

NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

# EVALUATION REPORT

## ▶ ▶ FAST TRACK TO COMPLETION

THE COMPLEMENTARY RAPID EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
(CREPS) AND THE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DEP)  
IN SIERRA LEONE

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## **PREFACE**

Thanks to Marit Backe at NRC's Head Office in Oslo and to all the good helpers at the NRC Sierra Leone Offices in Freetown, Kono and Kailahun who have provided us with the documentation needed. Particularly I want to extend my thanks to Georg Mevold and Nancy Smart in Freetown who have been "on-line" (even when the on-line was down!) since I left Sierra Leone and have sent swift answers to my numerous questions. Georg has forwarded the mock final results and Nancy has developed the estimated expenditures chart regarding the teacher training and supervision costs (annex II).

Adama Sesay took part in the fieldwork and handed in written reports and Ellen Cathrine Kiøsterud has assisted me in analysing statistics and budgets. Thanks to both of you for excellent co-operation. But I have written the final report and am responsible for all mistakes and shortcomings!

Eva Marion Johannessen  
July, 2005

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the Complementary Rapid Education Programme (CREPS) in Sierra Leone as NRC is phasing out by the end of 2005. CREPS is the only accelerated programme NRC supports that allows over aged school children to finish primary school. The Teacher Emergency Programme (TEP) which has been applied in other countries, and the Rapid Response Education Programme (RREP) which was implemented in Sierra Leone before the CREPS, are of shorter duration (6 – 12 months) after which the children are transferred to regular primary school. Therefore the lessons learned in the CREPS can feed into the ongoing discussion in NRC on Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs). An important component in the CREPS is the teacher training, thus the Distance Education programme that has been offered to CREPS teachers is also part of the evaluation.

The field work took place in Sierra Leone between May 9 – 26 with Eva Marion Johannessen as the team leader and Adama Sesay as the local team member. We visited 10 CREPS centres in Kono and Kailahun. The team leader also talked to the Field Coordinator (FC) in Kambia during a meeting in Freetown. At the time of our visit the pupils had just sat the final exam, the National Primary School Exam (NPSE), and the teaching that went on was preparing them for the transition to secondary school. It was therefore not an ordinary time of the school year. More details on the methodology are found in annex 1.

I have chosen to go into some details regarding the CREPS allowing others to learn from their experience. Secondly it is written with a view to the discussion on ALPs.

A summary of the main findings is found in the second chapter, after which follow chapters on quantitative and qualitative findings relating to the different topics in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The findings are discussed in a separate chapter followed by the recommendations.

There are four annexes; one on methodology, one listing people interviewed and centres visited, and two regarding statistical aspects.

## 2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The Complementary Rapid Education Programme in Schools (CREPS) was introduced in different districts in Sierra Leone in 2000 by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST). In 2002 NRC became the implementing partner of CREPS in three districts in the northern and eastern regions: Kambia, Kono and Kailahun. The programme is phasing out in December 2005.

The target groups are overage children (10-14) who have missed out of school or who had their schooling interrupted by the war. CREPS allows the children to finish primary school in three years in stead of six, covering class 1-2 (level I in CREPS), class 2-4 (level II) and class 5-6 (level III). The majority of the CREPS teachers were untrained and unqualified.

CREPS is considered part of the regular school system and the connection between the two is tight. The teaching takes place in regular school in the afternoon or in a CREPS centre close to the regular school in the morning. Syllabus and manuals have been prepared by MEST/UNICEF to ensure that the contents and teaching are in harmony with the regular school.

**The CREPS model** that NRC has developed in co-operation with MEST and UNICEF has the following components:

- No fees
- 40 students per class
- Provision of education materials and some textbooks
- Provision of teacher manuals and syllabus
- Regular and frequent supervision and control of the CREPS centres/classes by well-qualified Teacher Supervisors
- A monthly whole day in-service training based on subject lessons and micro-teaching arranged by the supervisors
- Most of the teachers are enrolled in a Distance Education programme run by Freetown Teacher College, which is free of charge, allowing them to obtain an officially recognized Teacher Certificate
- Provision of incentives to teachers and supervisors
- Community-Teacher Association (CTA) at each centre who is involved in the temporary school constructions and in the control of the centres and the pupils
- Supervision by Head Teachers from regular primary school

**The major achievements** are:

- The main and most of the specific objectives have been reached. Many of the weaknesses pointed out in the evaluation in 2003 have been corrected
- Very close and well-functioning collaboration between MEST-UNICEF and NRC at national as well as at district level. This is an example of “good practice”.
- 267 (28f) teachers are currently working in CREPS
- Totally 99 centres in the three districts are currently in operation
- 14 well-qualified Teacher Supervisors (2 female) are involved in the daily supervision. All centres are visited regularly
- A successful combination of monthly in-service training involving micro-teaching, extensive supervision on the spot and the distance learning programme for teachers ensures

continuous development of their competence and skills. This is another example of “good practice”.

- 314 CREPS teachers are presently enrolled in the Distance Education Programme (DEP) and 191 of them are expected to sit the final exams in July-August 2005. Their results so far are very promising. The second group of teachers will take their final exams next year. The DEP programme has been very well received by the teachers as they continue teaching while they are qualifying to get a Teacher Certificate. The DEP fits into the other teacher training components. It is considered more cost-efficient than regular teacher training.

- Since 2003 NRC has developed databases on the pupils and their enrolment, attendance rates and test achievements. This is a third example of “good practice”.

- The target groups of children have been reached. NRC has done a very good job through the supervisors in controlling and following-up the pupils' attendance. Totally 8453 (38% f) pupils were enrolled in the programme in June 2005 and the majority are in the right age group. The average enrolment over the three years is 10.985. The total drop out is about 38%.

- 3752 (44%) of the enrolled pupils sat the NPSE in May 2005. 33% were girls. The results are not yet known, but the results from the mock final arranged in March 2005 show that 2818 (797 f/28%) pupils passed (73%). In addition 517 (377 b/140 g) pupils from Kono passed the NPSE last year.

- The majority of the enrolled CREPS students (4701/45% f) did not sit the NPSE and will be transferred to classes in the regular primary school the next academic year according to their performance.

- Referring to the CREPS pupils who passed the NPSE last year, their results are just as good as the regular students'. The former CREPS students are doing very well in secondary school and the drop out is low.

### **Constraints**

- Initially there were conflicts between CREPS and the community (incl. teachers and head teachers in regular school) because the purpose of CREPS was not understood and the community had not been sufficiently sensitised. Head teachers and MEST supervisors wanted to be part of the programme and get incentives. In some places it was a competition between CREPS and regular schools initiated by Head Teachers, and many children left CREPS

- Drop out was not recorded systematically but the major reasons are transfer to regular school, moving to other districts, moving to other training programmes, farming, marriages and pregnancies.

- Some children have entered the CREPS illegally as they were too young and should have been in regular school. But by and large CREPS is not a parallel to regular school, but a supplement

- The selection of teachers was not transparent as some of them did not have a satisfactory level and should not have been accepted. Although they were tested initially the results in two of the three districts are not known

- Only about 10% of the teachers are female and the percentage has not increased much since the initiation

- The syllabus and teacher manuals were developed before one knew the level of the selected teachers and were too difficult. The reason was that it was expected to have qualified and experienced teachers in the CREPS.

- The syllabus and teacher manual are weak with respect to teaching methodology

- The temporary school structures are vulnerable to rainfalls and thefts and it has been a constant problem to replace them. Consequently some classes had to be combined with the

regular school classes. Sharing classrooms with regular school has also been difficult as the teaching takes place in the afternoon and only for 3 hours

- The initial teacher training was too short (2 weeks)
- The Teacher Supervisors do not spend enough time on guiding the teachers on the spot according to their specific weaknesses.
- The supervision could have been more systematic and focused
- The relation between the supervision and monthly workshop should be clearly stated
- With respect to teaching methods, the most common method is blackboard teaching, although most teachers manage to involve the children in questions and answers
- There is little use of child-centred methods, like working in small groups, except in some subjects
- There is relatively little use of concrete objects and didactic material
- Some teachers and pupils manifest problems in mastering English
- Some children have problems in reading and writing
- Few signs of use of the contents in the UNICEF kit
- Not enough textbooks for the pupils
- Inefficient use of textbooks when they are available
- Too much time spent on preparing the pupils for the NPSE at the cost of varied teaching methods and supplementary readings. Too much focus on memorisation
- Lack of teaching methods adapted to the needs of slow learners
- DEP: lack of tutorial centres and frequent tutoring, some manuals do not include teaching methods, too short time to study
- Pupils are struggling to pay the school fees in secondary school and many NPSE pupils also worry about this
- Community participation varies and some communities are not very co-operative. There are examples of leading members of the Community-Teacher Association (CTA) who are favoured with respect to enrolling their children in CREPS
- The NRC supported CREPS programme will not be taken over by other NGOs
- Lack of connectedness between emergency and development programmes
- Too little sharing of lessons learned between NRC and other NGOs



### 3 BACKGROUND

Sierra Leone is located in the southwest coast of Africa, and the population is estimated to be around 5.6 million<sup>1</sup>. About 2 million are estimated to have settled in the capital Freetown. There are 20 native African tribes in Sierra Leone, the country is divided into 14 districts; all with local governments (who share power with traditional rulers). The life expectancy in 2002 was 37 years. The illiteracy rate in Sierra Leone is around 65%. The percentage is even higher in the Northern and Eastern provinces where NRC operates.

60% of the population are Muslims, 30% Christians and 10% hold indigenous beliefs. English is an official language, as is Mende (South), Temne (North) and Krio. Krio is English based Creole, and a lingua franca and first language for 10% but understood by 95%.<sup>2</sup>

Sierra Leone was a British colony and gained independence in 1961. Corruption and an economic decline prepared the ground for the 11 years civil conflict in the 1990s. In March 1991, combined forces of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL) entered Sierra Leone and a brutal civil war started. In January 2002 the war came to an end, leaving the country with the lowest Human Development Index in the world. National elections were held peacefully in May the same year paving way for reconstruction and resettlement. In the years following the peace declaration, more than 543.000 displaced people returned to their place of origin. Many Sierra Leonean fled to Liberia and Guinea during the war. More than 80% of the returnees were from Kambia, Kono and Kailahun districts, which were the three most heavily devastated districts. These are the districts where NRC supports the CREPS.

In the past, Sierra Leone was said to have one of the best education systems in Africa. However, during the years of war over 80% of the educational facilities countrywide were destroyed or vandalised. A study done in 2001 found that only 12.9% of the classrooms were usable in their current conditions. Another problem was the lack of trained teachers. Even before the war started, only 45% of the children in school-going age were in school<sup>3</sup> and the armed conflicts left a lot of children without access to school. In 2002 it was estimated that as many as 500.000 children from 10-14 had missed out of schooling because of the war.

. In 2003 all Sierra Leonean IDPs had returned to their communities of origin. UNHCR discontinued its support for Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea and Liberia in the middle of 2004, concluding the last organized repatriation of refugees from these two countries. At the beginning of 2004 there were about 66.000 registered Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone (SL).

.NRC activities in SL started in 1999. The educational support focused on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools and other community infrastructures, and providing educational support to underprivileged societies. The project in 2002 was called School development programme. Since that time the co-operation has been close with the Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports (MYES, now MEST), UNHCR, UNICEF and IRC, particularly with MYES and UNICEF. Activities in the education area included: assessments in emerging areas, rehabilitation and construction of schools, construction of temporary shelters, and

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<sup>1</sup> CSO projections 2001

<sup>2</sup> National Recovery Strategy 2002-2003

<sup>3</sup> National Recovery Strategy 2002-2003

production of school furniture and strengthening of MYES's managerial and supervisory capacity.

Since NRCs operations started in Sierra Leone, the nature of the activities and target groups has changed a number of times. As the Sierra Leonean refugees and IDPs resettled NRCs operations have become focused on activities aiming at reintegration. It is in this context that NRC was asked to engage in the CREPS programme in 2002.

### 3.1 Regular primary schools

As CREPS operates in close collaboration with the regular school system, the results have to be understood in relation to how the regular primary school system operates.

1999/2000 the Government launched free primary education for all with classes 1-3 which in 2000/2001 was extended to classes 4-6. This means that the parents should not pay any tuition fees and that the Government is supposed to provide teaching-learning materials and core school books for free. With respect to the totality of fees involved in primary school, the situation today is not necessarily any better than it was before free basic education was launched, as it is not uncommon that teachers charge illegal fees to cover necessary expenses and/or to increase their salaries which do not arrive on time. The school supplies are grossly inadequate and cannot be depended on. Parents therefore pay for their children's textbooks if they want to have enough texts for them. But as many cannot afford it, it is rare to find children who have a complete set of textbooks.

Anyhow, free primary education has led to a rapid growth of school enrolment but also to very crowded classrooms as the lack of teachers is still precarious. As a result of free access to primary, it has been an increase of about 300% in the school enrolment since 1996<sup>4</sup>. But there are still estimated 3-400.000 children who are out of school.

In 2004 there is a total of 3.801 Government and Government-Assisted Primary Schools countrywide.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1.**

#### **Status of formal Government and Government-assisted Formal primary schools in Kambia, Kailahun and Kono (as of January 2004)**

District	No. of schools	No. of students	No. of teachers	No. of qualified teachers	Percentage
Kambia	151	49.907	517	174	33.7%
Kailahun	263	66.546	1.350	499	37%
Kono	185	59.462	939	270	28.8%
Total	599	175.915	2.806	943	

<sup>4</sup> William Taylor, MEST

<sup>5</sup> The figure does not include CREPS centres, but Government-assisted schools who are run by religious and on-religious organisations, communities or individuals. The Government pays the salaries and supplies as in all other primary schools

As we see the majority of the teachers in primary school in the three districts NRC operates are not qualified<sup>6</sup> like in the rest of the country. As for the teacher: pupil ratio it was 93:1 in Kono in 2002-2003, 72:1 in Kambia and not known in Kailahun. In all the three districts, the gender balance is heavily biased towards boys. At national level in the academic year 2001/2002, the male enrolment was 59% as compared to 41% female, and the female enrolment drops to 39% in junior secondary school.

The government developed a plan for the reconstruction and recovery right after the war. A main issue in the National Recovery Strategy (2002-2003) was to focus on quality, which is also the case to day<sup>7</sup>. This means to provide more trained and qualified teachers, reduce the teacher/student ratio, and provide teaching and learning materials.

With respect to the lack of qualified teachers, the situation is the same in Sierra Leone (SL) as in many African countries. The teaching profession is not attractive. Few of the students at the Teacher Training Institutes want to become teachers and move to the countryside where they are most needed. Teacher salaries are low and do not arrive on time. With the over-crowded classrooms, their working conditions are difficult. The majority of the teachers are Untrained and Unqualified (UUs) (52.2% in 2004). Although the ordinary system has supervisors, they have to cover large districts and lack of means of transportation and fuel restricts their capacity to supervise schools in remote areas. Some of the UUs are on the Government payroll, while others are voluntary teachers who do not get a regular salary but who are paid by the community<sup>8</sup>.

The trained and qualified teachers' salaries vary between LE 100.000 and LE 120.000 (US dollar 35-40) per month. In addition they get allowances (transport, medical etc.) amounting to LE 51.000 (18 us dollars) a month. The non-qualified teachers' ("untrained and unqualified" and "trained unqualified") salary range is 15 to 47 us dollars a month.

In 2004 a new Education Act was put into force (the previous act was from 1964) which introduced compulsory basic education.

SL is member of the West African Examination Council. The same final primary school exam (NPSE) is applied in five countries. Because of this they have experienced a jump in the number of candidates. The number who opted for NPSE in 2003 was 20.000.

SL has received a grant from the World Bank and a loan from the African Development Bank of 40 million US dollars. The money is mainly spent on school constructions or rehabilitation, teacher training and textbooks. It is planned to construct 500 primary schools and 100 secondary schools (SABABU project). Priority will be given to secondary schools in chiefdoms that currently do not have any.

The male: female ratio is worse in the three districts where NRC operates than at national level. Two years ago the Government introduced a new incentive in order to encourage girls to continue their schooling. In the North-eastern regions (where NRC operates) any girl who

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<sup>6</sup> Unqualified teachers refer to the untrained and trained but not qualified teachers (not passed the teacher training). In addition to this figure come the volunteer teachers who are not on Government pay roll.

<sup>7</sup> Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Final Draft 2005

<sup>8</sup> This is another extra fee the parents have to pay

passes NPSE is sponsored if she continues in secondary school. The Government pays all the fees for her first year in secondary. During our visit to Kono, however, we learned that the Government scholarship to girls arrives late. The children we talked to told us that their school fees had only been paid for the first semester, and some were therefore experiencing problems with the school administration and told that they would be kicked out of school if they were not able to pay. In Kailahun it was reported by some of the pupils that the girls did not get the whole cash amount.

### **3.2 From RREP to CREPS**

NRC took the lead in the establishment of RREP (Rapid Response Education Programme) in Sierra Leone in 2000, a six-month emergency education programme that was the first education programme to be put in place as soon as an area was declared safe. RREP was run to prepare children mentally for schoolwork before they start formal schooling.. The programme focused on peace, reconciliation and trauma healing as well as basic literacy and numeracy skills. The objective was to reach children who have had their schooling interrupted or who had never been to school because of the war. By the end of the programme, children would have reached various levels of mental readiness, and were thus prepared to go ahead with a more formal school programme<sup>9</sup>. Many were transferred to regular schools.

The reasons for the transition from RREP to CREPS are not fully presented in the reports. In NRC's annual report for 2002, two reasons are mentioned:

- RREP could not continue as a supplement to formal schooling
- There were fewer children in the RREP target groups

UNICEF maintains that the call for CREPS came from previous child soldiers. Some of them were older and even in their twenties when the war was over and some had already joined the RREP programme. They demanded a new programme which could cater for their needs to continue formal schooling and finish primary school.

The CREPS idea was introduced by UNICEF. Education officials from the MEST visited a similar Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) in Liberia together with a UNICEF representative. There they found out that the Liberian ALP came from Uganda.<sup>10</sup> The ALP that finally was adapted in SL was only slightly different from the one in Liberia.

UNICEF had an agreement with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and had been working closely with them since 1993.

UNICEF called upon NRC's Education Adviser regarding the development of the CREPS, and early in 2000 the NRC/UNICEF/MEST partnership on the RREP was extended to CREPS, enabling a rapid expansion in Kono, Kailahun and Kambia. Others were engaged in the CREPS in Kenema, Port Loko, Koinadugu and Bombali Districts.<sup>11</sup> CREPS had been piloted in Lungi and Kenema and the target group was over-aged children who had graduated from the RREP.

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<sup>9</sup> cf. Annual report 2002

<sup>10</sup> At present SL receives visitors from other countries who want to learn from their experience with CREPS

<sup>11</sup> Agreement between UNICEF and NRC 2003

Up to 2002 CREPS had not taken off as well as was envisaged when the programme was launched primarily because of inadequate capacity to operate it. (UNICEF is not an implementing partner).

MEST, NRC and UNICEF agreed that all new CREPS classes starting in 2002 and beyond will use a combined RREP/CREPS programme. All parties shared the view that psychosocial and health related aspects of RREP should be fused into CREPS core subjects, and that the teacher training should be adjusted accordingly.

Today MEST (through their District Education Offices – DEO) is running 12 CREPS centres in Kenema, Kono and Kailahun. CREPS is also being implemented by World Vision in some areas in Kono (25 schools). They started in 2004 and work closely with NRC in the field.

All RREP classes came to an end in August 2002 but some restarted later in Kailahun due to the heavy influx of refugees from Liberia.

### **3.3 The 2003 evaluation of the CREPS**

In 2003 UNICEF commissioned an evaluation of the CREPS which was carried out by a local group of consultants from the University<sup>12</sup>.

The evaluation focused on CREPS in general and not specifically on those centres that are supported by NRC and who are run according to the NRC model. At that time CREPS was operating in seven districts: Bombali, Kailahun, Kambia, Kenema, Koinadugu, Kono and Port Loko, thus four of the seven centres included in the evaluation were not run by NRC.

The evaluation is based on a random sampling and data was collected in 26 CREPS centers in 6 districts. The data provided are mainly quantitative and gathered from questionnaires and checklists. The short time available for the fieldwork (Oct. 20 – 29) did not allow extensive classroom observations and qualitative interviews. However, the results give an indication of strong and weak aspects of the programme, some of which have also been looked into in the present evaluation. Their focus was on: the quality of the teachers, the availability and suitability of the teaching-learning material, if emerging issues like gender, trauma healing, peace education, sexual exploitation, HIV and Aids etc were incorporated in the teaching/learning, the adequacy of physical and environmental facilities, the quality of the supervision and monitoring and the level of community knowledge about the programme.

The main findings are:

Teachers: The teachers demonstrated poor pedagogical skills<sup>13</sup>, but their level of motivation was high. The majority had spent less than two years in the classroom and was untrained.

Training was periodic.

Teaching-Learning materials (checklist covering: complete set of teaching manuals, materials for preparing teaching aids, slates, exercise books (two per pupil), one reading and one arithmetic textbook per pupil, other reading materials in resource centre, at least one set of all

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<sup>12</sup> Mansaray, A., Buck, R.E., Kandeh, J.B.A., Report on the evaluation of the complimentary rapid education programme for schools (CREPS), November 2003).

<sup>13</sup> It is not defined what is meant by “poor pedagogical skills” and no reference is made in the executive summary as to how their performance was in terms of subject knowledge and skills

other textbooks, blackboard, one portable ABC chart per class, one portable number chart per class, one globe per school, one large map of the country, laminated wall charts in each classrooms). With the exception of teaching manuals, most of the materials on the checklist provided were indicated as either not available or not adequate. Little local didactic material developed by the teachers was exposed in the classrooms.

Emerging issues. HIV and AIDS, peace education and gender issues are mentioned in the curriculum and teacher guides, but little evidence found that they were treated systematically in the classrooms. The students said they learned more about environment than the other issues.

Facilities. The physical condition of “a number” of the centres, particularly in remote areas, was deplorable.

Supervision and monitoring. Supervision is regular, but there is a need for closer supervision of actual classroom activities

Community. Communities had adequate knowledge about the programme. Their involvement includes attending meeting and providing labour for construction.

Some of the results will be referred to more specifically in the following.

It has to be taken into account that NRC started to develop their support systems to the CREPS in 2002 and thus it had only been operational for less than a year when the evaluation took place.

## 4 THE COMPLEMENTARY RAPID EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS (CREPS)

CREPS is a programme that allows over aged children to finish primary school in three years in stead of the six year formal Primary School. It is meant as a supplement to formal school.

**Table 2. Formal primary school in relation to CREPS**

Formal primary school	Class 1 - 3	Class 4 - 5	Class 5 - 6
CREPS	Level I	Level II	Level III

### 4.1 Target groups

CREPS was introduced as an accelerated learning programme (ALP) for over-aged children who have missed out of school. The term “over-aged” is specified as children and youth from 10-14 years of age in most documents<sup>14</sup>. Children above 14 have also been accepted. The majority of the CREPS children are between 14 and 15 years of age.<sup>15</sup> The age group and where the focus should be are not discussed in any of the documents although a practice has been established of accepting students who are older than 14 and even up to 20 and above<sup>16</sup>.

As far as we have been able to observe in the registers when we visited the classrooms, there are some examples of children who have entered the programme illegally at an earlier age, although the cases are few. In some of the cases, it is reported to be the teachers’ children who have been admitted and in other cases they have been admitted as a result of pressure from the parents. Through our interviews with the Town Chiefs, Community Teacher Association (CTA) Chairmen and Chairladies, parents of CREPS children and Head/Assistant Head Teachers, it was only the Head/Assistant Head teachers who did not have children in CREPS. Many of the others had between two to five children or grandchildren there. They also had children in the regular primary school. It seems as if the teachers have been in a position to decide which children to accept which is a questionable practice. CREPS teachers have confirmed that they are aware of some children who have entered the programme illegally (too young).

It is however, obvious that NRC has made continuous efforts to observe the limits of the age groups through their support and control in the field. This is being confirmed by some of the children we have talked to when they explained that they were told that only children from 10 to 14 or above 10 were allowed. Without this control, CREPS could easily have become a parallel to the regular school system.

“Disadvantaged children” is not mentioned under target criteria, like in many TEP programmes. During our visits in the field we have been able to confirm that the programme reaches disadvantaged children (orphans) and presumably also ex-combatants. It does not seem to be much difference between the children who are enrolled in CREPS and in regular

<sup>14</sup> cf. reports and applications from 2002-2005

<sup>15</sup> cf. attachment III for more details

<sup>16</sup> The oldest student we talked to was 22.

school with respect to their socio-economic and family status. All are more or less at a disadvantage as a result of the war and poverty. In the CREPS syllabus developed by MEST and UNICEF, displaced children and ex-child combatants are particularly mentioned as target groups.

Furthermore, CREPS is geared to IDPs and returnees. CREPS started just after the war was over in areas of returnees. We have been asking the children about their status in this respect, and it has been quite difficult to establish exactly. Before and after the war, there has been, and still is a lot of movement within the target groups both inside the country as well as across the borders to Liberia and Guinea

Increasing the number of girls in school is mentioned as an objective in all the documents.

## 4.2 Syllabus and timetable

It is underlined from the beginning that the CREPS should be in harmony with the activities in regular primary schools. To this end a CREPS syllabus was prepared by MEST and UNICEF based on the syllabus in primary. Together with the syllabus, textbooks, activity books and teachers guides in the core subjects have been developed...

The contents are condensed into three levels (I, II and III) each with two years work in the formal school to be done in one year.

CREPS covers three subjects in Level I (Mathematics, Language Arts, Environmental studies) and five subjects in Levels II and III (Mathematics, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies and Prevocational Studies). The quality of the contents should be at par with the formal primary syllabus.

The number of hours devoted to the subjects at each level is:

**Table 3. CREPS syllabus**

	Level I	Level II	Level III
Language Arts	10	7	7
Mathematics	10	7	7
Environmental stud.	10		
Social studies		5	5
Pre-voc.studies		5	5
Science		6	6
Total	30	30	30

At the time when the CREPS syllabus was developed, the educational level of the CREPS teachers was apparently not known. The writers of the syllabi underline that it was meant for qualified and trained teachers.

The daily timetable is suggested to start at 8.30 a.m. and last until 1.30 p.m. with appropriate breaks between each lesson (10 min.).



The above time-table does not correspond with the reality in the CREPS centres where teaching takes place in the afternoon from 2.30 to 17.30 because they share premises with the ordinary primary school. In these classes the condensed syllabus becomes even more compressed as they lose two hours every day.

The teacher manuals are meant to guide to teachers in how to use the syllabus.

It is stressed that the time indicated for each lesson can be adjusted, but we have not observed this flexibility in the field. On the contrary, it is emphasized that the teachers should stick strictly to the 40 min. sessions.

The syllabus and the manual are too difficult for untrained and unqualified teachers and not adapted to their reality (lack of textbooks, temporary schools, lack of facilities, wide span of ages from 10-18). It is not specific as to teaching methods

NRC's supervisors discovered that the syllabus and manual were far too difficult for untrained teachers and therefore they developed a "Detailed harmonised syllabus/ scheme of work" for each term in each subject. The sheets simplify the work for the teachers. It is particularly useful to separate Teacher Activity from Pupil's Activity. On the other hand this supplementary guide is not specific enough with respect to how to organise learner-centred teaching, and variation of methods is not stressed at all.

The NRC supervisors have presented their suggestions for a revision of the MEST/UNICEF syllabus, but so far nothing has been done. Because of the problems with the teacher manuals, they found that additional capacity building was needed and this is how the monthly workshops were introduced.

### **4.3 The CREPS centres/classrooms**

What does a CREPS centre/classroom look like?

There are basically two types of CREPS centres/classrooms, those who take place in the premises of the regular schools, and those who have separate temporary classrooms. In the latter cases the classrooms are locally constructed by the communities and covered with plastic sheeting. In Kambia 16 of the 40 centres are temporary structures. In addition there are a few examples of NRC built/rehabilitated schools which serve both the regular school as well as the CREPS. In Kailahun there are four primary schools constructed by NRC . In 1-2 CREPS centres there are no regular schools.

Most of the CREPS classes in Kono take place in regular school buildings. The regular teaching goes in the morning<sup>17</sup>, and the CREPS starts at 2.30 pm (until 17.30). In Kailahun all CREPS classes take place in the morning.

It is a constant problem with the temporary structures as they are easily destroyed and the plastic sheeting stolen. It was also a problem with the sharing of classrooms with the regular school, particularly in the beginning, which contributed to a tense relationship with regular school. Afternoon teaching is not an ideal solution, and particularly not when it involves a reduction of two hours per day compared with the suggested time-table in the CREPS manuals.

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<sup>17</sup> Many schools in Kono run two shifts

The CREPS classes only accept 40 students. Most of the classrooms we have visited have had fewer students. This may be due to the fact that the pupils' attendance is more irregular after the national exam (NPSE). We have also seen many combined CREPS classes where two or three teachers work together. In all of the classrooms visited, they have benches or desks, although the classroom may be very crowded when 4-5 pupils have to share a desk.

In some of the centres/schools level III classes are combined with class 6 from regular school.

## **5 TEACHERS AND SUPERVISORS**

### **5.1 How were the teachers selected?**

According to the annual report from 2002 CREPS teachers were recruited on the following basis:

- They should be unemployed and not on Government payroll
- Have satisfactory qualifications
- Perform satisfactorily on a test and an interview.

It is however not specified what is meant by "satisfactory qualifications" and what a satisfactory level on the test was. This reason may be that no-one knew exactly at that time how many teachers were available.

According to the annual report, it was MEST's specific responsibility to carry out needs' assessment to determine the demand for CREPS and also to identify and select teachers. It later turned out that many of the teachers selected were too weak but only in Kambia a serious effort was made to correct the situation. There the teachers were tested again and the results were alarming. Actions were taken to improve their level and they had to pass a new test before their contract was renewed. In Kono and Kailahun it has been difficult to get hold of the results of the initial test. The teachers were also retested by the Inspector of schools in Kono and Kailahun, but everyone that had been selected was allowed to continue. The teachers in Kailahun have been tested in some of the subjects on later occasions, but if and what actions have been taken on basis of the results, are not reported.

Some of the teachers in Kono and Kailahun who apparently passed the initial test with good results have later turned out to be inefficient, while some of those who failed were good. According to the first draft Educational Annual report for 2004 (15.2.05) a total of 53 teacher's contract ended in August that year for various reasons, some of which due to poor performance.

At the time when the teachers were selected, the supervisors had not yet been appointed and could not take part in the process. The majority of the teachers responded to an advert and some among the best RREP teachers were also engaged and had to pass a test.

### **5.2 Number of teachers and their background**

The majority of the CREPS teachers are untrained and unqualified. Our inquiries regarding the teachers' background is that the majority have an O-level (form five) and very few are trained teachers and hold a Teacher Certificate or above. Our observations correspond with the findings in the 2003 evaluation which showed that 78.5% of the CREPS teachers had O levels and only 6.3% held a TC.

In the annual report from 2002 it is said that "UNICEF and NRC regard the recruited teachers as MEST employees, even though they are paying the incentives. In this regard, MEST has drawn up a contract for them as an interim measure, pending their official placement on Government Payroll".

The updated figures for 2005 show a total of 267 teachers, 28 f and 239 m.

**Table 4. Number of teachers in NRC supported CREPS 2002-2005**

Location	2002		2003		2004		2005	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
Kambia	134	22	130	22	111	17	109	19
Kono	59	1	73	2	57	2	57	2
Kailahun	94	5	89	9	73	7	73	7
Total	287	28/8.9%	292	33/10.2%	241	26/9.7%	239	28/10.5%

Thus the number of teachers has dropped from 315 in 2002 to 267 in 2005 (15%). This development is partly due to poor performance, but also to budget cuts. Taking into account how the teachers were selected, it was reason to expect an even higher drop out among teachers.

The percentage of female teachers varies from 8.9% to 10.5%.

Many of the teachers also work in regular school, before or after the CREPS classes.

### 5.3 Teacher remuneration and incentives

The CREPS teachers receive 75.000 LE (26 US dollars) a month paid by NRC. This is in the mid-range of what untrained and unqualified (UU) teachers earn in regular school. In addition (in 2005) they get a monthly bonus of 25.000 LE from NRC. NRC's teacher incentives are competitive with the government salaries. A late payment of salaries and emoluments was mentioned as a very serious problem by 66.7% of the teachers in the 2003 evaluation. As most of the centres covered in that evaluation were MEST centres, we do not know to what degree the NRC supported CREPS teachers had the same problem at that time. Anyhow, none of the CREPS teachers mention late payment as a problem today.

Some are voluntary teachers in regular schools and do not receive a salary but incentives from parents.

### 5.4 Teacher training and supervision

#### Initial teacher training

The initial teacher training offered to the CREPS' teachers was of two weeks' duration. The training took place before the supervisors were appointed. The majority of the teachers we have spoken to believe that the time was not sufficient and some say that a month's training would have been more appropriate. In comparison, teachers who have been recruited to teach

in the Teacher Emergency Programme (TEP)<sup>18</sup> in Angola and Congo were offered a training that lasted 4-6 weeks.

### **Link between initial training, in-service training and supervision**

An issue in NRC's TEP programme is the link between the initial training, in-service training and the follow-up/supervision in the classrooms. The trainers need to know the programme and to adapt their teaching to the teacher candidates' level and the reality within which they are operating. Even more important is it to ensure that the link between the supervisors' work in the classrooms and the in-service training offered is strengthened in order to see an improvement in the teachers' classroom performance. Too much teacher training is separated from actual classroom practice. We have therefore tried to find out how this has been done in the CREPS.

The initial two weeks' training was given by qualified teacher trainers from the Teacher training colleges but these trainers have not followed up the programme in the classrooms. In stead supervisors have been appointed by MEST/NRC. The supervisors' qualifications seem to be satisfactory, a majority holds BA's. They received one week initial training by those who developed the CREPS manuals. They were selected on basis of their qualifications and an interview (no testing).

### **Organisation and contents of the supervision**

In NRC's field offices, the Field coordinator (FC) is responsible for the overall management of the field activities, including supervision. Her/his responsibility in this respect covers assisting the supervisors to work out a supervision plan for the teachers and to supervise the Education supervisors.

The Education/MEST supervisor's responsibility is to assist the Field Coordinator in developing a monitoring and supervision plan for the Teacher Supervisors (TS) and the teachers and monitor them. The Education Supervisor should visit all CREPS schools at least twice a month, and supervise the Teacher Supervisors' activities.

The Teacher Supervisors are the main responsible for the day-to-day supervision and monitoring of schools and communities. They have to hand in a monthly report to the Education Supervisor.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 5. No. of Teacher Supervisors and NRC supported CREPS centres May 2005**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Teacher Supervisors</i>	<i>Centres</i>
Kambia	7 (no females)	40
Kono	2 (both females)	24
Kailahun	5 (no females)	35
Total	14 (2 f)	99

<sup>18</sup> A 9-12 months' accelerated programme after which the pupils' are transferred to normal primary schools

<sup>19</sup> cf. job descriptions

In addition the Education Supervisors also take part in the day-to-day supervision at the centres.

The local Inspectors of schools we have visited have appointed one member of their staff as responsible for the supervision (MEST supervisor). The MEST CREPS supervisor works in close collaboration with the NRC Education supervisor.

The Head Teacher (HT) at the local primary school is also responsible for supervision of the CREPS activities on a daily basis.

Both the MEST supervisors and the HTs we have talked to say that one of their tasks is to ensure that the teaching in CREPS is not different from the teaching in regular school.

The teachers are visited regularly by the Teacher Supervisors – once a week – even in remote places, and they do classroom observations. In Kono each of the three supervisors (incl. the Education Supervisor) is responsible for 8 centres (totally 24). In Kailahun the six teacher supervisors (incl. the Education Supervisor) divide the 35 centres between them. Due to long distances, the TSs spend Monday to Friday in the field staying overnight and spending about one day at each center. Apart from their tasks with the teachers (checking registers, statistics, classroom observations, distribution of education materials), they also have to report on the physical status of the temporary schools and arrange meetings with the parents. They are responsible for running sensitisation programmes to promote education in beneficiary communities, and also to sensitise them on HIV/AIDS and sexual abuse. The TS's monthly reports confirm that they spend a lot of time on community work and on checking the physical status of the temporary schools.

The TS net salary is 561.800 LE. In addition they get a daily allowance of 8.000 LE when they spend the night in the field. The Education supervisor's net salary is 739.500 LE and the MEST supervisor's is 487.000 LE.

According to the TSs they spend most of time in the classrooms. In Kono they identify the weak teachers and spend most time with them. The regularity and frequency of the supervision is being confirmed by the teachers. In Kono they say they are visited by the supervisor once a week and some even every day. They confirm that the supervisors may spend whole days at one centre and even longer if there are specific problems. They check the registers, lesson plans and observe in the classroom. They may also assist in the teaching (give model lessons). The teachers point out the big difference between the quality and frequency of the supervision they get as compared to regular schools that hardly are visited. The teachers in both districts underline that the TSs are very supportive and helpful and that they consider the supervision essential for their work. . The TSs in Kono add "We are not only supervisors, but community workers". They report weekly to the Field Coordinator and have to hand in a monthly report on their work... The TSs rotate between the zones, thus the teachers meet different supervisors, which are considered an advantage by the teachers as well as by the TSs.

Regarding the frequency and contents of visits, our findings are different from the 2003 evaluation. There it was reported that 80% of the teachers received supervisors "at least once

a term”,<sup>20</sup> while we have found that the TSs visit far more often, and at least once a week. Furthermore, it was concluded in the evaluation that the TSs did not spend enough time in the classrooms giving advice on classroom work, which is not the case to day as they seem to spend most of their time in the classrooms.

### **The quality of the TS’s supervision**

The TSs say that they do not use any written guidelines. Such guidelines exist and were mostly used during the first year (level I). They emphasize the following as important to observe in the classroom: the relationship between teacher and students, the way the teacher talks to the students, how he/she uses the blackboard, class control, methods/contents, lesson preparation and register, children’s’ work and teaching aids.

During the discussion regarding participatory methods in Kono, the TSs do not mention working in small groups... They confirm that it is used mainly in science and physical education. This has later been confirmed by the children. The TSs say the teachers’ use of participatory methods is average. They have not received much training in such methods. The Teacher Supervisors in Kailahun are well informed about the advantages of working in small groups.

One of the Education Supervisors said: "We do not test the teachers in the teaching methods, only in their content knowledge". According to the supervisors, most of the teaching is abstract and there is relatively little use of concretes. There is not enough locally developed didactic material.

A good teacher according to the TSs in Kono is:

- A teacher who loves the children
- A teacher who is knowledgeable
- Able to transmit
- Kind, honest, faithful and tolerant
- Able to motivate the children
- treats everybody equally

The TSs in Kailahun underline the following qualities of a good teacher:

- Duty conscious
- loves teaching and the children
- knows subject matter
- knows how to transmit subject
- is tolerant
- is honest
- is resourceful
- is knowledgeable
- uses child-centred methods
- is a model in the community

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<sup>20</sup> The categorisation in the 2003 evaluation is not very useful, as there is no category for “once a month” or “once a week”. Hence it is not unlikely that the supervision was done on a more frequent basis than once a term already in 2003.

According to our brief classroom visits together with the TSs, we are not able to make an accurate and just evaluation of their performance. We have observed them in action on two occasions: during one day's classroom observations and a whole day's participation in the monthly workshop, talked with the teachers and children and studied some of their monthly reports. On basis of this we can conclude that they do spend a lot of time in the classrooms, however, it is not possible to know exactly how much time they spend on pedagogical tasks (observing and guiding teachers) as compared to checking documents and registers.

Their observational skills, comments and advice seem to be satisfactory, although it varies from one supervisor to another. Their communication skills also vary. The quality of the supervision not only depends on their observational, pedagogical and subject qualifications but also on their supervisory skills which are related to their training on how adults develop and grow.

Another question is how systematic the supervision is. Supervision may easily become a routine consisting of checking papers, registers and classroom performance,<sup>21</sup> and is only systematic if it is built upon previous visits allowing observing the individual teacher's progress and if h/she has followed the advice given. Furthermore, it is necessary to develop an overall plan which outlines areas that need to be prioritized. We have not studied the supervision plans with a view to whether such priorities exist, but we question whether the supervision is systematic enough. For instance it was recently decided to strengthen the students' reading skills (an example of a priority). However, this piece of information has been known at least for a year (as mentioned in TSs' reports) and we do not know whether it has been a systematic approach to overcome this weakness earlier.

It is somewhat disappointing to find that the monthly reports are not very specific in terms of the pedagogic problems the teachers are struggling with and how the supervisors specifically go about to help them. This should be the most important part of their job and the reason why one asked for their qualifications.

The new format of reporting (I have only studied the reports from Kambia) asks for the following information

- Centre, enrolment and pupils' attendance
- Comment on pupils' attendance and enrolments
- Main activities within the period
- Performance, attendance and attitude of teachers towards work
- Pupils' performance
- Problems/constraints/challenges
- Any other relevant issues
- Recommendations to Field Office

As a result of the new format, the TS's monthly reports have improved considerably, although they could still be more detailed regarding the teachers' classroom performance. It also lacks information on how the supervisor goes about to help the teachers with the problems they encounter.

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<sup>21</sup> One Field Coordinator confirms that the supervision has become routine work, and one of the TSs also said that the work is "tedious"



The teachers are very satisfied with the supervisors and the supervision and emphasize it as a core element in the programme. Our finding at this point does not correspond with the 2003 evaluation as only (around) 20% of the teachers found the classroom supervision very effective.

### **Supervision from Head Teachers and the supervision in regular school**

The HT also supervises the CREPS centres as the CREPS is seen as part of regular schools. In principle this should be done every day to check that the teachers and students are present and observe the teaching. According to some of the HT themselves, they come regularly in the CREPS classes, but according to the teachers not all come every day, but once or twice a week, and the supervision does not always include classroom observations. The supervision of HT takes the form of brief visits to control some of the activities and their visits are not as thorough as the TSs.

Visits from supervisors in regular school are very rare. One of the children said: "I have never seen them here", and another added: "I do not think they even have a supervisor in regular school". The Inspectorates confirm that their supervision is irregular due to large districts to cover and lack of means of transport and fuel.

### **Supervision and in-service training (monthly workshops)**

A third question is the link between supervision and the monthly work shops. The pedagogical weaknesses in the programme are summed up as follows by the Teacher Supervisors in Kailahun: lack of class control (i.e. they do not focus their attention on all the children), lack of eye-contact, some teachers skip topics they find difficult, especially in mathematics, poor blackboard work (when children seated at the back are not able to see), lack of use of teaching aids, poor reading abilities among children (spelling), poor math skills. In Kono the weaknesses among the teachers are mentioned as follows: - Children are slow in reading due to few reading exercises and few supplementary readings. Some teachers forget to let the children read what has been written on the blackboard, - Teachers should pay more attention to the quality of the work the children produce (learning), - Teachers must pay more attention to the children's' questions and activities. None of the groups of supervisors mention the lack of child-centred methods as a problem.

Ideally these weaknesses should be raised in the monthly workshops. To what extent the monthly workshops give priority to the above mentioned issues has not been possible to establish exactly. The monthly workshops are a mixture of subject lectures and micro-teaching. The Field Coordinator in Kambia says they have changed the format of the monthly workshops and decided to not treat too many things at the same time, but focus on few issues. This is an example of a prioritization.

Teachers from regular schools may also assist in the workshops, as do the Inspector of schools.

The monthly workshop's focus on micro-teaching however, serves several very important purposes and thus contributes to increasing the teachers' skills in a broader sense. Firstly, they are highly learner-centered as they are mainly based on micro-teaching. This means that the learners (teachers) are the most active and that the trainers (supervisors) are their facilitators. Secondly, they are highly relevant for the actual classroom performance when they bring up issues the teachers are struggling with. Thirdly, they contribute to a strong collegial atmosphere. The teachers have to expose their weak and strong sides to their colleagues and become trained in receiving comments on own performance and giving comments to their colleagues'. The Field Coordinator in Kambia says that they use the more experienced teachers as models for the others when they invite them to do model micro-teaching lessons. All the above are components in developing skills in learner-centered methods and peer learning, and it is therefore strange to find that the teachers in their turn hardly seem to make use of the same learner-centered methods in the classrooms.

The teachers are asked to evaluate the workshops regularly in order to find out the learning outcomes.

One teacher summarises the opinion of several when he says: "If it had not been for the microteaching in the monthly workshops I would never have been a teacher". Another says: "We are loading in during the workshop and offloading in the classroom". A third adds: "The workshop serves as a base for the Distance Education programme. The two complement each other"

## 5.5 Teacher classroom performance

The evaluation done in 2003 concluded that the CREPS teachers "pedagogical skills" were poor. The teachers' classroom performance was judged according to a (good) checklist for classroom observations and then summarized and scored quantitatively. However, the scored categories are too broad to give a detailed picture of where the teachers' weaknesses lie<sup>22</sup>. If we take a closer look at the table showing the teachers' classroom performance, the weakest points are the use of teaching materials, pupils' participation, class management and lesson planning, while subject delivery is not as weak. These findings demonstrate that it is difficult to give a precise evaluation of teacher performance without a well-developed definition of each category and how they are interrelated. Among the six districts, the overall lesson assessment shows that Kambia got the highest score (4.56 out of 5 possible) while Kailahun ranges number five.

During our classroom observations as well as in the monthly workshop, we have noticed the following:

- Most of the teachers plan their lessons carefully, but not all follow the planning
- Many teachers are good at raising challenging questions to the students and in using the blackboard
- The most common teaching method is teaching the whole class by using the blackboard and asking questions

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<sup>22</sup> The categories are: Lesson plan, Subject mastery, subject delivery, teaching materials, class management, pupils participation, communication, evaluation. These categories are summed up as "pedagogical skills" in the executive summary, which is not quite correct as it is a mixture of pedagogical and subject skills, and the differences between the categories are not discussed.

- Some teachers are very good at not giving the right answers right away but inviting other students to answer if the first one does not succeed (brainstorming). In most classrooms the pupils are very eager to answer and not afraid of making mistakes
- There are however, some teachers who master the brainstorming well but forget to tell the students the right answer in the end
- Many teachers remember to point at students individually and do not let them answer in unison
- Some teachers are very conscious of asking the girl student and not only boys
- Some teachers manage to involve the whole class, while others only teach the best students and forget about the weaker ones
- We have not observed one teacher who uses the method of working in small groups; although teachers and students say they do use it
- We have noted very little use of methods that encourage discovery and creativity
- Some teacher use self-produced didactic material (often flash cards) but in other cases there is inefficient use of this type of teaching/learning materials, i.e. letters are too small on the charts and flash cards, and/or there is too much information on charts, little use of pictures and drawings, although we find such materials made by the teachers exposed in the classroom
- We have observed little use of concrete objects
- We have observed several cases of inefficient use of textbooks when textbooks are found

## 5.6 Teaching-learning materials (TLM)

In the 2003 evaluation they conclude that most of the materials on the checklist (see above) were not available or not adequate, with the exception of Teacher manuals. They also observed very little locally produced teaching-learning materials in the classrooms and noted that the supplies were heavily dependent on provision from MEST or NGOs.

Compared with the 2003 evaluation, our findings indicate some improvement in the development of locally made teaching-learning materials. They are exposed but we have noticed relatively little use of them, or their use is not satisfactory. Materials to develop such teaching aids have been distributed by NRC, but it is also possible to produce objects and teaching aids from local material found in the nature, which we have hardly seen. Some teachers use flash cards. We have mostly observed drawings and maps made by the teachers hanging on the walls in the classrooms. On one occasion we observed the use of ready-made didactic material that was provided by the regular school. The teachers and students tell us that they pick flowers and leaves in the nature and bring them to the classroom, but we have not seen it in use, not even in environmental science which we have observed on several occasions. Even in the monthly workshop we attended, we noticed the same weaknesses (lack of use of teaching aids or inefficient use, lack of use of concrete objects, lack of a variety of methods, and no group work).

In the RREP an educational kit produced by UNICEF was in use. A similar kit is distributed in the TEP programmes. The team leader's evaluation of the TEP programmes show that in some places there is relatively little use of the material in the kit. Therefore we asked the teachers about its use and observed it in the classrooms visited. In the academic year 2002/2003 800 CREPS kits were ordered for distribution for new and old CREPS classes<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> 2003 Evaluation, p. 11

CREPS kits and supplementary materials to the kits were also distributed to all CREPS centres in 2003/04 and the first term of 2004-05 (donated by UNICEF).

In the 2003 evaluation they found that slates were available in 78.3% of the schools but not in a sufficient number. The letter chart (ABC chart) was available and in sufficient number in most classrooms, while the number chart was not. However, the 2003 evaluation does not give any information on the actual use of the slates and the charts. When we asked the teachers about the kit, they confirmed that they had received it, but that they used it mostly in the beginning. Most of the teachers believe that the slates are suitable, but rarely use them at this stage. Furthermore we saw no ABC charts or number charts hanging on the walls or no signs of a kit in the classrooms. Some of the teachers mentioned the use of the clock-face. A locally made clock-face was observed in use in one classroom in Kailahun.

## 5.7 Text books and reading materials

A serious threat to the learning is the lack of textbooks. This was also noticed during the 2003 evaluation as only around a third of the teachers reported to have at least one set of all textbooks and about half of them had one reading and one arithmetic textbook per pupil. None reported to have enough textbooks to all pupils in their class. It is not possible for us to know exactly how the situation is to day, but checking in the classrooms and with the teachers and students, it is apparent that until recently no CREPS class visited has a complete set of textbooks for all its pupils in any of the subjects. The few they have, had to be shared by several students. The situation has improved recently in some classes due to the distribution of schoolbooks through the SABABU project, but checking on the number in one class in Kailahun, only 11 students had such a book. The general opinion among the teachers is that the situation is somewhat better in regular schools.

The CREPS students have received a small number of textbooks lately, but before it was only the teacher who had a copy of the textbooks in each subject. However, even though there seems to be more textbooks in the classrooms today,<sup>24</sup> the teachers do not seem to be properly trained in the use of them. Some still spend too much time writing on the blackboard even though the same texts are found in the available books. This may be due to the fact that not all the children have textbooks, but still shows how necessary it is that the teachers are trained to use them properly.

In the 2003 evaluation, a majority (82.6%) of the centres did not have supplementary readers for the pupils. At least in the NRC centres, this situation seems to have changed, although we doubt how much they have been used. In February 2004 supplementary readings in English were distributed to all the centres in Kailahun, which were in use until September 2004. After that date the teachers started preparing the pupils for the final exam (NPSE) and did not have time for anything else. About 16-20 books were distributed to each class and we were told that they had not started to use them yet but would do it after the exam.

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<sup>24</sup> Lately, Plan has distributed new textbooks in some schools (SABABU project). However, the books are slightly different from the other textbooks distributed by MEST and it is therefore impossible for a teacher who has both types of textbooks in a class to guide the students in reading the texts.

Observations in the yellow classes (students who have not passed the screening test for NPSE and who need more support) reveal that there does not seem to be enough focus on methods that are particularly adapted to slow learners.

We have noted several cases, particularly in remote areas, of teachers and pupils who do not master the language of instruction, English, well. English is not heard or spoken at home, only in school. The children speak their local language before and after school.

## **6 THE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME (DEP)**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In 2002 NRC started to support 191 non-qualified CREPS teachers to participate in a Distance Education programme which would allow them to obtain an officially recognized Teacher Certificate<sup>25</sup>.

The DEP is a three year programme developed in Sierra Leone by lecturers from Teacher training colleges and the University. The principal at Freetown Teacher College (FTC) encouraged the development of this type of programme inspired by other countries. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has arranged workshops for trainers and coordinators in the programme. The FTC is responsible for the administration of the DEP on behalf of the government.

The DEP has been developed in order to qualify the high number of untrained and unqualified teachers found in primary schools in SL. As about 60% of the teachers in regular primary schools are UUs, there is a dire need to find effective ways of training them. The demand for more teachers has grown as a result of the government's decision to launch "free primary education for all".

Before the programme was launched it was piloted in 2001/2002 with 200 students in the Western Area and in the Moyamba districts.

### **6.2 Teacher training and distance education**

A distance education has many advantages compared to regular teacher training. It is a great advantage to the Government as the UUs continue to teach while they qualify to become teachers (in-service training). The FTC's capacity to train the required number of teachers is limited as are the facilities provided in Teacher colleges. The advantage of combining theory and practice is obvious. The CREPS teachers (as well as other UUs in regular schools) can apply what they have learned in DEP every day in the classroom.

Other advantages are that the teachers do not need to travel and live away from their families. They can attend to their regular jobs and other work and responsibilities while they study.

### **6.3 How the DEP is organised**

The contents is organised in modules covering the subjects in the syllabus in the ordinary primary school system. There are eight compulsory subjects (core subjects) (Mathematics, Language Arts, Environmental Science, Social studies, Community Development studies, Education, Creative Practical Arts, Prevocational studies) and two optional (1. selection of one of four indigenous languages and 2. selection of either Religious and Moral Education,

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<sup>25</sup> Annual report 2002

French or Physical health education). Thus during the three years they study totally 10 subjects. Each subject has 6 modules and the students are expected to complete two modules of each subject per year<sup>26</sup>, totally 20 modules per year.

The programme involves self-studies based on the modules and tutoring. The tutors are selected from the districts where the students are located. The coordinator of the DEP gathers the Head Teachers and asks them to present the best teachers in their districts. On basis of this, they select the number needed. The tutors may be secondary or primary school teachers and some are from Teacher Colleges. They are given one week's training.

The original plan was to establish tutorial centres in different districts and to gather the students every Saturday for tutoring, which was not feasible due to long distances to travel. FTC had originally planned to develop a closer monitoring system, but it turned out to be too expensive.

The tutoring is done during school holidays when the tutors gather all the students at the centres. Tutoring takes place two weeks during Christmas, two weeks during Easter and four weeks in July-August. During the tutoring periods the students are given assignments and the tutors also give lectures and arrange discussions. Students are encouraged to work in groups. Most of the teachers we have talked to also meet with their colleagues for studying and discussions. Teachers who work in isolated places are difficult to reach and are those who struggle most. FTC has representatives who supervise the tutors and evaluate their performance. Based on this, some have been dismissed. They have contact persons who are the link between FTC and the districts.

The DEP also comprises assessment of teaching practice. The coordinator of the programme at FTC travels to do classroom observations following a set of guidelines. She has also reviewed the comments the CREPS's supervisors have given to the CREPS teachers and her conclusion is that they do a very good job.

The grading system in DEP is from 1- 5 (A is 5 points). Division I (4.2-5) = Distinction, Division II = Credits, and Division III = passed.

FTC has developed several small guidance books to the students and to the tutors which explain in detail the requirements regarding the studies and assessments.

## **6.4 Teacher participants and their performance**

191 CREPS teachers registered in the DEP in 2002 which will train them for the teachers' certificate recognized by Sierra Leone. They will finish the 3 years programme in July - August 2005. A second group was registered in 2003/2004.

To date a total of 314 CREPS teachers are enrolled in the DEP and 197<sup>27</sup> of them are expected to take their final exams in July-August 2005. To ensure that the rest of the DEP teachers complete their education after NRC has left, NRC has already paid the costs for them to FTC. They have to finish in 2006. This is also the deadline to finish the programme for those teachers who have not presented themselves for the exams or who have failed.

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<sup>26</sup> cf. Student's handbook, DEP

<sup>27</sup> Six of the 197 have been engaged in the Youth Pack programme in Kambia, which has now come to an end.

As the group of teachers who are in their third and last year of the DEP have not yet attended the final exam (which takes place in July-August), it is not possible to know the final results. However, through conversation with teachers, head teachers, supervisors and local school inspectors, we have been able to get an impression on how the programme is being evaluated. In addition the results from the first and second year are available. It is however not possible to compare the results from the first and second year, as it is not the same cohort of teachers.

The first batch of students did very well in their first year. Out of 220 (number enrolled), 211 (95%) sat the second semester exams. 95% passed while 5 % failed. Of those 200 who passed, 40.5% attained distinctions, 40.5% credits and 19% were awarded a pass<sup>28</sup>. In their second year 97% (188) from the same batch of students passed while 2% failed. 34.5% passed with a distinction, 42% with credits and 23.4% with ordinary passes.

The second batch of students (accepted in 2003-2004) also did very well as 91% (104) of those who presented themselves for the exam (114) , passed and 8.7% failed. Of those who passed, 21% obtained a distinction, 48% got credits, and 30% got ordinary passes.<sup>29</sup>

The good results of the CREPS teachers are confirmed by the coordinator of the program at the FTC, who believes that they are slightly better than the other teachers who are in the DEP.

## **6.5 The teachers' evaluation of the DEP**

The CREPS' teachers' unanimous opinion of the DEP is that it has been one of the most important supports NRC has offered.

### **Modules**

The majority of the DEP teachers find the modules rich and interesting and say they are written in a simple and understandable language. The modules are good, especially in mathematics and Language Arts.

Some prefer them to the CREPS manuals and use them in the teaching. Other teachers underline that the modules and the CREPS manual are different and complement each other. CREPS is a lesson plan while DEP explains the subjects.

### **Tutoring**

The majority of the teachers also find the tutoring satisfactory. There are no special tutor centres, but they gather for tutoring in a primary school. Some of the tutors are competent and although some have been dismissed, they believe it is difficult to find local tutors who are more competent.

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<sup>28</sup> Annual report 2003

<sup>29</sup> Annual report 2004, draft



## **DEP or regular teacher training?**

The majority would have preferred to join the DEP if they had the possibility to choose. The reasons are that they can go on teaching and earn money, that they can stay with their families and thus solve problems of accommodation and food. Besides it is an advantage that they can practice daily what they read and study. What you learn in DEP can immediately be put into practice, compared to regular TT. Teaching practice in regular TTs is too little. The regular TTs have no modules and few textbooks and guides. A few of the teachers would rather prefer to study in the regular teacher training (if it was free of charge), mainly because it would allow more time to study.

## **Weaknesses**

- The modules give references to literature that they do not have access to
- There is too little time to study. Some of the subjects are too broad for the time given to us.
- We have too much to do at the same time. We can only study during the night and in weekends
- We study at all times, as it is linked with the job we are doing
- All the modules should have some teaching methodology, which is not the case.
- We would like to have some more practical teaching in DEP and more practical aids.
- Lack of tutors in some subjects like Creative Practical Arts and Prevocational

## **Advice**

- Enough time to study
- The modules must be handed out on time
- We would like to have teacher resource centres (as part of a tutorial centre) with reference books and materials.
- Financial constraints: they have to hand in three copies of a dissertation and pay for the copies themselves

## **Overall evaluation**

“DEP increases our capacity. Without DEP we would have no chance to go to college. DEP is the best NRC has done for us.”

“The DEP is excellent. I never thought I would be going to college. It has improved my standards.”

“We are very grateful that NRC pays all the fees involved, without this support I would never had the chance to become a qualified teacher”

“It is a privilege to be in DEP”

“I used to be a very weak teacher, but DEP has helped me to become better. I never thought I would become a teacher” (the teacher got a distinction).

## 6.6 Costs

Plan International paid most of the costs during the pilot phase.

The total costs per student are 309.400 LE per annum. This amount includes:

Tuition	60.000
ID card	5.000
Handbooks	7.000
Induction	5.000
Internal exam	15.000
Centre dev.	15.000
Modules	202.400
LE per annum (108 us dollars) per student	309.400

UNICEF, Plan International and NRC paid the costs for the first batch of DEP students. UNICEF provided 150 modules, while Plan International provided 50 and NRC 10. The rest of the costs were covered by NRC.

As UNICEF's funding became critical, NRC has obtained an agreement with FTC regarding the reproduction of the modules which also will take care of the students who finish next year. A deal was struck in 2003 to give institutional support in the form of riso ink, master stencil and duplicating papers to assist them providing modules for all NRC sponsored teachers. Currently NRC does not have any major expenditure on the DEP; except for food and transport allowance during their tutorials. The teachers receive transport and food allowance during workshops.

In addition there are costs involved for FTC as they provide their own staff with vehicles and transportation.

As of May 2005, the total costs involved in the DEP are 101.324 us dollars (4,5% covered by UNICEF, 95% covered by NRC). Divided by the total number of CREPS teachers enrolled in DEP (314), it means about 322 us dollars per teacher.

The principal at FTC underlines that DEP is far less expensive than the regular teaching training colleges taking costs of infrastructure, lecturing and tutoring into account. There are totally 650 students at the FTC while they have more than 2000 enrolled in the DEP.

As the teacher candidates are not taken out of service, it is also a more cost-efficient solution for the government. The "burdens" are put on the teacher candidates shoulders, if the costs involved had not been covered by NRC.

## 7 THE PUPILS

### 7.1 Selection of pupils

Experience from other countries shows that accelerated learning programmes which allows the children to catch up with the others makes it attractive to many parents.

The advantages of CREPS were not obvious to the some of the parents in Kono. Since they did not know what the programme really could offer as it had not yet proven its qualities, they were sceptical. In many places in Kailahun the problem was the opposite. The CREPS schools/classrooms became very popular and overcrowded with children in all age groups in areas where there were no other primary schools. CREPS actually paved the way for regular schools to be re-established.

CREPS met a lot of resistance from Head Teachers (HTs) in regular school. Although the regular primary school classes are overcrowded, the Head teachers are eager to have as many pupils as possible, as the size of government subsidies depends on the number of children. Secondly, there were doubts as to the quality of the programme.

According to the parents it was the CREPS teachers who selected the children. They explain that an assessment of the needs was made among 10-18 years olds who were not in school. The community was gathered and they tried to confirm through them whether the children were in the right age group. But it was not always easy to verify. The teachers say they also met with the Head Teacher to assure that the children were not already enrolled in regular schools. Already in the beginning there were many children who rather wanted to join the CREPS than to come to regular schools. This has been confirmed by some of the students we have talked to who were in grade five in primary when the CREPS was introduced and they moved over to CREPS. Thus the HTs had reason to fear that they were losing their children and this contributed to a strained relationship from the beginning, which is still not solved in some schools. At that time the supervisors had not yet been appointed and could not take part in the process of selecting the children...

### 7.2 Enrollment and drop-out

**Table 6. CREPS enrolment and drop-out 2002-2005**

	Enrolled	Drop out
2002-2003	12 703	
2003-2004	11 736	967
2004-2005	8 516	3220

Average enrolment  
10.985

=

Total drop out =  
4.187, 38%

As we see there is a heavy drop out in 2004-2005. The reasons for the drop out will be presented in the following, but no specific explanation has been given for the high drop out from level II to level III other than the general reasons mentioned.

A recently updated database shows that there are around 10% more girls than boys that have dropped out.

**Table 7. Recent enrolment CREPS (June 2005)**

District	Boys	Girls	Total
Kambia	2684	1592	4276
Kono	1176	823	1999
Kailahun	1357	821	2178
<b>Total</b>	<b>5217</b>	<b>3236</b>	<b>8453</b>

Only 38% of the students enrolled are girls.

An exact and complete recording of the number of and reasons for dropping out is not documented. When we have checked the registers in the classrooms, we have found no cases of pupils who have been classified as “drop-outs” even though they have longer periods of absence (four weeks or more) at various stages. In general the teachers seem to know whether the absences are permanent or temporary and the reasons why, but it is very confusing that they are still recorded in the register and not clearly indicated as drop-outs. In stead the term “average attendance” is used, which is informative, but does not distinguish between permanent and temporary absences. Curiously enough, the same lack of registering drop out is also found at the Inspectorate’s office. They have until recently not registered drop out but only average attendance rate.

We find the categories in the register incomplete, as neither the children’s age nor their sex are always recorded, except in a few cases.

NRC has put a lot of time and energy into the registration of the pupils, and the supervisors’ frequent control has without doubt had a positive impact on the attendance rate. Since 2003 NRC has developed data bases on the pupils and on other statistical information in the programme, which are very impressive. These data bases serve as an example to other NRC offices that have similar accelerated education programmes. However, it takes a lot of time to register the attendance rate properly, and the impression is that the teachers as well as the supervisors find this work tedious and cumbersome. It might have been easier if the CREPS register were easy to fill in.

Our control of the attendance and absence during the visits shows a positive tendency. It has to be taken into account that we visited the school right after the national exam and one would not have expected the children to continue to come regularly if NRC had not made an effort to motivate them. One of the children said: “A difference between CREPS and the regular school is that they even ask us to come during holidays and after the exam”.

The reasons for the reduction in the number of enrolled students and variances in the attendance rate are several:

- Generally, it was a problem in the beginning – as explained above – that many under aged children were registered... The campaign of HTs for the children to return to regular school might also have influenced the drop out rate in some places.
- There is a lot of movement among the target groups as it is common to move to another district or even cross the borders to Guinea or Liberia, and come back again.
- CREPS is characterized by a certain flexibility in the sense that children have moved in and out over the years due to the fact that many families returned only recently to their places of origin. Thus even in 2004 some new over aged children were accepted in the programme.
- Girls dropped out because of pregnancies or marriage.
- Initiation rituals prevented girls and boys from coming to school and some of them never returned as they were considered mature for parenthood.
- 517 pupils in Kono were transferred to secondary school in 2003-2004 after they had passed the NPSE exam

Through investigation of some of the lists, we have been able to confirm that the main reasons are transfer to regular schools or to other CREPS centres, to other types of training (skills training), moving to Liberia or Guinea. Relatively few are reported to have left because of marriage or pregnancies.

It is known that the general drop out rates in primary are high in the areas where CREPS operate, particularly in rural areas. According to the 2003 Household Survey, only 11% of girls and 16% of boys completed primary school, that is, completed class 6 and a few 10-14 years olds completed primary schools in rural areas<sup>30</sup>.

It has been confirmed by the community and the pupils that the CREPS teachers are different from the teachers in regular school in how they deal with pupils' absences. If a child has been away from school for some days, the teacher visits the parents to find out the reason why and encourage them to send the child back to school. Children and parents also notice this as a difference between regular schools and CREPS.

One parent said: "CREPS is a motherly school". Parents have also told us that the teachers and the community supervise the school children's behavior and discourage them to go out in the evening and attend dances. One pupil's answer to the question "What is a good teacher?" was: "One who is strict and does not want to see children go to video clubs or dances at night but keeps with his studies".<sup>31</sup> It is a general opinion in the community that there are fewer cases of early pregnancies among the CREPS pupils and some of the pregnant girls were encouraged by the teachers to sit the final exam.

### 7.3 Learning outcomes

The National Primary School Examination (NPSE) is the goal the pupils are striving for. Passing the exam with good results would give them access to secondary schools. Working

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<sup>30</sup> PRSP Education Sector Review 2004

<sup>31</sup> Early pregnancies are not uncommon and this is one reason for the strict control of their behaviour.

hard for an exam seems to be very motivating for the children and good achievement gives a lot of credit to the pupil, teachers and parents.

The NPSE is an external examination conducted by the regional West African Examination Council. The successful scores for the candidate is a minimum of 230 to 400 to enter Secondary School.

The 2003 evaluation made a comparison between CREPS pupils who were in level two and pupils in class 4 in two districts (Port Loko and Bombali), but this comparison does not include any of the CREPS centers supported by NRC. The results were that in the four subjects (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies) regular pupils consistently scored significantly higher than their counterparts in all the core subjects. The results cannot be generalized to all CREPS centers and the evaluators also warn that one has to take the different teachers' marking style into account as the outcomes are not based on an external exam.

At national level 61,148 pupils sat the NPSE in 2004, 36% were women (22,445). The pass rate (Cut off 220) was 75.7% for the female and 80.3% for the male candidates.<sup>32</sup>

When we visited the classrooms, the pupils had just sat the NPSE and the result will be ready by mid-July. NRC arranged a mock final exam in March and the outcomes give us some clues regarding the pupils' level. Furthermore a group of CREPS students in Kono passed the NPSE last year and are now in secondary school. They have been one year in secondary and we visited two such schools.

**Table 8. NPSE results in Kono 2004**

Name of school	No. of schools that sent candidates	No of pupils who enrolled for the exam	No. of pupils passed	No. of schools with 100% passes
Normal school	71	2286	2089	47
CREPS center	22	570 <sup>33</sup>	517	12
Total	93	2856	2603	59

*Source: Inspectorate of schools, Kono*

The overall pass rate is 90% for the CREPS students<sup>34</sup>, which is about the same as for the regular pupils (91%). 38% of the regular schools had sent candidates while the corresponding figure for CREPS is 91%. 66% of the regular schools had 100% passes, while CREPS had 54%. It has been a discussion whether this group of CREPS students is special compared to the rest of the level III pupils who are presenting themselves for the NPSE this year. It is likely that the group was slightly better than the average CREPS pupil in 2004 as they sat the exam after level II.

<sup>32</sup> MEST, Trend in National Primary School Examinations 1995-2005

<sup>33</sup> According to new information only 549 CREPS students sat the exam, but as the corresponding figure from regular school is not available, we cannot add a column showing total number of pupils who sat the exam.

<sup>34</sup> It is actually slightly higher, 94%, see previous footnote

The figures in the tables that follow regarding enrolment vary and the reason may be that they are referring to different months.

**Table 8 Results Mock Final NPSE candidates March 2005<sup>35</sup>**

District	Enrolment		No. who sat the mock final		Pass above 40%		% Passes
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Both
Kambia	935	316	941	299	837	243	87
Kono	877	529	858	512	724	375	80
Kailahun	884	344	825	353	460	179	54
Total	2696	1189	2 624	1 164	2 021	797	74
Grand total	3885		3 788		2 818		

97.5% of the NPSE candidates enrolled sat the mock final and 74% of them passed (40% or above).

30% of the enrolled mock final NPSE candidates are girls. 30% of the candidates who sat the mock final were girls, and only 28% of them passed.

#### **7.4 How are the former CREPS students doing in secondary school?**

According to one of the class teachers in Ahmadiyya Islamic secondary school in Kono, the CREPS students are punctual and very active in class. Their school behaviour is excellent. Two of them are prefects in their class (which means they are among the best students academically). The class teacher believes that the CREPS students are better than the others. The Vice principal shares the same opinion. There is no or very little drop out.

The math teacher confirms that the CREPS students are among the best in the class, i.e. they are above average.

During our conversation with five pupils (3 boys and 2 girls) they are concerned that they did not get the scholarship they had been promised by their CREPS teacher. They had been told that those who got the best NPSE results (boys and girls equally) would get scholarship. One says he came out as the best, but did not receive any support

Another concern is how to pay the school fees<sup>36</sup>. The pupils have to work to pay them. They normally work during holidays. It is difficult to get work and the work is hard. Some work in the mines. They get 5.000 LE per day. One of the girls says a former CREPS teacher helps her to pay the fees. The girls confirm that the scholarship that they were supposed to receive from the Government to cover all costs in the first year of secondary does not arrive on time or not at all. They had not yet paid for the second term and had been threatened to be thrown out of

<sup>35</sup> The figures in this table only cover the NPSE candidates, i.e. the pupils who will present themselves for the final national exam (NPSE) .

<sup>36</sup> The school fee in junior secondary school is 20.000 LE per term = 60.000 LE per year

school if they did not pay. The girl students in Koidu Girls' schools were also sent out of school when the money from the government had not arrived<sup>37</sup>

They are very happy to be in secondary school although the classrooms are far more crowded than in CREPS. Teaching is not very different from CREPS.. Teachers are good but not always present.<sup>38</sup> The CREPS teachers were always present. The pupils teach each other by exchanging notes and by working together. Everyone wants to see their notes. When the teacher asks, only the CREPS pupils answer. In CREPS they did experiments in science, but they do not do it here, only one teacher does it.

The other school visited was a girls' school where we talked to a class teacher and a group of students. They find the teaching in secondary school easy. "Most of what is taught here we had already been taught in CREPS. It is just like a revision", they said.

The class teacher confirms that the majority of the former CREPS students are doing very well and were among the best in the first term, their behaviour is nice and better than the others. They are above average. They are punctual and motivated. Some of them are very clever, and he believes their performance is better than it would have been in a mixed group. In a girls' school they are not distracted by the boys. He confirms that the Government has only paid for the first term. A problem is lack of textbooks; many of the other girls also have the same problem.

## 7.5 The pupils' opinion of CREPS

When we asked about *the differences between CREPS and normal school*, the answers vary. Although most of the pupils have not been to regular school, they have siblings and friends who have and they are very well aware of the differences.

In some ways there is no difference, in other ways there are. Regarding the teaching, there is a difference in the sense that the CREPS teacher "comes every day to work", while many of the teachers in regular school are frequently absent. One student said: "We get more teaching in CREPS than in regular". On several occasions the evaluation team observed that the pupils in regular school arrived on time, but the teacher is not there. They may spend the whole day waiting for him or her to turn up.

Some pupils say that the CREPS teachers teach better than the regular, even better than those in secondary schools.

On the other hand it is no difference in the sense that they are taught the same. CREPS teachers and regular teachers work together and sometimes, it is a CREPS teacher who also teaches a regular class. One pupil said "When the DEP teachers are in a workshop, the regular teacher comes to teach us".

- In CREPS the teachers do not ask them for money

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<sup>37</sup> Conversations with CREPS children at a centre in Kailahun confirm irregularities regarding the scholarship for girls from the Government. The accusation is that the cash amount the girls get per term is 40.000 and not 60.000 LE. as it should have been

<sup>38</sup> Apparently the absent teachers are mostly the volunteers who do not get a regular salary



- CREPS teachers give us medicine when we are sick
- CREPS teachers visit pupils at home to check why one is absent from school
- Teachers are supplied with teaching manuals and teaching/learning materials
- CREPS is free, regular school is not
- In most CREPS classes there are no uniforms, in a few they have decided to wear it because they do not want to be different from the others. Most of the children say they would have liked to wear uniforms to show people that they are "real" students". Some of the older children say that they do not want to wear uniforms. Many pupils had to pay for the costs of the uniforms themselves by fetching wood or selling agricultural products.
- The lack of textbooks is confirmed by the pupils (particularly in level III), only the CREPS teacher has. Children in regular school have textbooks.
- Another problem mentioned is the irregular food distribution. Most pupils say they do not get food or very little, compared to their colleagues in regular school. In one case they say the regular school gives them food.

The children have clear perceptions of the CREPS teachers' qualities. To the question: *What is a good teacher?* They answer:

- A good teacher is one who teaches well and who also cares about the student and see to it that they come to school and study.
- It is a teacher who explains and whom we can ask if we do not understand.
- A good teacher teaches step-by-step, and checks in the register that the student is present
- One who is regular and does not come late to school
- One who teaches well. "Mock exams were easy because the teacher had taught us everything we found in the exam"
- If we don't understand and need help, we can go to the teacher's house
- Is kind and helpful
- The CREPS teachers are good because they play with us
- Advises parents and encourages them to send their children to school
- Encourages students to study and pay visits to monitor their work at home
- One who is strict and do not want to see children go to video clubs or dances at night but keeps with his studies. In one place, the students told that three girls have become pregnant this year, but two of them sat the exam. The teacher visited them at home and encouraged them to participate
- The majority says that the CREPS teacher does not beat them, but that they do in regular class. Only in one case do they report of a CREPS teacher who flogs them when they are late for school

## **7.6 Continuation of schooling**

When we asked the children about the transfer to secondary and how they will manage to get the money to pay for the school fees, it is obvious that all of them want to continue and have dreams about the future. They see themselves as nurses, doctors, presidents and teachers.

Most of the children have to work to support their families. They fetch wood, pick fruit, and sell agricultural products or panga. They get 1.000 LE for one bunch of wood and it takes two weeks to earn 5.000LE. It shows that they go to great lengths to keep up with the studies and continue.

As most of the parents are poor and many of the pupils are orphans, it may be difficult for them to continue schooling. They are appealing to NRC for further assistance.

## **7.7 Pupils who did not sit NPSE**

**The majority of (totally 4701/45% f) of the enrolled CREPS students have not sat the exam.** They are in “literacy classes”. 45% of this group of pupils is girls, compared to 30% in the NPSE candidate group.

They will be transferred to regular school as of the next academic year (2005-2006). They will be tested and placed in a class depending on their results. The pupils who fail NPSE will also have to take their final exam next year. The regular schools know they are coming.

It has not been possible to give these students special tutoring if they are very slow or have learning difficulties. It demonstrates that three years is not enough for the majority of the students; they need more time.

Based on the good NPSE results of the group of students from Kono last year, it was expected that a higher percentage of the enrolled pupils would sit the final exam. However, it turned out that this group of children did not pass the screening test.

There may be several reasons why the children have not managed; one is that they are too young. 27% of this group of students were below the age for CREPS (all those 12 years and below). A thorough screening regarding the age was not done until recently and too late to exclude them from the programme. Secondly, the reason may be that they came into the programme only last year. Another possible reason is prolonged absences. There may also be several pupils who have learning difficulties. Whether this is the case or not is difficult to judge since it is an accelerated programme.

The CREPS teachers are not prepared to teach children with special learning problems, and many belonging to this group of children will have even more difficulties in a regular class of 80 pupils.

## 8 COMMUNITIES

Close co-operation with the community is essential in the programme. Continuous sensitisation is necessary to ensure that the communities understand the advantages of CREPS and send their children – particularly girls – to school. In these poor communities it is a constant problem that parents take their children out to help them with farming or for other purposes. The initiation rituals that we witnessed in May, particularly hit the girls hard as many were taken out of schools for a long period and did not sit the NPSE. Many do not return after the initiation.

NRC supervises the attendance closely and takes actions when the attendance rate is declining.

The parents/community are organised in CTA (Community-teacher associations) who meet regularly. They have however, not received a special training on how to run the association (according to the FC in Kono)<sup>39</sup>.

During the construction of CREPS centres (where applicable), the communities have to contribute with stones, water and sand. If they are not willing, the centre will not be constructed. Sometimes they are paid. The contractor has to use local manpower. Village elders may be involved in the selection of the local workers. UNICEF has paid for the plastic sheeting, nails and other material, while the community has to provide the sticks. In one of the communities who are very co-operative, they tell us that the construction work received the full participation of every energetic member of the community, irrespective of whether they had children or wards in CREPS or not. Some communities charge a fee (3.000-5000 LE) from a community member who does not participate.

Another issue is the relationship between CREPS and the regular school which has been a problem in some communities and where the CTA has an important role to play. When CREPS and regular school share the same premises, the problems that arise need to be solved.

To a certain extent, the community also sees to it that the teachers (and children) are not absent.

During our visits to the communities, we have observed the importance of a close relationship between the school and the community. Some communities are very active in the construction and supervision of the school. Other communities do not show enough interest, and as a result the centre is without water and latrines. This creates tension between the pupils and the community as the pupils some times are ordered to do the job that the adult members of the community fail to do. The recurrent problems with the temporary structures mean that the communities have to attend to construction issues frequently.

There are examples of CTA leaders and other community leaders taking advantage of their position in the sense that their children or grand-children have been given priority to CREPS. One of the arguments was that there was no scramble among parents for admission into the CREPS in the beginning because not many people had returned to their locality at the time CREPS started (in Kailahun).

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<sup>39</sup> IRC and World Vision have given their CTAs training

The socio-economic status of both CREPS and non-CREPS children and their families did not reveal any significant difference. They (the parents/community people) all said, “We all fled during the war, we have all been affected and have lost everything, we have returned poor, therefore we are all poor people here”.

The parents/communities believe that the CREPS teachers “must be very hard working to be able to prepare children for NPSE and secondary school in just three years”. They are very concerned about the late payment and irregular salaries of the teachers in regular school, resulting in irregular teaching.

The parents emphasized that CREPS is a very good programme.

- It has helped us because our over-aged children have had the opportunity to learn. Some of our children are already big enough to get married. To tell them to go and sit in class with their younger ones is impossible
- It has provided us with more good teachers
- It has helped us with free education for our children. With an average of about 3-5 children in school, it would have been very difficult to put them all in school for six years
- CREPS does not ask us to sew uniforms for our children.
- Our children taking just three years in primary school and then being ready for secondary school is very good
- CREPS children are put under control to change their behaviour
- CREPS has less teenage pregnancies.

All those interviewed are aware that CREPS is a school programme meant to educate those who are too old to attain primary school. They are also aware that CREPS does not ask for school fees, uniforms, and that they supply everything the children need to learn. .

The town chief, the CTA chairmen and chairladies indicated that they visit the centres periodically to see how the children are learning and how the centres are getting along. The wish to visit the school was expressed by other parents. This was not however done with the commitment or enthusiasm required. It is often uncommon for parents or community people to pay visits to their children’s schools. This only happens upon invitation, especially in instances where the student has some problems that demand the presence of the parents.

Every parent interviewed expressed the willingness to pay their children’s fees to continue in secondary schools. However, they were not quite sure how they could do this. A common saying among them was, “Well, we’ll look up to God; we hope that God will provide for us”. Some said though that with their farm and crop harvest, they would try. Others still appealed to NRC to continue to help them as they have already started.

Considering the misplaced priority of some of the parents in these communities, coupled with their poor status, it is expected that a good number of the children will not finish secondary school. A pupil, whose mother is the sole parent, told me in Kono: “It is when you see money that you will say you want to go to school; any money we raise now goes towards the rebuilding of our burnt out house and nothing else”. Over and over again he said that his mother wants him to leave school and work at home.

Nonetheless, some parents could manage to pay their children's fees. They did not express this explicitly because they expect further financial assistance from some outside agency. In their opinion the assistance will not come if they reveal their ability to manage their children's school affairs.

## **9 COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

NRC is collaborating with several partners, with other NGOs and with international organisations, for instance World Food Programme (WFP) regarding the distribution of food. However, the most important partnership is established between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), UNICEF and NRC. This partnership is very tight and agreements of understanding have been developed and signed that describe details in the division of responsibility between the parties. As UNICEF's funding was reduced, NRC has had to bear more of the costs. UNICEF started to give incentives to the teachers but could not continue and the responsibility was handed over to NRC.

The collaboration with the MEST takes place at national and districts level through the Inspectorate of schools, which co-operates with NRC in the field. MEST has appointed a focal point at national level. One of the CREPS supervisors in each district is appointed by the MEST. UNICEF underlines NRC's important role as they have their own resources and are therefore able to do a thorough job. NRC is running a monthly workshop for their teachers while UNICEF's other partners do it on a quarterly basis. UNICEF has quarterly reviews with partners and MEST. In addition regular interagency fora are arranged.

UNICEF makes a small monetary contribution but makes a considerable contribution in terms of teaching and learning materials, initial and in-situ training of CREPS teachers, logistical support and support for construction of temporary shelters. UNICEF caters for four of the supervision staff in the field. UNICEF has faced several budget cuts and has had to reduce its support accordingly.

The NRC Education staff in Freetown and the field offices and the MEST District Inspectorate regularly monitor the project.

The most important characteristic of the collaboration between UNICEF, MEST and NRC is the ease of the informal contact and continuous dialogue.

The co-operation between NRC and MEST had already been going on for a while with respect to the RREP when NRC was asked to come on board the CREPS. It was UNICEF that advised NRC to let their teachers register in the DEP.

We have been able to confirm the open and co-operative attitude of MEST towards its partners. The political will is there, but there is limited capacity in terms of logistics and financing.

NRC is regarded as a reliable and competent partner by all parties at national level, and it was also one of the first organisations who engaged in emergency programmes.

The Inspector of schools takes part in the monthly workshops as do HTs and regular teachers.

The Inspectorates of schools that we have visited confirm the close and good cooperation with NRC. The Kono Inspector said. "NRC has never disappointed any community". If something is wrong, they attend to it immediately.

The co-operation with the Inspector of Schools in Kailahun was not so good in the beginning. It was low during the first year, but has gradually improved and today it is good. The reason was that NRC employed experienced and qualified teachers as supervisors and this was seen as a threat. They wanted NRC to employ the MEST supervisors.

The regional UNICEF representative sees NRC as an effective and efficient partner. “When you compare the teaching in the NRC supported CREPS centres with the DEO supported centres, you see better teaching in the first mentioned ones. Those supported by the Government are not paid on time. The level of monitoring is irregular.” He visits both centres and notices the difference.

The collaboration between NRC and the Freetown Teacher College regarding the DEP is also excellent.

Several problems are reported regarding the food distribution.

## 10 SUSTAINABILITY

There is a unanimous agreement among teachers, pupils, communities that CREPS is a very successful programme that should continue. It is said that there are still many children and youth who are need of such a programme.

NRC's exit plan says "The situation Sierra Leone no longer poses a humanitarian emergency with regards to IDPs and refugees"<sup>40</sup> Sierra Leone has moved from an emergency phase to post reconstruction and the financial assistance is changing to multi-year development funding.

On the other hand, after three years' in operation, the programme is now at its height and has found ways to overcome obstacles met in the beginning. If it is right that the country still needs an accelerated learning program for over-aged children, how has NRC secured its continuation and is MEST willing to continue with the assistance of other agencies?

In principle it is not a problem for any regular school to have 1-2 classes for over aged children similar to the CREPS. On the other hand there is more to CREPS than the accelerated programme. It is free of charge and has a regular in-service teacher training and a regular follow-up.

### MEST

It is estimated that there are still 3-400.000 children and youth out of school.<sup>41</sup>

The grant and loan from the World Bank and the African Development bank will be spent on rehabilitation and construction of schools, teacher training and textbooks. The SABABU project which is also supported by the Islamic Development Bank, plans to build 500 primary schools and 100 junior secondary schools. PLAN International is a major partner in the SABABU project and they co-operate with the Government with respect to the teacher training component and in the production of textbooks. UNICEF is also involved in the teacher training.

MEST has to find ways to meet the needs of the out-of-school children. An approach that was launched in April this year, is to build community schools, simple constructions, in areas where there are no primary schools or where they are not easily accessible. This programme is supported by UNICEF. The problem is to find ways of training the teachers as they do not want to continue with the high percentage of UUs. Inspired by the DEP and CREPS, the MEST wants to modify the syllabus in primary school to see how they can train teachers to teach classes 1 – 3 within a period of one year.

In Kailahun the Inspector of schools confirm that they already have five community schools spread in areas where there are no CREPS or regular school. The communities have put up a structure.

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<sup>40</sup> NRC Exit Strategy and Phase out plan, 2005

<sup>41</sup> According to William Taylor, Director General of Education



According to MEST there is no need for a continuation of CREPS or an accelerated learning programme of this type. The over aged youth can enrol in vocational training. Adult literacy programmes are also an option. They want to join partnerships with other organisations. Within the next 2-3 years CREPS will be phasing out.<sup>42</sup>

At the district level in Kono and Kailahun, the opinion is that there is still a need for a CREPS programme

### **Transfer of CREPS teachers to the regular system**

Since the beginning the CREPS teachers have been considered MESTs responsibility. As the majority of the teachers are qualifying themselves for the Teacher Certificate through the DEP, it is expected that they will be taken on board by the MEST. MEST's problem is the payment of the salaries. The Finance Department gives them a quota every year, and the quota in 2004 was 28.000 primary and secondary school teachers that were allowed to be accepted on the Government payroll. Up to date 150 (of 267) of the CREPS teachers have been promised to be accepted and the rest will be absorbed by the Government later in 2005, according to NRC's exit strategy. In Kailahun the Field Office was asked to recommend 50 teachers for transfer (out of 80). The process of accepting the 50 started on April 1, and they presume the papers will be ready before the new academic year starts.

NRC has already provided for the DEP teachers who are not ready to take their final exams this year enabling them to do it next year. Furthermore the children in CREPS who have not sat the NPSE this year and those who fail, are being transferred to regular schools this year.

### **Continuation of CREPS**

In NRC's exit strategy it is stated that "emphasis will be given to consolidate and ensure sustainability of activities post NRC presence in Sierra Leone"<sup>43</sup>. In the exit strategy it was expected that the NGO IBIS would be able to continue part of the CREPS, as they had expressed a strong interest in running the programme in the Kono District. However, IBIS has not yet received the necessary funding. A final decision regarding the funding will be made in August 2005.

NRC has also had good contact with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) regarding the CREPS, and they are very interested in the programme, but are not ready to take over the responsibility for its continuation.

Thus, to date there are no other organisations who are ready to support the CREPS.

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<sup>42</sup> After Dec. 2005 when NRC is closing down, there will still be CREPS classes in other areas run by DEO and World Vision.

<sup>43</sup> NRC Exit Strategy and Phase out plan NRC Sierra Leone 2004-2005. Revised March 2005, p. 3

## **Sustainability**

Sustainability is multi-faceted. It is related to the pay-off on a long-term and short term basis. It is not possible to know at this stage the long-term effects of the CREPS.

As it looks now, the NRC supported CREPS will not continue in its present form. It would not necessarily be a wrong decision if the programme was re-adapted to the new situation, for instance by establishing CREPS classes in the regular primary schools. As MEST does not seem to have any plans of continuing the CREPS, it is likely that it will close down.

NRC has had regular contact with other organisations where lessons learned have been shared. However, this does not seem to be sufficient. The problem at national level now seems to be the transition from an emergency to a developmental phase and that there is a lack of link between the two. Emergency programmes are closed down and new “developmental” programmes are initiated. The SABABU project is one example, the community schools’ project is another. The MEST changes partners who want to do things differently from the previous ones.

On the other hand, MEST and their partners PLAN International and UNICEF are well acquainted with the positive aspects of the NRC supported CREPS programme and will hopefully feed their experience into the new programmes. As far as we have been able to find out, there does not however, seem to have been enough emphasis from NRC on how their “good practice” regarding teacher training and supervision can be transferred to the SABABU project. PLAN International distributes teaching and learning materials and teacher training is organised, but differently from CREPS.

## 11 DISCUSSION

In the following we shall discuss the findings in terms of the CREPSs and DEPs effectiveness, co-ordination, impact, efficiency, sustainability/connectedness and relevance as outlined in the Terms of Reference. Accelerated Learning Programmes will also be discussed.

### 11.1 Objectives

A comparison between the overall objectives in 2002 and 2005 show that they have not changed over the years, but have gradually become more specific and focused on quality and outcomes. The overall objective is to provide access to basic education for over aged children who have never been to school or whose schooling has been disrupted by the war. Other specific objectives are related to community participation, equal opportunities for girls, teacher training and capacity building through in-service training and distance education, and to prepare CREPS pupils for NPSE (80% pass). In the application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for 2005 the specific objective regarding the pupils is “to continue the CREPS programme to ensure completion of primary education for approx. 9.600 pupils (239 classes)”.

### Target groups

The target group, i.e. over-aged children (10-14 years old), has been reached. As CREPS was introduced in areas where there were no other primary schools, it was difficult for parents to understand that CREPS was only for over-aged children. In other places, there were conflicts between CREPS and regular school and many children were subsequently transferred to regular. NRC has followed the development through frequent control and supervision carried out by the supervisors. The databases on enrolment and attendance allow the management to follow the progress.

Regarding the statistics, the registers the teachers handle in the classroom are not uniform and complete. It is a weakness that drop outs have not been systematically recorded from the beginning. However, taking the age of the children into account, one has to expect more dropping out, particularly among the girls, as they become ready for adult life according to their traditions.

Even though the majority of the children are in the right age group, some are too young and many are older than 14 years.<sup>44</sup> It is of course even more important for older children to get their chance through the CREPS than younger. On the other hand, it makes teaching more demanding for the teacher when the age span varies from 10 – 20 years, particularly for untrained teachers. CREPS may also cover up for better adapted programmes to older children/youth above 14 that combine academic and vocational training.

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<sup>44</sup> See annex III for more details regarding the age distribution

CREPS has not seen a noticeable increase in girls' attendance and the girls' enrolment and results are far lower than the boys<sup>45</sup>. We do not know to what extent more girls would have come to school and stayed there if NRC had paid more attention to it, or whether it demonstrates that cultural attitudes towards girls' schooling are hard to change. It is not possible to find specific measures – apart from sensitisation of the community – which NRC has taken to increase the number of girls in CREPS and not the least, to improve their performance and encourage their retention.

A factor which is not mentioned as an objective but which is related to the girls' enrolment and attendance, is the number of female teachers which is very low<sup>46</sup>. CREPS is a male dominated programme. In addition to the dominance of male teachers there are only two female (out of 14) Teacher Supervisors and no female Education Supervisors. It is reason to believe that this indirectly affects the enrolment and retention of girl students and the number of female teachers

Regarding the other target group mentioned in the documents from 2002, the non-active teachers, this stems from the initial belief that it would be possible to recruit trained and qualified returned teachers. The majority of the CREPS teachers do not hold a Teacher Certificate and are not on the Government payroll, which was an important criterion to avoid draining qualified human resources from the regular school system.

### **Pupils, NPSE and learning outcomes**

Based on the available information regarding regular school and CREPS pupils, it is likely that the latter will get as good results as their colleagues. The children have been well prepared for the NPSE and the pass rates on the mock final seem to be according to the expectations or even above (except in Kailahun). It is however, rather strange to find that only about half of the pupils enrolled in CREPS sat the NPSE compared to what one expected when the 2005 application was written. We do not find a satisfactory explanation for this in the available documentation apart from the fact that they did not pass the screening test. We do not have more detailed information on the learning outcomes for the other half of the students. It is not surprising that many children need more time in an Accelerated Learning programme but the reasons should be looked into. Thus the specific objective regarding the number of NPSE pupils has not been achieved at the time when the programme is phasing out.

At this stage we do not know whether the rest of the CREPS children who will be transferred to regular school will complete primary education.. NRC has made an effort in preparing them, although we consider it a weakness that the teachers have not been exposed to some teacher training adapted to students who learn at a slower pace. Looking at the situation in regular school however, it is reason to believe that most of the pupils will not lag behind when they are transferred.

To sit and pass NPSE is a goal that all the children in primary school age are striving for. But it is necessary to investigate the quality of the results and what they indicate. Although the former and present CREPS pupils are doing well on exams, many CREPS children have problems in reading and some also in writing. It has not been possible to find out what

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<sup>45</sup> see annex III for more details on girl's enrolment and performance

<sup>46</sup> We do not have the comparable figures from regular school in the districts

specifically these problems relate to, and if it is understanding, spelling or just lack of practice in reading, or a combination of all these. Neither do we know whether the students who have sat the NPSE have the same problems as those who have not yet passed or those who fail.

One is in doubt as to what NPSE really can tell about the pupils' academic level. If it is possible to be a poor reader and still pass the final exam, it may indicate that memorizing without understanding is one explanation.

The strong focus on the NPSE takes a lot of time and attention away from other important aspects of teaching and learning like supplementary readings, variation in teaching methods, and more participatory and explorative methods.

### **Teacher training and teacher performance**

The specific objective that has been most successfully reached regards the training of teachers. The DEP, in-service training and supervision are interrelated and reinforce each other. It is interesting to notice that although the DEP content has not been planned with a view to the other teacher training components in CREPS, it seems to fall nicely in place. It has strengthened the other parts. A regular supervision without further teacher education and training would not have yielded the same results.

But regular supervision is the most important. Lessons learned from other emergency education programmes NRC is involved in are that engaging qualified supervisors who visit the CREPS centres regularly is essential, particularly in remote areas. All teachers need regular and frequent pedagogical support and supervision. If not, even trained teachers may fall back into non-quality teaching. The CREPS teachers believe that if the regular primary school teachers had been exposed to the same training and follow-up as them, they would also have become better. The supervisors' classroom observations are a support to the teachers but also serve as a feedback with respect to the in-service training and what the training should concentrate on. In addition there are several other components that together explain the success such as a regular pay to teachers, provision of some teaching and learning material for free, and a reduced class size among others.

It is difficult to know whether the programme could have come even further if the teachers were better and to what degree the teachers' level influences the learning outcomes.

The connection between teacher qualifications and pupils' learning outcomes is not straightforward. It is interesting to notice that although the majority of the teachers are enrolled in DEP and doing very well on their exams, many do not master English well and also demonstrate other problems in their teaching. This shows that academic training and classroom practice are two different things and is an argument for strengthening teacher training that is closely related to the teacher's performance in the classroom.

One might have expected even better results if the different components in the teacher training were more interlinked and the pedagogical supervision were more systematic and thorough focusing on the teachers' specific weaknesses in reading and writing.

Although the teachers have received training in cross-cutting themes like HIV/Aids, gender, peace and reconciliation and human rights, the results of this training is not known. It was may be more important in level I than in level III.

## **Pedagogical support and control**

It is necessary to separate pedagogical support from control. Supervision has both connotations and the supervisors are doing both tasks. The steady control should not be underrated, as it would not have been possible to obtain the good results without this component. Introducing schooling in a poor, non-bookish society where the community has so many other tasks to attend to needs frequent control to develop. The control of the teachers and the supervisors and their documents has been strict and the teachers appreciate it.

## **Balance between the components**

The balance between the teachers' initial level and the training is not possible to assess ex-post facto as we do not have access to the results of their initial testing in the districts visited and not much information on the two weeks initial training. However, it was given by the authors' of the teachers manuals who also elaborated the syllabus, and they were developed with a view to trained and qualified teachers. The initial teacher training was too short and probably not adapted to the level of the recruited teachers. By comparison the TEP training is of 4-6 weeks' duration.

The pedagogical supervision and the in-service training are well balanced as it is the Teacher Supervisors who are responsible for both, which allows inter-relatedness. We do not know whether the initial training and the supervision has taken the wide age span of the students into account. Training in methods of teaching children who for various reasons learn at a slower pace, has not been given priority.

## **Community**

The communities have been sensitised throughout the programme on the importance of sending their children, particularly girls, to school.. The time the Teacher Supervisors spend on sensitisation of the community should not be underrated.

The community participation is not very strong in CREPS compared to the community participation in the TEP in Congo for example. Their participation in Sierra Leone depends on the type of school structure. May be it would have been stronger if the school structures were more permanent and if CREPS had their own classrooms. Where there are temporary structures, their assistance has been needed on several occasions to re-establish destroyed plastic sheeting and sticks. While in the cases where they have shared classrooms with regular schools, their participation is not needed to the same extent, and only through CTA meetings. Some communities are co-operative, others not. The physical conditions in some of the centres are still not satisfactory as they lack latrines and access to water. This was also stressed as critical in the evaluation in 2003.

Factors that may explain the community attitude are several. One is that this is not a bottom-up but a top-down project, which is nearly always the case in emergency situations and reconstruction. Even though the project was called for at national level, this does not mean that the communities understood and supported it. Lack of an initial thorough sensitisation of the communities, Head Teachers and regular school teachers resulted in misinterpretations and conflicts regarding the objective of the CREPS which delayed its functioning.

As it is now, some of the CTAs are involved in certain aspects of the school management, like seeing to it that the children come to school on time and regularly but it should be discussed whether and on what conditions their participation could be extended.

## **11.2 Co-operation and co-ordination**

The co-operation between MEST /UNICEF/NRC has been very close at national and local level. It is obvious that this important factor has contributed positively to the good results. The appointment of MEST supervisors underlines the close relationship between CREPS and regular school. Furthermore CREPS classes and regular school classes are combined in some cases. This paves the way for a smooth transition of CREPS students and teachers to the regular system.

It is no doubt that there is a strong political will in the MEST. The development of a National Recovery strategy, launching free basic education for all, the new educational act, engagement in and approval of CREPS, and the establishment of a Distance education programme, are all indications of a willingness to act, and also of relative efficiency in their actions. However, limited budgets restrict the number of teachers they can train and accept on their pay-roll. Widespread corruption found at all levels in the education system is also a serious and time-consuming barrier that MEST has to attend to.

NRC is regarded as an efficient and reliable partner by all the partners.

The successful co-operation with the important actors on the scene like MEST and UNICEF stands out as one of the strongest components in the CREPS and is looked upon as good practice. Due to this the NRC supported CREPS is well known among the partners.

## **11.3 Impact**

It is not possible to give full credit to the impact of the CREPS at this stage, as it has only been going on for three years and the results of the children who have sat the NPSE are not known.

As a result of CREPS over-aged children who would otherwise not have had access to school, have benefited from this opportunity. Many are orphans or live with single parents, grandparents or other relatives. It is not uncommon to find that only one of the many children in the family is in school: the CREPS pupil. Particularly girls are inclined to stay behind in their families. Very few of the children we have spoken to had been to school before the CREPS, particularly not the oldest of them. Their families are poor, and the children themselves have to contribute to the families' economy during holidays and before and after school hours. The children have to earn money to pay for school fees (in secondary), uniforms and other expenses.

The former CREPS students in Kono who are now in secondary school are in the same social and economic situation as the majority of the present CREPS students. They are determined to continue even if they have to work to pay the school fees. Although the girls have received financial support in their first year in secondary, the boys have not and they have continued. The drop out is very low.

## 11.4 Cost-efficiency

The costs that will be considered are the human and financial resources that have been put into the CREPS, if they have been spent efficiently and how the input relates to the output.

The main expenses in CREPS are salaries to expatriates and locals, to teachers and supervisors, office expenses, teacher training costs, cost regarding the Distance Education programme, and teaching-learning material. **The total amount spent on CREPS is 3.241.388,75 US dollars** and the main donor has been the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>47</sup>.

### CREPS centres/classrooms

The expenses regarding the temporary school constructions are low and mainly paid by UNICEF. But they have become more expensive than initially planned as they have to be reconstructed time and time again due to heavy rainfalls, storms and thefts. As a consequence of this CREPS has had to be combined with the regular school classes thus increasing the number of children in already overcrowded classrooms. The sharing of premises has also proven difficult. Taking the precarious situation of the regular schools into consideration, one has to question whether temporary constructions and sharing of classrooms with regular school was the most efficient solution. An alternative would have been to construct two-three permanent classrooms adjacent to the regular primary school. The construction of permanent classrooms has been chosen for the TEP in Congo although it is an emergency programme of shorter duration. The solution has proven very successful and has contributed to an excellent relationship with the communities and with the government.

### Teacher training, in-service and supervision

We shall look more closely at this component as it is considered good practice and might serve as an example to others who want to start a similar programme. The teacher training in CREPS consist of the Distance Education programme (DEP), in-service training and regular and frequent pedagogical supervision.

Since the beginning the most important investments in the CREPS have been costs related to the teachers and their training. This involves incentives to supervisors, the monthly workshops (in-service training), other supervision costs (travels etc.) and the Distance Education programme. In addition comes shorter in-service training in subjects like HIV-

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<sup>47</sup> Annexes II and III give more details regarding figures and statistics



AIDS, gender, peace and reconciliation. Giving priority to the teacher education and training was a right decision as one cannot expect to see good learning outcomes unless the teacher is motivated and trained..

### **Is training and supervision expensive?**

The pedagogical supervision, control and in-service in remote places may be considered an expensive solution, compared to programmes that have less frequent follow-up and training. The reason why MEST does not want to continue with the CREPS may be that they are looking for cheaper alternatives.

The costs regarding supervision and teacher training (including DEP and in-service training) have been shared between UNICEF and NRC.<sup>48</sup> **The total amount spent on supervision/follow-up and training of CREPS teachers from 2002-2005 (May) is 350.769 US dollars (NRC 88.7% and UNICEF 11.3%).<sup>49</sup>, and this is about 10% of the total CREPS budget.**

One way to calculate the teacher training and supervision costs is to divide them with the average number of pupils' over the three years. The result is that around 32 us dollars (31.93) is spent per child over three years to train the CREPS teachers, or 10.66 us dollars per year. If we consider that the teachers will continue to teach in the years to come, the costs per student become lower the longer he/she is working.

If we look at the costs in terms of the teachers trained, the costs of training one CREPS teacher per year are 437.82 us dollars which over three years amount to 1313.47 us dollars. (51% goes to cover the supervisors' and follow-up costs, 28% goes to DEP, and totally 48.94% goes to cover DEP and other training).

We do not know specifically how much the training and supervisory components have contributed to the outcomes compared to the teachers' working conditions and the regular pay and other factors. We know however, that the textbooks have not contributed much, as very few books have been provided.

Thus in terms of NRC's total budget, the training-supervision costs are low, but with respect to the MEST budget they may be considered elevated. An unanswered question is whether NRC has developed a "too good" project which is difficult to follow up on a smaller budget and if reducing the costs to supervision and training would have made it easier for the MEST and other organisations to follow it up. The opposite view is to look at the CREPS as a model for what is needed to provide a quality education programme.

### **Is the way the supervisors spend their time efficient?**

The responsibilities of the Teacher Supervisors are vast and not only confined to the follow-up and monitoring of the teachers' teaching in the classroom. In addition they are responsible for checking the lessons plans, registers and statistics, teaching learning materials (TLM), and

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<sup>48</sup> See attachment II for more details

<sup>49</sup> Teachers' salaries are not included. They are more or less equal to the salaries offered in the regular school system. The expats' and locals' salaries involved in the administration of the programme are not included. In addition MEST has provided some textbooks but as they are very few we have not been able to trace the exact amount it represents

sensitisation of the communities regarding the children's education and for checking the status of the CREPS centers' facilities and physical conditions. Their monthly reports reveal that they spend a lot of time on control and supervision regarding the tarpaulins of the schools and the statistics. These things are of course very important for the functioning of the schools, but is it right to use highly qualified pedagogically trained people to do the job?

In Congo the administration of the TEP programme realized that it was too much for the supervisors to do an extensive pedagogical supervision of high quality and at the same time check the statistics and distribute teaching-learning materials. They had therefore engaged others to look after these tasks.

The supervisors' efficiency in dealing with the specific pedagogical problems the teachers encounter is an important input to increase the quality of the teaching. This is not only related to the supervisors' pedagogical qualifications, but to how much time they spend on pedagogical process tasks compared to the control tasks. We have not done a thorough study of this, but can deduct from the supervisors' reports that not enough time has been spent on process oriented tasks in the classrooms.

As the Teacher Supervisors are ambulant they spend a lot of their time on the road. One may question whether there are other ways to organise the supervision which reduces the travelling time. One possibility is to arrange supervision among neighbouring schools where the more advanced teachers supervise and teach other less advanced colleagues. This has been done in Mozambique and in other countries.<sup>50</sup> Building up such a supervisory system also takes time and money and taking the large number of untrained and unqualified teachers into account, it might not have been very efficient.

## 11.5 Sustainability/connectedness

The investments in the teacher training and supervision are sustainable and have increased the number of qualified teachers in the regions. The effects could have been extended if the teachers as they became gradually better qualified shared their knowledge and experience with their untrained colleagues in peer supervision groups.

The connectedness in the programme has been planned from the beginning with respect to the CREPS pupils and teachers. We already know that the group of 517 students who passed the NPSE last year has continued and are doing well in secondary school. The government has contributed with scholarships for girls in their first year in secondary schools. A follow-up study of the students within 3-5 years would make it possible to find out whether they have continued their schooling.

As for the teachers who are enrolled in DEP and who will graduate this year, the government has in principle accepted them on their pay roll, but only about 150. NRC has good hopes that the remaining teachers will also be accepted before the end of 2005.

As it looks now, there is no organisation that is ready to take over the NRC supported CREPS model, and MEST believes that there is no need for it and within a few years when they are planning to phase out. World Vision will continue in Kono, but neither World Vision nor

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<sup>50</sup> cf. Johannessen, E.M.: Management of teachers in emergencies. IIEP, Unesco, in process.

MEST have expressed interest in taking over the NRC supported CREPS. IBIS is interested, but lacks funding.

Through NRC's close and regular collaboration with the MEST and UNICEF, the model is well known to their partners, and one can hope that the best of the programme is being transferred to new educational programmes.

It has to be considered whether NRC has made enough efforts to share lessons learned regarding teacher training and follow-up with their main partners. MEST is now involved in other programmes and partnerships with PLAN International regarding the SABABU project. The supervision in that programme is based on what the MEST supervisors may offer and is not as frequent and regular as NRC's. World Vision also reports that they offer in-service training and supervision but not on the same scale as NRC's CREPS. Only a final evaluation that compares the effects of the different CREPS models could give us information of the efficiency of the various approaches.

MEST is also engaged in a new program regarding community schools and in finding ways faster ways of training primary school teachers. It does not seem very efficient to start new programmes that are not built on the previous and in this respect the connectedness between education in emergencies and development programmes is not good enough in Sierra Leone. The connectedness should have been planned between the partners at an earlier stage.

## **11.6 Relevance**

CREPS was clearly relevant to the situation and for the target groups, and this was also recognized by the government in the National Recovery Strategy. Even so it is a long way from the national level to the districts, and the communities were not sufficiently informed about the CREPS. It was not obvious what the difference was between CREPS and regular schools, thus some communities were sceptical in the beginning. One may say that the relevance became clearer as the communities understood the quality of the programme and how it responded to their needs. The CREPS has made the communities more conscious about the benefits of education also for the older children/youth..

NRC's mandate is to protect IDPs and returnees, and in this connection the selection of the three districts was clearly relevant. CREPS started just after the war was over in areas of returnees. It is reason to believe that the majority of the pupils are returnees, but a complete answer to this has not been possible to establish. It has been, and still is, a lot of movements within the target groups

## **11.7 Reflections on achievements, constraints and Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALP)**

CREPS has gradually improved as the programme has become more stable and the teachers better trained and qualified. It is at its height when it is closing down. Taken the short duration of CREPS into account and its compressed syllabus, the outcomes are rather impressive. In order to evaluate the achievements one has to consider the status of the primary

school system, the fact that the literacy rate is lower in the districts NRC is operating in than at national level, that access to school is more difficult and that the districts in question are less developed.

Many of the problems pointed out in the CREPS evaluation commissioned by UNICEF in 2003 seem to have been sorted out in 2005, at least in the NRC supported CREPS centres.

NRC's mandate is to "seek to provide constructive lasting solutions" and one therefore has to consider the long term effects of their emergency programmes.

The transition between emergency and post-emergency/reconstruction phases is not discussed in NRC's policy papers. In the case of Sierra Leone, CREPS was put into force at an early stage of the reconstruction phase and as such at a very appropriate time according to the mandate.

It is no doubt that CREPS' good results are related to the fact that it has been allowed to develop over three years. But an ALP of 3 years' duration creates expectations. One of the teachers said: "When NRC is phasing out we'll lose both our father and our mother". The parents praise the CREPS, but they want the support to continue also for their children in secondary school. Thus, CREPS has not only inspired hope and optimism as the teachers and children learn and develop, but has also created a hope of being further provided for. Sierra Leone is still in an early phase of reconstruction and although free basic education has been declared, the quality of this education is poor. The gap between what the regular school can offer and the CREPS is wide and it will take many years to fill this gap.

There are at least 3-400.000 children/youth out of school in Sierra Leone, and we do not know exactly how many of them who are too old for regular primary school. In this perspective between 8-9000 children/youth in the target groups have been reached through CREPS. But only about half of them have sat the NPSE.

Is this a satisfactory result? Yes and no. It is satisfactory that these children have had a chance to schooling because of CREPS. This golden opportunity has allowed some of them to finish primary school and continue in secondary. Those who were transferred to secondary last year show good progress and little drop-out. In this respect the effects of the CREPS are most probably more durable than the effects of the TEP who experiences a heavy drop out when the children are transferred to primary (in Congo and Angola).

On the other hand we do not know what will happen to the around 4.500 children in CREPS when they are transferred to regular primary school. It is however likely that they have built up more motivation over the three years than they would have done after one year only.

Another target group is the untrained and unqualified CREPS teachers. The prospect of becoming a recognized teacher has been very motivating. But there are about 300 teachers who get this opportunity, which is a small number compared to the needs. The qualification of teachers contributes to long term effects if and when the government accepts all of them. We do not know what will happen to the second half if the process drags on for too long. The future of the students and teachers depends on the government and how they look upon quality vs. access. It is after all cheaper for the government to hire untrained and unqualified or even voluntary teachers than trained ones.

The conclusion is that it is not possible at this stage to know the long term effects of the CREPS neither in terms of the pupils nor in terms of the teachers.

NRC's mandate does not exclude ALPs like CREPS. It might be interesting to develop ALPs in some countries to know more about the advantages and disadvantages compared to shorter emergency education programmes.

### 11.8 Good practice

The findings from the evaluation of the CREPS in Sierra Leone include three examples of “good practice”.

It has to be stressed that there is no strict scientific foundation for this finding. In other words, we do not know in scientific terms to what degree “good practice” influences the outcomes, but it is a judgement based on experience and lessons learned from other countries. The reason to highlight examples of good practice is to draw the attention to solutions that may be studied by other organisations and countries. It is not necessary to copy a “good practice” but one can take note of factors that one wants to develop in another context.

The first example of “good practice” is the excellent co-operation between MEST, NRC and UNICEF, which is rare to find. It is characterized by a strong formal as well as informal relationship. It is reason to believe that this component has facilitated the different steps that have been taken over the years to improve the programme and that it also has an impact on the sustainability.

The second example is the development of the databases regarding the enrolment, attendance and performance of the CREPS pupils. This allows the management to assess the developments in the programme continuously and to take note of changes that need to be corrected. It is indispensable to quantify data in order to evaluate the achievements and the constraints of a programme.

The third example is how the teacher training components have been organised, consisting of formal academic training via Distance Education to qualify for a Teacher Certificate, a monthly in-service training related to a frequent and regular pedagogical supervision in the classrooms done by the Teacher Supervisors. It is reason to believe that this way of supporting the teacher’s development has contributed to the good learning outcomes.

## 12 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations follow the summary and discussion of the findings. It is also based on conversations with NRC staff in Sierra Leone regarding lessons learned.

As NRC is phasing out it is not possible to improve the programme further. The recommendations are therefore meant as advice to NRC and other organisations that are planning to start similar accelerated learning programmes in other countries.

It is not possible to know the exact importance of each of the components in the CREPS that have contributed to the positive outcomes. Several factors have interacted. It is also a danger to give recommendations and advice which are taken out of their context. Therefore the following recommendations have to be understood in relation to the presentation and analysis of the findings.

### **Planning and the role of the government (MEST) and other leading agencies**

- **It is essential to establish a close and formal co-operation with the government (Ministry of Education) from the beginning and a memorandum of understanding should be signed.**
- **Agreements with other leading agencies are also recommended** to avoid competition and double work.
- **The memorandum of understanding must include a plan on how to qualify unqualified and untrained teachers and on which conditions, and when the Ministry of Education will take over the responsibility for the teachers' salaries**
- **The Ministry of Education must appoint staff who is responsible for the connection between the government and the implementing partners at national and district level. Working closely together is essential.** In Sierra Leone this has been solved by appointing a CREPS focal point in MEST and a MEST supervisor in the districts.
- **The implementing partner should take notice of engaging local personnel which are able to develop sustainable cooperative relationships.** The collaboration between NRC, MEST and UNICEF is one of the strong components in the CREPS in Sierra Leone, and reflects the importance of good formal and personal relationships.

### **Starting the programme**

- **It is recommended to make sure to have funding for the whole period of three years before a programme like CREPS is introduced.**

- **A local needs assessment is recommended. The implementing partner should take part in the needs assessment together with the Ministry of Education and other relevant partner**
- **It is necessary to spend considerable time in the field on sensitisation of the communities (including teachers and Head Teachers) in the beginning regarding the purpose and objectives of the programme**
- **Starting on a small scale is another recommendation.** It is easier to take control of the various components in the programme when it is small and manageable and to introduce changes as one gains experience.
- **Setting criteria for the selection of teachers is recommended. It should be avoided to engage qualified and trained teachers who are already on government pay-roll.**
- **The teachers must pass an entrance test and the cut-off must be decided.**
- **Efforts must be made to recruit female teachers. Experience from other countries shows that one may have to accept lower qualifications for female teachers.**
- **It is recommended that the co-operating partners participate in the selection of teachers keeping a list of eligible candidates who have passed the test**
- **The target group of pupils must be in line with the organisation's mandate and in the right age group. It must be ensured that children who can enter regular school are not accepted.**
- **Different approaches must be addressed regarding how to increase the enrolment and retention of the girl student and how to improve her school performance**
- **It is recommended to discuss whether an accelerated programme should set an upper limit with respect to age.**
- **It is strongly recommended not to accept more than 40 students per class.** This would allow the teacher to give attention to slow learners.

### Selecting school structures

- **It is recommended to select more solid school structures in a three years' programme.**
- **It is recommended to construct classrooms/centres close to the primary schools which may be used as regular classrooms after the CREPS has closed down.**
- **The community should be engaged as partners in the school constructions from the beginning and constructions should not start in areas where the communities are not willing to contribute. Division of responsibility between the implementing partners and the communities has to be decided.**

- **It has to be ensured that the physical construction of the centres/classrooms is fit for teaching and that it has the necessary facilities.**

### **The community' responsibility**

- **The community should be partly responsible for the management of the centres/classrooms controlling the teachers' and the pupils' attendance and see to it that the construction and the furniture are well protected.**

### **The implementing organisation**

- **It is recommended to develop data bases on pupils' enrolment, attendance, drop out and achievements from the beginning and to update them each semester.** NRC has established a good practice in this respect.
- **The implementing organisation needs to engage enough staff that is strong in administration, logistics and statistics at national and local level**
- **It is recommended to engage international experts (expats) in the initial stages of the programme also at field level in order to ensure proper training of national counterparts.**
- **A decision regarding the size of the teacher and supervisor incentives has to be made with a view to the salary level in the regular school system.**
- **The implementing organisation should stress the teacher training and make sure that the different components are interrelated. It is strongly recommended to combine academic teacher training (when applicable) with in-service training and continuous pedagogical supervision.** This is another area of good practice developed in the NRC supported CREPS.

### **Supervisors**

- **It is advisable to select supervisors before the teachers thus enabling them to take part in the selection of teachers.**
- **A two weeks' initial training should be arranged for the Teacher Supervisors as well as continuous in-service training in subjects they deem necessary**
- **It is advisable to select Teacher Supervisors (TSs) who have a good academic background (preferably a Bachelor degree) as well as experience from primary school teaching. Efforts must be made to recruit female supervisors.**



- **The Teacher Supervisors (TSs) report to an Education Supervisor who has to develop a prioritised plan for the pedagogical supervision based on classroom observations. The job description has to emphasize that the TSs should spend about 50% of their time guiding teachers in the classrooms according to the prioritised plan. The plan should include how to do a systematic stepwise pedagogical supervision in the prioritised areas. The Education supervisor has to see to it that the plan is followed and that the in-service training (monthly workshop) is based on the results of the month's pedagogical supervision.**
- **The format of the monthly reports from the Teacher Supervisors should include the teaching- learning process, which specific actions and advice they have recommended regarding the teaching and how their advice is followed-up**
- **It is recommended to engage staff other than Teacher Supervisors who is responsible for the statistics at district level. A standardised register on enrolment, attendance and drop out which is easy to fill in should be developed, and the teachers should be trained in how to do it.**
- **The communities must be continuously sensitised about the importance of sending their children to school, particularly the girls. This work should be done by the Teacher Supervisors.**

### **Teacher training**

- **It is recommended to extend the initial teacher training to four weeks.**
- **It is recommended that the Teacher Supervisors also take part in the initial training and that they, together with the Education Supervisors, are responsible for the planning and facilitation of the in-service training (monthly workshop) and the link between the in-service and the pedagogical supervision.**
- **It is recommended to pay attention to how the teachers can be formally qualified and obtain a Teacher Certificate (when applicable) while they are in-service for instance through a Distance Education programme.**
- **Training programmes, manuals and syllabus have to be adapted to the teachers' level and at the same time be in line with the requirements in regular school**
- **The implementing organisation together with the Ministry of Education and other partners have to discuss the main components in the initial and continuous teacher training, and make sure to balance subject orientation with teaching methodologies, classroom management, the use and development of locally made education materials and textbooks. Emerging themes like HIV/Aids, gender, peace and reconciliation are particularly relevant in the first year. Regarding how to organise teacher training with respect to contents and methods, particularly participatory methods, the booklets on teacher training recently developed by NRC are strongly recommended.**

- **It is recommended to give the teacher some supplementary training in how to teach slow learners.**
- **It is suggested to find a balance between preparing the children for the national final exams and exposing them to a broader range of subjects, teaching methods and supplementary education materials.**
- **It is recommended to find ways of strengthening the teachers and children's' competence in the language of instruction by extra training and supplementary readings. The relationship between the local language and the language of instruction also needs to be decided and whether the teachers should use both languages.**
- **It is recommended to establish a Teacher Resource centre in each district under the auspices of the Inspector of School. It should hold a library, supplementary readings, computer facilities when possible, and other education materials relevant for the teachers in their training and teaching. The centres should also serve as a meeting place for teachers who take part in a Distance Education programme.**

### **Connectedness and sustainability**

- **The government and their partners have to discuss how the best elements in the emergency education programmes can be connected to development programmes.**
- **The implementing organisation must pay attention to how the lessons learned in an accelerated programme can be continuously transferred to other organisations and partners. If for instance, a successful way of training and supervising the teachers has been found, the “good practice” needs to be analysed in detail and demonstrated to other partners. To this end it is recommended to videotape parts of the in-service training.**
- **The continuation of the accelerated learning programme needs to be taken into consideration from the beginning.**

### **Assessment and evaluation**

- **The children's progress, drop out and attendance and the teachers' work and development need to be continuously assessed.**
- **It is strongly recommended to evaluate the long term effects of programmes like CREPS 2-5 years after the implementing organisation has phased out.**

## **Recommendations to NRC regarding Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALP)**

In order to give qualified recommendations on NRC's position towards Accelerated Learning Programmes like the CREPS, it is necessary to have the results from the final exams and also to follow the students and teachers over some time. Ideally the CREPS results should be compared with the TEP results before concluding. It would also be interesting to study the impact of other CREPS programmes in Sierra Leone, for instance the World Vision's in Kono, and compare their results with NRCs.

- **It is recommended to do a final evaluation of the CREPS in Sierra Leone after 2-5 years particularly tracing the effects on the pupils and the teachers.**
- **It is recommended to try out an ALP like the CREPS in another country to acquire more experience with this type of programme**
- **It is strongly recommended that NRC does not end up with "one size fits all", but that the organisation, depending on resources, funding and other conditions, finds out whether the situation calls for ALPs or shorter emergency education programmes.**

## ANNEXES

### Annex I Methodology

The field work in Sierra Leone was carried out in the period May 9 to May 26. Two of the three locations were visited: Kono and Kailahun. In addition the team leader had a conversation with the field officer for Kambia in Freetown. One international and one local evaluator were involved in the fieldwork. The local evaluator did most of the interviews with children and the community and she also did classroom observations. The team leader did most of the interviews with the teachers, classroom observations and interviews with partners, head teachers, supervisors, education officials at district and national level and NRC staff. The first 1-2 days the team visited classrooms and held interviews together, and afterwards we worked separately most of the time enabling us to cover more centres/classrooms.

The team leader had prepared a detailed guide for the interviews and classroom observations before the fieldwork started based on the document analysis. In addition some questions were added.

We asked the field offices to make sure that the schools/centres visited would give us a balanced picture of the situation, allowing us to see good or very good schools/teachers as well as those they considered average or below average. We spent 5 days in Kono and 5 days in Kailahun and three days travelling. The rest of the time was spent in Freetown and on travels. In Kono we made two visits to secondary schools that had received CREPS students last year and spoke with the students and some of the teachers. We were also able to take part in the monthly workshop that took place on a Saturday during our stay in Kono. In both locations we had meetings with a group of teachers as well as with individual teachers. We had separate talks with 4-6 of the pupils (boys and girls) during or after school hours. One day in each location we accompanied the supervisors observing their work in the classrooms and how they advised the teachers. The classroom observations lasted about an hour in each class.

We started by visiting the schools/centres and talked with the HT, observed in classrooms, talked with the teachers, with the students and/or with the parents/community. We observed in one regular classroom and in some classrooms in both locations that had combined level III with class 6 in regular school.

As the visits took place after the national exam (NPSE), the teaching and the attendance was not regular. We noted a high number of absences in some schools/classes, but lower in other cases.

Totally we have visited:

- 10 CREPS' centres
- Observed in 19 classrooms and in one regular school classroom (but a few others were combined level III and regular class 6)
- Spoken to 6 Head Teachers/Vice Head Teachers and 44 teachers
- Spoken to 67 CREPS pupils and secondary school students (former CREPS) and 28 CTA members and community members
- Participated in the monthly workshop in Kono (1 day)

## **Annex II**

### **List of people interviewed and schools/centres visited**

Mrs. Ellen Dahl, Country Director NRC, Freetown  
Mr. Georg Mevold, Project Coordinator for Kono and Kailahun and Deputee Country Director NRC, Freetown  
Mrs. Nancy Smart, Education Manager, NRC, Freetown  
Mrs. Magnhild Norgård, former NRC employee, Kono  
Mr. Gunnar Walther Richter Johansen, former NRC employee, Kono  
Mrs. Merriall Davies, Project Officer, Education, UNICEF, Freetown  
Mr. Stephen Korossa, MEST, CREPS focal point, Freetown  
Mr. William Taylor, Director General of Education, MEST, Freetown  
Mr. S.P. Sorrie, Principal, Freetown Teachers College  
Mrs. Martyna Foday, Coordinator Distance Education Unit, Freetown Teachers' College  
Mrs. Miriam Murray, (former) Learning adviser, Plan International, Freetown  
Mr. Abu Yamah, Officer in charge, World Vision, Freetown  
Mr. Taplima Muana, Head of education programme, World Vision Freetown  
Mr. Mattia Dimoh, Child Protection Programme, World Vision, Freetown  
Mr. Alpha Bangura, Field officer, NRC Kono.  
Mr. Fullah, Deputee Head Teacher, Aladura, Kono  
Mr. T.M.T. Komba, District Inspector of Schools, Kono  
Mr. K.J.Y. Kaseyama, Inspector of schools, II  
Mrs. Margaret Ellie, Teacher Supervisor CREPS, Kono  
Mrs. Margaret Jenkins, Teacher Supervisor CREPS, Kono  
Mr. Komba Bockarie, Education Supervisor, Kono  
Vice Principal, Ahmadiyya Islamic Secondary School, Kono  
Mr. John Fullah, class teacher Ahmadiyya Islamic Secondary School, Kono  
Mr. Stephen Komba, Class Teacher, Catholic secondary school for girls, Kono  
Mr. David F. Pessima, Deputee and acting head teacher, Sewafe, Kono  
Mr. Joseph Conteh, Field Coordinator, Kailahun  
Mr. Joseph S. Genda, Head Teacher, Boorbu primary school, Kailahun  
Mr. D.L. Momoh, Head Teacher, Yandohun  
Mr. Jonnie Gabriel, Education Supervisor, NRC Kailahun  
Mr. Matthew Momoh, MEST Supervisor, Kailahun  
Mr. Alfred M. Mattia, Teacher Supervisor Kailahun  
Mr. Edward S. Bangura, Teacher Supervisor, Kailahun  
Mr. Jacob Navo, Teacher Supervisor, Kailahun  
Mr. Ibrahim Shaw, Teacher Supervisor, Kailahun  
Mr. Fredrick K. Lansama, District Inspector of Schools, Kailahun  
Mr. Ahmed Kutubu, Assistant Project Officer Education – East. Unicef, Kenema  
Mr. James J. Brewah, Field Coordinator NRC Kambia

### **Schools/CREPS centres visited:**

#### **KONO**

Aladura, Kono (spoke with Vice Head Teacher, meeting with CTA committee (community-teacher association), observation in one regular classroom, observation in one CREPS classroom –three lessons (combined class) and conversation with the three CREPS teachers (one female), conversation with four CREPS children).

Workshop Kono (observation of workshop, conversation with 10 teachers)

Ahmadiyya Islamic Secondary school (Vice principal, two class teachers, one group of students (5)

Girls' Catholic secondary school, Kono (one class teacher and a group of students (6)

Kdec CREPS centre, Kono (together with supervisor, observation in one classroom, spoke with one (female) qualified teacher)

Kdec Koeyor (conversation with five students, classroom observation in three different classrooms together with supervisor, three teachers)

Sewafe (teaching in the morning, observation in two classrooms (level III and class 6 merged) spoke with two groups of children (totally 9), spoke with Vice principal in regular school, two CREPS teachers, two parents (female) and two community women)

Yengema (observed in two classrooms, spoke with three teachers, and one group of children (6).

#### **KAILAHUN**

Boorbu CREPS center (regular primary nearby but was not there when Creps started) (shelter school, two classrooms, spoke with two groups of children (9) with HT and the two teachers)

Yandohun Creps center, shelter school, three classrooms, no primary school in the neighbourhood. (spoke with Head Teacher, three CREPS teachers, observed in three classrooms, spoke with CTA chairlady and one group of children (6 )

Baoma Center (classroom observation one teacher, spoke to two teachers, observation of supervisor, CTA chairman, Head Teacher and one group of pupils (6)

Kpandebu (spoke with 10 teachers, spoke with CTA deputy chairman and CTA chairlady and treasurer, and a group of CREPS students (9)

Mendekeima (constructed school by NRC) together with Supervisor Jacob Navo, obs. in two classrooms, spoke with the three teachers together with Jacob, and one group of children (5) alone)



### Annex III

#### CREPS EXPENDITURE ON SUPERVISION/FOLLOW-UP AND TRAINING OF CREPS TEACHERS SEPTEMBER 2002-APRIL 2005

	2002			2003			2004			2005			GRAND TOTAL		
	NRC	UNICEF	TOTAL	NRC	UNICEF	TOTAL	NRC	UNICEF	TOTAL	NRC	UNICEF	TOTAL	UNICEF	NRC	
<b>SUPERVISORS COST</b>	19 792	5 935	25 727	44 240	17 793	62 033	45 796	12 257	58 053	17 269	2 175	19 444	38 160	127 097	165 257
													23,1	76,9	100,0
<b>FOLLOW-UP/SUPERVISION</b>	1578	363	1 941	4202	1089	5 291	3393	1447	4 840	1559	190	1 749	3 089	10 732	13 821
													22,4	77,6	100,0
<b>TEACHER TRAINING COST</b>															
<b>DEP</b>	15 351	1 992	17 343	28 101	0	28 101	53 275	2 605	55 880	-	-	-	4 597	96 727	101 324
<b>OTHERS</b>	18 342	1 991	20 333	18 882	5 975	24 857	14 818	4 676	19 494	3 510	2 173	5 683	14 815	55 552	70 367
	33 693	3 983	37 676	46 983	5 975	52 958	68 093	7 281	75 374	3 510	2 173	5 683	19 412	152 279	171 691
													11,3	88,7	100,0
															350 769

#### UNICEF CONTRIBUTED IN KIND 150 MODULES FOR THE FIRST YEAR DEP STUDENTS IN 2002

\*\*Other training includes Supervisors and Head teachers

\*\*UNICEF paid for the initial training of CREPS teachers for 1-2 weeks

All costs are in USD

No. of pupils enrolled in CREPS since 2002

<b>Three academic years</b>	02-03	12 703
	03-04	11 736
	04-05	8 516
		<b>32 955</b>

Average enrolment in 3 years= 10,985 **\$31.93 per 1 CREPS child within 3 years**

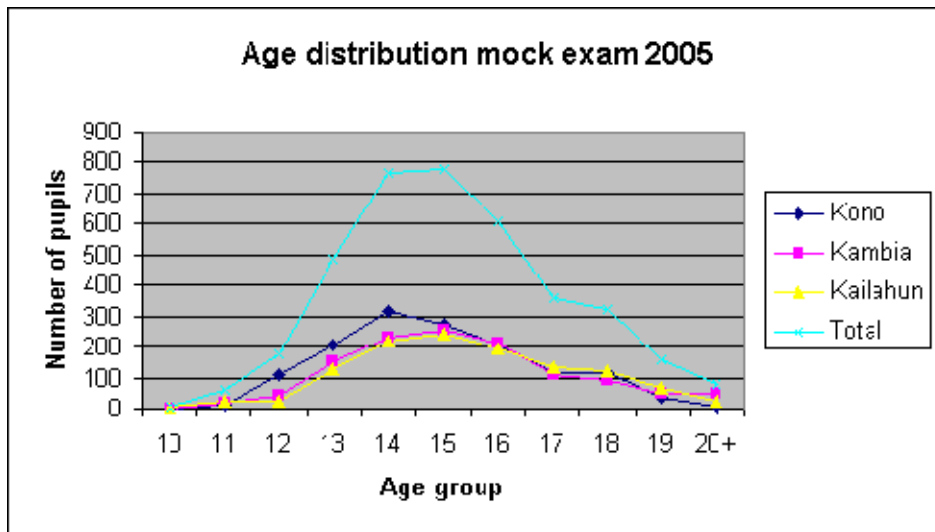
Prepared by Nancy Smart May 2005



## Annex IV<sup>51</sup>

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
<b>Kono</b>	1	12	109	204	318	276	205	113	116	39	5
<b>Kambia</b>	0	21	42	153	232	257	214	109	89	51	49
<b>Kailahun</b>	7	26	27	128	217	246	192	136	120	67	25
<b>Total</b>	8	59	178	485	767	779	611	358	325	157	79



### Statistics

Note on statistics. (ECK)

To provide exact numbers for financial and logistical variables in a project is a difficult task. One of the problems with this project is that the financial year does not correspond to the school year, which result in working out cost per year for students, teachers, etc an issue of how to interpret the data in the fairest way. That said, the available statistics for this programme is remarkably good for its kind. When final exam results are ready and final accounts are done, there will be good opportunities to look further into the outcomes of this programme.

The evaluation was undertaken before the final results from the NPSE were available. The results here are from the mock-exam held in May 2005, which should give a good indicator on how the final results would come out.

<sup>51</sup> The age distribution is based on the data provided to the draft version which later was slightly modified. The tendency is the same

## Students<sup>52</sup>

Area	Enrolled			Writing mock final			Av. age mock final <sup>53</sup>		
	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys
Kono	2026	836	1190	858	512	1370	15	14,6	15,1
%					37%	63%			
Kambia				1240	299	941	15,4	15,2	15,5
%					24%	76%			
Kailahun				1178	353	825	15,4	15	15,6
%					30%	70%			
Total				3276	1164	3136	15,2	14,9	15,4

## Age<sup>54</sup>

Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
Kono	1	12	109	204	318	276	205	113	116	39	5
Kambia	0	21	42	153	232	257	214	109	89	51	49

<sup>52</sup> The statistics are based on the data we received to the draft report and have been slightly modified later. This does not affect the general tendency

<sup>53</sup> When adding all the pupils from the database together to find the average age, I found more pupils than the amount in the aggregated data of exams and fewer than the aggregated data of enrolment. I have not found the source of this, but the impact on the result is marginal.

<sup>54</sup> The age distribution only includes the pupils where age was available. Data from Kailahun was not available at the time the table was prepared. The total number is therefore slightly smaller than the total amount of pupils.