

NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

EVALUATION REPORT

▶ ▶ BACK TO A FUTURE

YOUTH PACK 2003-2005, SIERRA LEONE

BY SCANTEAM

JULY 2005

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Abbreviations

AASL	Action Aid Sierra Leone
CEIP	Community Education Investment Programme
CREPS	Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools
CTA	Community Teachers' association
DEP	Distance Education Programme
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
IAMTEC	National Institute for Advanced Management and Technology
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action (coordinating body)
NPFL	National Patriotic Front for Liberia
NRC HQ	NRC Head Quarters (in Oslo)
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
RREP	Rapid Response Education Programme
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
TEP	Teacher Emergency Package
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
YP	Youth Pack

1 Executive Summary

More than 10 years of brutal conflict in Sierra Leone ended in January 2002, leaving almost half of the population of 4.3 million displaced, and the country devastated. In border provinces towards Guinea and Liberia, the entire population was affected by the war.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) started to plan operations in Sierra Leone in 1999 to support the National Recovery Strategy, to aid the process of recovery and the reintegration and reconciliation for resettled IDPs, returnees, ex-combatants and separated children. As the situation in Sierra Leone no longer poses a humanitarian emergency with regards to IDPs and refugees, and the activities are increasingly on the margin of NRC's mandate, the organization is phasing out at the end of 2005. Emphasis will be given to consolidate and ensure sustainability of activities post NRC presence in Sierra Leone.

The current education programme has three main components:

- The Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools programme (CREPS), to give formal basic primary education for over-aged children in three years (rather than 6);
- The Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP), to reintegrate child ex-combatants and separated children in close cooperation with UNICEF;
- The Youth Pack scheme, a one-year pilot programme for 400 youth in 4 different centres. YP provides a combination of vocational skills training with basic academic and life skills education for 14-22 year olds, and is implemented in cooperation with a local NGO in Kambia district on the border to Guinea. YP was run for two years (2003-04 and 2004-05).

NRC has used its experience with educational projects in other countries as a basis for the YP project in Sierra Leone. A project developed in Rwanda was adapted to the Sierra Leonean context, and teaching manuals were written by national curriculum writers and University members, based on learner centred methods. The local partner, Action Aid Sierra Leone (AASL), was asked to provide the vocational aspect, which accounted for 50% of the teaching time.

Scanteam was asked in March 2005 on short notice to evaluate the Youth Pack programme, to document lessons learnt and guide plans to develop and debate the establishment of YP programmes in other countries as a "new addition" to NRC programme portfolio.

The evaluation assessed the following main issues:

- **RELEVANCE:** Assess need and relevance in the community and for all stakeholders.
- **PROCESSES:** Identify best practices and weaknesses; balance between theoretical and practical components, and involvement and empowerment of stakeholders at all stages.
- **IMPACT:** To assess if the program reached the target group and contributed to individual growth and reintegration; impact on teachers, and unforeseen positive and/or negative effects.

- **SUSTAINABILITY:** To assess if changes achieved are likely to be sustained for all actors involved; and continuation of Youth Pack activities after NRC's exit.
- **COST-EFFECTIVENESS** of the intervention; use of trainers, supervisors, and two teachers per class.
- **THE NRC MANDATE:** To assess if Youth Pack falls within NRC's mandate, and relevance with regards to NRC criteria for program support, including target groups.

Since a main purpose of the evaluation is to guide NRC centrally and country teams embarking on youth education projects, the report is quite detailed with many examples from the pilot project, and relevant methodology references and tools have been included in order to contribute to the operational challenges of the country teams. A document review is included as an annex to draw the attention to resources that may be consulted further.

1.1 Methodology

A team of two Norwegian and two Sierra Leonean consultants visited the YP programme during its last week of operation. The team conducted exploratory interviews with all main stakeholders and observed classes and activities in the centers. Based on this, questionnaires and systematic checklists were developed, and used by the SL consultants in two subsequent trips to carry out further interviews. Interviews have also been conducted with NRC in Freetown, in Oslo, with AASL and with other organisations and the Ministry for Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in Freetown.

Three main aspects have influenced the findings of this evaluation:

- Interviews were held with 96 of the 186 youth who graduated the first year. Despite efforts, it was not possible to locate the remaining youth;
- Observations and interviews of 2nd year learners and teachers in the centres were done during the last days of regular programme, and classes were atypical;
- All major stakeholders (teachers, learners and community leaders) were strongly interested in a continuation of the popular programme, and very few people volunteered critical comments. Those who did, asked to be anonymous.

The Norwegian part of the team presented preliminary findings to NRC Oslo to give rapid inputs to the process of deciding on continuation of the programme, and on the revision of the modules.

In many cases the report will raise questions and highlight dilemmas, rather than provide concrete answers and recommendations.

1.2 Findings and conclusions

The intentions and ideas of NRC to start the YP project are very good and much needed and have resulted in a very positive direct outcome for the learners and teachers, and a very good impression in the communities. In Sierra Leone as in many other countries, NRC is also uniquely positioned geographically, logistically and at the right time to initiate a programme for war-affected youth. However, NRC has not been sufficiently aware of the differences between the YP-pilot and their established

project portfolio, and has not had the right skills, tools and experiences for YP to reach optimal results.

The main problem seen by the evaluation team is the way the programme has been planned and implemented, almost in isolation from other actors (including the local implementing partner), as an expensive service-delivery project. In general Youth Pack is seen to be NGO-run activities, which are very much welcome, but the community members and leaders do not see that NRC has taken advantage of resources that are available locally.

The lack of involvement of and cooperation with local actors (government institutions, other projects, and local communities) and the lack of follow-up of learners is the most serious drawback of the project, resulting in very limited sustainability of the efforts beyond the direct beneficiaries. In a transition period it is questionable whether it is justified to spend such large sums of money on so few recipients. A very rough estimation of the total programme cost (112.3496 USD)¹ divided by 400 learners gives an average cost of 2.800 USD per learner.

It is the impression of the evaluation team that NRC has paid more attention to whether the target group and the orientation of the programme fits with NRC mandate and expertise, than to whether the programme fits within the overall context of the time and society in which it is placed. These, in the view of the team, are not the right terms to justify the project. For the discussion on this, see chapter 9.

Below is a summary of main findings, related to the questions in the Terms of Reference.

Relevance

- There is a clear need for YP in Kambia, and the programme content is seen as relevant by all stakeholders.
- The programme approach taken by NRC renders YP less relevant to and more isolated from the community than it could have been, had the programme been more integrated with community structures and social fabric.

Outcomes and impact: Learners, teachers and communities

- YP has trained 400 (386 graduated) youth in four centres. The majority of the 1st year learners are building on what they have learnt in Youth Pack, either as apprentices or in some form of employment, or in school. It is too early to determine whether this is a lasting effect.
- Gaining vocational skills that enables the youth to enter the job market is seen by all stakeholders as the most important outcome of the project.
- Most of the youth are however not able to read and write. They have learnt enough skills to be able to measure and to read simple instructions in their trade.
- The most vulnerable group, the young mothers, have not been assisted to learn effectively.

¹ See table on page 14

- The effect of life skills training is not very clear. Although the youth say that it has been useful, they display little practical knowledge.
- The youth, teachers, community members and community leaders all state that Youth Pack has had a beneficial effect on their self-confidence, behaviour and role in society.
- Academic Teachers employ certain elements of learner centred methods, such as role play and dramatisation, but the teaching method that seem to be more common is “chalk and talk” and Question and answer sessions that have the form of learners’ “automatic responses” to the questions or statements.
- 16 academic teachers have been trained and received two years of work in an inspiring and advanced (modern) pedagogical setting. 15 of these have completed 2 of 3 years of Distance Education, which might lead to a qualified teacher status.
- 24 vocational trainers have similarly received some training and benefited from 2 years of work experience, but some of these teachers are still illiterate.
- It can be deduced, from the very positive feedback, regarding behaviour change in the youth and the status they seem to have gained as role models in the community, that YP with 400 youth trained has contributed to the peace-building process in Kambia District, given the very strong link between disempowered youth and destabilisation.
- A safe, stable, friendly and respectful environment in the centres has ensured that there have been few serious incidences of misbehaviour. YP does not provide psychosocial support to the youth, but the teachers do have a module on trauma. Traditional ways of dealing with trauma has not been integrated in the programme.
- A negative side effect of the programme is the increased tension in the community during the selection of youth as the number of youth wanting to benefit from the programme was double that of the intake.
- All 40 teachers are local to the District and constitute a future resource in the education sector. However, several have indicated that after the “NGO” experience, they no longer want to work for local institutions.

Sustainability

There is a difference between aims stated in the documents, and opinions given by NRC staff, regarding the intentions for securing sustainability of the programme. This lack of clarity has influenced the outcome negatively.

- YP was designed mostly in Freetown and Oslo. Other actors in the same field were to some extent consulted, but there were no serious efforts to integrate the YP activities with wider transition initiatives. There were several large-scale initiatives² going on prior to- or at the same time as Youth Pack, and opportunities for synergies and wider impact of the programme have been missed.

²: The Youth Reintegration training and Education for Peace Program (YRTEP – see reference under documents review) (NCDDR/ USAID/ OTI/ WV)

Youth Engagement Programme (UNDP/UNV)

- YP created a “parallel structure” to the existing system, and planned and implemented a programme based on their experience with rapid response education projects.
- The need for efficiency and short term visible results for the target group, rather than longer term impact in the communities, seems to have guided the decision to go for an expensive project with few participants.
- The selection of a local partner with experience in implementing community projects was a wise move. The lack of willingness and ability to work with this partner to take advantage of their community experience and participatory programme approach has had negative effect on sustainability.
- Participation of the communities during the preparation phase of the programme was rudimentary and rushed. The consequence of this is that the project is seen very much as an NGO activity in Kambia District. There is a severe lack of ownership and identification with the Youth Pack programme, and hence feeling of responsibility towards it among local institutions and community groups. Admiration and awe are better words to describe the community views.
- There is no follow-up of learners once they leave youth pack or monitoring of how they cope. There has been some attempts made by NRC and AASL to link YP with other schemes to ensure further employment, training or other opportunities for the youth to build on the YP year, but apart from a few “ad hoc” examples, no such partnerships have been formed.
- The high cost alienates the programme as an exclusive NGO activity, which is next to impossible for the local community to copy despite the fact that there are some local institutions with similar programmes. These could have been strengthened through closer cooperation with YP.

Programme Planning and Management

- YP has been implemented during very difficult circumstances in the field, which is normal for NRC when operating in emergencies. What was not normal, however, was NRC starting a new type of project in a transition period, which involved cooperation with a local partner with experience in implementing community based projects. The NRC “normal” rush to get a programme operational, which takes effect when funding is secured for a short time period, has affected YP negatively.
- Allocation of manpower to manage the programme has been inadequate. At the start-up of Youth Pack, the Project Manager position was added to that of the Field Coordinator who was already running the CREPS programme with 6000 children and 156 teachers.
- The NRC and AASL project teams managed to get the programme up and running with teachers recruited and trained and learners selected in a matter of two-three months. The programme has been running relatively smoothly for two years with

Community Empowerment Project, CEP (NaCSA/UNHCR)

Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Project / Training and Employment Program (CRRP/TEP) GoSL / World Bank

a good atmosphere in the centers and few reported conflicts among teachers and learners. This is impressive, given the conditions under which the programme is implemented.

- The process of establishing the partnership between NRC and AASL was done in a matter of weeks, and was not based on established operational rules for dealing with a partner. The confusion and difference of perceptions regarding roles and responsibilities that emerged between NRC and AASL can partly be explained by the lack of cohesion between the various documents of NRC and the lack of an assessment at the beginning of the programme. NRC did not carry out any organisational assessment of AASL to assess whether the organisation did have the capacity to carry out the tasks at hand, nor did they take action to assist AASL find different ways to upgrade their skills.
- The perceptions and expectations for the partnership were fundamentally different. AASL did not contribute to the planning of the overall programme and there was no joint programming undertaken to ensure integration between the two components
- A severe conflict between the two agencies emerged early on in the programme, influencing all levels of implementation. The relationship has been described as “thorny”. The conflict was not handled constructively from either side, and has prevented effective integration of the components and seriously affected the preparation for hand-over to AASL and phase-out of NRC, and thus the potential sustainability of the project. The second year was finished in April 2005, and activities will most likely not be re-started by the local partner. This is very unfortunate, given the many strengths of the programme and the potential of wider impact inherent in the concept.
- The selection of learners has, in general, been according to the criteria of YP, despite one case of mismanagement during the first year. Isolated cases of ‘nepotism’ have been noted, but not verified.
- The management model for centre leader changed from the first to the second year. The selection process of centre leader was not approved of by several teachers and the changes made have brought some suspicion and grudges among teachers. There are complaints about lack of transparency and accountability of the new system.

Programme Effectiveness: Gaining knowledge and skills in the centres

The evaluation team, and NRC, were puzzled about the low achievement regarding literacy for learners of both years, and about no one picking up that this was a problem. The following are seen as some of the main reasons:

- The teaching methods used are not sufficiently learner-centred, and do not stimulate to reflection, or to allow teachers to see how well the learners are picking up on the skills.
- The evaluation methods used do not work to pick up that students don’t read and write. There is no participatory monitoring system in place, which ensures that teachers and learners together with supervisors verify that the methods work and that learners learn.

- Hardly any teaching materials are used in academic and life skills classes. Learners do not have reading materials. This prevents them from practising what they learn.
- The modules are far too theoretical, and above the level of learners as well as teachers.
- Supervision has focused more on administrative issues than on pedagogical supervision of teaching methods. This has contributed to the lack of learning reading and writing skills.
- There is very little integration between the academic training and the vocational training.

1.3 Recommendations

The following are main overall recommendations; detailed ones are given in each chapter.

1. NRC should continue work to facilitate implementation of youth pack programmes for transition periods in countries emerging from conflict and war.
2. If NRC continues to work on Youth Pack and include it in the organisation's portfolio, it should be done with the following adjustments:
 - Update the planning and implementation methods and tools to fit with current "state of the art" way to execute such programmes in transition phases, including stakeholder assessments, clear formulation of objectives and the establishment of a functional monitoring system;
 - Use lessons learnt from YP SL to develop guidelines for working with local partners. If partnerships are formed, the programme should be planned jointly from the start;
 - Staff working in stressful situations with high pressure need to acquire skills that make them feel safe and aware of the effect of their own attitudes and communication on others. The staff should be trained in cross-cultural communication and conflict management skills.
 - Explore possibilities for closer community cooperation and YP integration with local institutions, including ways to reduce costs.
 - The curriculum should be thoroughly revised, to make it more appropriate to this type of course, and to the level and life situations of learners and teachers. The revision should include the development of effective teacher-learner materials.
 - The two components of the programme should be integrated.
 - Ensure enough time and manpower during the planning and start-up phase to accomplish the above points.

2 Introduction

2.1 Objectives of the Evaluation

Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assess the impact of the academic and skills training components of the one-year program.▪ Did the program reach the target group? Did the program contribute to individual growth and reintegration of the target group?▪ Assess the impact of the program on Youth Pack teachers.▪ Assess unforeseen positive and/or negative effects on community or persons involved.
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Identify the program's best practices and weaknesses. Is there a good balance between the project's components (theoretical and practical)?▪ Have the target group and stakeholders been appropriately involved at all stages and empowered through the process?▪ Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the choices of premises.
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Evaluate the need and relevance of Youth Pack in the community and for all stakeholders.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Are the changes that have been achieved likely to be sustained?▪ Continuation of Youth Pack activities after NRC's exit.
Cost-effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ All actors involved (students, teachers, local community).▪ How cost-effective has the intervention been? (Long term impact assessment might still be necessary).▪ Use of two teachers per class▪ Use of trainers and supervisors
NRC mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Does Youth Pack fall within NRC's mandate?▪ The relevance of the program with regards to NRC criteria for program support, incl. target groups.
Conclusions and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ For other continued development of Youth Pack in other NRC program countries (sharing the learning).

2.2 Methodology

Data collection

The evaluation is based on an assessment of documents, observations in the field and interviews in Kambia, Freetown and Oslo. A preliminary presentation of findings to NRC in April, and discussion of these, has led to further points in the report. Important relevant documents have also been found on the net, and have been referred to.

The evaluation team was composed of two Norwegian and two Sierra Leonean consultants. After introductory interviews in Freetown, the whole team spent one week in Kambia. Exploratory interviews were conducted in addition to two days of observation in three centres. Based on these, questionnaires and systematic interview

checklists were developed for nine categories of respondents; 1st and 2nd year learners, teachers, parents and community members and –leaders, business community, youth outside the programme and employers of youth from YP. The instruments were tested and revised. Additional interviews and observation was carried out during the end-of semester sportsweekend where all 2nd year learners and teachers as well as other respondents were gathered for two days.

The Sierra Leonean consultants went back to Kambia twice for a total of 15 days to conduct systematic in depth interviews with all categories of respondents. In addition, quantitative data were collected through questionnaires regarding the effect of YP on 1st year students. See annex E for an overview of instruments used.

Although the selection of respondents has been driven by accessibility (and is hence not a random selection), the extensive efforts put into accessing respondents have given a large sample on which to base the conclusions drawn:

- 96 (of 186) first year learners
- 50 second year learners
- 19 teachers
- 11 local business owners
- 7 community leaders
- 15 community members
- 4 staff of AASL
- 9 staff of NRC SL and NRC Oslo
- 1 representative for other vocational training institutions
- 4 Ministry of Education staff
- 4 staff of international organizations

Follow up interviews were carried out at NRC Oslo with key personnel that were involved from the planning phase of YP.

Timing and time limits – of vital importance

1. The evaluation has benefited from the time set aside to complete the assignment. The team and NRC has been able to engage in dialogue on findings and recommendations after and during the final field trips without being limited by strict and short time limit for the finalising of the report.
2. However, there was very little time to plan for the field trip. The consequence of this is first and foremost the fact that only about 50 % of the 1st year learners could be reached. There is a risk that those interviewed are the most successful ones, in that they are close to the centres and have stayed in touch with the centres. We have no information about the 50% we did not reach, and neither the teachers nor the NRC staff could give information about these participants.
3. The evaluation was carried out too late in the school year, in fact, during the final week of the last semester. The consequence is that there was no opportunity for the team to observe normal classroom situations. Ideally, an evaluation of this sort should include several days of classroom observations in order to give a thorough assessment of the quality of education.

4. It is also worth to note that the evaluation is carried out before any longer-term impacts can be assessed. It can only give some indications regarding future effects of the programme.

The time factor is extremely important to consider for evaluations of this sort. They should not be rushed! The quality of the data collected is dependent on the use of professional local consultants. These will most likely have to combine the assignment with regular jobs. In addition, the implications of variable availability of electricity, phone lines and access to servers that work should not be underestimated.

Reliability of data collected

The YP project is a highly valued contribution to the local economy, and the large majority of the stakeholders wanted it to stay, and would like to contribute to make this happen. While this positive attitude is a significant finding, it also may have influenced respondents' willingness to reveal any criticism they might have about the project.

The critical comments offered were cautious ones, and often said "between the lines", or after considerable time had been spent to establish trust. With the time limits the team had, we were not able to establish significant levels of trust with more than a few respondents. These were then also the ones giving quite serious negative comments.

It is always a challenge to obtain "objective" information when respondents have their own agenda – here it was a clear wish for YP to continue. It is of course impossible to assess to what level such an agenda influenced the results – but the team does want to raise the issue, as there is a need to see beyond some of the positive statements to the problems carefully hinted to. The team remains with a serious question-mark about this issue.

Dialogue and action

The Norwegian team presented a preliminary briefing at NRC Oslo, with the NRC Sierra Leone Country Director present. NRC acted on some of the recommendations made and NRC presented the PowerPoint presentation from this first briefing to Action Aid Freetown. The dialogue was continued between NRC Oslo and Freetown, the Norwegian and Sierral Leonean consultants and Action Aid.

The dialogue also led to hiring a Norwegian educator to work with teachers and second year students to start revising the YP modules.

Documents consulted

Documents concerning YP have not been collected and stored in a systematic manner, neither at Action Aid, nor at NRC. NRC Oslo did not have access to all relevant documents as these were filed in Freetown. The team spent too much effort during the limited planning and fieldwork period "chasing" essential documents. Keeping in mind that YP is a pilot project the reporting must be considered lacking and not geared towards institutional learning.

It should be noted, however, that NRC has done some internal reviews of YP, in which lessons learned have been well documented.

The team was not made aware until after the fieldtrip of the fact that one Norwegian consultant had been employed for the most of a year to develop both teachers' manuals and trainers' manuals prior to the start-up of Youth Pack, working closely with the national curriculum writers. The only documents accessed by the team were two reports by the consultant that did in no way document the full process. There were no internal reports from this process made available to the team.

2.3 Structure of Report

The first four chapters of this report present the background for the project and the methodology used in this evaluation. The next three chapters cover the findings related to the education programme.

Chapter 5 gives a brief description of the main effects of the three skills training programmes for the youth in the Youth Pack centers.

Chapter 6 deals with education methods and includes a summary of assessments and recommendations for chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 7 describes the impact of the programme in the community. Relevant assessment and some recommendations are included in each of the sections in this chapter.

Chapter 8 deals with Project Cycle Management: the process of planning, implementing and monitoring Youth Pack.

Chapter 9 analyses in some detail what went wrong between the two partners, NRC and AASL, resulting in a "thorny" relationship that has had a serious effect on the programme.

In chapter 10, the question of whether Youth Pack is within NRC mandate is discussed.

Chapter 11 gives a summarised overview of the choices made by NRC throughout Youth Pack planning and implementation and the main lessons learnt.

2.4 Evaluation Team, Acknowledgements, and Disclaimer

The evaluation was carried out by Ms Liv Moberg (team leader) and Ms Ane Haaland (quality assurer and team member) both of Scanteam Oslo, and professor Abdul Mansaray and Ms. Adama Sessay, local consultants in Sierra Leone. The team received full support from NRC, Action Aid SL and staff and students at the four training centres, and all government, NGO and UN offices approached, for which it would like to express its sincere thanks. Thank you also to Mr. Sullay Bobor Sesay, Programme Manager for the Disadvantaged Children and Youths Programme of GOAL (Ireland/SL) who gave valuable input on the situation for war-affected youth in Sierra Leone and commented on the draft report.

The report and its findings are the sole responsibility of the evaluation team, and do not necessarily reflect the views of NRC, AASL, the Government of Sierra Leone or any other actors mentioned in this report. Any remaining errors are the team's responsibility.

3 Background and Context³

Sierra Leone is located on the southwest coast of Africa, and the population is estimated to be around 4.3 million. About 2 million are estimated to have settled in the capital Freetown. There are 13 ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. The country is divided into 14 districts; all with local governments who share power with traditional rulers.

Sierra Leone was a British colony and gained independence in 1961. The first years after independence were characterized by a number of military coups. Later a one-party state was established. Corruption and an economic decline prepared the ground for civil conflict. In March 1991, combined forces of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL) entered Sierra Leone. RUF continued their brutal attacks for more than 10 years, resulting in a devastation of the country and more than 2 million displaced. The protracted conflict in Sierra Leone officially ended on the 18th of January 2002.

The present stability in Sierra Leone has allowed the Government to embark on an ambitious programme of national recovery supported by the international community, including efforts aimed at the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants, the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). Given these efforts, Sierra Leone is moving slowly out of a recovery period into a phase of social, economic and political development. In recognition of these positive developments the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), the United Nations System, donors and NGOs are changing their emphasis, modalities and structures for operating in Sierra Leone. In recognition of the improving situation, the United Nations is continuing its scaling down of activities albeit at a slower pace than initially planned. Likewise the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) will have pulled out of Sierra by the end of December 2004. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will take over its activities. UNHCR is expected to end its reintegration activities by the end of 2005.

At the beginning of 2004 there were in excess of 66,000 registered Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone, and 39,000 outside the country as refugees. Officially all Sierra Leonean IDPs have returned to their communities of origin, and the last registered IDPs were resettled during 2003. UNHCR discontinued its support for Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea and Liberia in the middle of July 2004, concluding the last organised repatriation of refugees from these two countries.

Norwegian Refugee Council Sierra Leone

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) started projects in Sierra Leone in 1999. In 2004, the main focus of NRC's work has been to aid the process of recovery and to support the reintegration and reconciliation process for resettled IDPs, returnees, ex-combatants and separated children in home communities and to facilitate the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees in safety and dignity.

NRC's activities in Sierra Leone are in support of the aspects of the National Recovery Strategy, as and when it pertains to returnees and refugees. Given that NRC

³ Chapter 3 and 4 are to a large extent text copied from NRC documents.

is planning to phase out of Sierra Leone at the end of 2005, emphasis will be given to consolidate and ensure sustainability of activities post NRC presence in Sierra Leone.

The current education programme in Sierra Leone has three main components:

- The Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools programme (CREPS), which is a programme that in three years provides formal basic primary education for over-aged children that would normally have taken six years.
- The Community Education Investment Programme (CEIP), which is aimed at reintegrating child ex-combatants and separated children in close cooperation with UNICEF
- The Youth Pack scheme that provides a combination of vocational and life skills training with basic academic education for 14-22 year olds.

Since operations started in 1999, the emphasis and geographical distribution of NRC's activities have changed a number of times given NRC's criteria for entry and exit. The nature of activities - and target groups - has consequently changed throughout NRC's presence in Sierra Leone. As Sierra Leonean refugees and IDPs resettled and NRC is no longer having any significant activities aimed at Liberian refugees or IDPs, the thrust of NRC's activities at this stage has become focused on activities aimed at reintegration. In Kambia District, where Youth Pack is being implemented, the entire population was affected by the war, and were either forced to leave the country or flee to other parts of the country. The current situation, and the foreseeable future, is such that it warrants NRC's exit from Sierra Leone. The situation in Sierra Leone no longer poses a humanitarian emergency with regards to IDPs and refugees. Given that the activities that NRC can undertake in Sierra Leone increasingly are on the margin of NRC's mandate, it is recommended that NRC, congruent with its 2002-2004 Strategy for Sierra Leone⁴, phase out its activities in December 2005.

⁴ Referring here to an internal NRC recommendation

4 The Youth Pack Project⁵

Youth that have lost out on formal schooling is one of the vulnerable groups that do not generally receive much attention in a post-conflict situation. NRC has identified this gap in several of the countries where they support IDPs and Refugees in the return and resettlement phase. Youth returnees fall between two chairs in the reintegration process. In most post-conflict situations there are support programmes for children and for youth ex-combattants, usually run by UNICEF and UNHCR. Illiterate youth without formal skills training⁶ becomes a vulnerable group and a “risk factor” in that they cannot easily enter the formal schooling system or the labour market. There is a great risk that disillusioned youth become a threat to the rebuilding of society and they are often seen to contribute to resurgence of the conflict. Idle youth with nothing to lose are one of the main “spoilers” in a peace-building effort.

Youth Pack is a one-year combined literacy and skills training project for youth between 14 – 22 years old. The project has a staff of 16 academic teachers, 20 vocational trainers, 2 supervisors, in addition to staff from the implementing partner Action Aid Sierra Leone (AASL). The project caters for a total of 200 youth per annum, half of whom are girls. Being a pilot project the exercise had to be viewed as a learning process and, consequently, modifications were expected to be made to the concept.

Youth Pack was launched on April 23rd 2003 in four locations in Kambia, Sierra Leone and is now in its second year. The initial modules were developed by NRC in 2002 and implementation of the pilot project started in 2003.

The project has been funded as follows:

Donor	Project number	Budget amount (USD)
NRC Funds Youth Pack (literacy and vocational skills training modules) 2002	SLFT0206	254,986
NORAD Youth Pack (literacy and vocational skills training) Kambia, 1 st year, 2003	SLFT0302	208,333
NORAD Youth Pack Kambia, 2 nd year, 2004	SLFT0402	436,794
NORAD Youth Pack, last term 2 nd year, 2005 (proposal, not yet approved)	SLFT0502	223,383

Youth Pack is a full time programme with the academic part of the program concentrating on teaching youth a working/functional knowledge of Literacy, Numeracy, Health (including HIV/Aids), Physical Education, Peace and Human Rights and a component of vocational skills training. This combination will make the youth functionally literate and will give them knowledge of a skill, which should

⁵ Selected text from the NRC background document for the evaluation.

⁶ Youth that do not fall within UNICEFs mandate and are not necessarily classified as ex-combattants

enable them to be self-reliant or with qualifications that may give them a chance of employment. All youth receive a “start-up” package when they graduate from the program, containing the tools that they have used during the course of the program. At the end of the program a one-week training in small-scale business management is conducted at each centre.

Youth Pack in its form seeks to integrate youth into their communities of origin after many years as refugees or IDPs. The target group is particularly vulnerable as many of them has lost their parents and are striving to find ways to reinstate themselves in their communities of origin.

The schedule of the program is organised in three semesters, with assessments of the youth at the end of each semester, and a graduation semester of 2 weeks at the end of the program. The academic part of the program runs in the morning hours and the vocational training is taking place in the afternoon hours. The schedule is flexible and might be altered if the need to do so arises (e.g. sowing – harvest season). Lunch is provided for the learners (and the teachers) every day, prepared by local cooks.

For the academic part there are 2 teachers per class (25 youth). There are 6 vocational trainers in each centre, covering the 6 skills offered to the youth, agriculture (for all) carpentry, masonry, hairdressing, garment and dye and tailoring.

Recruitment of qualified teachers and trainers is a challenge in Sierra Leone. When NRC selected academic teachers in Kambia only one of the 16 candidates selected was a qualified teacher. It was also a challenge to find vocational skills trainers with both academic background as well as the necessary vocational skills. Some of the vocational trainers are without much academic education.

Youth Pack was developed in Sierra Leone with local expertise from the learning institutions (university, National Curriculum developers and teacher colleges). Focus during this process was the academic modules for the programme.

Before the opening of the program a three-week introduction and training workshop with 25 teachers and Youth Pack staff was conducted. Only 16 of the 25 teachers were selected at the end of the three weeks. Topics covered were the modules prepared for the program. The Youth Pack staff handled methodology, physical education, teaching aids, team teaching, learning environment and class management; resource persons from the University, teacher training colleges and National Curriculum Development facilitated the other topics.

NRC and AASL conducted a one-week “curriculum development workshop” on five vocational skills (carpentry, masonry, tailoring, agriculture and hairdressing) in May 2003 for 20 skills trainers.

All the Youth Pack teachers benefit from a monthly in-service training and 18 teachers/trainers are currently enrolled in the Distance Education Programme. In addition to this the teachers and trainers are supervised in their centres, they go on week-long exchange visits between the centres to learn from each other. This is especially important for the vocational skills trainers, as some of them are less educated.

Youth Pack staff together with MEST and local authorities select the youth in the program. The program caters for 200 youth, with a balance between girls and boys. The youth are selected against criteria of vulnerability, and in accordance with NRC’s policies.

For the 2003 – 2004 school year the statistics were as follows:

Table 1. Profile of the youth in the programme, 2003-2004

Category:	Boys:	Girls:	Total:
Abductees	4	7	10
Ex-combatants	15	3	18
IDP/Refugees	72	84	156
Disabled	2	2	4
Civilians:	2	9	11
Total:	95	105	200

NRC Sierra Leone first implemented the program in Kambia District as a pilot program at the start of the first school year in April 2003. The program is now at the end of its second year. In 2005 NRC is planning to implement the program in several other NRC program countries. A thorough evaluation of the program in Sierra Leone will therefore be of utmost importance, not only for closing of the program in Sierra Leone, but also to allow for improvements/adaptations in the program prior to implementation in other NRC program countries.

Objectives of the project

The Objectives of the project were revised between the first and the second proposal for funding. The analysis in this study is based on the last set of objectives.

The various project documents are not consistent in terminology⁷. What has been labelled ‘objectives’ and ‘aim’ here are in fact the activities and outputs of the project⁸.

Objectives for the project in general as understood by the team concern such achievements for the youth as self-reliance, reintegration, rebuilding of community etc. since these are referred to throughout the various documents.

Aim:

To give youth an opportunity to participate in a one-year educational programme, experience progress and thus empower them for their future lives

⁷ See chapter 8 for further analysis

⁸ Some comments on objectives formulation: The project manager is responsible for the *outputs* of the project. The project team plans and implements the *activities*. The *objectives* should denote what the project outputs seeks to *contribute* to, in terms of change in behaviour for the target group. In order to reach objectives, the target group has a co-responsibility to make use of the project output. The objective could be that the youth continue schooling, that they become self-reliant or that they contribute to community development in other ways once they leave Youth Pack. Hence, the objectives should be formulated as “one step beyond” the project – not as the actual deliverables of the project.

Objectives:

- Provide functional literacy and numeracy skills to illiterate youth between 14 and 22 years of age
- Provide vocational skills in order to strengthen chances of employment and self-reliance
- Provide youth with life skills such as Health, Physical Education, Peace Building, Environment, Conflict Resolution and Human Rights

The project has the following long-term perspectives:

- Integrate the education activities into community efforts to demonstrate cooperation and future reliability.
- Work with the Ministry of Education and local authorities to identify opportunities for work and further training / schooling for youth.
- Solve problems that prevent girls specifically from attending or completing an education
- Develop the confidence and general knowledge of the youth through a variety of subjects taught.
- Strengthen the youth's chances of becoming self-reliant.
- Help the youth's energy positively towards rebuilding their community instead of being idle

5 Gaining knowledge and skills in the centres

The following three chapters describe findings of the programme, and analysis of findings. Chapter 5 describes learning in the three main components, literacy and numeracy, life skills and vocational skills – i.e. the short-term results of YP on the main target group. Chapter 6 reflects on the findings in chapter 5 by assessing the curriculum development and teaching methodology – what worked well and what did not work so well. Chapter 7 describes the outcome of the project – the effect on the learners in the community.

5.1 The context: Creating a Safe Environment for the Youth

The context of the centres is special. Both teachers and learners come from a background of war, violence and trauma. This influences what is taught and learnt at the centres, and thus needs to be kept in mind when interpreting results. NRC has been using experiences from educational programmes in post-war situations in other countries as well as its Sierra Leonean experience to plan and implement the YP project.

NRC's approach is to construct a framework for creating a safe environment in the centres, where the main focus can be directed towards the future, towards building a new life with new skills, knowledge and insights.

NRC does not have the facilities, nor the experience or the ambition, to treat trauma in a comprehensive way – i.e. to work with teachers and youth to *heal* their trauma, or work directly with individuals. Their approach is to create conditions that are good enough and safe enough for the youth to become stable, to get back to “normal life”, and have enough positive things happening to them that they can cope with the trauma, and go on with life. In other words – they are aiming at enabling the youth to put the past behind them by reducing the symptoms, not healing the trauma.

The main elements in this approach are the following:

- Creating an environment that is predictable: No surprises that can get the youth out of balance;
- Establish open and transparent rules: Youth participate in creating rules, and agreeing to them being followed (they are displayed in the centres);
- Creating a safe environment where they know they will not be beaten, but where lack of discipline is punished by doing physical labour for the centre;
- Train teachers to deal with the overt symptoms, i.e. if a youth is in distress, by talking with the youth directly, go to his/her home and talk with parents/relatives, or seeking assistance from community leaders or elders.

The approach seems to work reasonably well most of the time, and most youth seem to be able to re-integrate in their communities, with time. YP is certainly contributing to them being able to cope, and manage better.

The average attendance of the programme for the first two semesters in 2003 was 81% and attendance increased to close to 100% at the end of 2004.

See point 5.3 For further findings on how the approach is functioning in the centres.

5.2 Literacy and Numeracy

Literacy levels were very low among 1st year as well as 2nd year learners. Many could only do basic measurement and calculations. It was clear from the interviews, however, that they could use those literacy skills related to their vocations such as measurement, and reading and interpreting simple instructions or labels reasonably well. The majority of the youth acknowledged that the literacy skills had only been acquired at a rather low level, but that these skills were critical for their different vocations. The 96 first year learners were given tests during the focus group interviews– to read the questionnaires that had been prepared, and only one or two in each group could read the simple questions. Bearing in mind that these learners are assumed to be among the most successful ones, the conclusion that very few have in fact learned how to read is one that the team feels confident about.

Students were observed copying text the teacher had written on the board, in a ten minutes' long pause where most students were just bored, but a few copied some of what was written. One of them came over and showed a tem member proudly what he had written. She asked him to read it to her, but he said he was not able to.

Literacy and numeracy is taught with a basis in the manuals. A main reason for the low achievements in these areas is likely to be the complexity of the manuals, combined with ineffective teaching and supervision methods. An observation from literacy class illustrates the point:

The teacher starts with a game - stand up/sit down, and manages to loosen the mood and get students to laugh.

He then explains about nouns, adjectives and adverbs, and asks for examples of nouns. None are forthcoming. Finally one comes, carefully. Teacher's response: Great! All of us are brilliant this morning! And everybody claps.

The teacher then explains that there are six classes of nouns, and checks for examples. None are given first, and then a few students venture - with wrong answers. Finally he gets one or two right ones, all from the same part of the classroom. His attention is focused there, on a few students. The rest of the class is ignored during the whole lesson. This is the final lesson of the year.

The literacy skills related to the vocation were the ones identified to be the most important that they had acquired. It was observed in the classrooms that learners would copy what was on the board, letter by letter. Many of the youth nevertheless, expressed satisfaction that by the time they left the centres, they were able to at least write their names, something they could not do before.

The few youth who could read and write reasonably well had received some amount of schooling prior to coming to the YP centre.

Still – the ability to “read a little, write a little, and acquire a vocational skill” was what the majority of the students saw as the most important effect of the programme on them.

For the majority of the youth, this was their first encounter ever with formal learning, and they found the experience satisfying,

“I would not have recognized the letter A if it were as big as a house, but now, thank God, I can write my own name”

- one youth said, to which all the others vigorously agreed

The evaluation team sees the low achievement on literacy skills as a main problem for YP, and one where the objectives of the project have clearly not been met. Looking further for the reasons for this problem is a main challenge for NRC that needs to be dealt with before adapting the programme to other countries. The reasons for the low level of literacy learning will be analysed further in chapter 6.

5.3 Life skills

Life skills include peace education/human rights, health education including HIV/AIDS, and physical education/sports. A number of different methods are used to teach these subjects, including drama and role-play.

Teachers' focus appears to be to teach facts, and check that the students know facts. However, it was not possible for the evaluators to get a reliable sense of how these subjects are actually taught during normal school time. The other indicators – that neither students nor teachers are able to give any concrete examples of how the knowledge taught is actually transferred to skills in daily life – strengthen the conclusion that a lot of this knowledge is general rather than operational, and that to a large extent, the knowledge may not be turned into practice. An alternative conclusion could be that students learn the knowledge about what is good practice, and that some of this knowledge is actually used, but cannot be expressed.

In any case, the knowledge is most probably a good basis for further learning.

Peace education

The subject is discrimination. In a small classroom, 16 students are present.

Teacher: Discrimination - what is it?

Student: That bad treatment.

Teacher asks for example. A student says there are schools for boys, not for girls.

Teacher: Very good example! Teacher says the situation is worse in the North of Kambia. He tells a story about a woman who is treated badly. Asks: What does the story tell us about men's attitude to women?

Student: Bad attitude!

Teacher: Yes! He does not probe more, or encourage any questions or discussion.

The teacher tells a new story, and again gets simple answers to mostly leading questions.

He asks: What can you do to avoid discrimination?

Only one student has an answer: Stop the bad treatment.

The teacher is using YP as an example, in this class there are women who are carpenters, and masons. This is important to stop discrimination.

The teaching is lively, but students are not engaged, or involved. All communication is directly between the teacher and one student.

At the end of the question and answer session, the teacher copies from his manual to the blackboard, on the negative effects of discrimination - and nothing on the positive effects of no or less discrimination. No one in the class copies. This is dead time, the teacher loses the connection to the students, they lose concentration, and start talking - not about discrimination, but about the trip to Mambolo.

Some of the 1st year learners interviewed claimed that they had acquired important knowledge in health education, which they use at home. Examples they could give include knowledge of hygiene, balanced diet and how to keep the environment clean. They also demonstrated appreciable knowledge of aspects such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, although a few showed some degree of misconception of the modes of HIV transmission.

The youth said that they use a lot of what they have learnt in daily life, but could not give concrete examples with respect to such aspects as health education, physical education, and trauma

The question of how the course has helped them in their everyday problem solving was one that most of the youth did not quite understand. Their predominant conception of “problems in daily life” was in terms of meeting their personal and family material needs. For them, the vocational skills acquired have put them in good stead to address these problems.

The most clear direct outcome of the peace education was the youth’s abilities to help settling quarrels in their families and in the community. Several community leaders and family members also mentioned this as an outcome. This is by all means a very important skill, and – it was the only concrete example that was given about what the youth was doing differently.

“Having gone through the YP, I can now sit down and think whenever I have a problem”

“Now when there is a quarrel among my friends, I am the one they call upon to settle it”

Girls were found to be just as self-assured and active as boys in the classrooms, on the sports field and during the various events at the final school year jamboree in the Mambolo centre. From an outsider’s perception, there was in general a sense of good comradeship and mutual respect among the youth as well as between the youth and the teachers.

Learners are clearly learning useful knowledge during their life skills lessons. The question – which cannot be answered by the evaluation – is to what extent they learn the concepts well enough to be able to transfer them into practice. From the health education we observed, and from the behavior displayed by the youth, the teaching here seemed very superficial.

The health education module should be carefully reviewed by good public health actors. The section on malaria hardly mentions the main strategy to control malaria in endemic areas – i.e. to detect the illness quickly, take the appropriate treatment, and finish the treatment. By focusing on cutting grass and using mosquito nets, the module is not dealing with the main issue for action.

5.3.1 Dealing with trauma and discipline

It is beyond the scope of Youth Pack to offer psychosocial support to the youth. The project indirectly aims to have a beneficial effect through offering stable and predictable surroundings to the youth. The youth themselves participate in setting the rules for behaviour in the centers, as the picture below shows. These rules, apparently, are modified or added to as the situation arises. It appears that this makes it relatively easier for the students to adhere to these rules.



Rules posted on the wall in Rokupr Center

NRC staff said there is presently no facility for dealing with trauma in individuals in Kambia, but that it might be possible to cooperate with organizations that had such facilities in other places, e.g. Redd Barna.

Teachers are taught about trauma during their training, and there is a module on the subject. There was some doubt among the youth with respect to what they have learned about trauma. While they did not recall being encouraged to talk about their

past experiences publicly (i.e. in class), they do discuss these among themselves. This, they agreed, serve a good purpose as they could provide some emotional support for each other. Hardly any concrete examples were given of how knowledge about trauma is used in their daily life.

The "Minor incidence" at Mambolo:

The team was reminded of the realities in which YP operates when there was an outbreak of violence during the "tug of peace" (competition with two teams pulling a rope) at the Mambolo sports weekend. Following an accusation of cheating by one of the teams, the youth picked up stones and canes and started fighting. The NRC supervisor managed to calm down the groups and later explained that it was in fact the teachers who stirred up the heat. The supervisor referred to the fight that involved some ten-fifteen youth and teachers as a "minor incidence".

Ways in which teachers say trauma is manifested among the learners include withdrawal, outbursts of temper, and the use of foul language. Personal counselling is what most teachers say they use to deal with trauma, sometimes helped by the Community-Teachers Association or community elders and chiefs.

The teachers generally claimed they know quite a lot about their learners' background. The requisite information about the learners is gathered through their friends and relatives, and through personal visits to their homes. Many teachers claimed they deliberately probe into their learners' background in order to "get to know them better".

At one of the centers, one teacher, who was in charge of trauma and discipline explained how he deals with a learner that is a "trouble maker"

"We are not supposed to talk about trauma with the youth.[...] In order to understand more about this young guy's background, I went to his home without telling him. [...] Now I understand more about what he is going through and I have made him my friend by inviting him to my house for dinner. This has helped"

Corporal punishment is prohibited in the YP centres. According to the teachers, disciplinary problems are handled by assigning manual labour to defaulting students; fetching water, transporting blocks, cleaning the pigsty, etc. The impression from the interviews is that serious cases of disobedience have been few and far between. For the occasional recalcitrant case, the parents are invited to the centre, and one or two suspensions from the centre have been affected.

The members of the Community Teachers Association (CTA) were also asked for their opinion on how the issue of trauma should be dealt with. They were sure the youth were happy in the centres, but were not sure as to whether they felt comfortable talking about their past. For them, the youth were settling down pretty well, and did not want to be reminded about their past. One CTA member thought that discretion is required in how much the youth are encouraged to talk about their past. He felt there is always the risk of being shunned by the others whose past may not be that "blemished".

In both Rokupr and Kukuna, community leaders volunteered the opinion that the area of discipline and behaviour of the youth is an area where they have a role to play and could contribute actively, if invited to do so.

The approach chosen by NRC seems to help youth to cope better, and to reintegrate in their communities. However, incidences like the one in the Mambolo-weekend show that there may be only a thin veneer of coping skills over a potentially uncontrollable rage and despair, and that it may not take much to ignite the fire. The teachers are in the same situation.

People in the community who are considered competent to deal with trauma include the local Pastor and Imam, selected elders in the Council of Elders, and in one case the Counsellor from the local clinic. There is no indication that they have been consulted during the project design phase regarding how this issue should be dealt with in the centers. The approach in Youth Pack seems to have been decided upon by NRC unilaterally. There is no evidence that traditional ways of dealing with conflict and trauma have been consulted or integrated into the programme.

5.4 Vocational knowledge and skills

The youth were unanimous that they have found all what they learnt at the centres useful, with the vocational skills identified as the most useful. They express the feeling, however, that much more needed to be learnt, but that the YP had provided them with the foundation.

Community leaders likewise referred specifically to the vocational skills gained in the YP as the best thing about the programme, which they generally had a very high opinion of.

The vocational skills were learnt at a basic level, but enough to build on, as described in the next chapter.

Carpentry teaching: review in class

Carpentry teacher is reviewing names of working tools, and names of different parts of a house to be constructed. He asks a question, gets half an answer, and then gives the chance for another student, cutting off the first one.

The students knew just the word for cutting tools. Peering tools they did not know. The teacher drew a house on the blackboard, and asked for the name of the different parts - students knew just one of the three words/names the teacher was looking for.

Vocational training is (obviously) practical in nature and the learners have made several products during the year: School uniforms, clothes that are sold in order to buy materials and benches and tables for schools in the Chiefdom.

It was a Government requirement that agriculture should be included as a subject. For the first year, 20 learners had to chose this, but very few were motivated, and they are also the least content today among those interviewed. For the second year NRC / AASL changed the concept so that agriculture became compulsory, one day a week for all learners, in addition to their choice vocation. This was a successful revision.

Vocational training seems to have had a good effect, despite lack of assessment and proper planning for the component. The challenges faced and lessons learnt are discussed in chapter 8.

Selection and use of start-up kits

The youth received their start-up kits in September 2004, 6 months after they graduated. The delay was due to difficulties in purchasing the materials, and to the problems between NRC and AASL over this issue, which will be described further in chapter 9. Based on the lessons learned during the first year, the vocational trainers were involved in the selection and the purchase of the tools for the second year. They were given the responsibility of prioritising type and quality of tools within a given budget and the new procedure seems to have worked well.

The youth were unanimous in their agreement that the kits they received were important in helping them start their various vocations and most of it was seen to be useful, with a few exceptions. Asked to exemplify, a few of the masons mentioned that they did not find the plum bulb they were given too useful, and would have preferred items like pincers, tipping hammer, block axe, helmets, overalls and rain boots. The first year youth complained, however, that the rather poor quality of some of the tools was a serious limitation for them. The Agriculture majors did not demonstrate much enthusiasm for what they had received.

Teachers said that the tools used in the practical exercises should be different from those given out as start-up kits. Their contention was that since the students use these in their every day practicals, many of the tools were damaged by the time the learners finish their programme.

The tools are mostly appropriate; the teachers were, however, unanimous in their view that the tools are of poor quality. Most of these tools are not available in Kambia, with the exception of the locally made agricultural ones.

Teachers do not think the students are in a position to select the tools themselves. They feel the vocational teachers who are more experienced should do the selection. They feel also that it would be helpful to provide the students with some start-up materials in addition to the tools they are given. According to them, this would make for “a more rapid take-off for them” when they graduate.

Most of the teachers said they were not aware of any YP graduate who has sold his or her kit, but felt it was possible for this to happen without their knowledge. For them, this is one reason why a follow-up of graduates is necessary. Two teachers, however, told about students having sold their kits – two carpentry graduates sold the kits, went to Freetown to set up a business, went bankrupt, and lost their money. A tailor in the same community sold her machine to a neighbour of the teacher, for 120.000 Leones, which is half of its original worth. The teacher claimed the student did not know how to use the machine.

Another teacher told about several students who had sold their kits, and gone to Guinea.

It was not possible for the team to get information about the 90 students from the first year that could not be reached.

Business skills

A one-week course in small-scale enterprise development has been arranged by AASL each year. The first year, lecturers were hired in from a business school in Freetown to teach the learners directly. The second year, a training of trainers’

seminar was conducted for selected teachers from each center who would then teach the course at the centers. The manual shows that the course includes subjects like “principles of working together”, record keeping, “setting up a monitoring team” etc.

The 1st year learners mainly referred to the course as a course in “proposal writing” and displayed disappointment in the fact that they had not received any money after sending their proposals to the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), which has an office in Kambia. Many of them were still waiting for assistance from AASL and NRC to set up their business.

6 Curriculum development and Teaching methodology

6.1 Development and testing of teaching modules

NRC has developed special training modules for the Youth Pack programme. They were initially written in Tanzania and Rwanda in 1995. The modules are based on RREP (Rapid Response Education Programme) curriculum and cover the academic components. A Norwegian consultant spent five months in Sierra Leone with the twelve National curriculum writers to adapt the modules to the national context and to the level of the youth. The modules were far too advanced academically at this stage and the challenge for the consultant and the national team was to simplify them to the right level.

The modules were tested in the field in a two weeks' workshop with 21 youth in Kambia by a Norwegian consultant and two former CREPS teachers in June 2002. The curriculum writers did not participate in this workshop.

No testing was done by or with teachers from the teacher target group, as they were not yet selected or trained. Only two of the youth in the workshop had never been to school. One of the teachers was an experienced literacy teacher and the learning results in the workshop were very good.

This evaluation shows that the modules are still too theoretical and advanced for the purpose of teaching basic skills to (semi-) illiterate youth, as will be described in the next chapters.

NRC was aware of the problem with the modules still being too advanced and included a point about revision of the modules after the pilot project.

Assessment:

NRC has employed good practice principles by working closely with the national curriculum writers, cooperating with MEST, and testing the modules with the target group. However, it appears that the methods used in the testing workshop were not appropriate to pick up the fact that the modules were far too advanced for the target group.

The important question of how well the modules could be used by teachers who are mainly untrained and unqualified was not tested in the workshop. This would have given an important indication about the appropriateness of the level in the modules for both target groups.

6.2 Selecting and training teachers,

NRC's policy was to ensure that teachers for YP in Kambia should not be taken from regular jobs or from other districts. Among the candidates assessed by NRC there was only one who was already a qualified teacher. The others had passed form five in secondary school, but were otherwise untrained and unqualified.

More than 180 people applied for the 16 posts of Academic teachers. Sixty were invited in for tests and 25 candidates were selected for the three weeks training workshop. Then 16 teachers were selected based on criteria of performance, local affiliation with the center, age and teaching experience. The objective of gender balance could not be reached because there were not enough qualified women.

The training was undertaken by staff from the teacher's college / University and Youth Pack staff.

Less thought and time had been given to the training of vocational staff, but a one-week curriculum development workshop was carried out with the selected 24 artisans.

The academic and vocational teachers were given the chance to exchange between the centers to learn from each other.

At the beginning of the programme, academic teachers were given monthly follow-up workshops. It was soon realized that the same should be offered the vocational teachers.

The consultant who developed the modules reports that trainer's manuals were also produced. It is unclear whether these have been used at all; there was no reference to them by project staff.

Teachers enrolled in 3 year's programme on distance learning, to become qualified teachers. NRC is paying for this, and the opportunity to become qualified teachers is a main incentive. MEST has agreed to hire the teachers after YP since there is a vast need for trained teachers in Sierra Leone.

Assessment:

The approach for teacher recruitment and training shows NRC commitment to align with Government system and priorities. NRC does not compete with local efforts and adds value through training unqualified teachers in modern pedagogical methodology.

Training of academic teachers seems well defined, and the frequent follow-up training periods are appropriate for the teachers to be able to slowly build their skills and confidence. Supervisors could possibly have benefited from using the trainer's manuals that were developed at the same time as the modules.

NRC did not have plans to integrate the two components from the start and training of vocational teachers was short and not well planned.

The use of exchange visits contributes to a more integrated and coordinated programme and to institutional learning in each of the centers.

6.3 Teaching methods

Learner centered methods (LCM)

Teachers are taught to use learner centered pedagogical methods in the academic topics. These methods focus on involving the student to participate in his/her own learning by stimulating critical thinking and reflection, and teach problem solving. The methods include role-play, dramatization, discussion, field trips and discovery, and are now used in most modern adult learning programmes.

The YP teachers identified role-play, dramatization, group work and the lecture method as those they use more often in class. Reasons given include greater class participation, greater motivation of the learners, and that they help concretise learning. The teachers also said that role-play in particular is easier to use, and that it encourages friendship and self-confidence among the learners. Some observations were made to corroborate this. The learners displayed genuine engagement and talent for portraying daily life in the family and community with a great sense of humour. Girls were equally, if not more, daring and self-confident in these situations as boys.

The least used methods identified are field trips and demonstration. The teachers find that field trips are difficult to organise and also take up a lot of time. They also claimed that demonstration seems to be more appropriate for the vocational subjects than the academic ones.

Teachers were, however, vague when it came to citing specific examples of how they used participatory methods to achieve self-reliance, and how they had monitored such outcomes.

The teachers generally claim to encourage self-evaluation by the learners, but were not specific in how they do this. It was observed that teachers do the evaluation mainly through conventional tests and assignments, and the evidence adduced through an examination of learners' books does not indicate that this is done as frequently as would have been desired.

The youth stated that they were always encouraged and given the opportunity to talk in class and express their views. They also said they took part in drama and demonstrations.

On the whole, the students spoke highly of their teachers' abilities. They thought they were patient, and that they encouraged class participation.

The team was able to observe only a few classes in three of the centres. These lessons were dominated by lectures.

All teachers use question and answer method, and often they ask leading questions that just require a "yes" or a "no" from the students. Questions do not seem to stimulate thinking, because the trick is to answer "right", to confirm what the teacher has said. An example from health education illustrates the point:

Health education was very general, with a knowledge focus:

The teacher was asking: How do we clean our homes? Students answer: We sweep, and clean toilets. Teacher: How do we clean our bodies? Teacher: With soap and water. Teacher: How do you clean you hair? With shampoo and water.

During this "conversation", which was mostly questioned and answered by the teacher herself, several babies were lying on thin cloth on a cold and very dirty and dusty floor. At the back of the classroom, where we sat observing, there was a lot of rubbish that had apparently just been dropped there. No one seemed concerned.

Another common method was observed, also in health education:

Teacher: Should you have more than one partner?

Students (in unison): No!

Teacher: What can you get if you have more partners?

Students (in unison): HIV/AIDS!

The way all the learners knew and participated in this "game," indicates that this mode of teaching is standard. It is not clear if the teachers do know how much the learners actually do understand of what they teach, as there is not much interactive teaching going on, and most of the students do not participate in class, apart from responding to such leading questions.

The team did not observe any teacher using questions to ask students to stimulate the students to think or reflect, or to discuss among themselves and come up with their own answers. Much of the time was spent giving information and facts, and explaining concepts. The teachers observed did not ask follow-up questions to the learners that ventured to answer their questions.

Assessment and questions:

Most teachers have themselves been taught with the “chalk and talk” lecture method where the teacher has all the answers and the learners are supposed to listen and learn, and not challenge the teacher. For these teachers, the modern methods take time to learn, and to use comfortably in class. In many cases, several years with supportive supervision and follow-up courses are needed. The largest challenge for the teachers is usually to give up the “monopoly on power” which the old type teachers have, and to rather share the power with the learners and accept that they may have their own ideas and opinions. In many cultures, this goes against the traditions, where youngsters are not supposed to question the adults.

A likely interpretation is – the teachers know what they should do, they do this sometimes, but most of the time they probably lecture, and use simple question and answer. This may be felt as safer, and requires less preparation time. The response from the students is – this is good enough. For most students who dropped out of school, what the YP teachers do is certainly an improvement over what they were taught, then. For others, they have nothing to compare with

It was not possible for the team to assess well the self-evaluation methods and other tools teachers have for assessing progress of the learners. What seems clear is that they are not functioning well enough to discover the magnitude of the literacy problem. Or – maybe teachers thought that learning at the present level is good enough?

Maybe the problem is that they do not have clear realistic guidelines about what are the goals, how to check progress towards the goals, and whom to tell if the goals are not being reached? And maybe they do know, but are afraid to tell – because it may be taken as an indication that they do not do their job well?

Could the problem be related to the way NRC is acting in the centres – that many decisions are taken without the teachers feeling they are involved, and that they thus do not have a trust in NRC to talk about such a difficult issue?

The issue of communication and involvement of partners in the programme is discussed further in chapter 8.

Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs)

The manuals and some posters and charts are the main TLMs supplied by the project. One manual includes pictures only. All centres have chalkboards. It was not clear to the team to what extent the teachers have been taught to use materials well in class, and/or to make their own and use local materials.

All the teachers maintained that they use TLMs in their classes. They also said that they use objects such as bottle tops, stones, sticks, beads and seeds, “local dusters”, etc. Students help in producing some of these; pictures, illustrations, charts, etc. There is very little evidence of the use of TLMs in the classes, however. There were a few

rather rudimentary teaching aids such as charts, pictures and illustrations displayed on the walls of classrooms, but these appeared rather inadequate. Hardly any supplementary reading materials were found in the centres, and the teachers did not claim to use these.

During observation, teachers demonstrated rather poor skills in using TLMs – where these were used at all. Demonstrations were restricted mainly to the vocational subjects.

Very few, if any, reading materials are available to the learners in the centres, or for that matter at home. Many students are making do with only the notes they write down in class. For those who have siblings at home who go to school, they do attempt to use their school materials, but invariably find these “too difficult to understand”.

Assessment:

The skills and practice of development and use of TLMs are inadequate. This affects learning negatively.

The complete lack of reading materials for the students is seen to seriously affect the students’ abilities to practice what they learn, and to study on their own.

NRC internal review of the project states that there is a need for additional textbooks for the youth, especially in the literacy classes, and that “textbooks for regular primary schools are well suited for this purpose”. The team questions this. The youth met in the centers are on the brink of adulthood. Many of them have children of their own and their next step is to earn a living and take care of a family. They would want to read about how to set up a petty trade stall at the market rather than primary school issues.

Team Teaching

Team teaching (two teachers per class, with one teaching and the other helping is said to be practiced in the academic subjects in all the centres. The teachers generally expressed a preference for this practice because it gives a shared responsibility, support is provided by the partner, the assurance of more effective class control, the possibility of pooling information together, and the fact that one teacher’s absence from school would not disrupt classes.

Teachers said a weakness is that there are sometimes unwarranted interruptions by the second teacher, which is distracting. Both teachers are usually present in class for the duration of the lesson.

The youth generally liked the team teaching, because “it prevents one teacher from getting too tired”; “One teacher can always come in to help explain (difficult ideas) what the other cannot do so well”; “Class control is better where there are two teachers rather than one”. Most said that having two teachers in class was helpful to them, and that the support the teachers give to each other aid the understanding of the students.

Assessment:

Observations by the team gave reason to suspect that the answers given by the teachers to these questions may be a bit on the ideal side of reality. Teachers know

what they should do, and do it sometimes – enough to make a difference for the students, and probably enough to justify the method and the cost.

Fast and Slow learners

The centres use various methods to separate slow and fast learners.

Most of the teachers supported separating “slow” and “fast” learners because learners feel more confident with their own “kind”, and “fast learners don’t have the opportunity to bully the slow ones”, as one teacher put it.

There was a difference of opinion among the youth about the method. In Kukuna, most students said that such separation was good as it allowed everyone to learn at his or her own pace. At Rokupr the general feeling was that mixing fast and slow learners enables the fast ones to help the slow ones. In Mambolo, however, students said they would not want learners to be separated as they felt the fast ones could help those who are slow. It would appear that separating fast and slow learners is not a policy *per se* of NRC, but rather something left to the Centre Leaders to decide. Each centre has two classes, but the criteria for the composition of these are determined by the Centre Leaders.

Assessment:

A major constraint is that it involves a great deal more effort on the part of teachers, as different lesson notes have to be prepared. It is not clear whether the separation of the learners coincide with literacy and numeracy skills, i.e. whether the fast learners are those who already know how to read and write. There was no mention of different methods for literacy training used in the two groups.

Relevance and appropriateness of curriculum

The content of the curriculum is largely considered by the teachers to be appropriate for the daily life of the learners. According to the teachers, “the basic reading and writing skills they acquire are useful in their daily work, and of course the vocational skills are necessary for their existence”. Teachers did not comment on whether the learners were able to use in practice what they learnt in class.

While the teachers believe that what they teach in class is useful, they also said that a substantial part of the contents of the modules, especially the one on literacy does not have an overt relevance for the learners.

Conversations with the learners confirmed that they did not relate to abstract questions, but could relate to practical questions. One example is the question about “problem solving”. The team tried to tease out to what extent the training prepares the youth for solving problems in daily life. This could not be measured by asking direct questions, as the learners would understand “problem solving” to be “earning money” and not relate it to challenges in a more general way.

Assessment:

Manual contents are too complicated for the learners, and maybe too complicated for the teachers. The module for literacy training is too theoretical for the purpose of one-year basic training in reading and writing. In one class the teacher was lecturing about “6 classes of nouns”. This was at the end of the school year and most of the students

could barely write their names. It was clear that what was taught, was irrelevant to their need at this stage and that a lot of the contents was way above the heads of the learners.

Problem solving has probably not been used much as a teaching method, and learners have probably gained more theoretical knowledge than appropriate skills in most of the academic subjects, including life skills. They seem to have learnt the concepts, but may not know how to use them.

The assessment of relevance is difficult: When reading the modules, most of what is there appears relevant to the youth' situation. However, if the youth have learnt most topics or concepts mainly in theory, because the teaching methods used do not allow for much critical thinking and reflection, are they then relevant?

Two examples:

Teaching the learners “6 types of nouns” is neither appropriate nor relevant. It is too theoretical and the youth will not need the knowledge in daily life. If they go on to primary or secondary school, they will learn these details.

Teaching the learners about communication and proverbs is relevant, but the module's approach is not appropriate. In order to explain what it means to “walk in somebody elses shoes” the following North American proverb is recited:

Oh, Holy Spirit!

Grant that I may not comdemn my neighbour

Until I have walked at least

Two moons in his moccasins

Learners do hardly speak English - why not use a Sierra Leonean proverb that they can relate to?

All modules and the “chalk and talk” teaching is in English. The teachers swap to Krio to explain certain issues, but most of what was observed was lectures held in English. Role Play and dramatization was done in Krio or one of the other languages. When the non-krio speaking evaluation team-members sought learners to talk to, the best English speakers among them had difficulties keeping a light conversation going. There is an introduction in the literacy manual, stating that literacy is best learnt using the mother tounge, but still, the choice has been to produce the curriculum in English. This may also be an important factor explaining the low rate of learning.

One reason for the lack of appropriateness of the curriculum may be that it is based on the RREP curriculum, rather than developed specifically for the Youth Pack purpose, making the most of the combination of vocational and academic skills be integreating the two components better. The aim of RREP is to get children that have lost out on schooling back into the school system and the curriculum has been developed as an accelerated learning programme based on the full primary curriculum. The Youth Pack aim is more directly aimed at “coping in society with basic skills”

6.4 Supervision

During the first year, there were two supervisors for the academic component and none for the vocational teachers. For the second year, one supervisor position was transferred to the vocational component and AASL recruited for this position.

The person recruited did not have an education background. There have been problems connected with this recruitment that are described in chapter 9.

The YP teachers indicated that they are supervised on a weekly basis, and that at times the supervisor stays in the centre for a whole week. Two supervisors oversee the centres, and they usually swap places.

The teachers claimed that the supervisors check their lesson plans, class registers, time book, visitors' book, as well as do actual classroom observation. Teachers receive feedback on issues like "lapses in teaching", classroom management, handling of registers, etc. They were unanimous that they find this feedback very useful, and it helps to enhance their confidence. They further said that problems they cannot handle, like disciplinary problems, are referred to the supervisors.

The supervisors do not train the teachers to use problem-solving methods. They don't think this way, they have not been taught that way themselves. (NRC staff)

Assessment:

Supervisors seem not to follow up on the learner centered methods practiced by the teachers. This would be much needed for the teachers to become confident in the use of these methods and to build on what they learned in the three-week training.

Supervisors are the major link between the programme management and the teachers and learners. If they do not see it as their task to supervise on teaching methods and learners' participation, this is possibly another main reason for the programme not picking up on the low level of learning literacy skills.

Supervisors need to be trained on how to observe and follow-up on teachers' use of learner-centered methods in class, and in how to assess the effect of the teaching, especially regarding literacy skills.

6.5 Balance between vocational and academic subjects

The ToR for this evaluation asks for an assessment of the balance between the two main components. Should there be a shift of emphasis between the two? As usual, the answer seems to be the "Winnie the Pooh" answer: more of both. A large number of those interviewed, learners, teachers and community members have emphasised that the vocational training should be extended to two years. However, it has been verified that learners seem to manage quite well (at the moment) building on what they have learnt. As for the literacy training not being very successful, the reason for this may as well be the choice of methodology and access to materials as the timeframe. With a better use of the available time, it should be possible for the youth to gain functional literacy skills in a year.

The majority of the students felt that the balance between the academic and vocational component was right, although a few felt more time should be spent on the vocational bit as a lot has to be learnt within a short time. For some, the academic aspect was highly prized as they had never been to school, and felt this was the only opportunity they had to acquire some literacy. A good number of the students however felt that one year of the programme is too short to fully acquire the vocational skills.

The team's main concern about the relationship between the components is that they are not integrated. If the two components are better integrated, it is assumed that the effect of both will be strengthened and better targeted to the needs of the youth.

6.6 Summary and Recommendations

Revision of the objectives of Youth Pack

There is a need to clarify what the purpose of Youth Pack is, beyond the *activity* of providing training to youth⁹. What are realistic outcomes for the youth after one year of training? How are they expected to make use of Youth Pack? Such clarity is needed in order to choose appropriate methods and to ensure maximum impact of these methods.

If the purpose is to enable youth to enter the formal school system, the approach taken should be different from a situation where the youth are expected to seek employment upon leaving Youth Pack. For most of the youth, this will be the only academic training they get in life. For the purpose of apprenticeship, a different set of activities is necessary. The evaluation has found that among half the first year learners, only 12% go on to the formal school system. If this is a representative number, the one-year Youth Pack training should focus less on theoretical issues and more on practical training, since the youth will never build on the theory learnt.

Revision of modules through a participatory process

The modules should be thoroughly revised by those with most knowledge of their value and effect, that is, the teachers and learners from Youth Pack in Kambia. A facilitator with long experience in using participatory methods to collect quality information and with knowledge in Learner Centered Methods should be group leader. The curriculum writers from the University of Sierra Leone should participate in the workshop, to contribute and to learn. They are not experts in non-formal education methodology and this is an area identified by the Department of Non-Formal Education in the Ministry that is in need of capacity building.

Such a revision will take time. At least 2-3 days should be set aside per module for the teachers and learners to appreciate the importance of the exercise.

Making the curriculum and approach more relevant to youth needs.

It should be recognised that in Youth Pack in Kambia, the Vocational skills training is perceived as the most important subject by the learners and by the community. Income generation is on top of the agenda.

Based on the lessons learnt in Kambia, the modules should be revised with the perspective that literacy training is a tool for vocational training.

Literacy and numeracy lessons should refer to and build upon the life skills- and the vocational curriculum. All three components would be considerably strengthened if they draw upon each other.

Life skills should be linked to problemsolving and to practical tasks whenever possible, that is “learning by doing”. Eg: cleaning the house should not be taught theoretically, but through cleaning the classrooms. This would also contribute to critical thinking and problem solving.

⁹ Objectives formulation is treated in greater detail in chapter 8.

A public health specialist should review the life skills modules, as they need some updating.

Vocational skills training should be linked with community involvement, business development and income generation. Learners should learn how to cope with the local resources available and how to build networks and form partnerships, not to ask for more money and handouts, which encourage dependency.

A strategic approach to the involvement of the business community at the preparation stage is necessary in order to enhance chances of youth employment. It is also a good way of ensuring reintegration in practice during the programme. There are several good examples to learn from in Youth Pack, but these have not been systematically planned (see 7.2). The youth should interact with the businesses as a matter of priority and be responsible for preparing their own future through such a programme.

Youth Pack should be a tool for the rebuilding of social fabric

During the preparation phase, NRC should actively seek out resource people in the local communities who are skilled to deal with conflict and trauma handling in a traditional way and assess whether these are positive and constructive methods that can be integrated in the programme approach.

There are several gains: i) The teachers will have local resource people for support in this challenging task, ii) The community will acknowledge greater ownership of and therefore more responsibility towards the programme and iii) The programme will contribute to rebuilding the youth's respect for traditional values and culture that often perish during time of conflict and displacement.

Adult literacy programmes are more relevant to youth than primary school curriculum.

The approach should be based on non-formal adult literacy education such as Paolo Freire's methodology that is centered on the active use of pictures and scenes of daily life situations. The curriculum should be reviewed with the specific purpose of Youth Pack in mind, which is reintegration and self-reliance. Primary school curriculum has been developed with a different purpose.

Teaching and learning materials should be prioritised among tools and materials provided since the achievements in this field were so low. They should be related to the life skills and vocational components and be developed based on Paolo Freire's methods and learning tools.

Many organisations produce "sensitisation" materials such as brochures and leaflets in the areas that YP curriculum cover. NRC could investigate opportunities for "assisting" organisations with distribution of these materials through Youth Pack in order to provide the youth with reading material.

Good practice in selection and training of teachers

There are several good practice principles in the selection and training of teachers that show the intention of NRC to align with Government policies and priorities and to

build on local resources. The “philosophy” behind teacher recruitment and training should be guiding other components of the YP programme

Focus the training and build on what the teachers know

Aknowledging the fact that Learner Centered Methods takes time and a lot of practice to master, the training should focus on a few key methods that are practiced thoroughly and then worked on in refresher courses and with supervisors. These may include i) how to ask follow-up questions to ensure engagement beyond “automatic response”; ii) the use of buzzing sessions to ensure participation of all; and iii) role play and drama with follow-up questions for reflection, which are methods the teachers take well to.

Competent supervisors are key to results achievement

Supervisors should have an education background with experience in using learner-centered methods. They should be well trained in supportive supervision of both administrative and pedagogical issues in order to facilitate teacher learning rather than checking teacher performance.

Supervisors should participate in the teacher-training programme. Together with teachers and trainers they should discuss and plan how supervision is going to assist teachers in their daily work, and how to strengthen skills in the use of learner-centered methods.

Supervisors should be responsible for a participatory monitoring system that records progress along the main indicators of the programme in a systematic manner. Teachers and learners should be aware of the targets (for example “to acquire functional literacy”) so that all can collaborate to reach them.

7 Effect of the programme for the youth in the community

7.1 Self-esteem and role in community

An important aim for YP was to raise the self-confidence of the youth, and to improve their role in the community. This objective seems to have been reached very well, according to students themselves, their teachers, and community members and leaders.

Many of the 1st year learners said that with their vocational skills, they are now self-dependent and do enjoy the respect of their peers and community leaders. They also felt they were a source of motivation to others.

"I can live from my income now, and can get a wife. I am paying the medical bills for my mother." (Tailor)

"I am paying for my husband's education." (Hairdresser)

"I would be in the street without YP. It is a God's end."

"My husband is dead, but I am now paying the school fees for my children, and can survive."

"No one tells me now what to do!"

There was clearly a feeling, also among 2nd year learners that the YP experience has added value to their lives. There was the indication that they feel pride in what they have learnt, and they demonstrated a great deal of hope that they could now make a meaningful contribution to their families and to the community at large

The learners without exception claimed that the YP had served to enhance their self-respect and confidence. They also felt they now enjoyed the respect of others in their community. "They now take us big", was how one student put it. Some felt that other (non YP) youth in the community want to be like them, and that this had enabled them make more friends.

Not only did they express a high opinion of themselves, they also felt that their friends and the larger community now think highly of them. "Even our friends are now jealous of us". "Jealousy" in this context meaning high respect. There was a palpable feeling of motivation among the interviewees. Indeed, many of them expressed the feeling that they were the "lucky ones" in the community. The views above were also echoed by the community leaders interviewed.

The 1st year learners were asked how they perceive their role in the community and how this has changed since they completed YP. The largest number of those asked (40%) believe that they now actively motivate other youth. Twenty-four percent say they are perceived to be leaders of a group and 18% think that they are an example to others. Eighty-eight percent of the youth also believes that community leaders will have the opinion that they are now important members of the community and that this role has changed after YP. This very positive result was confirmed by other community members:

To determine in what ways the youth experience the effect of YP they were asked how their role has changed. Eighty-four percent of the youth reply that they were idle, but are now doing useful work. Nine of those asked say that they used to be

troublemakers, but are not any more. Four have stopped drinking and smoking and two people affirm that they used to have several partners, but now they only have one (each).

The Community Teachers' Association (CTA) members interviewed expressed satisfaction with the work being done in the centres. They claimed they take an active interest in the activities of the centres, and so far, they could not identify anything negative that goes on in them. "We, the parents can see the positive change in our children", said one CTA member. There was a great deal of agreement among the CTA members that the YP has had a very significant positive impact on the youth. As one member put it, "they have become more respectful, more controllable, and helpful at home".

The teachers also expressed the strong feeling that the YP programme has had a significant impact on the learners as well as their communities. According to them, it has provided learners with useful skills that have aided their reintegration into the community. Some teachers pointed to the fact that the instances of prostitution and delinquency have been markedly reduced. "Many of these youth were trouble makers before, but after YP they have changed and are now helpful in the community", was how one teacher put it.

Assessment:

NRC has to a large extent succeeded in one of the main objectives of Youth Pack, which is to provide a basis for the youth to go from being idle and vulnerable to achieve a sense of purpose and to find a place in the community. The methods used by the teachers have been open and supportive enough to strengthen the Youth's self-esteem.

It is deduced that the way the centers prohibit corporal punishment and the agreement on clear rules has an important effect in this regard. The system contributes to a sense of fairness among youth and teachers rather than an opportunity for teachers to display power through punishment. The use of learner-centered methods is also assumed to have an important effect on the self-esteem of the youth.

It is particularly important to take note of the effect the center situation has for girls' self-esteem. NRC has succeeded in creating an environment that encourages girls to "take up half the space".

7.2 Employment, income and further schooling

Providing a targeted short skills training programme that enables youth to find employment or further schooling in an extremely poor community is a complex challenge. Despite the positive numbers referred below, where only 11 of the 96 1st year learners interviewed use the category "unemployed", it is too early to determine the long-term impact of Youth Pack. Nevertheless, there are many important lessons learnt from the process that can guide other Youth Pack project teams.

During the year since they graduated, most of the 1st year learners interviewed have gone on to attach themselves to more experienced business people/artisans as apprentices in order to further enhance these skills. Only a few claimed to have set up their own businesses, or are in employment from which they received monthly wages, but several have formed groups to try to establish a business together.

Based on the quantitative data covering 50% of the 1st year students, the following trend indicates the achievement of the overall aim of the project:

<i>Current Engagement (1 year after graduation from YP)</i>	<i>Number</i>
Going to School	12
Employed Full time	7
Employed part time	3
Self-employed full time	16
Self-employed part time	7
Apprentice	26
Working on own land	14
Unemployed	11
Total	96

A vocational teacher who keeps close contact with many of the first year's learners estimate that about 60% from this centre are self-employed, and doing well. Five of the carpenters have jobs. Also the tailors are doing quite well.

Among the 1st year learners interviewed, 77 % earn less than LE 20 000,- (NKR 50,-) a month. These include the apprentices who are normally not paid monthly wages. Eight learners state that they earn more than Le50 000,- (NKR 125,-) a month.

The majority said that YP had equipped them with the requisite skills to make a living, and to be self-reliant. Although many of them are currently apprenticed to more experienced people, they expressed a great deal of hope that they will be better placed to stand on their own once they finished their apprenticeship.

A couple of interesting cases were identified: one YP graduate now works on contract with an NGO; another makes concrete balustrades that people come from afar to purchase; and yet another started off as an apprentice with a "master" carpenter, but soon became his partner. Two of the 1st yr hairdresser graduates has not only set up their own business, but also serve as tutors for girls that are supported under the Save-the-Children programme.

As apprentices, the YP graduates are not paid wages since they are considered advanced learners. This is by no means peculiar to them. In the Sierra Leonean context, apprentices are not paid wages. In some cases, they (apprentices) even pay a fee for the training they are receiving. In some cases, however, a benevolent master may give them a small stipend.

This does not imply that the YP who are apprentices are being used as "slaves" given only simple routine work without pay, a concern that was raised by a UNICEF representative who had received reports of this happening in Sierra Leone. Their YP experience rather seems to make them choice apprentices and the tools make them more eligible. They could be given more delicate tasks, but it also serves to considerably shorten their apprenticeship.

Most employers of YP youth expressed that they were happy with the youth's knowledge and attitudes in the business.

Assessment and recommendation:

Among those interviewed, about 2/3 of the first year learners have managed to find relevant activities to build on the vocational skills they have acquired. In recognition of the fact that income generation is perceived to be the main issue for the youth, YP should include activities that in a strategic manner contribute to opportunities for employment or apprenticeship.

Continued schooling has not been defined as an objective for the programme. The fact that only 12% of those interviewed has been going back to school is a finding that NRC can bring into the continued debate on what the objectives (and hence the strategy) for Youth Pack should be in other countries.

YP Kambia has provided several lessons learnt in this regard and good practice examples of collaboration with local businesses. These opportunities could have been utilised more strategically throughout the youth pack year if concrete activities had been planned up front to identify and develop such opportunities.

NRC had general plans to link youth pack with income generating schemes and opportunities for micro credit, but this has never materialised. If such activities are not identified and planned concretely upfront, the chances are small that the project team will find time during implementation to prioritise them.

7.3 Self-reliance

Most of the learners identified the inability to earn a decent living as being the main difficulty they had encountered in their life. As one of them put it “without education and without a skill, you cannot live in this community”. The vast majority were quite emphatic that with the skills acquired in the YP, they were in a position to now cater for themselves and so be able to live a decent life. “Even if we still have to build on these skills, we now have somewhere to begin”, said a male learner.

What came out very clearly in the interviews regarding the most important effect of YP was the feeling among the First year learners that the programme had given them a profound sense of purpose. Although they emphasized the vocational skills they had acquired, they said they found all aspects of the training “very useful” – again with the exception of the Agriculture majors.

“Not only do I work for myself now and don't constitute a burden to others, I also provide useful service to others” was how one interviewee summed up this aspect. Without exception, the youth said they came out of the YP with an enhanced opinion of themselves.

The community elders concurred that the impact on the youth has been very positive. Beyond providing them with meaningful skills, they also felt it has positively influenced behaviour change. “The youth could now turn 1 cent to 2 cents”, said one elder, referring to the newly acquired business acumen of the youth.

The predominant definition of “empowerment” given by the teachers is “to support one to be self reliant”. The vocational skills were unanimously identified as the most effective means of empowerment employed in the centres. Some teachers mentioned the participatory methods in class as other good means of fostering empowerment among learners.

Compared to any other similar programme in Kambia, getting a place at Youth Pack is like winning the lottery. There were about 200 applicants for each centre with 50 places for the second year. As one learner put it: "this is a chance in a life time".

The Paramount Chief in Kukuna emphasised the status of Youth Pack in a poor society like Kambia. Normally it would take a tailor 5-7 years of hard work to earn enough money to buy his/her own sewing machine.

Some further statements and examples cited in this section have been selected to bring to light some arguments that illustrate dilemmas in this type of emergency service delivery. They should not be taken to be "the truth", but rather thought-provoking observations for further discussion.

Creativity and reflection hampered by the "perfect model"?

NRC has a very high standing in the community. Many of those interviewed would emphasise that NRC needs to stay on, because nobody else would be able to keep up the standard provided by NRC.

The NRC Guru

In order to explain to the youth that they should respect the right of the child and not beat their children, one of the teachers referred to NRC expat staff: "do you remember when he was here - he told us that we should not flog our children."

There was no more discussion or explanation as to *why* you should not flog your children.

What are the benefits of costly handouts? Self-reliance or dependency?

One of the agriculture teachers explained how he teaches the methods for using compost and manure for fertilizer. Since NGOs have been bringing in fertilizer, he prefers to teach and use this and maintains that there is a desperate need for more. He no longer believes compost is a viable option.

Coping when dependency fails.... Four girls are gathered on a verandah around the corner from the YP center. They produce false hair-extension and one is smearing black goo (produced in China) into the hairdo of a fifth girl. The head girl from last year's class is very vocal: "We expected more assistance". They asked us to form a group and we did. We learnt how to write proposals and sent one to NaCSA. We thought there would be support from NGOs. We need materials and chemicals from Conachry and Freetown."

One box of goo costs Le1000,- (NKR 2,-) and the price for ordinary plating is Le1000.-. False hair extension costs Le 3000.- When there is an occasion, like now, the upcoming jamboree, the girls work from morning to night. When there is no occasion, there is very little work.

Following some heavy probing into how they manage without the external support they expected, the girls can relate that they have formed a women's savings group in the traditional cooperative manner, an "osusu", where all five girls from last years class are members. They also make their own "goo" based on palm oil and soap.

The meeting with the girls gave the impression that they were first angry at the lack of follow-up, which they had expected, and aggressive to point out how much they need in order to do what Youth Pack has taught them to do. With the follow-up questions, they then displayed some pride in what they have in fact managed to get going on their own, despite lack of continued support, although not enough pride to cover the original anger.

"Someone should influence AA to fulfil their promise to support us. We would also like to be recommended for employment with NGOs. We go through the centre leader, and ask him to tell AA, through their supervisor who comes here. But we do not now if he passes the message - we have got no feedback."

"We were told to establish groups. AA promised us assistance, we made lists of what we needed, but up till now we have not seen any assistance."

"We were promised loans, on cash basis. We were not given, and there has been no follow-up."

"The kits were incomplete - for the masons, there was no bucket and no cement."

"The tailors need a table, a chair, an iron, and materials. None of this was given."

Assessment:

Youth Pack has definitely contributed to self-reliance among the youth, by giving them a basis for further learning and by giving them a confidence that they will be able to take care of themselves in the future.

There are several lessons learnt, however, of choices made in the programme that contradicts the objective of self-reliance. There is too little focus on teaching the youth to do critical thinking, problem solving and to be creative and practical in finding local solutions.

There are too many elements in the programme that create (false) expectations through the provision of expensive solutions that are out of reach for the youth once they leave Youth Pack. This may ultimately lead to demotivation and loss of self-esteem. The expectations that have been raised among the youth through YP should not be underestimated. NRC and AASL need to be very aware that even if they believe they are communicating clearly, the youth will expect more assistance. Many of the first year youth interviewed were obviously still waiting for more assistance.

The most telling illustration of this is that Youth Pack teaches the youth to write proposals for grants to send off to NaCSA, rather than to go to their office to find out if there are other groups they can link up with to learn more and benefit from a network.

7.4 Reintegration

The majority of the Community Teachers' Association members were of the opinion that YP has played a significant role in bringing about reintegration in the communities. "The youth had been idle trouble makers, and idleness was a major cause of the war. Now they have something useful to do".

Most of the youth claimed they were displaced during the war, and initially found it difficult to settle down in their communities when they returned. They felt that the YP experience, and especially the vocational skills they had acquired, had helped them

tremendously to settle down. They felt that the skills could now enable them live functional lives in their communities, “and people now respect us more”, said one female student. “I now stay at home more with my husband”, said another.

Before getting into the YP, the majority of the youth claimed they were not engaged in anything worthwhile. Some came out clearly to say they were involved in a great deal of mischief, and were generally considered a nuisance in the community.

While a few of those interviewed expressed the desire to move to other locations for employment or further training, the majority said they were content to stay in their communities. It should be noted, however, that those reached by the team are most likely those who have good connections with the centers, and there is no information on how many of the other half has remained in their villages.

Since finishing the YP, they said they now engaged themselves in meaningful activities, and that they are respected by their peers and elders in the community alike. For them, this has helped their re-integration in no small measure. As one of them put it: “I would have moved away (from the community) if not for the Youth Pack”. Without exception, the youth claimed to now “enjoy respect in their community”. “Some other youth want to learn from me, but I don’t yet have all the necessary tools”, said one youth.

The elders acknowledged that the YP has been very effective in reintegrating youth into the communities. To their knowledge, the relationship between the YP and non-YP Youth is cordial, and to a considerable extent the YP graduates serve as model for others. As far as they knew, older artisans and technical people are happy with the programme and do not in the least feel threatened (by the competition).

A number of the 1st year learners said they belonged to various youth groups in which they played an active role as Secretary, Chief Whip, Treasurer, etc. They also claimed to take an active part in such community activities as repairing roads and bridges, building the community mosque (in one specific case), and in giving advice to other youth. This was corroborated by community leaders.

There appears to be an inter-relationship between the issues of re-integration and being considered a “trouble maker” in the community. It was inferred from the interviews that “trouble making” is itself a manifestation of the inability to fully re-integrate into the community. With nothing meaningful to do, the youth are idle and restive, and invariably engage in undesirable acts. With the YP experience, the youth are equipped with meaningful skills which enable them to feel like respectable members of the community (in addition to providing them with potential means of a decent livelihood), and thereby enabling them to better settle down. “Trouble making” is thus contextual. The more difficult it is to re-integrate, the greater the degree of “trouble making”.

Assessment:

The direct effect on the target group seems to be that they find it easier to reintegrate into community with the YP experience.

As noted in the recommendations in chapter 6, there are several changes that could be made to the way Youth Pack is integrated with community institutions and businesses that would have strengthened this positive contribution to reintegration during the training.

7.5 Effect of programme in community and district

7.5.1 Community involvement

The community leaders could have an advisory role, and assist to solve problems that emerge, says one Paramount Chief. "During the 1st year, some learners didn't take YP seriously enough and were coming late for class. I called them all to a big meeting together with the parents and had a talk with them. This solved the problem."

Community leaders interviewed claim they had no direct role in the YP. They were not consulted in any direct way about the running of the YP centres. They do have an interest in what goes on in the centres, they said, but the demands of their occupations do not allow them much time to manifest this interest in a more overt or concrete way such as visiting the centres.

The community leaders said they were involved neither in the planning nor implementation of the programme. The members that participated in the planning at the inception of the programme were selected by the chief. Initial meetings were held by NRC and prominent community leaders. Such leaders, however, were those mainly in the chief's council of elders, and they were invariably hand picked by the chief himself.

Community contribution

In one community the elders said the owner of the centre, who had earlier made his house available for the purpose, wanted it back but was prevailed upon by the community to wait a while. The elders in that community considered this a contribution to the YP. According to the elders, the limited resources of the community imposed a serious constraint on how much and in what ways it could contribute. They contended, however, that if consulted and involved in a more direct way, they could contribute in certain ways such as selecting the learners since "we know those who are in most need of the programme". "We could also offer advice, especially to the girls, on how to utilise the opportunity offered to them".

Feeding is an important component of the programme, and the CTA members thought it should be continued, as it is what keeps many of them in the centres. The communities, however, could help out with the feeding, in the opinion of the CTA members. The community could also provide land for commercial farming from which the centres could make money as well as housing for staff.

Regarding the effect of YP in the community the views of CTA members were that the programme is designed to benefit the community. Youth are now given skills that are beneficial to themselves and to the community at large. In one of the communities, the CTA members even claimed that they are approached directly for important projects in the community to solicit the support of the centre in providing the requisite expertise.

Some of the elders were of the opinion that the more people with varied skills there are in the community, the better for the community.

Specific recommendations and ideas concerning the involvement of the community is presented in chapter 8.

7.5.2 The education sector

Forty teachers with various degrees of educational background have been given two years of work practice. sixteen of these have enrolled in the Distance Education programmes. NRC has paid the three-year course in advance.

Many of the teachers intimated that one of the most important effects of the programme on their lives is the experience they have gained in handling youth. For the vast majority, however, the opportunity afforded them to enrol in the Distance Education (DE) programme is the best thing to happen to them. Most of them have just one more year to go on the DE programme, and they feel very optimistic that once they graduate, their chances of employment would have been significantly enhanced.

The teachers expressed the view that if the YP closes, it would be extremely difficult for them to continue their DE programme, as they would be without an income despite the fact that their fees have been paid by NRC to the end of their programme. They are not optimistic that they will be absorbed in other schools before they finish their programme, and therefore they will be without wages until they complete the DE programme.

The teachers were unanimous that the incentive they receive is very low. They expressed the understanding that this is due to Government policy rather than that of NRC. Their motivation, however, comes from the fact that they are given the opportunity to enrol in the DE programme. They also feel the YP affords them an opportunity to “help our little brothers and sisters”, as one teacher puts it.

There was a pervading feeling among the teachers that the training they received was adequate for their tasks in the YP centres. They specifically mentioned the skills they acquired in teaching methodology and the techniques of handling youth. They felt the training has enabled them deal effectively with the demands of teaching illiterate youth.

The teachers said they attend the periodic refresher workshops, organised by NRC during vacation periods. They said they found such workshops extremely useful in upgrading their skills, as well as sharing their experiences at the various centres. They nevertheless expressed the desire for more skills in curriculum development.

The training modules has a wider reach in Sierra Leone than the Youth Pack programme. Modules have been shared with four NGOs at no cost, GTZ, Finnish Red Cross, SLADEA and Care.

There are local training institutes in Kambia District that could have benefited from closer collaboration with YP.

IAMTEC is the national Institute for Advanced Management and Technology. In Rokupr there is a center just around the bloc from the YP center. Courses offered are (in theory) computer, gara tie-dye, soap making, carpentry, tailoring, hairdressing and adult literacy. Certificates issued by IAMTEC are recognized by the Government (eg. Certified Mason, which is not the case for YP). 120 learners have enrolled over the last seven years, but none have graduated yet. The director of the center has not received salary since Sept. 04. She sells soap and other products from the center to keep the center open. The only contact that has been between IAMTEC and YP is a football match that was initiated by IAMTEC.

Save the Children has been looking for existing service providers in order to give 158 girls training similar to that of YP. These are girls that did not benefit from the DDR programme in Kambia (because they did not have weapons or ammunition to hand in). In June 2004, they enquired whether they could "buy some seats" at the YP centers, but because of the uncertainty of YP future, they have found other solutions in the communities. Eight girls in Rokupr IAMTEC are given a stipend and start-up packages like the YP kit. According to the Director at IAMTEC, these are the only students likely to graduate. The incentive is what keeps them in the programme.

Assessment and recommendation:

While Youth Pack has contributed in a direct way to the education sector through the training of teachers, and through the sharing of modules with a number of NGOs, the YP centers represent "parallel structures" in the non-formal education sector that are not likely to be sustained, as the two boxed examples above point to.

If YP had been integrated with other institutions, for example IAMTEC, it would have been easier to ensure systematic follow-up of the learners as such a function could have been developed with the local institution. This would also have strengthened the existing structures, and assured that the courses could continue.

The lack of follow-up of the learners is considered a major problem in relation to longer-term impact and should have been given priority in the project design. Again, this is a component that does not necessarily add extra cost, it is rather a matter of giving it the right attention during the planning stage.

NRC should follow-up on how the teachers manage to continue in the Distance Education Programme if YP is discontinued. The teachers should get support that enables them to complete the programme. A major activity should be for the teachers to be engaged in the practical revision of the modules, for which they should be paid.

7.6 The Cost of Youth Pack

The programme is costly and it is not possible to determine whether the results are worth the cost at this stage. A rough estimation gives a cost of 2800 USD per learner, one third of which goes to cover the salary for the international project manager. It is an assumption, which the team does not contradict, that a high teacher-learner ratio, free lunch and start-up kits are all investments that contribute to the quality of the programme and commitment of the youth in a significant manner. Findings indicate that the provisions motivate and are highly valued by the target group. There is, however, reason to rethink whether some of these effects can be achieved by different means. Possible negative effects of introducing a short-term, high-cost programme in a devastated social structure, which is under reconstruction, like Kambia should also be carefully reviewed. Youth Pack is not situated in a camp – outside normal community structures. It is introduced as a very important element in the community fabric. Hence it cannot be assessed in isolation of its effect on this fabric.

NRC has made the decision that a relatively large amount of money should be invested in a relatively low number of youth in order to achieve targeted impact in a short time. Maybe Kambia District would have chosen otherwise? What is the reason behind this choice? Does Norad's new emphasis on results monitoring come into the

equation? Does the Donor drive the NGO to “produce visible results” with the effect of shifting focus from long-term impact to short term effect?

Such a programme cannot be sustained in a poor community. For long-term development purposes, it is the wrong programme at the wrong time, using a large amount of money on a few youth. For short-term reconstruction purposes it seems to have a good effect, but then the question is raised about whether other and less costly alternatives could have the same short-term results. One example illustrates this point:

The Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Programme in Sierra Leone serves as useful contrast to Youth Pack. This was a truly rapid response, humanitarian type programme that was carried out during the very early phases of return and reintegration¹⁰ reaching some 45 000 youth all over Sierra Leone. Despite the very different approach taken with this programme, there are a number of similarities in terms of what has been achieved, the most notable being that both programmes succeeded in contributing to enhanced self-confidence and positive role for youth in society. Both programmes face the challenges of linking the response to more sustainable efforts in the community – which can be built on by the community itself.

Final Evaluation of the OTI Program in Sierra Leone. *August 2002*

In two years, during intermittent civil unrest and insecurity, YRTEP (Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace) trained over 45 000 youth. The fact that the training lasts from six months to a year¹ makes the process particularly noteworthy. (p. 31)

The most impressive finding is the degree to which participants and community members report that YRTEP has improved youth behavior. Communities believe that the YRTEP training experience helps youth become less violent and rude after completing the program. The most common response that the evaluation team heard is that YRTEP gets youth off the streets and into productive and educational activities. Youth participants report that they are able to function better within their communities because the YRTEP training gave them an improved understanding of cultural norms and helped them control their tempers. (p. 33)

The design for YRTEP can best be described as a cross between nonformal education and humanitarian assistance. It is developmental in nature in that it addresses longer-term issues, such as self-reliance and education. At the same time, YRTEP's implementation is reminiscent of a humanitarian food distribution program in that it is emphatically front-line, rapid-response effort. (p. 23)

The major weakness of the YRTEP is the lack of attention paid to closure and how this affects the communities. Repeatedly, participants reported a sense of frustration over how trainings ended, and they feel only partially prepared to implement lessons learned.

Missed Opportunities with Complementary Projects: YRTEP inspired a massive degree of community activism, a potential asset to other developmental activities. Unfortunately, the evaluation team found little evidence that other agencies were taking advantage of the community potential created by YRTEP.

¹⁰ The two year programme was implemented one year before the commencement of Youth Pack.

Is the added value of Youth Pack in terms of the good effect we have seen for a majority of the 400 individual learners good use of scarce resources in Sierra Leone at this moment in time?

It has been documented that there are some negative side effects of the programme in the community. The Youth Pack contribution has created tension among youth during the selection process, but it has not been possible to verify to what extent such tensions exist among youth today. The example of the centre leader posting the admission list at the police station gives an indication (see 8.2.1).

Another tension – or pressure on the community which is induced by the youth pack programme is the tension over management of resources, both in terms of the community members standing on the outside “looking in”, but also inside the centers where teachers and center leaders have their “turf wars”. The issue of corruption has rather been fuelled, than addressed.

The “signal effect” of such a programme is not necessarily positive: although it is positive for those who get lucky, community members and authorities feel that this is something they could never afford. It should be pointed out that this is the team’s interpretation based on all the interviews. On the surface, few would say anything negative about Youth Pack, even upon probing. Still, with the references to the “extraordinariness” of it that were communicated – the team is left with the impression that this is a great gift, but there is no recognition of community responsibility or ownership connected with this gift.

This is shown by the fact that many community members cannot think of how they could contribute to youth pack, since they do not have the financial means.

Another problem with the high cost of the programme is that it is not realistic to believe that other donors will want to continue support once Norad withdraws¹¹.

The statement by one teacher, that he would not want to work at other vocational institutes in Kambia after Youth Pack as they do not have the same approach, is also quite a strong indication of the counter-productive effect that the “perfect model from the outside” may have.

Assessment:

The overall assessment by the team is that the high cost cannot be justified, when the target group that benefits from it is so limited and the results are so directly linked to the target group. NaCSA requested YP to cover all chiefdoms in Kambia rather than select four. If the programme was integrated better with local institutions, and it could be seen that the “investment” would have a wider impact in the longer run, without creating the division between the “lucky ones” and the others, the choice to prioritise high quality education would be more appropriate. It is the conviction of the team that this would require a different approach and more time, but not necessarily a higher cost.

¹¹ See chapter 8.

8 Project Cycle management: Findings and Assessment

The Chapter deals with the *process* of managing Youth Pack. Which choices did NRC make and what were the consequences? The term Project Cycle Management refers to the full process of preparing for, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a project, learning from it – hence aiming to improve design and implementation throughout the lifetime of the project.

Ideally, the project team should keep the full process in mind while designing the project, for example, by thinking through how results are going to be measured along the way, who is going to do it, and be prepared to revise the project according to lessons learnt.

NRC has, as described earlier, collected lessons learnt during project implementation and revised project design between the first and the second year to improve the project.

There were however two major weaknesses in project design that were never addressed properly. One concerns the involvement of communities and coordination with other stakeholders. The second concerns preparations for the partnership with Action Aid Sierra Leone and clarification of roles and responsibilities.¹²

8.1 Preparation and Design

8.1.1 Foundation and experience for project design

NRC has a solid foundation for primary education in emergencies – but what about youth education in a transition phase? The Youth Pack concept bears evidence of NRC's long-term engagement and strong expertise in education projects in emergency situations.

The organisation has a proven track record of delivering education services in fragile and volatile environment and has a number of good-practice examples and a highly specialised expertise in this area to draw upon. In addition to this, NRC has vast experience with working with local staff in post-conflict situations with related challenges concerning management, administration and security issues. Comprehensive strategies and handbooks with code of conduct and other guiding principles have been developed over the years in NRC core areas of operation. NRC generally has field offices in the areas of operation with well-established networks with the National and District Authorities.

During its five-year presence in Sierra Leone, NRC has accumulated considerable experience in the education sector reconstructing or rehabilitating close to sixty schools. Thirty six thousand children and youth have been through NRC supported education programmes, and nearly one thousand teachers have been through NRC teacher training workshops. (New budget proposal to Norad)

The project design for Youth Pack includes a wide range of good practice principles that have been developed over the years in this field. Examples have been described in the previous chapters, some of which were not realised, but the intention was there at the preparation stage. They include:

¹² A third weakness in the design that has been discussed earlier is the lack of integration between the academic and the vocational components.

- The selection of local untrained teachers who are then enrolled in a distance education programme
- The strive for a gender balance, both among learners and among teachers
- The mix of literacy, life skills and vocational training for youth with field-tested curriculum
- Learner centred methodology
- Community contribution through the establishment of Community Teacher Associations and the practical work in skills training for local schools and businesses.
- Aiming to link the programme with business and employment opportunities

The concept of Youth Pack was initiated in Tanzania and Rwanda in 1995 under the name of Yolipac (Youth Literacy Package). The implementation did not materialise, but the programme was revised for later realisation. NRC education department continued to look for opportunities to pilot the concept in order to develop a programme package that could be replicated on short notice in countries where the relevant needs are identified.

In January 2003 the opportunity came to pilot the project in Sierra Leone with fresh money from MFA GAP funding¹³. The project proposal indicated a life span of the project of three years, but the funding could only be secured for one year at a time.

NRC in Freetown had prepared for the project in anticipation of possible funding since the end of 2001 as described earlier.

The selection of Kambia District was based on the fact that NRC has a field office there and on statistics from UN OCHA. Kambia was, together with one or two other Districts, the most vulnerable district in Sierra Leone with regards to existing opportunities for youth.

The Youth Pack difference

There are some factors that make Youth Pack in Sierra Leone different from other NRC education programmes:

- The concept is more “compact” than regular education programmes, with a small number of beneficiaries singled out and selected from a community and introduced to “centre-learning” instead of a general offer to an IDP/refugee population based on regular primary school classes.
- There is no obvious local counterpart institution for Youth Pack, like the primary school system is for CREPS. NRC would have had to identify partner institutions locally, rather than have them selected by the MEST.
- The concept is more complex in that it involves vocational skills training. Although NRC has education as a core area, the large number of challenges and choices to be made that concern vocational skills training are new to the organisation.
- Youth that have lost out on education will not necessarily continue in the formal school system and the education should therefore have different objectives than

¹³ Funding that is earmarked interventions in the transition phase.

education for children that aim to continue schooling¹⁴. The YP was to offer an alternative way of building capacity, competence and self-confidence.

- Youth Pack is geared towards a different set of overall aims than regular education programmes. Concepts like reintegration, self-esteem and self-reliance require a different level of attention to overall social and economic structures in the community. Close cooperation with the business community (eg. through placements) is one example of how education for youth could be more practical in orientation and more directed at income-generation.

Assessment:

The strength of Youth Pack design reflects the NRC experience and expertise in Education in emergencies. The weaknesses reflects that too little have been done in the area of mapping “new” challenges and learning from other agencies that have more expertise in the area of non-formal adult education and skills training in a transition/development phase.

8.1.2 Identifying an implementing partner

NRC could not run the Youth Pack concept that combines the academic and life skills components with basic training in vocational skills on its own. NRC expertise lies with the first two components, and a partner was required to undertake the third, vocational component. The project proposal that had been developed did not include a budget or design elements for the vocational component.

Three agencies were invited to tender for the implementation of the vocational training component, which comprises roughly half of the programme. Action Aid was the only organisation that managed to develop a full project proposal within the two-week time frame, and the proposal was produced in close collaboration with NRC.

The NRC project manager had been recruited during the last months of 2002 and was expected to have Youth Pack up and running with an implementing partner by April 2003. This was in addition to the position he already had as Field Coordinator with the responsibility for the CREPS programme (with 6000 children and 156 teachers). Tasks included getting the partnership with AA in place, assigning roles and responsibilities, and for both agencies to recruit and train teachers in Kambia, identify and establish four centres in Kambia District as well as select learners, 50 for each centre. The achievements are quite impressive and show the ability of NRC to act quickly and efficiently.

NRC has had some experience with working with Implementing Partners in other countries, but not with the same type of partnership model that was required for Youth Pack. The project team had to break new ground in terms of preparing the partnership with little support in terms of guidelines and tools. The MoU was based on an earlier MoU from an implementing partner for Camp Management in Sierra Leone. YP in SL was a first partnership of this kind for an education project.

¹⁴ “Unlike younger children, youth with support and guidance can assist themselves. Assessment and the subsequent development of programs should actively involve youth, as well as local youth organisations and their leadership.” www.ineesite.org

8.1.3 Community Involvement and coordination with other actors

The impression from observations in the centre and the interviews with the teachers is that there are good examples of interaction between community members and Youth Pack. This seems mainly to be a result of the fact that skills trainers are local artisans with good connections in the community. Learners are given “real” community projects to work, especially in carpentry where an organisation or a business provides material and the learners provide the labour. Tailors sell their products locally in order to buy new materials. And the centres participate in community activities like “plant a tree day”.

However, the community was not involved in the planning of Youth Pack in a substantive way as described in 7.5. Many opportunities were lost that would have contributed to a programme more adapted to local conditions and hence more relevant in the overall reconstruction of the community and thus having a more sustainable impact. The business community, who later took on YP youth as apprentices, was not involved in the planning of the programme, and no network for job-placement was initiated.

There were some consultations held with local Government and with NaCSA, but the main request by NaCSA to establish YP in all Chiefdoms was rejected by NRC. The Youth Pack “high-cost model” chosen by NRC could only be sustained in four centres. NaCSA coordinates the follow-up of UNHCR funded “Community Empowerment Projects” in all Chiefdoms in Kambia District and could relate a number of important lessons learnt from this programme that could have guided YP implementation from the start if closer collaboration had been established.

Statements from different staff of Action Aid:

The community did not adequately take part in the planning of the programme. There were no considerations for sustainability and transition. Only now are we going out with sensitisation.

This was an emergency project, and did not involve the communities from the beginning.

When agriculture is compulsory, the youth are not interested. The youth want change. If we had worked with power tillers, they would be interested!

We never consulted with the people, we just started YP.

NRC staff statements:

We don't measure success based on the degree of community involvement.

We did not carry out an assessment, we just planned from the Freetown office.

I don't recommend these procedures (lack of assessment) to other offices planning a Youth Pack project

In some districts, integration is not the issue – but unemployment.

The lack of community involvement has resulted in a clearly demonstrated lack of ownership among community- and local Government leaders and members in the communities. While few of those interviewed would state any dissatisfaction with

Youth Pack in any way, there were several subtle and diplomatic formulations revealing the fact that they could have wished to be more involved from the start.

The District Council Chairman held a meeting with the evaluation team with participants from the local authorities. They questioned especially the issue of sustainability of the intervention and the lack of integration with other programmes for follow-up of learners and income-generation schemes. The Constellation that has been formed between the District Council, NaCSA, UNDP and line Ministries was especially mentioned as one such network that should have been involved. It was acknowledged that the District Council was not functional at the establishment of YP and that their role is currently a “fathering role”. It was emphasised that AASL should take note of the fact that the local Council is now in place. The Ward Councillors are the representatives at the grassroots and the source of communication. They are “part of the machinery” and “Youth Pack should be seen as their property”. Until this is possible, the council should have a supervisory role. Although the communities are financially trapped, they can provide land and labour.

Teachers from Youth Pack have visited GTZ projects to learn from their experiences and approach. Both programmes benefited from this exchange and reviewed some of their approach based on the input received.

In general Youth Pack is seen to be NGO-run activities, which are very much welcome, but the community members and leaders do not see that NRC has taken advantage of resources that are available locally and that could have rendered Youth Pack into a more community-based and sustainable project.

The role of the Government

The Government, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, is a member of the project steering committee at the national level. At the District level, the Inspector of Schools represents the Ministry. *Documents* indicate that the Government has an active role as advisor and supervisor of the project. Likewise, the minutes from the Steering Committee meetings show that the Government has had influence over the project to some extent. Examples are the requirement of agriculture as a compulsory subject and the engagement of University Curriculum Writers. The impression from interviews with all parties is that the role of the Government has been more to approve documents and receive reports. There is no indication that they have been actively involved in reality in planning, monitoring and supervision of the project. The main reason for this is stated to be lack of resources on the part of the Government. NRC has not seen it as their role to undertake capacity building of Government counterparts.

The Director of Non-Formal Education Department in the Ministry described a pilot “illiteracy eradication” project that her Department is implementing in another part of Sierra Leone with support from the Islamic Development Bank. There were a number of similarities with YP, but apparently no sharing of experiences between the Department project and YP. The Department is of the opinion that NRC should facilitate monitoring excursions to the Youth Pack Centres, at least twice a year. NRC claims that this has been offered.

Close collaboration between partners need to be planned and established from the start through working together. Conscious efforts are needed to develop good cooperation, extending invitations and sending letters is not enough.

8.1.4 Use of planning tools

NRC has a comprehensive set of guidelines and code of conduct concerning the establishment of education programmes in an emergency situation. They do not however practice results based management with related assessment and appraisal tools¹⁵.

There are a number of project documents that have been prepared by NRC for Youth Pack, such as proposals, reviews and a strategy for phase out, but these are not consistent in approach and emphasis. The most comprehensive project document that the team has accessed is the Norad Proposal (based on Norad standard) that was prepared for 2004-2005. Hence there is no joint project document for the full YP project that ensures good coordination between the two partners and the two components. The confusion and difference of perceptions regarding roles and responsibilities that emerged between NRC and Action Aid at an early stage can partly be explained by the lack of cohesion between the various documents and the lack of assessments made at the start of the programme. NRC did not carry out any organisational assessment of AASL to investigate whether the organisation did have the capacity to carry out the tasks at hand, nor did they take action to assist AASL to find different ways to upgrade their skills.

The relationship with AASL and the conflict referred to above is discussed further in chapter 9.

The fact that the project has been revised according to lessons learnt several times between 2002 and 2005 has had important and positive effects on the programme, but the team is still left with the impression that the process has not been managed strategically with the full involvement of AASL.

For example – it appears that NRC has never really decided internally whether institutional capacity building of AASL is part of the project or not. It has been stated in the Norad proposal, but most NRC staff claim that this is not NRC responsibility.

8.1.5 Risk and opportunity analysis

The project document does contain a section on risk and assumptions. The anticipated risks did not occur, and all the assumptions seem to have been fulfilled. While the risks and assumptions identified were relevant and had some potential of occurring, they only related to “external factors”, out of reach for the project management to address. It would have been useful for the project team to think through, at an early stage, what kind of “internal risk factors” existed in order to put in place “mitigation strategies” for these.

Similarly, an analysis upfront identifying which opportunities exist in the community that can be taken advantage of is instrumental in enhancing the impact of the programme beyond the mere immediate outcome. As pointed out earlier, such opportunities for involving local capacities in a more obligating manner could have realised more of the potential in the programme.

Two examples illustrate this. The existence of the UNHCR Community Empowerment Programme referred to earlier were of benefit to the project in one

¹⁵ There is no systematic training of NRC staff in cross-cultural communication, project cycle management or conflict management. “This is something we would have wanted – but it is always burning somewhere”. (NRC staff, Oslo)

instance where YP could get the job of providing benches and tables for the schools under construction. Had a partnership been formed at an early stage, more such opportunities could possibly have been identified for the youth in the centers as well as for graduating youth.

Formulated as a risk assumption, it would be

“The selected vocational skills do not generate employment in the community.”

An alternative formulation for risk mitigation or opportunity assumption could be:

“Engage in partnerships with larger scale development schemes in order to secure relevant and practical skills training as well as future opportunities for employment”.

The risk and opportunities analysis may assist the team planning the project to assess the realism in the assumptions they make. As for Youth Pack, it is very obvious, with the benefit of hindsight, to state that there were some very unrealistic assumptions made that have resulted in the fact that a very good and necessary initiative does not seem to be sustainable

The two most important killer assumptions¹⁶ for the success of the project were:

1. That it would be possible to find a local partner with just the right qualifications, the human resources available and the presence to be able to design a quality project plan in a matter of two weeks. And that the two agencies would be able to work smoothly together with so little time to prepare for the cooperation.
2. Believing that, once Norad no longer wants to fund a project they have funded for two years, AASL should be able to secure such funding on their own. (Why should somebody else want to fund a project Norad withdraws from?)

8.1.6 Selection of Vocational Skills

Apart from any possible assessment done during the two-week academic training workshop described earlier by NRC in Kambia, no comprehensive assessment was carried out to guide the vocational training programme. The Project Managers of AA and NRC made the selection of categories, and determined the number of places offered within each category, in the Freetown Office. There was no time to conduct participatory workshops with the communities in order to align the course composition with community priorities. The Implementing Partner was not given the opportunity to draw on institutional resources such as participatory tools to ensure local ownership and capacity building. Action Aid has a large network and a knowledge base that could have been consulted during the early phase of project design to enhance the sustainability aspects of the programme.

The project team was pressed for time to recruit and train teachers and select learners, to get the programme going.

Based on documentation in NRC reviews of YP and interviews, the following checklist has been compiled by the team as questions to ask for the future planning of vocational skills:

- What are the skills needed in the community?

¹⁶ Assumptions about risk that would cause a project to collapse

- Do the youth want to learn these skills?
- Which skills are likely to generate employment and income?
- In which skills can the youth benefit from a one-year training period – and find ways to build upon what they have learnt in the local community?
- How can they build upon what they have learnt;
 - o What needs to be in place for them to enter the school system?
 - o For which skills are there opportunities for apprenticeships?
 - o Are tools and materials available locally?
 - o Are there any opportunities for micro-credit- or other schemes that can kick-start a business?
 - o Could the project (and hence choice of vocational skills) be linked to a larger development programme in order to coordinate employment opportunities, for example in labour intensive infrastructure projects.
- Are there skilled artisans and crafts(women) in the community that can teach?
- If so – are they updated on modern techniques and tools that may bring new skills and more efficient ways of working to the community?
- Are there any such existing institutes that could adapt Youth Pack to keep it going once the NGOs are moving on?
- Who else is, or has been, providing similar trainings that could be built upon and that provide important lessons learnt?
- If a “shopping list of skills” has emerged through the influx of emergency reintegration programmes, is this because these are the most suitable and have proved to be successful, or is it that they are easy to copy for lack of proper assessments.

Such a “shopping list” of NGO skills training vocations was referred to in Sierra Leone, and the question arises of “flooding” the market with a few skills that are “convenient” to manage for the NGOs. - “How many hairdressers can Kambia nurture?”

The review of the planning process for Youth Pack in Sierra Leone shows that some of these questions were looked at, but not recorded and integrated into the project in order to guide implementation. Despite this fact, the immediate effect of the project looks quite positive. There is, however reason to believe that the long-term impact will be seriously limited by the lack of consideration for some of the points above. More specifically, it can be considered a missed opportunity that Youth Pack did not team up with existing “pre-war functioning” institutions for skills training. There were National Vocational Training Institutes in Kambia as well as the IAMTEC centers described earlier. Knowledge transfer has been targeting individual teachers and learners, whereas a local partnership could have secured a more permanent institutional learning that would go both ways – between the local institution and NRC.

8.1.7 The rush was donor- and HQ-driven, not driven by emergency

One very important factor to note regarding the rush during the early phase is: it does not stem from a “disaster-situation” and pressure in Kambia District at the time of the start-up of the project. Youth Pack was initiated at a time when UNHCR together with other agencies were coming to an end with their reintegration programmes.

The rush was rather driven by the funding mechanism and system of programme planning, between NRC Oslo and Norad. Hence the lack of community involvement cannot be justified by the “emergency approach”.

Many NGOs face the same type of dilemma. They cannot start project preparations with stakeholder workshops and participatory project design until they receive funding, and once they receive funding, there is a push for implementation to take off and “measurable results” to be produced. With a one-year time-period for Youth Pack, it is understandable that NRC felt the pressure to get going.

Still – this is not an approach that renders sustainable outcomes. The early phases of identifying risk and opportunity as well as creating a sense of ownership and dedication in the communities are some of the most important components in any programme, whether emergency, transition or development, and deserves a budget line and time frame of its own. Whether it is a “pre-project” or “pilot” activity or built into the main project proposal, it should be integrated into project plans. Any Youth Pack programme should have at least an 18-month framework from the very start, given the need for participatory planning, prior to the start of the first semester.

8.2 Project Implementation

8.2.1 Selection of learners¹⁷

Based on interviews with a large number of different stakeholders, the general impression is that NRC and AASL have succeeded in identifying youth from the target group, that is the most vulnerable of the returnees. Another indicator of this is that in all four centres there were at least five very young mothers. There have been a few reports on favouritism of family by one of the centre leaders, but these have not been verified. One incident was reported from the 1st year selection process: the man in charge of registering applicants at one of the centers demanded a “fee” for registration. This was reported to NRC and action was taken immediately. A car was driven around the chieftom with a loudspeaker announcing that registration was free and open for all and then registration was done again.

Local advertisement was used for the identification of learners. Responsible for the process were: project manager, project staff, implementing partner, teachers, local head-teachers and district education officers. The comment in an NRC report is: *Also time consuming. More youth want to participate than there is room for. This can cause a security risk.*¹⁸ And it did. The centre leader at one of the centres explained how they had to post the list of candidates selected at the police station to avoid it being torn down and destroyed. He received threats during the process of selecting

¹⁷ Selection of teachers has been described in chapter 6.

¹⁸ NRC, Education Department, NRC SL. *Youth Pack, Sierra Leone, an overview of NRC’s pilot education project for illiterate youth.* 17.01.05

learners. There were in general about 200 applicants for each of the centres' 50 places each year. One of the teachers said that they would calm down those rejected by indicating that they should hope for a place "next year".

8.2.2 Caring for the most vulnerable

The need for someone to look after the babies during classes was obvious in all centers. One of the most vulnerable groups is the group of young single mothers. There were some five or six infants in every center, in addition to young children playing around.

A large number of the female students had young babies to look after. Many babies were crying, or awake, or hungry - needing their mothers' attention, and also seriously disturbing the class. The young women are naturally disturbed, and their learning abilities are seriously hampered. YP was considering doing something about this in one centre, but it was reported to the evaluation team that there was "just enough money" to do something for one centre, but - since there was a need in all the centres, it was not done. This seems like a strange reasoning, and questions whether there were any women involved in making the decision.

There was no evidence that NRC or AA had made any attempts to try to find a solution to this problem in the communities.

The very low number of female teachers could have an influence on this issue.

The difficult situation for the young mothers shows that NRC has not managed to protect well the most vulnerable group of the learners and not arranged for their effective learning.

The explanation that there were not enough money for this is not good enough. How come the community is not asked to contribute by taking care of the babies in close vicinity to the center? Or, how come this has not been prioritised over other investments? Or, could daycare have been built into the course in some way and linked to life skills learning?

The lack of attention to this issue is on one hand a lack priority of the most vulnerable groups, on the other hand it contradicts in practice the objective of YP to ensure gender equality.

8.2.3 Keeping the youth in the programme

One important reason for the NRC choice to offer the incentives for the youth is to ensure that they complete the programme. NRC has succeeded with this aim, as shown by the very high attendance and graduation rate. The director of IAMTEC in Rokupr confirmed that the idle youth in a post-conflict situation needs more incentives than the mere prospect of getting an education. She stated that the prospect of receiving the start-up kit is what makes the youth dedicated. At IAMTEC, she claimed, the eight girls that receive a stipend and start-up kit from Save the Children are the only ones that work hard to graduate. Other youth are easily drawn towards petty trade, and the border commercial activities.

The flip side of the coin is that the costly benefits create a marked difference between YP youth and other youth in the community. Some indications were found, such as the security issue during selection and the suspicion encountered in the centres regarding transparency of managing the tools and materials. The team would like to point to the inherent dilemma in the concept of giving expensive handouts while

trying to contribute to self-reliance and to “help to self-help”. One of the vocational teachers in the programme had strong views on this issue: “*The training should not be free. If you don’t pay for something, you don’t see the value*”.

Could the objective of keeping youth in the programme and the objective of contributing to self-reliance be reached in other ways than through offering free gifts of such magnitude? Good Practice examples from other programmes should be considered, such as combining some type of start-up kit help (eg. to a group) with a micro-credit loan.

8.2.4 Identification of suitable locations

Two of the youth pack centers are housed in private buildings, while two are connected to secondary schools. There are pros and cons of both models and the interviews did not reveal any compelling arguments for one or the other.

The most important issue to consider, again, is the contribution of the community, creating ownership and dedication. In Kukuna, the YP center is housed in a private house. The owner has recently stated that he wants the house back, despite the fact that he wrote a three-year contract¹⁹. Community leaders have stated that they convinced the house-owner that he should not claim the house back and they see this as a community contribution. The incident bears witness of more of a “negotiation” relationship between YP and the community than a “co-sharing” agreement. It is also a clear indication that the community was keen for the project to continue.

The lack of focus on genuine community involvement is reflected in an NRC report from early 2005. The report gives advice on how to identify community contribution to the identification of locations.

“Visits to area of implementation, approach local Education Officers (for use of vacant classrooms), or private house owners (either with rent or rehabilitation of premises).”

Responsibility: Project manager, other education staff or field staff with local knowledge.”

NRC staff in Kambia describes the effect of the lack of community ownership:

The house-owners want their houses back if the programme is not to continue, and we also have to deal with what we do with the animals, as the staff would disappear.

The approach taken by NRC in this regard represents another missed opportunity for community commitment. “Visits to area by project staff” is very different from “engaging the community in the planning and implementation of Youth Pack” and soliciting community support and contributions. If the community had been involved from the start, more sustainable solutions for housing could have been found that did not involve “lease contracts”. As was also mentioned by community leaders, such input could have been housing, childcare, animal rearing and provision of food, among other things that does not require a financial input.

¹⁹ This is another indication of lack of consistency in communication between the community and the YP team. The signing of a three year contract indicates the intention of keeping the programme going for at least three years.

8.2.5 Identification of Youth Pack Center Leader

Based on the experiences from the first year NRC decided to select one teacher at each center to take on the full time job as center leader with management responsibilities, doubling his salary. This has created some grudges among the teachers. At two of the four centers, teachers volunteered information on what they found not to be a transparent system. They question the accountability of it. In the typical diplomatic and subtle way, but with the message not to be missed, one of the teachers stated:” *the benefit should go directly to the learners*”. The point here is not necessarily that resources are being misused, but that the management system of it does not forestall suspicion and envy. A few of those interviewed were not subtle, and ventured some strong opinions.

Leadership of the centres must be by merit. When they chose leaders, the questions they asked were only geared towards the academic teachers, not the technical/vocational ones. NRC does not understand the vocational trades. Their motive was to choose academic teachers as centre leaders. All leaders are chosen by NRC, with a motive. NRC is supportive, but very controlling. (Vocational teacher)

There is no denying that corruption is one of the key problems at all levels in Sierra Leone and that mitigation strategies should be in place to forestall this problem. The issue is extremely sensitive and requires a great deal of clarity, transparency and communication skills to develop transparent rules that ensures the integrity of the leaders.

There are good practice examples of transparent arrangements for securing the management and control of resources in a project (money, tools, materials, favours etc.) and the use of a “western management model” like the one chosen in Kambia may not be the solution at this stage in such a volatile environment. It is very likely that there are local traditional ways of assigning responsibility and ensuring transparency that should be looked to. Yet another reason for involving the community more is to rekindle fair and transparent traditional control mechanisms that may have existed before the war and to re-establish respect for these.

8.2.6 Follow-up of learners

The project documents and proposals indicate that there were plans to ensure follow-up of learners once they leave Youth Pack. [...] *where a two-teacher system will be of great value for the follow-up and monitoring of the programme.* (MFA prodok)

It can be seen from the Steering committee meetings that this has been an issue of concern to all throughout the implementation phase, but still, no provisions have been put in place to offer the youth any follow-up support.

Once the youth leave the programme, they are on their own. There are several ways in which YP, without much extra cost could have linked up with other actors in the community in order to facilitate the identification of job opportunities for YP graduates. One example is the opportunity offered by NaCSA and the Community Empowerment Programme mentioned earlier.

NaCSA is responsible for the coordination and follow-up of groups that were formed under this programme. There were small wooden signboards all over Kambia District, for every little project group, and the team had a good meal at one of the women’s group’s “food stall” in Kambia town. Youth Pack learners have likewise been encouraged to form groups, and apparently they wrote proposals for funding that were

submitted to NaCSA. There is no indication, however that NaCSA and NRC/AA have discussed the opportunities for collaboration to integrate YP youth with the Community Empowerment Programme follow-up. The NaCSA coordinator could share important lessons learned including mistakes made and “success stories” from the programme with the evaluation team.

CHIEFDOM	TOWN/VILLAGE	CEP NO.	NAME OF PROJECT/GROUP	PROJECT ACTIVITIES
Magbema	Kambia	08	Women In Weaving And Hairdressing	Weaving & Hairdressing
		12	Kambia Women Progressive Dev. Association	Tailoring, Soap-making & Gara Tie-dyeing
		14	Kambia Youth Carpentry Association	Furniture Fabrication & Housing
		21	SLRC-CHILD ADVOCACY & Rehabilitation	Baking
		31	Magbema Women's Dev. Assoc	Rice Milling & Drying Floor
		64	Welding Machine	Welding, Tin-smithing, Fabrication of Tools and steel Windows & Doors
		29	Office Space and Equipment-MSWGCA	Rent, Furniture, Bicycles Adult Literacy, Remuneration
		57	Kambia Women Entertainment Centre	Food and Drinks
		65	Cozy Sisters	Petty Trade
		66	Kambia Dist. Radio House	Broadcasting
		Resistance	Education	Nursery School
Kapairon		02	Women In Shelter & Skills Development	Tailoring, Soap-making Gara Tie-dyeing

Poster at the NaCSA office showing which groups have been formed under the CEP

Another example of follow-up mechanisms is Save the Children’s programme for girls referred to earlier that has developed an interesting follow-up mechanism at the field level for the girls that receive training under the programme. A group of community monitors is established at each location. The girls recommend members in the community that they trust and one of the girls participate in the monitoring group. The function of the group is twofold: to provide mentor-support to the girls once they leave the training, and to monitor and report on the progress of the girls. Simple monitoring forms have been developed with some key questions and the monitoring groups have been trained in workshops to fill them in. While this appears to be a good system, info needs to be gathered on how it works in practice.

As for the objective of linking up with micro-credit programmes, there are no well-functioning schemes of this sort in Kambia. One that was previously there have failed. Micro-credit and loan schemes require specialised expertise and are difficult to manage successfully. If there are none in operation, other alternatives for follow-up support should be considered.

In chapter 5 the business training is described. The impression is that this course has led to more frustration and crushed expectations among the youth in that it

encouraged the youth to ask for more assistance that does not materialise rather than prepare them better to manage on their own.

Could the Youth Pack learners have linked up with the NaCSA groups and benefited from their network? Is it a wasted opportunity that NRC/AASL did not pursue a possible partnership with UNHCR and NaCSA.

Is the Save the Children model one that works and could it be copied or adjusted for YP?

The emphasis on “grant-writing” in the business-skills training should be reviewed.

8.3 Monitoring, reviewing, learning

There are several good examples where NRC and AA communicated well, analysed problems that emerged, took action and succeeded in solving the issue during the first year of Youth Pack. The most obvious one is the issue of agriculture training where 1st year learners were very unhappy with this choice. By making it compulsory for all, and adding it to other skills training, all parties benefited. During the first year, there was an ongoing dialogue between the two agencies to improve weaknesses in the project management. Some examples:

Joint assessment of problems – from the National Steering Committee Minutes, December 2003:

- NRC spent a year planning the programme without giving AASL enough time to plan and implement in terms of recruitment of teachers
- NRC has two full time supervisors and AASL does not have this privilege. However, it has been resolved that the supervisors of NRC should now work with AASL as they have the capability. Before the start of the second year of Youth Pack, this issue should be discussed again. In lieu of the above, a combined monthly report is to be submitted to both agencies and that supervisors can spend time working at AASL office.
- It has been observed that teachers of Youth pack have divided loyalty because they were employed by different agencies. This we have rectified, now they see themselves as one.
- NRC failed to include Vocational teachers in the monthly in-service workshops. This we realised did not have a very good effect on the programme but it has been taken care of.

The project proposal document has developed some good indicators to measure the results of the project that should be possible to collect information on.

1. # of learners who successfully complete the full year
2. # of learners who are accepted into other schools or traineeship
3. # of learners who acquire jobs after completed year
4. # of female and male teachers trained
5. the performance of the teachers as evaluated by the trainers and the learners
6. the attitude of the learners towards the Youth Pack year

7. The attitudes in the community towards the Youth Pack education programme
8. Registered interest or requests for additional courses or classes in an area.
9. Number of total eligible age group in area involved at the end of the programme.

The actual measuring of these indicators has not, however, been built into the project activity plan and most are not undertaken in the project.

This evaluation has included the indicators in the checklists and in the questionnaire (see Annex E), but given the constraints of time and accessibility to the 1st year learners it is clear that better data would have been achieved with an internal systematic monitoring system in place.

Only the first and the fourth of these nine indicators were measured by the project. However, what is meant by “successfully” is not clear. In the End of Year Report 2004 for the Education Programme (which incorporates Youth Pack), it is not reported on literacy and numeracy abilities of the 187 learners that graduated. The end of year report contains information mainly on activities that have been carried out and on challenges faced during implementation. There is hardly any information on results.

In the report to Norad it is stated that 187 of the 200 youth graduated by the end of March, “of which 90% were functionally literate”. It was not until the end of the three field trips conducted for this evaluation that it became clear to the team how poor the results of the literacy training really are. Hence it has not been possible to “get to the bottom” of the question of “How come nobody seems to have known?” This is an important question to ask and could possibly be addressed by comparing YP to other NRC literacy programmes. Where are the gaps to be found in the way teaching, supervision and monitoring is done that account for the fact that NRC has not been aware of the poor results?

It would have been more cost-efficient and effective to integrate systematic monitoring and recording of activities, to be carried out by the supervisors together with the CTA (for example), than to leave this task to external evaluators who do not have the local knowledge and overview of the whereabouts of the learners²⁰. With an integrated monitoring plan in place, with specifications on how to collect data, more attention would probably have been paid to keeping track of 1st year learners and this again would have had a beneficial effect for the learning in the center as well as for the learners who were followed-up.

8.4 Summary and Recommendations

The Youth Pack concept is complex and demanding. The impression of the team is that it is also an innovative and useful programme for youth in post-conflict environments. The amount of work carried out by the project team under very difficult circumstances is commendable. The preparation process prior to Youth Pack implementation by NRC has also been comprehensive and building on NRC experience and expertise. Youth Pack is a very important contribution to a vulnerable

²⁰ An independent evaluation could then verify the procedure and check the validity and reliability and of the data, and build on the information collected. The overall quality of the information would be enhanced and the overall cost probably reduced.

group that is often overlooked and NRC is in a unique position to initiate such a programme.

It was also a very good choice by NRC to select a partner with expertise in community based and participatory planning approaches and with a long standing in Kambia District to co-run the programme.

These important choices during preparation and the hard work of the project team have resulted in a programme that appears to be very successful in terms of the overall immediate effect on the target groups.

The previous chapters have described several shortcomings, however. There are two main reasons for the problems faced:

1) Youth Pack has not been planned in a strategic manner.

The point of departure has been NRC mandate, position, skills and intentions, not the specific needs and circumstances in Kambia District and Sierra Leone. The development of the literacy course was the starting point of the planning process. Other components have been add-ons. But Youth Pack is not a literacy-training programme. It is so much more.

NRC has not been clear about what they want to achieve with Youth Pack and this has made the dialogue between the two implementing partners difficult. NRC objectives are formulated as *activities*, i.e. “provide training”, not as purpose of the full Youth Pack programme.²¹ Conscious analysis of needs and resources available among all partners might have led to different priorities. For example: what is more important for learning and self-reliance: uniforms or daycare for the babies. What are more important materials to provide: hair cream from Conachry or reading materials on how to produce fertilizer locally with compost?

In order to choose the best set of activities, the project team needs to know the “WHY” of the project. With a clearer purpose, the project team could have planned activities more strategically from the start – asking the question “what are the activities we need to carry out in order to contribute to the purpose and how are the resources best spent?”. Such an approach would have given more support for the need to integrate components, integrate the NRC and AASL approaches and for integrating Youth Pack with community resources.

By not defining the purpose of youth pack in a concrete manner, NRC is avoiding the responsibility of communicating clearly what kind of change it is they are working towards.

“If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there”.

(Veien blir til mens man går)

The consequences of the non-strategic planning have been that

1. The difference in approach between NRC and AASL has not been given attention. The two agencies have pulled in different directions rather than combined the strengths and expertise of each agency. If the two agencies had

²¹ The term purpose refers to the change in society that the project aims to bring about. How are the youth going to make use of what they learn?

agreed on the purpose of the programme from the start, it would have been easier for them to agree on the methods to use and weight the different inputs.

2. NRC and AASL have not been able to work together in an integrated manner towards common goals. Hence the academic and vocational components have not been designed to mutually reinforce each other.
3. There was no functioning monitoring system in place that could give early indications of weaknesses in the programme, most apparently the lack of literacy learning.
4. Many opportunities have been lost in terms of integrating the programme in the community and thereby ensuring wider impact. NRC did not stop to consider risk.

NRC needs to acknowledge that strategic planning takes time. For a pilot project, especially, time should have been set aside for the project team at the start to agree on common objectives. *Then* choose the mix of appropriate activities that would most likely bring about these objectives.

The tools for project cycle management should be reviewed with the aim to facilitate the running of the programme and for improved institutional learning. This is particularly important as the project documents serve as tools for dialogue with the partners, within NRC and because there is a high turnover of staff, both at the HQ level and at the country office and at the field office.²² There should be a clear link between the assessment reports, the project documents, various administrative tools, the activity plans and the tools for monitoring and evaluation. There should be one single joint project document that is designed and revised with the intention of guiding implementation.

There is a need to build a functioning monitoring system into the project design. Teachers and learners together with supervisors should be part of the process of establishing indicators as this creates a common understanding of the objectives of the project and motivation to record results in a systematic manner and review the methods used if they are found not to work. The supervisors should have a key role in the planning of the monitoring methods, as they are responsible for monitoring the project.

2) There was little productive collaboration with other actors in the planning process.

The other main reason for programme weaknesses is the fact that NRC has planned the programme very much in isolation from important co-actors.

Action Aid was not acknowledged as an equal partner during the planning stage. It is assumed that a more active role of AASL in the design of the project would have ensured more active community participation.

The Department of Non-formal Education could have benefited greatly from a closer cooperation throughout implementation. The department acknowledges the fact that formal education is given priority in the Ministry and they would have appreciated more support.

²² During the three years of planning and implementing Youth Pack, there has been at least four desk officers responsible for SL in Oslo and at least four Country Directors in Freetown.

Kambia District should have been given priority as the “owner” of Youth Pack from the very start. Many opportunities have been lost for ensuring community responsibility in the provision of an enabling environment for youth reintegration.

There are several institutions in Kambia district that provided similar education before the war that could have been revived through close collaboration with Youth Pack. There are so many good lessons learnt from the two year pilot that are now lost to Kambia and Sierra Leone since the centers were so exclusive in their operation.

The business community and other organizations provide a (largely) untapped resource for Youth Pack. Closer collaboration could have ensured more secure access to employment and follow-up mechanisms could have been developed with their contribution.

Youth Pack encompasses challenges at many fronts; self-reliance, trauma handling, income generation, lack of formal schooling, etc. Traditional ways and social fabric could have been supported more in the Youth Pack centers if NRC had chosen a different role. The role of facilitator, administrator and advisor to bring out local resources and contributions would have been more appropriate for this programme than the role of targeted “service provider.” Kambia District should not “outsource” youth reintegration to an NGO. NRC has the expertise to take on this role through the pedagogical expertise in learner centered methods and training of trainers. This would mean a complete shift in the way Youth Pack is planned and conceived from the start.

9 The Partnership with Action Aid

Action Aid is a local Sierra Leonean NGO with a local resource base. The NGO has worked in the country since 1989 (?), and remained in Kambia throughout the war, implementing community based projects. Action Aid international has developed ‘*Reflect*’, which is a diverse and innovative approach to adult learning and social change. It was conceived and developed by Action Aid through innovative practice in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador. It is an approach that links adult learning to empowerment, and therefore strengthens the voices of poor people in decision-making at all levels. The International Reflect Circle (CIRAC) received the UNESCO International Literacy Prize 2003 in recognition for the way in which the Reflect approach has revolutionised approaches to adult learning over the past 10 years. Inspired by Paulo Freire, Reflect is a participatory approach to community development, adult learning and social change, used by over 350 different organisations including NGOs, social movements, governments and grassroots organisations in 60 countries²³.

AASL was the only organisation that managed to develop a full proposal to implement vocational skills training in YP in response to the NRC request. NRC and AASL worked together for two weeks to put the proposal in place. They did not review the project document in order to produce a comprehensive and integrated joint programme. The two components were kept as separate activities. There is no evidence that AASL had any influence over or was invited to contribute to the project design and the academic component that had been planned by NRC. One example illustrates this point. NRC and AASL use different terms for the “salary” that is paid to the teachers. NRC refers to the teacher compensation as “incentive” and AASL consistently uses the word “stipend”. While this may seem trivial, it does give an indication of the distance between the two agencies and the lack of agreement on basic principles for the running of the programme.

The Partnership with AASL became “thorny” (as described by one respondent) during the first year of implementation. This can mainly be explained by the stressful start-up phase and the lack of experience and skills of the parties involved to reach a common understanding on expectations, roles and responsibilities, approach and principles for the work, and overall objectives for the partnership.

“We realised the constraints only during operation, we were not aware of these at the signing of the MoU”... “We didn’t build in phase-out at the conception. The MoU did not capture phase out.” (AASL)

It is natural in situations like this – starting up a pilot project, working with a national NGO-partner for the first time, and being under time pressure – that problems will occur. This situation places a high demand for solid skills in intercultural communication and conflict management. Professional/topical skills in education are important, but not sufficient. Some quotes from the interviews give an indication of how strained the relationship became:

We have no tolerance for being put down. A partnership must be equal. If you don’t come to me as a partner, you are missing the point. (AASL)

²³ <http://www.actionaid.org.uk/441/reflect.html>

It is an issue of style – the issue here seems to have been one of “Master and Servant” [.....]The donor condition would be: only if you have a local partner²⁴. Not key to keep a partnership healthy. They depend on a local organisation to do the job.[...]They can check on you, but you can’t check on them. (AASL)

“It is like a father and mother taking care of their children and at a time the father decides to abandon his children for the mother to take care” (AASL at the YP seminar, Feb.2005)

The cooperation with AASL is very difficult. They do not show up on time and we are not getting information about meetings in advance. Everybody is annoyed with them, even those who come to the meetings (e.g. YP participants) (NRC)

They (AASL) do not cooperate well. It has come to a situation where NRC and AASL implement the components separately.(NRC)

9.1 Implementing partner or equal partnership?

AASL has signed a contract where it is clear that NRC and MEST are coordinating and overseeing the project and AASL is implementing one component of the project – so where does this problem of difference in perceptions come from?

The intention was that AASL should take over the project once NRC withdraws. This makes AASL different from an “ordinary” implementing partner. Action Aid also contributes to the project with their own funding for administrative functions and is expected to take over the project for continued operation once NRC withdraws. This indicates more of an equal partnership role.

There were no provisions originally for the vocational training in the NRC budget. The implementing partner was expected to co-fund the programme. AASL managed to provide in-kind contributions (about 20 000\$) for administration and logistics, but without an external donor. This is a strong indication of the commitment of AASL to the YP project. The resource base between the two partners was very skewed. Action Aid did not have the resources to keep on level with NRC, but saw the partnership as an opportunity for future development. The organisation has a 16-year presence in Kambia and knew they were going to stay around. They didn’t really stop to consider the implications of NRC withdrawing.

“We just assumed they would be staying”. (AASL).

In NRC’s proposal to Norad it is stated that:

NRC will, however, have sufficiently strengthened its partner organisation, Action Aid SL to independently undertake vocational skills training.²⁵

There is no evidence that NRC and AASL undertook a capacity assessment regarding AASL’s ability to carry out the activities in the MoU, which would have been necessary in order for NRC to find out in what areas to “strengthen” AASL to take over. Today the two agencies have very different perceptions on what was “clear” and

²⁴ The quote refers to a perception on the part of AASL that NRC would need to report to the donor that they have a local counterpart in order to get funding. And that NRC could not do this on their own, but still don’t respect their counterpart as an equal partner.

²⁵ NRC. New Budget Proposal year 2004 (and 2005) to Norad

what the intentions were. The MoU and the contract do not give much information about how the two agencies anticipated the partnership to develop.

The failure to ensure a common understanding of the purpose of the project and the working relationship between the two agencies can be identified as a main cause of the conflict that soon developed between the two partners. Rush during the early phases of collaboration and the pressure both agencies worked under further accentuated the conflict. The allegations of corruption, and the suspension of senior partners in AA, further eroded the basis for a good relationship.

The form of communication; letters sent from NRC to AASL to inform them, and then later to remind them, of what needed to be done, did nothing to improve the relationship. NRC has acted correctly, but not in a way that opened up for dialogue and good communication, which is necessary between partners.

If the two partners had been aware of how these circumstances created stressful and “unsafe” situations for all staff involved, they might have been able to act to lessen the consequences of mistakes that were made and “save the relationship” through the reestablishment of trust.

However, neither organization was apparently able to deal with the conflict constructively, and the conflict increased in severity. It was not properly acknowledged by NRC, which makes no mention of this serious limitation in its annual report. Furthermore, even when the NRC Kambia staff reported on the conflict to the country representative, no action was taken to help staff deal with it.

9.2 Communication skills to deal with conflict – theoretical backdrop²⁶

A brief look at common behavior and reactions in situations such as those facing YP staff (both from NRC and AA side) may be a useful backdrop for understanding what happened in the process of planning, implementing and handing over the YP project. These reflections may seem to be basic, but it is a fact that lack of attention to these issues often has negative consequences for a project.

Constructive communication

There are three main aspects of good communication: Respect, personal security, and openness. When these are present on both sides, the outcome of the communication or negotiation is usually felt as satisfactory on both sides. A few details:

Respect: This includes an acknowledgement of the other part’s aims, purpose, opinions and values as his/hers, and an acceptance of them being right for him/her – without the need to agree that they are also right for me. The respect must be mutual for a good negotiation to take place.

Personal security/safety: The urge to feel “safe” is our most basic psychological need, and guides our actions without us “knowing” that this is going on. We have internal rules – cultural and personal – and most of them are hidden from us, but – they guide our actions. The safest situation is when people are “like us”, when they think and react like us, and have the same values. When we feel safe, we can act rationally, and take all aspects – including the emotional ones – into considerations. When we do not feel safe, we most often act “irrationally”, i.e. we usually do not

²⁶ What is meant by communication skills in this context is described in some detail here because it is seen as fundamental to any of the NRC activities, as well as *the* underlying factor for the conflict in SL.

assess the situation well, and our actions are guided by emotions, and often by the need to “be right”, and thus re-establish the feeling of being safe.

Openness: This includes an attitude of curiosity, of the wish to find out, and the attitudes and skills to ask questions and listen well – to find out about the other person’s *intention* for what he/she says and/or does. Very often, we do not get to this point, because we start interpreting what the other person says for what we *think* it means. Usually, our interpretation is wrong. People usually need to feel safe to practice open communication.

Communication problems

Stress: When people are stressed, they feel unsafe. They do not listen well, because the focus is on themselves. The tendency to stick to their most conservative opinions, based on values that are often hidden in the subconscious, is a common phenomenon. By doing this, they often create bad feelings or confrontations, which push the other person over in his/her most conservative corner, and the space for dialogue that leads to a shared understanding can seem to be of limited interest to both parts. It is the feelings that decide the actions, not the rational mind.

Judgement: When communication is difficult, we tend to construct and project bad intentions onto the other part, judge him/her negatively, and act according to these negative interpretations (with the need to “be right” and thus “feel safe” again). The other person will naturally become defensive, and do the same. Suspicions are rife, and are not talked about.

Living in an environment where norms and values are significantly different from what feels “safe” (in our own environment) results in feeling pressured or insecure. The tendency is then to judge the other – subconsciously – for not being like us, i.e. practice according to the same values.

Lack of trust: Stress, judgement and lack of open communication leads to a breakdown of trust, which is very difficult to build up again. Conflicts are left to fester and grow, until they are out of proportions. In such an environment, there is no space for making mistakes, admitting them, learning from them, and continue with a clean slate.

Cultural and economic differences exacerbate the (potential) problems, and greatly increase the need for sensitive communication- and conflict management skills to prevent and/or handle the situation. Creating and maintaining clarity on both sides is the best insurance against conflicts.

9.3 Mistakes made that worsened the relationship

There were several mistakes made on both sides, most of which have been acknowledged and corrected during the program. Both agencies have shown that they were willing to accept responsibility and find solutions to problems that emerged. Still there were some mistakes that could not be “erased” from the relationship between the two agencies. There are attitudes and behaviour on both sides that have brought about a locked conflict.

Upon suspicion of corruption in AASL procurement department, NRC responded with judgement and a “zero-tolerance” approach and not from a “capacity building” and open perspective, with the intention to discuss the problem, let AASL

acknowledge the mistake, and go on with the work (see a description of the problem, below).

AASL in Kambia has, on several occasions shown disrespect for its partners, both NRC, local authorities and YP participants, by coming late to meetings, not having prepared meetings properly etc. And worse, two of AASL staff have openly insulted NRC staff with remarks of racism.

Staff from both agencies perceive the other agency's staff to be disrespectful.

Procurement of tools – the source of the conflict

The agricultural tools that Action Aid procured during the first year, were of poor quality and broke immediately, causing a lot of problems in the centers. The 20 youth, who had not wanted agriculture as an option in the first place, now did not have tools to work with. It took 2/3 of the school year to sort out this issue between NRC and AASL, and at the time of this study, it was obviously still a subject that all those concerned with YP had an opinion about. Strong feelings have been stirred on both sides.

Sometimes genuine mistakes are made. It was not taken for that. The mindset and the perception is set. They do not open up. No clean sheets. (AASL)

For the second year of Youth Pack, NRC handled the procurement of tools. There are different versions of why this is. NRC says that AASL never handed in a proposal in time to be able to handle the procurement. AASL believes that

“NRC took over the procurement of tools because AASL had problems last year. It would have been better if NRC and AASL could have done procurement together”.

Even in NRC, the staff has different impressions of what actually happened:

The AASL proposal came in too late. We don't have the capacity to do capacity development. We work with equal partners. (one NRC staff)

We took away from AA the “licence” to purchase tools, after the problems. It was a fait accompli, in a letter with strong words that all the purchases would be done by us. They were forced to accept it. Their budget ended up being just 10% of the one intended. Now, they have just 25000 \$ from us in their budget. (another NRC staff)

The point to make is that the perceptions of this issue still differ²⁷. The emotions related to the issue are still high, a year later, and AASL has not had “capacity built” under the project in order to keep the programme going – as was stated in the project proposal.

The recruitment and training of Supervisors

Because of the lack of integration of the components in the programme, NRC started out with two supervisors to follow up on the academic component. AASL did not have a budget line for supervisors. This imbalance was resolved and AASL could recruit a supervisor. A person without any relevant qualifications (other than being a woman) was hired, but she did not receive any training. Different NRC staff

²⁷ The Evaluation Team has not tried to verify the facts of the matter – the issue at stake is communication and perceptions, not to pinpoint who to blame for what.

acknowledge the responsibility they should have taken in training the new supervisor. The recruitment was a mistake that has made the conflict between the two agencies very visible in Kambia.

We did not train NN well. She was given documents, and was expected to learn what she needed from this.

We did not give NN an orientation to her work. We found out that she changed her name; she was discharged from the police because of misconduct. She gets more salary than me, so she does not want to report to me. When I ask her for the monthly report, she says "Go get it". She also says "If you were in AA, you would kill the black for the white".

We are not working peacefully together. She accused NRC for keeping materials from the trainers. But the trainers all said they got it. (NRC supervisor)

At this stage, the relationship with AASL had turned so bad that the agencies were not able to solve the problems created in the programme by the recruitment of the new supervisor.

In addition, the supervisor who was hired by AASL receives a higher salary than the NRC supervisor who has been with the programme from the start. On the question of the division of labour between the two supervisors, NRC Kambia was not very clear.

(The NRC supervisor) has the overall responsibility.

- Is he above the AASL supervisor?

Yes and no. Maybe the sharing of responsibilities could have been made clearer.

- Why has it not functioned?

The relationship to AA is very difficult. We do not know who has responsibility for what, beyond the main division of academic and vocational training. We sent a report to (NRC Representative in charge) about the difficulties with AA, when he was here as a stand-in for the Country Rep in September 04. We did not hear anything, and nothing was done.

Meetings with AA are so difficult; we do not feel like doing anything.

When we are visiting the centres, many things are happening, and we do not get time to deal with what is important.

The conflict between AASL and NRC is evident at the field office, in the centers and in Freetown. Mistakes have been made under pressure at all levels. There is very little evidence of this conflict and its consequences in NRC reports, and the attempt made by NRC Kambia to get support from the Country Office was not responded to. High turnover by staff and lack of training in conflict management and cross-cultural communication skills seem to be some of the underlying reasons for this.

9.4 Summary and Recommendations

NRC made a good choice to partner with a local organisation that could contribute with expertise that NRC does not have, both in terms of the vocational skills training, in terms of long-term knowledge of Kambia District and in terms of approach to participatory methods for social change. The model chosen for the partnership was not good, however. The programme should have been designed jointly; benefiting

form each agency's special expertise, and the components should have been integrated. Capacity would have been built on both sides. The model of separating the activities and contracting AASL as implementing partner contradicts the goal of AASL having capacity built to continue the programme when NRC leaves. This model was also one that created a lot of confusion about roles and responsibilities.

NRC should acknowledge the fact that money is power, but money should not be used as the yardstick to measure "equality" of partners. AASL did not have financial means to contribute on level with NRC, but NRC could not implement this programme on their own. The funding comes from Norad and the recipient is the youth in Kambia.

The working relationship has consistently deteriorated and this has prevented both organisations from contributing according to their potential. AASL has been especially restricted as a result of not having been included as an equal partner in the design of the programme.

Participation covers a wide range of involvement:

- Contractual: "If you agree, you receive your salary"
- Consultative "This is what I think – do you agree?"
- Collaborative "This is the issue – what do you think is the solution?"
- Collegiate "What is the problem, and how can it be solved?"

NRC interpretation of the partnership with AASL seems to have been of the first two types. In a programme like YP, any partnerships, whether with AASL, with teachers and learners or the wider community, the last two categories of participation should be sought.

"Collaboration" can generate ownership and sustainability, while in order to ensure empowerment and real transformation of relations, it has been said that you need "collegiality".

The impression of the team is that NRC in general employs the two first types of participation, while the last two are the ones that would contribute to anchoring Youth Pack in the Kambia communities and make sustainability a more likely achievement.

Recommendations

NRC should use the experience from YP to debate at what level of participation they want to operate in different situations, and increase the awareness of staff and partners about what level of participation is needed to encourage empowerment, and train them in skills to reach the set objectives.

Because of the high turnover of staff in all positions in NRC, institutional arrangements should be established to make sure staffs that are subjected to pressure and challenges in the field are taken better care of. This could be through i) providing relevant training, such as conflict management skills and communication skills and ii) having access to resource persons that can act as mediators or advisors in stressful situations, and iii) establishing other monitoring mechanisms that pick up on conflicts and extreme stress at the field level.

10 NRC Mandate and role in the transition phase

The Terms of Reference request that the evaluation consider whether Youth Pack is in line with NRC mandate. This is a tricky question to answer. Given the fact that the target group are mainly returnees and that Youth Pack is implemented in a post-conflict situation, a simplistic answer would be that the programme is within the mandate of NRC. There are other related questions, however, that need to be looked into in order to capture the essence of the “mandate-question”. The team understands the mandate to be the tool for NRC to communicate to others what their role and responsibilities are. Hence the real question is not whether NRC *can* implement YP, given the mandate, it is whether NRC *should* implement YP, given the mandate.

Some related questions are:

1. What are the comparative advantages of NRC compared to other actors in delivering a programme aimed at giving youth a better chance of reintegrating into the community?
2. Does NRC fill a gap and a need in the community?
3. Is the NRC approach appropriate to the given circumstances and future rebuilding of Kambia District?

NRC has specialised and developed considerable expertise in four core areas. A fourth related question would be:

4. Does Youth Pack fall within NRC expertise or is it an addition and a new “core area” that NRC would want to develop further?

10.1 The comparative advantage of NRC and the need for Youth Pack

Youth Pack is implemented in a fragile post-conflict situation and it is of vital importance that an agency like NRC is “on the ground” to assist the community and local government in providing a meaningful option for the youth at this stage. YP is a much-needed intervention that can contribute tremendously in a peace-building effort. Positive youth engagement is key to successful reconstruction of the social fabric and the communities. NRC has a comparative advantage as initiator and administrator of the project, but does not have the necessary expertise to seize and make the most of opportunities in a community that is being reconstructed to ensure maximum impact of such a project.

The pilot project has proved that the rationale of the project is right. The main anticipated effect on the target group has to a large extent been reached. Together with the very strong justification for the project in post-conflict countries and the lack of “competitors” – Youth Pack should definitely be improved and adapted to local structures in order to be implemented on a larger scale.

A more comprehensive programme of non-formal education for youth that has lost out on formal education during the war would bring the high unit cost down and the full opportunity for impact in the community could be realised. This would require that NRC engage other actors in collaboration or establish a partnership where YP is programmed jointly. Such actors could be UNHCR and UNDP in addition to the local government, institutions and other NGOs.

10.2 Appropriateness of the NRC approach

Interventions in a transition period need a different approach than interventions in an emergency situation. Youth Pack has been developed too hurriedly in a top-down and exogenous manner and is not likely to contribute to strengthening the overall non-formal education system in the District. Such projects should be developed and implemented in partnership with local institutions in order to provide a more sustainable solution in an impoverished community. Capacity building of local institutions or organisations will be needed to achieve this goal.

NRC has cooperated with a partner with experience in planning and implementing development projects to “fill this gap”. However, the lack of experience in and guidelines to managing such a partnership in a constructive way, combined with a high amount of stress and frustration, created a conflict that was not acknowledged or handled wisely from either side. The result is that the sustainability of the project is seriously hampered.

The difference between the profile of Youth Pack and the other NRC humanitarian programmes poses several challenges to programme planning, monitoring and follow-up.

Youth Pack was not defined as a transition project at that time (2002) (NRC staff interview)

This evaluation does not seek to debate whether YP is an ‘emergency’, ‘transition’²⁸, or ‘development’ project as such. The point made here is that the project was prepared in a transition period and at the time of this evaluation, when the last of NRC’s youth are graduating from the programme, Kambia finds itself in a ‘development phase’. One indicator for this is that UN OCHA and UNHCR has decided to pull out and hand over programmes to UNDP during the last year.

A tool kit for Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP) prepared by Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health and the Complex Emergency Response and Transition Initiative (CERTI) notes that:

A consensus is emerging among humanitarian agencies of the need for increased program participation by affected populations. This is partly to improve program sustainability through increased ownership and motivation by populations and increased local capacity to collect and use data for problem solving.

Agencies also acknowledge that increased participation supports the right of communities to have a voice in programs that affect them, and are a means toward recovering self-reliance. This is especially important in transition and relief programs that serve very vulnerable populations where means of self-reliance have been seriously challenged, destroyed, are only beginning to recover.
<http://www.certi.org/publications/Manuals/rap-16-section1.htm>

NRC describes the situation in Sierra Leone like this:

“Sierra Leone is moving slowly out of a recovery period into a phase of social, economic and political development. In recognition of these positive developments the Government of

²⁸ Transition is defined as the “time between the acute phase of a disaster and the completion of return or resettlement activities. The type of settlements that ‘transition’ populations live in vary from camps or resettlement areas to communities of origin”(ibid).

Sierra Leone (GoSL), the United Nations System, donors and NGOs are changing their emphasis, modalities and structures for operating in Sierra Leone.”(NRC doc. May 2004)

The NRC approach is still very much focused on delivering a high quality service to a specified target group, and impact measured is limited to the impact for the said target group. In an emergency situation where there are a large number of NGOs operating and delivering different types of services to different target groups, the NRC approach serves to complement other efforts. In Kambia district, very few other agencies operate, the community is slowly trying to rebuild the most basic structures of society and NRC can be said to be an “alien” element in this process. NRC shows Kambians what can be achieved if you have a sizable budget, but nobody else in Kambia can dream about copying what NRC does.

The project has produced some very good results for a majority of the 400 learners and 40 teachers and thereby contributed to the peace building in the short run, as well as some spin-off effects in the community at large. But, still, the question is asked, does this short term gain for 440 people justify the approach taken and the large budget spent? It is a question of whether the approach applied contributes to “dependency” or to self-reliance and empowerment in the communities at large and thus if the impact is sustainable.

NRC does not specify long-term development goals for the project and are clear that this is an intervention, which will end in its current form once Norwegian support has ended.

It is the impression of the evaluation team that NRC has paid more attention to whether the target group and the orientation of the programme fits with NRC mandate and expertise, than to whether it fits within the overall context of the time and society in which it is placed. This, in the view of the team, is to justify the project on wrong terms.

10.3 Is Youth Pack a fifth core area for NRC?

This is a question that the evaluation team leaves open to NRC internal debate. Given the lessons learnt in Kambia, and the conclusions drawn in this evaluation, the Youth Pack concept differs from other NRC core areas in several and fundamental ways. NRC will need to adopt new participatory planning methodology as well as a number of other tools and ideas in order to implement Youth Pack successfully in other countries. The team acknowledges NRC unique position, expertise and good intention to address this very important gap and peace-building tool during the transition period between war and recovery and hopes that NRC will “pick up the glove”.

11 NRC important choices made and lessons learnt

11.1 Important choices, rationale and consequences

This chapter aims to highlight some of the strategic choices NRC has made when planning and implementing Youth Pack, as a lead-in to the conclusion of the evaluation on lessons learnt from the programme²⁹. The evaluation is summarizing the important choices and the reasons for making these, as the team has understood them, as a basis for further discussion on lessons learnt, and future action. The consequences of the choices are also described, where relevant.

The understanding of NRC's rationale for their actions is an important point for discussing potential changes to future strategies. A constructive discussion about changes need to be based on understanding why organizations do what they do, not merely on *what* they do.

The nature and intention of Youth Pack

Youth Pack is in many ways a controversial project, as was acknowledged by NRC during the first introductory meeting at NRC Head Quarters (HQ) in Oslo. The team was presented with some of the choices NRC made during planning and implementation, the rationale for the concept, and the dilemmas the organization faced.

The subsequent study has confirmed that the consequences of these choices and the special profile of Youth Pack raise principal questions that need further debate. Some of the key characteristics and arguments are summarised below as a background to the findings and recommendations that are presented in lessons learnt, as well as in recommendations in the executive summary, and throughout the report.

1. Starting YP in a transition period in Sierra Leone

Rationale: There is a strong need for youth to get help to reintegrate after the war. Youth are both an “overlooked” vulnerable group, and idle and disillusioned youth are a potential threat to peace building. NRC has good experience from working with children and youth in other countries, and involve them in constructive learning of literacy skills. NRC has the apparatus to start a programme quickly. They are on the ground and with established cooperation with local and national authorities. There is a strong need in other countries as well for working with youth, so this will be a pilot project – to test out a “generic package” that can be used also in other countries, based on the experience in SL.

2. Need for a local partner

Rationale: Youth Pack combines literacy skills, life skills and vocational skills training in order to respond to the life situation and needs of returning youth that have lost out on education. Since NRC does not have experience in vocational skills training, there is a need for a local partner. The partner chosen is expected to have skills in community development, and be able to raise money for continuation of the project. NRC is pulling out after 2 or 3 years, as SL is moving into a development

²⁹ The chapter is hence a summary of the main findings and conclusions in the report – but presented as “choices made” and “lessons learnt” in order to serve as a stand-alone input to the NRC debate on the future direction of Youth Pack.

period. The partner is also expected to have the capacity to implement the vocational component independently of NRC implementation. (It is not clear to what extent the local partner is expected to continue the academic component of YP after NRC pulls out.) The partner is on one hand defined as an implementing partner for the NRC project, but on the other hand expected to be an equal partner with the responsibility for the vocational component and for ensuring future sustainability.

NRC is a humanitarian agency. AASL was selected because they have the experience with regular community development projects. NRC assumes they have the skills they need. NRC does not have capacity to do capacity development of a local partner.

3. YP Profile

Rationale: NRC chooses to concentrate and specialise on a limited number (400) of target group youth in order to ensure maximum impact in a short time³⁰. The number of applicants to the programme is four times the available places. The programme is “target group – driven”, not community-based in order to keep within NRC mandate. As a humanitarian agency, NRC does not see it as their role to do institutional capacity building; capacity building of local partners or to prioritise participatory planning that ensures community ownership of the project. The Youth Pack project is an NRC “product”, supplied by NRC as a service to the community. Sustainability is defined as the effect on the target groups that they can build on, not community and institutional learning and development. “Effect for the target group” is the overriding principle.

The YP profile is determined, based on NRC mandate and expertise rather than based on the stated needs and priorities of Kambia District.

It is not clear what is meant by a “pilot project” in terms of how it is planned, monitored and followed up. How is Youth Pack different from a “normal project”, and what does this mean for the role of Kambia stakeholders and the local partners?

Consequences of choice of partner, and profile:

- Missed opportunities for impact in communities
- The morale of “charity” – handouts and dependency rather than “help to self-help”
- If main areas fail (like literacy) – ½ of the programme fails (because of concentration)
- Focus on immediate results – for the donors?

4. YP Cost

Rationale: NRC chooses to develop a costly programme where the youth are given free lunch, uniforms and individual start-up kits when they graduate to enable them to set up their own business. The rationale is to ensure that the youth complete the programme, that they are motivated and enabled to learn and that they can build on what they have learnt when they leave the programme. The target group focus overrides the main dilemma connected with this choice, which is the relevance of the project concept in Kambia District. NRC demonstrates what can be accomplished when you have abundant resources, and then withdraws.

³⁰ YRTEP reached 45 000 youth with a lighter programme

Consequences:

- Kambia District cannot conceive to copy or benefit from the lessons learnt since the premise of the resource base is so alien to the District capabilities. At worst, this can severely contradict building of community self-reliance, and empowerment.

5. Development of curriculum

Rationale: NRC has developed the curriculum based on experiences in other countries and tested it out in Kambia. Government involvement is ensured by engaging National Curriculum Writers to rewrite the curriculum. To ensure relevance and appropriateness of the curriculum to the target group, NRC plans to revise the curriculum during the pilot project.

The academic and the vocational components are developed separately. The two partners work separately and the division is upheld throughout the programme. There are no plans to integrate the two components or to design a comprehensive project where management of the two components is coordinated and integrated.

Consequences:

- The majority of the youth have not learnt to read and write
- The curriculum is far too theoretical for learners, and teachers
- Time and resources have not yet been allocated for a thorough revision of the modules

6. Teacher recruitment and training

Rationale: NRC decides to recruit untrained and unqualified teachers and to offer a Distance Education Programme in order to contribute to the overall education system in the District, and enable the teachers to gain status as regular teachers after completing distance education. Teachers are recruited locally to contribute to the local resource base and incentives are kept on par with Government regulations in order not to compete with the existing system.

Consequences:

- NRC contributes to building local capacity in the education sector
- By pulling out of the programme after two years, leaving teachers without income for the third and final year of their distance education, NRC endangers its investment in the teachers. Teachers and the NRC supervisor questioned their ability to find money for transport to go to the distance education seminars. NRC has decided to monitor and report on the progress of the teachers within 2006.
- Training in use of learner-centred methods have positive but limited effect; teachers do not pick up on (or do not want to admit) that students can hardly read and write.

7. Timing of programme implementation

Rationale: The timing of the programme implementation is driven mainly by the “system of proposal, funding and reporting” to Norad, rather than by the need for

assessments, planning and project design to be carried out in conjunction with Kambia District and with AASL. Although NRC has prepared YP for a long time, and even carried out some preparations in Sierra Leone, all considerations for follow-up to the preparations done is overridden by the “implement now” imperative of the funding mechanism.

Consequences:

- Planning was rushed, which gave little time for real cooperation with or checking the results from projects of other actors
- Finding a local partner, and establish functional cooperation and joint understanding of roles and responsibilities and of how to learn from each other, was seriously compromised
- There was no time for involvement of the communities

8. “Zero-tolerance” for corruption

On the (well-founded) suspicion of corruption in the programme, NRC chooses to act on a “zero-tolerance” basis, rather than from a “capacity building” perspective. NRC sends letters and reminders to AASL until the matter is settled rather than solve it through dialogue.

Consequences

- A severe conflict with AASL, a loss of trust, and escalating problems with serious consequences
- Resentment is building up, no constructive action taken to deal with the conflict and with the hurt feelings on both sides
- The programme suffers
- AA loses motivation to cooperate, and to look for money for continuation (?)

9. Taking care of employees in the field

Rationale: NRC project management is to a very large extent “decentralised”, meaning that the project team is left to deal with stress, conflict and other extreme situations without adequate, training, follow-up or support. There is a very high turnover of staff at all levels in the organisation further weakening the system of follow-up of needs at the field level. The workload put on the YP Project Manager during the start-up phase was simply unrealistic. The lack of training and capacity building of NRC’s own staff is not a “choice” per se, but the high pressure under which NRC operates skews the priorities. “It is always burning somewhere”.

Consequences

- NRC staff is vulnerable to situations where there is potential for conflict. In areas where NRC operates, such situations must be common;
- NRC staff may have increased stress levels as a consequence of such situations, and be less able to handle project issues well.
- NRC projects can be negatively affected by staff and leaders not being able to handle conflicts constructively

11.2 Lessons Learnt

The following are main lessons learnt from the pilot project. They should be discussed with the analysis of the choices and consequences of action described in 11.1.

Overall:

1. NRC is in a unique position to address a gap that is often found in post-conflict situations: the need for youth to engage in meaningful activities and regain hope for- and belief in the future.
2. NRC has shown that it is possible to implement such a programme, and give youth a major “lift” and new chances in their reintegration process.
3. While the NRC model reaches the target group with some of the main intended skills and attitudes, the model is not sufficient for planning and management of projects in a transition period, where the focus is more directed at long term development, and the involvement of and cooperation with local institutions is crucial.
4. The YP programme, although very good with positive immediate effects for the target groups, has not been integrated well in the community. The high cost of the programme is one of the factors that prohibits sustainability and contributes to dependency rather than self-reliance. Expensive projects like YP will not necessarily result in local action to continue the programme, as it is seen as way out of reach by anyone locally.
5. In general Youth Pack is seen to be NGO-run activities, which are very much welcome, but the community members and leaders do not see that NRC has taken advantage of resources that are available locally and that could have rendered Youth Pack into a more community-based and sustainable project.

Literacy skills:

6. The YP pilot project did not succeed in providing functional literacy skills for the youth. The reasons for this are that:
 - The modules are too advanced and too theoretical for the level of the learners and probably even for the teachers, and they should be thoroughly revised by those who have experience with them.
 - They are not well integrated with the life skills- and vocational skills components,
 - The teachers and supervisors did not have a functioning monitoring system in place that could pick up on the poor results throughout the programme.
 - NRC did apparently not take advantage of their earlier experiences with education programmes regarding teaching and learning materials. Hardly any were used or provided in YP, and this has been a contributing factor to the failure of the literacy programme.
7. Reading and writing is, for most YP youth, a means to do vocational skills better, and to strengthen the ability to use them for self-reliance. It may be that NRC has not fully comprehended the importance of the vocational skills for the target audience.

Life skills:

8. It is not clear to what extent learning life skills has been effective. The learners say it has been effective, but the only concrete example emerging on how to use the skills, is the youth now being able to intervene in community quarrels. The life skills aspects should be carefully revised to strengthen aspects of practical use of the knowledge taught, and of strengthening problem solving skills.
9. Likewise, the health education module should be carefully reviewed by local public health experts. It is not up to date on the latest expertise in this area.

Vocational skills:

10. Vocational skills are seen as the main positive outcome of the training by all stakeholders. Only 12% of the first year's learners went back to school after YP.
11. For most of the other youth, the YP experience enabled them to gain a position as an apprentice, or to be employed or self-employed.
12. The provision of start-up kits in some form is seen by most as necessary if the youth are to be able to start up their own business. Despite the tools they achieve, there is still the problem of having enough materials to get the business going.
13. The provision of start-up kits is expensive, and seen as a luxury by many – although it is of course appreciated. For YP to be a more realistic programme in terms of cost, there is a need to assess other options for providing youth with a means to start their working life – e.g. provision of some basic tools, and the possibility for a micro-credit loan to pay for a higher quality start-up kit. To promote the notion of self-reliance and to avoid the danger of continued dependency, the youth should be made more responsible towards the acquisition of start-up kits
14. The provision of business skills is important. However, the present form of this education, with the emphasis being the students learning to write proposals to ask for money, seems like a blind alley: Most of the youth cannot read and write, and no one has managed to obtain any money from outside sources. At worst, such focus can be de-motivating, and prevent the youth from finding their own solutions to the problems.
15. NRC's strength lies in planning and management of education programmes. The idea to add vocational skills was a good one, but took NRC out of its "comfort zone". NRC did not manage to integrate the two components well in a joint programme.

Teaching and Supervision:

16. The learner-centred teaching methods are liked by teachers and learners. Teachers do not use them as intended, but use them well enough for the learners to gain general knowledge and skills, and to strengthen their self-respect.
17. The teachers should be trained in a few simple learner-centred methods, and supervisors should be specially trained to follow up on the use of such methods in the centres.

18. Team teaching is a method liked by teachers and learners. It is however not used to its potential, and new programmes should assess possibilities for using this resource more effectively.
19. The main failure of the teaching is seen in most of the learners not learning to read and write. Despite the apparent emphasis on evaluation methods and on supervision, no one picked up the fact that most of the learners did not learn to read and write. The tools for assessment and monitoring need to be revised, as well as the way they are used and interpreted by the teachers and the supervisors.
20. NRC's approach to dealing with trauma seems to work well, at least on the surface. However, it is not sure that teachers are getting the assistance they need on this issue. There is a need to assess how to use traditional community methods for handling conflict more consistently in the programme, both to strengthen these methods (where appropriate), and to help youth reintegrate and be able to use such methods themselves.

Working with a local partner:

21. NRC's action to select and work with a local implementing partner was a good one – they identified a partner with experience in community based work, and with knowledge about learner-centred methodology.
22. To be able to work constructively with a local partner, guidelines for managing such work need to be established, including how to clarify expectations, goals and roles. Furthermore, the staff needs to be given skills in establishing and maintaining trust, and in handling conflict, which will likely occur in such uneven relationships.
23. NRC cannot expect a local partner to have all the capacity needed for implementing a new programme in cooperation with NRC. In the proposal to NORAD, institutional capacity building of the local partner is included. However, NRC staff's rather rigid statements that "We don't have the capacity to do capacity building, we expect the partner to do this" is a refusal to engage with the partner to identify skills needed, and facilitate a process for the partner to gain those skills – which would be used to reach a common goal. NRC needs to get clear within its ranks about this issue.

The cost of the programme

24. Although the high cost of the programme ensures better quality education and the opportunity for learners to start up their own business, the negative side-effects are grave enough to warrant a rethinking of the YP-concept. The high cost makes YP an exclusive NGO activity that local communities cannot identify with and claim ownership of.

Project Cycle Management:

25. The YP implementation and follow-up has suffered badly from the lack of time allocated to the very important first phase of initiating the programme. The following are the minimum questions that should be assessed in the early phases of introducing the programme in a community:

- Are there any local institutions that may be willing to host YP in order to promote sustainability of the programme?
 - Are there local resource persons that can advice on the content and management of the programme in order to include traditional values and mechanisms for management and follow-up? (for example in the area of trauma handling and management of resources in a transparent and legitime way)
 - Are there innovative ways of engaging local resources to cut the cost of YP, eg. through requiring contribution in kind, such as daycare facilities, cooking, monitoring and follow-up of the youth etc.
 - Is there a network of local business people, or other ongoing development programmes that the YP could hook up with in order to integrate the centers with local entrepreneurship and make the most of opportunities for employment for the youth.
26. In addition to the above, the teaching modules should be tested with people that are themselves members of the target group, to avoid the problem of too advanced curriculum for teachers and learners.
27. During the early phases of assessment and programme design, the project team, together with relevant stakeholders, should carefully review the YP objectives and the indicators for results monitoring in order to ensure that these are realistic and relevant to the context, and that they give the information that is necessary for the project management to make appropriate decisions on which activities to prioritise in the programme. There should be a strong logical link between the results (outputs) of the programme and its purpose (immediate objective).
28. If NRC engages in partnership with local organisations, the programme should be planned jointly, building on the strengths and comparative advantages of each of the organisations.
29. Given the very high turnover of personnel in NRC at all levels, the programme planning and documentation/reporting should be given more emphasis in the organisation in order to ensure institutional learning. The Logical Framework Approach is a tool that would facilitate communication over time in that it provides a basic overview of project objectives, activities, monitoring tools and assumptions about risk.

Annex A: Terms of Reference

(Background Information and budget excluded)

3. PURPOSE

NRC Sierra Leone first implemented the program in Kambia District as a pilot program at the start of the first school year in April 2003. The program is now at the end of its second year. In 2005 NRC is planning to implement the program in several other NRC program countries. **A thorough evaluation of the program in Sierra Leone will therefore be of utmost importance, not only for closing of the program in Sierra Leone, but also to allow for improvements/adaptations in the program prior to implementation in other NRC program countries.**

The evaluation should take into consideration the **relevance** of the programme and the development of the programme – **process**. An **impact** evaluation of the program should not be based on the first group of youths graduating only, but should also include experiences of the second year graduates. This however is not possible at this stage (they graduate in the end of March 2005). Therefore the evaluation team's local members should be asked to do an additional impact study at a later stage (within one year from today).

4. SCOPE

The evaluation will deal with Youth Pack Education Programme in Sierra Leone in the period of 2002 – March 2005. The evaluation will take place in Kambia District, with special focus on the four Youth Pack centres, Mambolo, Rokupr, Kassirie and Kukuna. Initial information sessions will take place in Oslo and Freetown

5. OBJECTIVES

- **NRC mandate**
 - Does Youth Pack fall within NRC's mandate?
 - The relevance of the program with regards to NRC criteria for program support, incl. target groups.
- **Relevance**
 - Evaluate the need and relevance of Youth Pack in the community and for all stakeholders.
- **Impact**
 - Assess the impact of the academic and skills training components of the one-year program.
 - Did the program reach the target group? Did the program contribute to individual growth and reintegration of the target group?
 - Assess the impact of the program on Youth Pack teachers.
 - Assess unforeseen positive and/or negative effects on community or persons involved.
- **Processes.**
 - Identify the program's best practices and weaknesses. Is there a good balance between the project's components (theoretical and practical)? Have the target group and stakeholders been appropriately involved at all stages and empowered through the process?
 - Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the choices of premises.

- **Sustainability**
 - Are the changes which have been achieved likely to be sustained?
 - Continuation of Youth Pack activities after NRC's exit.
 - All actors involved (students, teachers, local community).
- **Cost-effective**
 - How cost-effective has the intervention been?(Long term impact assessment might still be necessary).
 - Use of two teachers per class
 - Use of trainers and supervisors
- **Conclusions and recommendations**
 - for other continued development of Youth Pack in other NRC program countries (sharing the learning).

6. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will be accomplished with consultants. The consultants will cooperate closely with NRC HQ and NRC staff in the field. The consultants will visit Sierra Leone in March and April 2005.

The target group will be consulted. The evaluation team will work in a participatory manner, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Youths that participated in both the first and the second year should be interviewed, the teachers and trainers in the project, together with YP staff have to be consulted and the opinions of central and local authorities and community must be heard.

Annex B: Schedule of work

Date	Activity	People involved
23/2	Meeting NRC	Kine Brodtkorp, Gro Annett, Eldrid Midttun
10/3	Liv Moberg arrives in Freetown, meeting NRC	Ellen Dahl
11. – 13/3	Meetings Freetown: NRC, AASL, UNDP, UNICEF, MEST	See Annex C
14/3	Ane Haaland arrives in Freetown Meetings with NRC Team preparation of interview guides	
15/3	Meetings with local consultants, and AASL, and Mr Sulay Sesay Leave for Kambia Meeting with Valbjørg Hoaas	
16/3	Visit Kukuna and Kasiri centres and communities Interview with Saheed, supervisor	
17/3	Visit Rokupr centre and communities; IAMTECH training centre. Discuss findings, make questionnaire	
18/3	Ane: Questionnaires and interview tools Team: Meeting NacSa, AASL, Councillor. PM: Rokupr – Voc. Training centre, SCF Drive to Mambolo. Review question guides	
19/3	Interviews Mambolo	Teachers, learners, supervisors, NRC&AASL staff, Save the Children, headmaster of Mambolo sec. school
20/3	Interviews Mambolo; back to Freetown	
21/3	Meetings Liv and Ane Leave for Norway	AASL Freetown, NRC, Mr Sesay, team
29/3-5/4	SL team back to Kambia to continue interviews with stakeholders	Community members/leaders, business people, 1 st year learners, youth, parents
15-22/4	SL team back to Kambia to complete interviews with stakeholders	Same as above
8/4	Presentation, preliminary findings to NRC	NRC Oslo and NRC Freetown staff
28/3	Meeting	Eldrid Midttun
	Meeting	Eric Severin
	Meeting	Elisabeth Reizer

Annex B: List of Informants:

NRC staff:

Eldrid Midtun, Education Advisor
Helge Brochmann, Education Advisor
Gro Annett Nicolaysen, Programme Coordinator for SL, Oslo
Kine Brodtkorp, Project Coordinator / Evaluation Advisor
Ellen Dahl, Country Director, Sierra Leone
Georg Mevold, Programme Coordinator / former YP programme manager
Nancy Smart, Education Programme Coordinator, Freetown
Sahid M. Kamara, YP Supervisor, Kambia
Valbjørg Hoaas, Field Coordinator, Kambia
Eric Sevrin, Section Chief, Oslo / former Programme Coordinator SL, Oslo
Elisabeth Reizer (former NRC consultant)

AASL staff:

Tennyson Williams, Director, Freetown
Dauda Brimah Sallu, Programme Coordinator, Kambia
Mary Koroma, YP Supervisor, Kambia
Sam Bangura, Education Officer

Ministry of Science, Education and Technology:

Olive Musa	Deputy Director, Dept. Non-Formal Education
Sam F. O. Bangura	Education Officer
M.A Turay	Supervisor, Adult Education
Mr. A.S Jalloh, Kambia	Inspector I MEST Member of Steering Committee

Local Authorities:

Local Council Chairman, Kambia
Paramount Chief, Kukuna
NaCSA Director, Kambia

UNDP:

Sylvia Fletcher, Senior Governance Advisor

UNICEF:

Donald Robertshaw, Child Protection Officer
Ekem Chiejeni, programme Officer, Education

Merriul Davies, Project Officer, Education

IAMTEC, Kambia (Rokupr)

Mrs. B.B. Doherty

Supervisor

Goal (Ireland/Sierra Leone):

Mr Sullay Bobor Sesay

Programme Manager for the Disadvantaged Children and Youths Programme

Save the Children:

Abu Kokoteke, Programme Coordinator

Anita Yamba, Project Officer

Teachers Interviewed:

NAME	CENTER	SUBJECT
Lamin Sesay	Mambolo	Academic
Sallay K Bangura		Academic
Alimamy S. Bangura		Agric, Trainer
Marie B. Kamara	Kassirie	Hair Dressing
N'fasinne Kargbo		Agric
Mohamed U.K.Forfonah		Academic
Michael P. Bangura		Mason
Lamin Bangura		Academic
Michael Yillah		Academic
Mohamed Mansaray	Kukuna	Mason
Mohamed M. Kamara		Mason
Ibrahim F. Forfonah		Mason
Mohamed H. Kamara		Agric.
Mr. Kamara		Academic
Alusine T. Kamara		Academic
Adama Kallay		Tailoring
Gibrilla S. Kargbo	Rokupr	Carpentry
Ibrahim A. Bangura		Academic
Ibrahim Ahmed Bangura		Academic

COMMUNITY LEADERS/ELDERS/BUSINESS PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

NAME	POSITION IN COMMUNITY	BUSINESS/ TRADE	TOWN/ VILLAGE
Mohamed F. Kamara	Voc. Trainer	Carpentry	Kassirie
Ya Alimamy Kamara	Y not with YP (save)		Kassirie
Mariama Sesay	“		“
	Not YP		Kukuna
Mohamed Bangura	With YP	Carpenter	Kukuna
Abdul Kamara	Owner of carpentry with 2 YP	Carpenter	Kassirie
Saidu Turay	Tailor No YP	Tailor	Kassirie
Alimamy Kamara	Tailor	Tailor	Kassirie
Alimamy Kargbo	Santana	Tailors (8-13)	Kassirie
Thamba Kamara	Tailoring		“
Brima Bangura	Workshop with no YP		“
Alimu Yillah			“
Kamanda Kargbo			“
Lamin Kamara			“
Aliseni Sillah	Carpenter no YP 4 apprentices	Carpenter	Kukuna
Pa Alhaji Bangura	Chief Imam	} Elders	Rokupr
Pa Alimamy Kafaur	Section Chief		Rokupr
Alhaji Ibrahim Koroma	T.Head & C/dom Councillor	} Elders	Kukuna
Pa Bangura	C/dom councillor		Kukuna
Pa Sorie Dumbuya	C/don councillor		Kukuna
Pa Adukali Kamara	Town Chief	} Elders	Kassirie
Pa alimamy Forkie Bangura	Section Chief		Kassirie
Alie Bangura-Ka Thorlu	Elder		Kassirie
Pa Foday Bangura	Elder		Kassirie
Thomas Kamara	Chairman	} Farmers Group	Kassirie
Ali forfonah	Treasurer		Kassirie
S.B. Kamara	Sectary		Kassirie
Alie Junks Kamara	Farmer		Kassirie
Lansana Turay	Farmer		Kassirie
Kadiatu Kamara (Mrs.)	H/Wife (parent)	Mother of YP st.	Kassirie
Aminata Turay	Parent	Trader	Kassirie
Tigidankay Kamara			Kassirie
Morlai Kanu	Vice C/Lady		Youth
Aminata Turay	Chairman/Adviser		Farmers

Haja Kankay Kamara	Chair lady		Assoc.
Mr. Abubakar Kamara	Medical Off.		Kassirie
Mrs. Aminata Kamara	House wife		Kassirie
Abu B. S. Kamara	Parent at YP		Kassirie
Mary Kamara	Parent at YP		Kassirie
Mr. Abubakar Kamara	Member of CTA		Mambolo
Mr. Abdulrahman Kamara	Member of CTA		Mambolo
Me. Sheik Abdulrahman Sesay	“		“
Mr. Sheik Hassan Kamara	“		“
Mr. Allieu Barrie	“		“
Mr. Kandeh Dumbuya	CTA Chairman		Kukuna
Mr. Robert Kamara	CTA Sec.		CTA
Mrs. Memuna Kamara	Chairlady		Member
Mrs. Mbalia Sesay	Member		
Mr. Ibrahim Bangura	Old employer with YP in business	Tailor	Mambolo
Mr. Komrabai Kamara	Youth Dev. Astrc.	Vice President	Mambolo
Mr. Nabie Kamara	Employer of YP Graduate	Tailor	Rokupr

FIRST YEAR LEARNERS INTERVIEWED:

KUKUNA		MAMBOLO	
Marie Kamara	Hairdressing	Alhassan M. Conteh	Mason
Memuna Sumura	Agriculture	Fatmata B. Kamara	Tailoring
Dauda Fofana	Carpentry	Isatu Bangura	Agriculture
Fatmata Turay	Hairdressing	Mariatu Kargob	Agriculture
Nana Kamara	Agriculture	Aminata Conteh	Gara tie-dye
Aminata Sesay	Hairdressing	Florence Conteh	Agriculture
Alimany S. Yillah	Agriculture	Hassan Kamara	Agriculture
Fatmata Bangura	Agriculture	Santigie Kamara	Mason
Mariama Sesay	Tailor	Abu Y. Kamara	Carpenter
Aminata Dumbuya	Agriculture	Metzger Kamara	Agriculture
Yarie Kamara	Agriculture	Saidu Kamara	Hairdressing
Saidu-Bah Dumbuya	Agriculture	M ma Kamara	Tailoring
Mariama Mansaray	Carpenter	Mohamed L. Kamara	Mason
Fatmata I. Kamara	Agriculture	Santigie Sesay	Carpenter
Kadiatu Bangura	Tailor	Alhassan Kamara	Carpenter
Adama Kamara	Hairdressing	Mohamed Kamara	Carpenter
Abubakar Kamara	Tailor	Haja Fatmata Kamara	Agriculture
Foday Sawaneh	Masonry		
Abdulai Kamara	Carpenter		
Abubakar Dumbuya	Masonry		
Memunatu Kamara	Agriculture		

		Tailoring	
ROKUPR		KASSIRIE	
Bomposeh Kargbo	Tailoring	Aminata Kamara	Mason
Mohamed Bangura	Carpentry	Zainab Conteh	Tailoring
Aminata Kamara	Agriculture	Mariama	Tailoring
Ibrahim S. Karama	Agriculture	Kadiatu Sesay	Hairdressing
Sorie Turay	Mason	Marie L. Kamara	Mason
Emma Bangura	Agriculture	Abu s. Bangura	Carpenter
Mohamed Bangura	Agriculture	Adama Sesay	Agriculture
Isatu Kamara	Tailoring	Ibrahim Kamara	Agriculture
Alhassan Kamara	Carpenter	Adikali Kamara	Agriculture
Ibrahim Kargbo	Carpenter	Alimamy Turay	Carpenter
Lamin Kargbo	Agriculture	Saidu Kamara	Mason
Mohamed Sesay	Agriculture	Nannah Yilla	Agriculture
Kekura Bangura	Agriculture	Ibrahim Bangura	Mason
Mohamed Kamara	Agriculture	Salamatu Turay	Hairdressing
Abdul T. Kamara	Mason	Alhaji Kanu	Agriculture
Ibrahim Conteh	Mason	Mariatu Kamara	Hairdressing
Kadiatu Y. Bangura	Tailoring	Mohamed Daffay	Carpenter
Foday Kamara	Carpenter	Fatmata Kamara	Hairdressing
Haja Kamara	Hairdressing	Santigie Kamara	Carpenter
Yainkain Yillah	Agriculture	Abbass Kargbo	Agriculture
Ramatu Kamara	Agriculture	Mohamed F. Kamara	Mason
Mariama Nabie	Hairdressing	Mohamed Bangura	Mason
Adama Turay	Tailoring	Isata Bangura	Agriculture
Kadiatu Bangura	Agriculture	Momoh Suma	Carpenter
Kadiatu Bangura (2)	Agriculture	Mohamed Kamara	Agriculture
Abdul Kamara	Carpenter	Idrissa Conteh	Mason
Dauda Kamara	Carpenter		
Fatmata Kanu	Tailoring		
Adama Lakoh	Hairdressing		
Mabinty Bangura	Hairdressing		
Yamakoro Kamara	Agriculture		

SECOND YEAR LEARNERS INTERVIEWED:

CENTRE	NAME	VOCATIONAL OPTION
KUKUNA	Mma Silla	Tailoring
	Mamie Dumbuya	Gara tie-dye
	Mariama Dumbuya	Hair dressing
	Isata Sillah	Gara tie-dye

	Adama Dumbuya	Tailoring
	Mbalia Conteh	Tailoring
	Fatmata Kamara	Tailoring
	Isata Dumbuya	Carpentry
	Isata S. Bunbuya	Carpentry
	Alusine Dumbuya	Masonry
	Zainab Kama	Tailoring
	Abdulai Dumbuya	Carpentry
	Rugiatu Kamara	Hairdressing
	Fatmata Janneh	Tailoring
MAMBOLO	Moray Kamara	Carpentry
	Santigie Bangura	Carpentry
	Sorie Koroma	Carpentry
	Mariatu Kamara	H/dressing
	Emma Bangura	H/dressing
	Isata Sesay	Gara tie-dye
	Balu Kamara	Gara tie-dye
	Isha A. Bangura	Masonry
	Alimamy Kamara	Masonry
	Isatu Mansaray	Tailoring
	Yenoh J. Conteh	Tailoring
ROKUPR	Mohamed S. Kamara	Carpentry
	Hawanatu Kamara	Carpentry
	Abu White Conteh	Carpentry
	Fatmata D. Bangura	Hairdressing
	Mohamed L. Mansaray	Masonry
	Korabai Kamara	Carpentry
	Kadiatu Conteh	Gara tie-dye
KASSIRIE	Mabinty Kamara	Hairdressing
	Zainab Conteh	Hairdressing
	Mary Kamara	Trailoring
	Mamusu Kamara	Hairdressing
	Mariatu Turay	Hairdressing
	Salmatu Kamara	Gara tie-dye
	Alusine Conteh	Masonry
	Kelfala Conteh	Tailoring

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General information documents:

- NRC. Sierra Leone general information compiled by NRC (2005)
- NRC. Background paper for Youth Pack Evaluation compiled by NRC (2005)
- NRC. *Country Strategy Sierra Leone 2002-2004*
- NRC / Refugee Studies Centre. *Forced Migration Review 22: Education in Emergencies: learning for a peaceful future*. January 2005
- United Nations, *Transition Appeal for Relief and Recovery, Sierra Leone 2004*

Institute for International Cooperation / Japan International Cooperation Agency. *Peace-building and the Process of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration; the Experience of Mozambique and Sierra Leone*

USAID and Creative Associates International, Inc., Prime Contractor. *Final Evaluation of the Office of Transition Initiative's Program in Sierra Leone*. August 2002

Useful websites:

<http://www.nacsa-sl.org>

<http://www.ineesite.org/guides.asp>

<http://www.certi.org/publications/Manuals/rap-16-section1.htm>

Annex E: Instruments used

Questionnaire for 1st year students

1. Chiefdom:

2. Vocational choice in Youth Pack:

Mason / Carpenter / Hair dressing / Tailoring / Agriculture

COMMENTS

2b. Was this your choice? Yes No

2c. If no, what was your choice?

Mason / Carpenter / Hair dressing / Tailoring / Agriculture

COMMENTS

3. What are you doing now?

Going to school (which grade)

Employed full time

Employed part time

Self-employed full time

Self-employed part time

Apprentice

Working on own land

Unemployed

COMMENTS

3b. Are you working with group from Youth Pack? Yes No

COMMENTS

4. From your work, how much money do you get per month? (Check one box)

Less than 20.000 Leon / 20-30.000 / 30-40.000 / 40-50.000 / More than 50.000

COMMENTS

4b. Are you able to feed yourself with what you earn? Yes No

4c. Are you able to feed your family? Yes No

5. How did you get your job? (check one box)

Family business

Got job through relatives/friends

Started on my own

Through Youth pack contacts

Through advertisements

Other (specify)

COMMENTS

6. Do you still have the start-up kit that you were given?

Yes, all of it

Yes, some of it

Yes, but it is not functioning

No, I have lost it

No, I have sold it

COMMENTS

6b. Which items in your start-up kit did you not find useful? (specify). Why?

COMMENTS

7. What is your role in the community (Check one or more)

Leader of group? (Name of group)

Member of group? (Name of group)

Actively motivate other youth to be good

I am an example to others

COMMENTS

8. What do you think is the opinion community leaders have about you (check one box)

“He/she is an important member of the community”

“He/she is ordinary”

“He/she is a trouble maker”

COMMENTS

9. Has your role in the community changed after Youth Pack?

Yes No

COMMENTS

10. If yes (to question 9), how has it changed? (check one or more)

I used to be idle, now I am doing useful work

I used to be a trouble maker, now I am not

I used to drink and smoke, now I don't

I used to not respect my elders, now I do

I used to have several partners, now I only have one

COMMENTS

Questions about the programme

11. Of the things you learnt in the programme, which ones are useful to you now?

Topic	Very useful	A little useful	Not useful
Literacy			
Numeracy			
Health education			
Physical education			
Peace education/ Human rights			
Trauma			
Vocational skills			

COMMENTS

12. Of the things you learnt in the programme, which ones were easy and which ones were difficult to learn?

Topic	Very easy	Not so easy	Difficult
Literacy			
Numeracy			
Health education			
Physical education			
Peace education/ Human rights			
Trauma			
Vocational skills			

COMMENTS

Please write your answers to the questions below:

What is your name?

How old are you?

What level of school did you complete before starting Youth Pack?.....

With whom do you live (parents, relatives, have own family, alone).....

Anything else you want to say?.....

Questions/issues to explore with 2nd year students

1. Use of the learning in daily life

(Probe on use of vocational skills, literacy, health education, peace and life, etc Get examples of how skills have been used). Did you learn to solve problems in daily life? How? Examples?

2. How has the course helped you to re-integrate into the community

(Probe on differences in role in the community, in how settled down in home)

3. What is the most important effect of the course for you so far?

(probe on balance between academic learning and vocational skills – should there be a change here?)

4. How has the course influenced your opinion about yourself?

(Probe on self respect, confidence, getting friends, etc)

5. What are the main difficulties for you to earn a living now?

(probe on how course has helped to overcome/deal with difficulties, and become self reliant)

6. How well have you learnt to read and write?

Probe on level of skills. What can they do, and not do now with the skills they have?

7. How well did you learn in class?

Probe on experiences with team teaching, with being separated into fast and slow learners – how have students benefited from these methods?

8. If you could change whatever you liked in the course, for next year, what would you do?

9. The YP programme is very expensive.

If it is to continue, we have to find a way to cut on costs. What would be some good ways to do that, and still help the participants to practice their skills?

(Probe on ways to share equipment and tools – how can it be done; on giving loans/micro-credit to buy materials to start up the business; other?)

10. Dealing with your past problems

Many come here after living through very difficult times. In the YP program, they do not discuss your past. How have you experienced this?

11. Future plans, perspectives and hopes

Questions/issues to explore with teachers

What do you teach?

1. Teaching-Learning materials

Probe on using TLM in class – what do they have? Made anything themselves? Students made anything? Using illustration module? Using demonstration (get examples if they do)?

If they are not using any – does it have an effect on the teaching? (may be difficult to answer if they have no experience using TLM)

If they could get some, what would they want to get?

(Probe especially for the literacy teachers – what are they using)

2. Team-teaching

Probe on how do they like TT, what they like and don't like, and why. Benefits to learners?

When do they use TT, and when not? How large part of the time are they 2 teachers in class?

Advantages and disadvantages of dividing students into slow and fast learners.

3a. Teaching methods

Probe on which methods they have learnt in training, which ones they use most in class, and why they use these methods rather than other methods they have learnt.

Which ones do they find easy to practice, and which ones do they find difficult to practice.

Which are the best methods to involve the learners, and how comfortable are they with teaching these? Probe more on effect of involvement of learners. Probe on use of examples, debates and discussion, and on use of role-plays.

How is self-evaluation practised, and how often is it used?

3b. Training for empowerment

What does "Empowerment" mean to you (how do they define/explain it)? How do you empower the students through your teaching? Which methods are best to encourage empowerment?

4. Dealing with trauma

Probe on what the teachers know about students' background, and on how trauma is expressed by the students in class. What do teachers do to control disobedience? How competent do they feel to deal with this? From whom do they seek help (check if it is clear to whom they should go for help in different cases).

In school, there are rules for how to deal with students who are not obedient. Are these rules OK? Difficult to follow? Should there be other rules? Why? What rules should there be?

Are there organisations or people in the local community who are skilled at dealing with trauma? Who are they? Are they involved in the YP work?

5. Supervision

Probe on how often they are supervised. What does the supervisor do (observation in class – for how long? What does he/she check?) What do they get feedback on, and how helpful is this? How does it help? What could have helped them better? How important is supervision?

6. Personal perspectives

What is the most important effect of the program on their lives?

Probe on if they are involved with Distance Learning, how they like the programme, and why. When will they be finished/ qualified to teach in regular schools (if this is in a year or so – what will they do in the meantime, when YP closes?)

Assess perception of chances to get a job when they are finished with Distance Learning.

Problems with incentives? Motivation?

Are they aware of other vocational training schools locally, have they enquired there about possibilities for employment? Why/why not?

7. Training of teachers

How adequate was your training? What were you well prepared to deal with, and what were you not prepared to deal with well (probe on vocational and academic skills)

How were you trained to find creative solutions to challenges in daily life? Do you use these skills? Examples?

What aspects of the training would you like to improve?

8. Appropriateness of curriculum to learners' lives

Probe on how appropriate the content of the teaching of your subject is to what the learners need in their daily life. Examples of what learners can use, and what they cannot use.

9. Teaching self reliance (“Tinæp fo yusef”)

What do they do - in theory and practice - to teach students to be self-reliant? Probe on use of teaching methods, and how methods influence development of self-reliance and empowerment.

10. Selection and use of start-up kits

Probe on what they think about selection of tools – appropriate? Method of selection (who decides what should be bought); Quality of the tools; Availability in Kambia; Students' ability to choose. Should they get materials to start production as well (e.g. cloth, cement, wood)

Do teachers know of any students who have sold their start-up kits?

11. Making the course cheaper

A major reason for not continuing the course is the cost. How can it be made cheaper? Probe on possibility of students getting some of the kit materials financed thru micro-finance loans, giving start-up kits for groups, and other methods of saving on expenses.

12. Changes needed for new course

The course will start in Liberia. What changes are needed?

Probe on training of teachers, supervision methods, who should run the course (NGO, Ministry, cooperation), how many teachers in class, where to cut costs,.....

Balance between academic and vocational skills – should this be changed? Why/not

Any new subjects? How about business training? Management of groups?

13. Impact of the course

Has the programme helped the students re-integrate into the community? How? Has it helped the community transition from war to peace? How?

14. Info on last year's students

What do you know about last year's students? How many do you know who have jobs; any who have sold their start-up kits? Any info on those who are far away?

Do they come to the classes sometimes?

Should a programme like this have follow-up for the students after they graduate? What could be done, by whom, and how?

Questions for centre leaders

a) What should be criteria for a centre leader?

- b) Any problems with running the centres?
- c) Some centres are in schools, some in community houses. Which do you prefer, and why?
- d) How do teachers involve the community in their teaching? Any examples?
- e) How is the collaboration with the other centres? Probe especially on agriculture.

Questions/issues to explore with employers with YP in their business

1. Experience and plans

How well does the youth work? Pos and neg sides? How does he/she compare to your other employees? Do you plan to keep him/her in the business?

Any difference between the YP youth and other apprentices?

2. Personal behavior

How does the youth behave? Better/worse than the other employees? How?

3. Opinion about YP

What is your opinion about YP? Pos and neg? What has the youth learnt enough about, and where does he/she need to learn more?

Would you recommend to a fellow tailor/carpenter/mason/etc to employ a YP youth? Why/why not?

4. YP compared to other vocational training programmes

What other training programmes are available for vocational training in your community? How do these compare to YP? Pos and neg

5. Future perspectives

Are there enough (carpenters, masons, tailors.....) in this community?

Is the YP educating too many? Is there space for all of them in the community – can they all earn a living here?

Will the youth push out the older business people?

Should the programme continue? Why/why not?

6. Local artisans not interested?

The people planning the programme found that local artisans in Kambia were not interested in having YP youth in their business. What do you think could be the reason(s) for their lack of interest?

7. Info about business

How many employed/working in the business

Average wage?

Do they have enough work?

How do you recruit your staff?

Questions/issues to explore with community leaders

1. Role

– in relation to the Youth Pack programme (member of committee, elected leader...)

2. Community contribution

What has the community contributed to the programme? How do the leaders feel about this contribution? Have you had any problems with running the centres?

3. Community involvement in planning and implementation

How was your community involved in the planning of YP programme? Was there a meeting here to find out what kind of skills should be taught, and how the community should be involved? What was the conclusion of the meeting?

Has there been any meeting since, with NRC and/or Action Aid? On what? (probe on involvement in selection process)

Is any member of the community involved in the YP now? Who? How?

(If they say – no/limited involvement – probe on consequences for the support to the programme, and for possibilities for continuation/sustainability)

4. Quality of programme

Probe on opinions about positive and negative aspects of the programme; availability of other programmes/vocational teaching courses in the community, how do these compare to YP

5. Impact of the programme

What is the impact of the programme on the youth who have taken part?

What is the role of these youth in the community now, compared to before? Do any of them take part in community groups?

Do they influence other youth? How? Any concrete example?

Has the programme helped the youth to re-integrate in the community?

Has the programme helped the community transition from war to peace? How?

Have there been any unexpected results/spinoffs?

6. Impact of the programme on the business community

How do business people in the community feel about this programme? Does it threaten their existence? Why do so few of them want to have the YP graduates in their business?

7. Do the youth earn a living?

How much do the youth earn? Is this enough for a living?

8. Continuation of the programme

The programme is expensive. If it is to continue, it has to be done in a cheaper way.

How could the community be involved to make the programme cheaper? (housing for teachers, other??)

Any suggestions for changes in the programme?

9. Different role?

Should the community have a different/stronger role in the programme? What should this be?

Questions/issues to explore with community members/parents

1. Closeness to programme

Do you have a relation who is taking part in the YP programme (last year or this year)? Who?

2. Knowledge of the programme

What is the programme trying to do?

3. Do the YP youth earn a living?

How much do the youth earn? Is this enough for a living?

4. Quality of programme

Probe on opinions about positive and negative aspects of the programme; availability of other programmes/vocational teaching courses in the community, how do these compare to YP

5. Impact of the programme

What is the impact of the programme on the youth who have taken part? (If they have a close relation in programme – probe on how the person has changed, including attitudes – how they treat women, elders, etc. Do the youth take any of the learning home with them? Examples.)

What is the role of these youth in the community now, compared to before? Do any of them take part in community groups?

Do they influence other youth? How? Any concrete example?

Has the programme helped the youth to re-integrate in the community?

6. Impact of the programme on the business community

How do business people in the community feel about this programme? Does it threaten their existence? Why do so few of them want to have the YP graduates in their business?

It has been said that some business people use the youth as “slaves”, they do not pay them. Do you know of incidences like this? What do you think about it? What could be done?

7. Continuation of the programme

The programme is expensive. If it is to continue, it has to be done in a cheaper way.

How could the community be involved to make the programme cheaper? (housing for teachers, other??)

Any suggestions for changes in the programme?

NOTE – explore with PARENTS:

8. Dealing with past problems of the youth

Many youth come to the YP training after living through very difficult times. In the YP program, they do not discuss the past. How do you find this approach, and how have you seen the effect of this on your son or daughter? Would there have been other ways of dealing with this, which would have been of more benefit to your son or daughter?

Questions/issues to explore with older/established business people (no YP employees)

1. Info about business

How many employed/working in the business; what kind of business

Average wage? (ask this later)

Do they have enough work?

How do you recruit your staff?

2. Knowledge about Youth Pack

What do you know about the YP? From where do you have this knowledge?

3. Opinion about YP

What is your opinion about YP? Pos and neg?

Do you have colleagues who have employed YP youth in their businesses? What are their experiences? Have they encouraged you to take on YP graduates?

4. YP compared to other vocational training programmes

What other training programmes are available for vocational training in your community? How do these compare to YP? Pos and neg

5. Future perspectives

Are there enough (carpenters, masons, tailors.....) in this community?

Is the YP educating too many? Is there space for all of them in the community – can they all earn a living here?

Will the youth push out the older business people?

Should the programme continue? Why/why not?

6. Local artisans not interested?

The people planning the programme found that local artisans in Kambia were not interested in having YP youth in their business. What do you think could be the reason(s) for their lack of interest?

Questions/issues to explore with MEST representative, Kambia

1. Involvement with YP

Probe on role, how often they meet, about what.

2. Opinion about YP involvement

Probe on opinion about the role and involvement of MEST in YP, during planning and implementation. Is MEST personnel involved in any monitoring of YP? Would they have liked to be more involved? Why/why not? Implications/consequences of present involvement? (e.g. on sustainability of this program, and on other organizations, and on learning?)

3. Communication with YP

Probe on what they think about the ways and means of communicating with YP. (Example – they sent letters about meeting the evaluation team, and about the change of time – and then MEST did not show up. Has this got anything to do with how the project communicates? With attitudes?) Has MEST representative taken any initiative towards YP, or – does the communication always come from the YP office?

4. Cooperation/coordination with other vocational training courses

Would there have been any advantages to YP (and/or to other voc. Courses, and to MEST) if YP had cooperated with other vocational training programmes in Kambia? What should they have done, and what would have been the advantages? Has such cooperation been raised by anyone in the Steering Committee/group, or been discussed in the group?

5. Teaching methods

Probe on what MEST knows about the teaching methods used in the academic/life skills part. Do they know about the use of participatory/learner-centered teaching methods? What is their opinion about the use and effectiveness of such methods? Have they observed how they are being used in YP classes? Are such methods used in any MEST-directed courses?

6. Opinion about impact of YP

Probe on opinions about the re-integration of YP youth (compared to other youth), on their role and usefulness in the communities, and on their chances to earn a living.

7. Lessons learnt

What has MEST learnt from the involvement with the YP programme? Are they able to use the learning in their own projects and programmes? What/how?

8. New start/advice to other NGOs

If the programme were to start again in Kambia (i.e. if you could turn the time back to 2003, with the learning you have now), what changes would MEST suggest should be made to the planning and implementation of YP? What would be the consequences of such changes for MEST?

If the programme were to start in Liberia next month, what changes would you suggest NRC should make in their cooperation with the local ministry of education?