

Author: Ton de Klerk, Agromisa Foundation and CTA, Wageningen, 2008.

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/dossiers/livelihoods-connect/tools&id=41615&type=Document>

More information on Village Savings and Loans, ROSCAs and ASCAs: CARE International's Village Savings and Loans Programmes in Africa: Micro Finance for the Rural Poor that Works

Author: Allen Hughes, CARE, 2002.

<https://www.msu.edu/unit/phl/devconference/CAREVillSavLoanAfr.pdf>

### 8. Ongoing support for business

Once youth have embarked on a chosen pathway, they require ongoing support to ensure success. Over time Street Kids has developed the Street Business Mentorship Module (SBM) that trains youth workers in setting up a mentorship program. The word "mentor" is defined as "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher". Mentors are people identified to provide guidance and support. Mentors can be recognized experts, elders, community members, a neighbour, or others who offer understanding and advice in an objective manner. Business mentorship refers to guidance provided specifically to young entrepreneurs, advising them through problems and obstacles that arise in their businesses. Studies have shown that youth with guidance from a business mentor are 75% more likely to succeed than those without. The SBM includes a course manual, mentorship board game and a mentorship comic book.

Another proven support mechanism is peer support. Youth can be networked with other youth running similar businesses to share successes, challenges and ideas for business improvement. Ensuring that youth continue to utilize their social networks for support is also important. Street Kids has found that often youth who have started a business are eager to pass on their skills and knowledge to their peers and family members.

### 9. Track performance of youth

The following monitoring and evaluation tools could help to improve the quality of the intervention and ensure that youth progress, success, challenges and lessons learned are recorded, shared and fed into future program design.

EQUIP3's Guide to Conducting Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessments:

<http://www.equip123.net/docs/e3-CSYA.pdf>

Extensive research available at [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org) demonstrates the strong correlation between the acquisition of developmental assets and both the promotion of thriving behaviors and protection from high risk behaviors. This site also provides indicators useful in measuring the acquisition of developmental assets. Allow room within your program design to adapt components as necessary according to information gathered through monitoring.

### Conclusion

Youth involved in mining in Sierra Leone have the motivation and drive to do something different. The framework presented is a guideline for the development of a youth inclusive program that meets market needs and provides youth with access to viable programming. Although the challenges are many, the potential and spirit among youth interviewed for this research was more than evident. It is hoped that this framework will assist your organization in helping youth realize their potential to do something different.

To share your programming ideas and for questions or feedback on this report please contact Kristy Vanderplas, Programme Manager at Street Kids International: [Kristy@streetkids.org](mailto:Kristy@streetkids.org).

## One Day I will do Something Else...

### An Outline

An action research workshop designed to investigate the realities, aspirations and opportunities of youth working in the mining sector in order to identify interventions allowing them to achieve their livelihood and educational goals.

If you are interested in using this workshop in full please contact Street Kids International ([info@streetkids.org](mailto:info@streetkids.org)).

This workshop has been developed for the benefit of youth, in fact youth are the driving force of this workshop. As a first step in achieving their livelihood and educational goals, youth will have the opportunity to share their experience and knowledge with their peers and explore livelihood alternatives through eight participatory sessions. Each session builds upon the previous one. Ideally the workshop will be delivered over four days. It is helpful to bring facilitators together for one half day session to review the workshop, introduce participatory techniques and make any changes to reflect local realities.

The eight sessions are as follows:

1. Introduction and Setting the Tone (includes review of youth rights and responsibilities)
2. Educational and Vocational Aspirations
3. Perception of Opportunity: What options do I have?
4. Life Challenges
5. Market Opportunity Identification
6. Market Opportunity Survey
7. Evaluation of Attractiveness of Livelihood Opportunities
8. Making It Happen: Can I really do this?

Facilitators are provided with detailed guidelines to help participants get the most out of each session. These guidelines stress the importance of setting the right tone, conducting a review after each session and running the workshop with appropriate timing and energy levels. Facilitators encourage dialogue and feedback from youth to help continue to develop this workshop.

Tools are utilized to support each activity, these tools include; Speed's Choice animation, visual aids, the workshop manual and 'the koosh', which is similar to a talking stick and invites and encourages participants to be heard throughout the workshop.

The workshop outline also provides facilitators with Energizers and Ice Breakers. This collection of activities will assist in keeping energy levels up and fostering a sense of openness and fun with participants. Finally, all necessary charts and monitoring and evaluation templates are included.

The following gives an overview of each session, including the relevant activities and objectives for each.

### Session One: Introduction and Setting the Tone

#### Overview

This brief session sets the tone and atmosphere for the journey ahead. Participants and facilitators have the opportunity to introduce themselves and to learn about each other. The concept of youth rights and associated responsibilities is introduced.

#### Objectives

- Develop a respectful learning environment.
- Explore participants' interests.
- Participants learn about the purpose of the workshop.
- Participants discuss the importance of rights and responsibilities.

#### Activity 1.1: Welcome and Youth Rights

Participants become aware of youth rights and associated responsibilities and become familiar with the agenda for the workshop.

#### Activity 1.2 Let's Get to Know Each Other

Participants learn about their peers experiences, interact with each other and learn more about the purpose of the workshop.

#### Activity 1.3: Working Together

This activity supports participants in determining how they will work as a group throughout the course. It provides an opportunity to express ideas and encourages participants to become involved in making decisions around the way they will work together as a group.

### Session Two: Educational and Vocational Aspirations

#### Objectives

- Learn about participants' aspirations.
- Participants share aspirations and discuss alternate livelihood possibilities.

#### Activity 2.1: Someday I would like to do something different...

Participants will explore their aspirations through artistic expression and share their aspirations with the group. This activity encourages participants to share their personal aspirations and build participants' confidence in sharing their ideas with the group.

## Session Three: Perception of Opportunity: What options do I have?

### Objectives

- Explore livelihood opportunities within the community including education.
- Explore participants' perceptions of opportunities.
- Determine skills needed to access alternate opportunities.

#### Activity 3.1: My Community Map

In small groups youth will explore their own communities, create a map of landmarks and identify the opportunities for livelihood that they are aware of.

#### Activity 3.2: Opportunity chart: Do I have the skills I need?

In small groups participants will evaluate the livelihood opportunities identified to determine if they are achievable and desirable. Participants will determine the skills they feel they need to access alternative livelihood opportunities.

## Session Four: Life Challenges

### Objectives

- Participants identify their personal life challenges.
- Participants explore strategies to overcome these challenges.

#### Activity 4.1: Personal Challenges and Speed's Choice

This activity includes the presentation of the animation Speed's Choice. This animation is about five young people who begin small businesses to earn an income. It was specifically designed to demonstrate the obstacles and challenges they have to overcome. It also encourages participants to think about their own situations and the challenges they face in their daily life.

#### Activity 4.2: Strategies to overcome challenges; How can I overcome the challenges in my life?

Through story telling, participants will explore various strategies for overcoming their identified challenges.

## Session Five: Market Opportunity Identification

### Objectives

- Participants explore alternative ideas for livelihood opportunities.

#### Activity 5.1: Speed's Choice Review

This activity reviews the Speed's Choice animation and provides the space to discuss the characters and their stories.

#### Activity 5.2: Business Ideas/Opportunity Ideas

Through Tree's story (a female character from Speed's Choice) participants will explore why it is important to think about a business or opportunity before starting it.

## Session 6: Market Opportunity Survey

### Objectives

- Participants observe how businesses are influenced by their community.
- Participants identify additional opportunities that exist within their community.
- Each participant selects an opportunity they would like to pursue.

#### Activity 6.1: What opportunities exist in our community?

So much can be learned by simply observing business owners as they run their businesses and interact with the community in which they work. This activity includes a group walk in the local market to do just that.

#### Activity 6.2: What did we observe? Creating an opportunity map

This activity will give participants a chance to discuss what they observed on the market walk. A comprehensive community map will be developed from these observations. Youth will be asked to identify additional livelihood opportunities that they noticed during the walk in the local market.

#### Activity 6.3: My business/opportunity idea

Participants narrow down the livelihood opportunities that were discussed in the last activity. Participants choose 2-3 opportunities or business ideas that they are interested in and feel they could pursue.

## Session 7: Evaluation of Attractiveness of Livelihood Opportunities

### Objectives

- Participants decide whether they would enjoy the types of opportunities they selected.

#### Activity 7.1: Why is it important to enjoy my livelihood?

There are many things to consider when exploring a business or opportunity idea. However, one of the simplest yet most important things is to decide whether that type of business will actually be enjoyable. This activity stresses the importance of enjoying the business or opportunity one plans to pursue.

## Session 8: Making It Happen: Can I really do this??

### Objectives

- Participants examine the supports they need to pursue their identified livelihood opportunities.

#### Activity 8.1: Do I have what I need to choose an alternate livelihood?

Participants will develop and present a skit that reviews what has been learned and allows them to share their ideas about alternative livelihoods.

#### Activity 8.2: What exists to help me?

Participants examine what supports exist in the community that could help them in accessing opportunities.

#### Activity 8.3: Summary

In conclusion: Thanks to all the participants for their time and participation. Explain the next steps in the project. It might be helpful to map out the skills building opportunities that do exist in the community and determine as a group various places to go for support in doing something different.

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