

**Draft prepared for 'POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION 2010' conference in
Edinburgh on 29 March 2010:**

**Community-based Reintegration Programmes in Post-Conflict Environments: New
Approach or Public Relations Gimmick? The Case of Sierra Leone**

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Abstract

The community-based approach to reintegration programmes has become a preferred option in solving some of the problems facing the current 'one-man-one-weapon' system which focuses exclusively on ex-combatants rather than communities. It aims at empowering communities to be actively involved in reintegration programmes to address forms of exclusion in the reintegration process which creates resentment among community members so that a more effective peacebuilding can be achieved. This means that community-based approach to reintegration process is one of the most vital elements that can facilitate a society's transition from conflict to normalcy and development due to its participatory or all-inclusive approach.

Whilst the use of community-based approach to reintegration continues to grow, there is the need to question whether the all-inclusive approach to reintegration programmes is being practised by international development actors or it is just a public relations gimmick. The paper draws on Bartle's (2007) conceptual differentiation between community-based (CB) and community-located (CL) programmes. Bartle argues that for a programme to be community-based it must be chosen, selected and/or controlled by the community. Thus, an outside agency's programme, which is merely located in a community, and have some level of community participation cannot claim CB status. Using planning and implementation factors, the paper compares some programmes that claim to be community-based in Sierra Leone to establish the fact that these programmes are rather community-located; thus deviating from the goal of empowering communities to be actively involved in reintegration programmes in order to facilitate a more effective peacebuilding. These critical insights emerged from an empirical research of the author's work in Sierra Leone. The research is a study of how community-based reintegration programmes can facilitate a more effective peace-building.

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Introduction

In recent years, a growing awareness of a community approach to reintegration (as part of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process) in post-conflict contexts has encouraged many implementing agencies to show increasing interest in this approach, rather than focussing only on ex-combatants (USAID, 2007; Ozerdem, 2009). This community approach to reintegration aims at empowering communities to participate actively in reintegration process to facilitate a more effective peacebuilding. Whilst many NGOs claim to use this reintegration approach, there is the need to investigate the level of community participation in these programmes. Are communities actively participating in these reintegration programmes, or their levels of participation are restricted? In exploring the levels of community participation, the paper compares community reintegration programmes initiated by NGOs, with programmes initiated by communities, to ascertain how they contribute to effective peacebuilding.

The paper is in four parts. First, it sets to define community-based programmes by exploring community participation. Second, it highlights some criticisms associated with DDR reintegration process in the context of Sierra Leone. Third, it discusses the effects of levels of community participation on peacebuilding. The concluding discussions justify the claim that I make in this paper that most NGOs reintegration programmes are community-located; thus, deviating from the goal of empowering communities to be actively involved in reintegration programmes for a more effective peacebuilding.

Community and Community Participation

The word community has been defined by many academics, but it lacks precise focus. Scholars have used different approaches such as locality/boundary, social networks, shared identity/attachment, and norms and habits in defining community (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, Frazer 2000, Gilchrist 2004). Some of these definitions considered the approaches as separate entity (Cohen, 1985); whilst others deemed them to span various entities (Smith, 2001; Jordan, 2002; Gilchrist, 2004). For example, Lee and Newby (1983) did not see community as a common territory; rather, they saw community as a collective life lived on the streets and in public places. This means that people across communities can be linked through networking when they 'share common interest' (Laver, 1983:67).

Based on the imprecise definition of the word community, this paper defines it as a group of people living in the same or different locality and enjoys the presence of a variety of social networks, based on shared identity, norms and habits in order to create value. This definition considers most of the approaches that define community. In a post-conflict context, a community includes ex-combatants (men, women, children and disabled members of different warring groups) and non-ex-combatants (internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, victims of violence, and locals). Community can therefore be considered as a unified organic whole (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999); and remains a warmly persuasive word that never seems to be used unfavourably (Williams, 1976:65). However, there are critics who argue that contemporary communities are weakening due to urbanisation, extended family systems and limited social networks. Such critics see individualism in contemporary communities rather than communities of the past where people lived and worked together (Marwell and Oliver, 1993; Batterill and Fisher, 2002). The question is to what extent these

contemporary limited social networks affect the community of 'old' (the unified organic whole).

Community participation became very popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Foley and Martin, 2000:479). Activists of community participation have argued that rather than helping poor communities to improve their social and environmental circumstances these communities should be made to take direct political action to ensure changes and improvement that will last for a period of time (Midgley et al, 1986:20). The UN interest in community participation became formalized in a number of United Nations reports including Popular Participation in Development (1971) and Popular Participation in Decision Making for Development (1975) (Smith, 2006). Community participation is therefore defined by the UN as 'the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development' (UN, 1981:5).

In recent times, community participation has become very popular with other international organisations such as the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for developmental projects in communities. Community-driven development (CDD) is a term used by the World Bank as 'an approach that empowers local community groups, including local government, by given direct control to the community over planning decisions and investment resources through a process that emphasizes participatory planning and accountability' (World Bank, 2006:6). The World Bank CDD programmes stress community action in post-conflict environments where public institutions are considered weak in order to facilitate rebuilding of local institutions.

The USAID also agrees with the World Bank on the definition of community-driven development in post-conflict environment that 'when the community determines project goals

independently without parameters set by a donor or implementer, a program is said to be CDD (USAID, 2007:5). This definition of CDD is analogous to community-based in biodiversity conservation in the same organisation (USAID). In biodiversity conservation, community-based is defined as ‘initiatives undertaken by communities for the purpose of benefiting their long-term development’ (USAID, 2005:66). However, the term ‘community-based’ differs in definition when applies to post-conflict environment. The defining characteristic of a community-based programme in a post-conflict context is that NGOs initiate programmes in communities and include ‘community participation in decision-making and project implementation’ (USAID, 2007:5). In the post-conflict contexts, the focus is not exclusively on communities, but rather on their participation with NGOs in the planning and implementation process. The question therefore is, ‘why is the term ‘community-based’ defined differently in post-conflict and non-conflict contexts in the same organisation? Are there not communities in post-conflict environments?’

Community-based defined

This paper draws on Bartle’s (2007)², definition of community-based as an activity, construction, service or organisation that is chosen, selected and controlled by a community as a whole and not just some faction. Bartle argues that there is a distinction between community-based (CB) and community-located (CL) programmes, and that an outside agency’s programme which is located in a community cannot rightly claim CB status; also consulting with community members does not make it CB, but rather CL. The definition by Bartle can be interpreted that various activities have been pre-selected for a community to choose or select from, prior to the control of an activity. This notwithstanding, Bartle’s

² <http://www.scn.org/cmp/key/key-c.htm>

definition clearly differentiate between CB and CL programmes. For the purpose of this paper, CB programmes refer to reintegration programmes which are planned and implemented by communities; whilst CL programmes are those planned and implemented by NGOs with some level of community participation. However, the beneficiaries of both CB and CL programmes are community members (ex-combatants and non-ex-combatants); unlike the ‘one-man-one-weapons’ approach to reintegration which focus exclusively on ex-combatants. Having defined CB and CL programmes, we can now discuss some criticisms raised against the DDR programmes in Sierra Leone that which focussed on ex-combatants.

DDR in Sierra Leone: Some Criticisms

Sierra Leone, a country in West Africa, was plunged into civil conflict in the early 1990s when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) led by Foday Sankoh launched an attack from Liberia against the then All People’s Party (APC) government led by Joseph Momoh. The political upheavals which led to a series of coups and counter-coups from 1991 to 1998 necessitated the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) to intervene with series of ceasefire agreements³. In July 1998, the UN intervened by establishing the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) to observe and report violations of ceasefire agreements; and subsequently the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). As part of its mandate, UNAMSIL established the DDR programme to facilitate the peacebuilding process.

³ These ceasefire agreements include the Abidjan Peace Accord in November 1996; the Lome Agreement in July 1999; and the Abuja Agreement in Nov 2000.

DDR of ex-combatants is considered by many international policy makers as one of the most vital elements in any peace-building process because it aims at stabilising a post-conflict situation; reduces the likelihood of renewed violence; facilitates a society's transition from conflict to normalcy and development; and strengthens confidence between former factions by enhancing the momentum toward stability (UN Security Council 2000). Colleta et al (1996) argue that a successful DDR programme is the key to an effective transition from war to peace. This means that a failure of DDR process is likely to prolong conflict situation in post-conflict contexts, thus efforts to transform a community to long-term peace is very important.

In Sierra Leone, the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) was formed to oversee the DDR process. The eligibility criteria for the DDR process in the first and second phases⁴ was that an adult has to be a member of a fighting force and present a serviceable weapon to qualify as ex-combatant. This form of eligibility criteria excluded some ex-combatants who could not present serviceable weapons from the DDR process. The third phase however included an area weapons as part of eligibility criteria to include all ex-combatants but this did not solve the problem as wives and other dependants continued to be excluded from the programme. Besides, the demobilisation phase was characterised by registering all ex-combatants together and issuing them with ID cards without considering their specific needs. Moreover, a transitional safety allowance of \$150 was given to only former combatants. Based on some of these characteristics, DDR in Sierra Leone has been criticised by academics and practitioners alike (Galama and van Tongereen, 2002; Ozerdem, 2009).

⁴ The disarmament process in Sierra Leone was a 3-phased programme. Phase 1 September 1998 – December 1998; phase 2 October 1999 – April 2000; and phase 3 May 2001 – June 2002.

First, DDR has been criticised for excluding ex-combatants without weapons, and other vulnerable groups. Many combatants from the Civic Defence Forces (CDF) who fought against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF)/Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) failed to qualify for the disarmament programme because they used unconventional weapons such as home made rifles which were not classified as weapons under the eligibility criteria. In Kono for instance, about 1,999 of the total number of Donso militia group (a faction of the CDF) forming about 45% were excluded from the programme because their short guns did not meet the required entry criteria (Solomon, 2007). In the absence of weapons, the militia group wanted to use hand grenades, rocket propelled grenades and mines to enter into the disarmament programme, but these were classified initially as ammunition under the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (NCDDR) disarmament guidelines.

Second, the transitional safety allowances of \$150 given to ex-combatants to meet their basic needs during the initial stages of the reintegration phase have been criticised for excluding community members; thus, creating resentment between ex-combatants and community members. During radio 'phone-in' sessions, the main debates by the community have been that 'those who have ruined us are being given the chance to become better persons financially, academically and skills-wise' (Ginifer, 2003:8). Focussing on ex-combatants at the expense of other community members create division among community members and hinders social reintegration.

Third, DDR programmes have been criticised that they are tailor-made to ex-combatants, and these individually oriented programmes impede social reintegration (UNDP 2006). In Sierra Leone, short-term vocational training was planned specifically for ex-combatants without

including other community members. These short-term training programmes for ex-combatants had little prospects of securing them well-paid jobs upon returning to their communities (Ginifer, 2003). Moreover, the exclusion of other community members from benefiting from these reintegration programmes created divisions among other community members who felt that ex-combatants were being rewarded for participating in the conflict that had ruined their lives.

Fourth, it is argued that a community coming out of war has few opportunities to generate funds only to be focussed on ex-combatants instead of communities. The limited opportunity to generate funds for implementation of DDR programmes has been a critical factor in specific programmes. In Kenema, it was revealed that out of 18,756 ex-combatants who registered for DDR process, over 7,000 did not go through the reintegration process, and over 4000 even failed to register within the Eastern Region due to lack of funds⁵. The limitations associated with the extant DDR process calls for a community approach to reintegration process to help address some of the problems.

Community Approach to Reintegration

Based on the criticisms put forward, a body of research is emerging which suggests that everyone affected by the conflict in a community needs to be assisted, especially during reintegration process, and not just the former fighters (Kingma 2002; Ozerdem 2009). It means that reintegration process needs to be approached in a more holistic manner by targeting all groups in communities. The benefits of community approach to reintegration can be enumerated as follows: (1) it will establish social links and connections between ex-combatants and non-combatants for social reconstruction; (2) it will encourage community

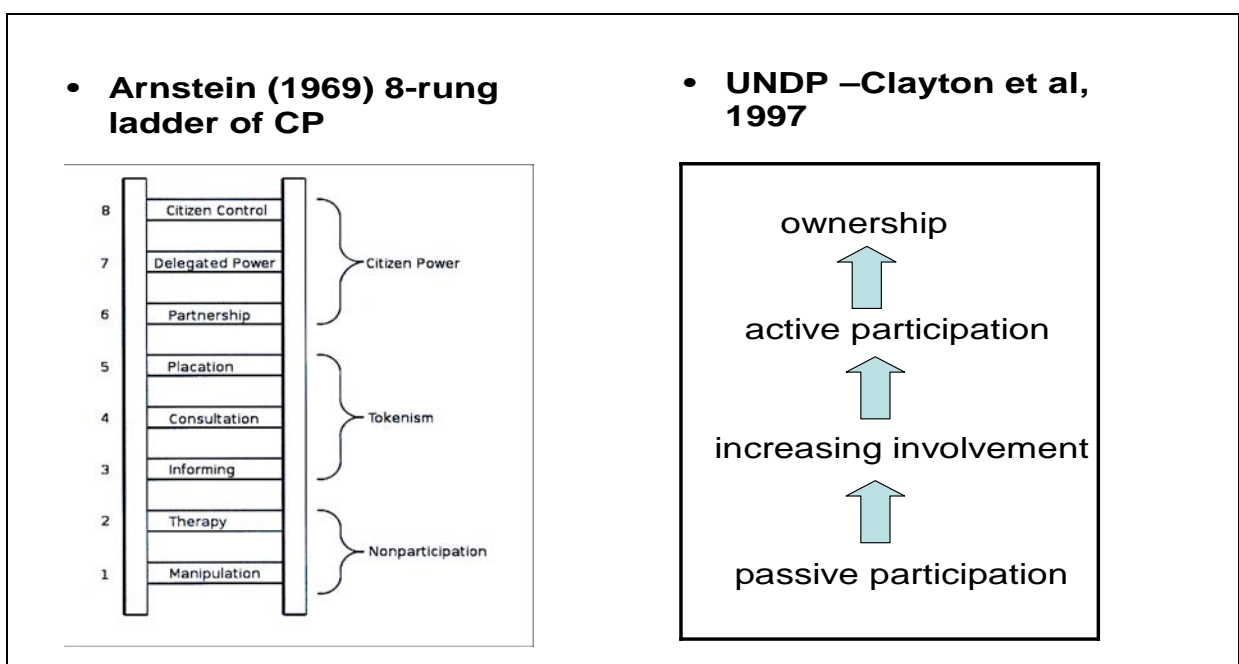
⁵ CARITAS project proposal for Rural Youth Empowerment Programme, Youth Livelihood Development Project, 2008.

participation of programmes for sustainability; (3) community capacity can be strengthened to initiate other programmes for the benefit of the community; and (4) communities will be focussed, rather than ex-combatants. According to Berdal (1996) the importance of community programmes is that they are more sensitive to local needs, more flexible, and geared towards integrating both ex-combatants and non-combatants into communities. Although the literature recognises community reintegration as a critical element for a successful DDR process, the implementation process revealed different levels of community participation in the programmes.

Levels of Participation in Community Programmes

There are different levels of community participation in programmes. Arnstein (1969) used ‘eight-rung ladder’ to describe levels of participation. These are manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and citizen control (See Figure 1 on Arnstein, 1969).

Figure 1: Levels of Participation by Arnstein (1969) and Clayton et al (1997)



She regrouped the rungs into non-participation, tokenism and citizen power. Based on Arnstein's ladder of citizen's participation, non-participation can be described as programmes planned and implemented by NGOs without community participation; tokenism is where communities are consulted without active participation in decision-making processes; whilst the citizen power is when citizens' control their own programmes. Though partnership is considered as citizen power, one could argue that partnership is different from citizen's power or ownership. The UNDP/CSOP, as shown in Figure 1, also describes hierarchical form of participation as passive participation, increasing involvement, active participation, and ownership (Clayton et al, 1997). This hierarchical form of participation is slightly different from Arnstein rungs of citizen's participation. Here, active participation could be described as what Arnstein termed as partnership, and it is different from ownership or citizen's power. With the other levels of participation, passive participation can be described as consulting or informing communities about programmes; increasing involvement is where communities are contacted and begins to take active part in programmes; and ownership is where beneficiaries develop their own initiatives to begin a project.

The level of participation is very important to this paper because it can be used to describe CB or CL programmes. The issue is that all these programmes (whether CB or CL) have some level of community participation, but the level differs from passive to ownership. Using several case studies, the subsequent section examines the level of community participation on community reintegration programmes. The discussion compares community reintegration programmes initiated by NGOs, and those initiated by communities, through the use of peacebuilding factors (improved livelihood, improved human security, enhanced good

governance, and enhanced social reconstruction) to explore whether these programmes can be described as CB, as defined by Bartle's; and also, which of these programmes facilitate a more effective peacebuilding. Table 1 shows programmes used for the discussions. The selection was based on the following criteria: (1) that the programme should be a reintegration programme or facilitates reintegration process; (2) that the programme should include both ex-combatants and non-combatants; and (3) that the programme should have some level of community participation. The time table for the programmes as shown in Table 1 covers a period of 10 years; from 2000, which is immediate aftermath of the conflict through to 2009. This time table period stresses the fact that reintegration is not a short term process as sometimes indicated by the international community. In Sierra Leone for instance, the NCDDR completed the four-year DDR programme for a caseload of over 72,000 former combatants in 2002. However, the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) was formed to take the reintegration process forward. This means that DDR is a long term process from the immediate aftermath of a conflict to a period of normalcy. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible to set a time frame for DDR process in a post-conflict environment.

Using the above criteria to select the cases, one could argue that they are in isolation and therefore drawing conclusion would be inappropriate. Whilst this argument could be cogent there is the need to consider the reasons behind the origins of a community approach to reintegration programmes. The community approach originated to address the limitations of the extant DDR process where ex-combatants are focussed, rather than communities to address issues of exclusion. Community reintegration programmes enable all groups to be included in the reintegration process in order to facilitate a more effective peacebuilding.

Table 1: Time Table of the Cases from 2000-9

Cases	Description	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
1	Women's Vegetable Prod Recovery for Income Generation in Fornikoh	<input type="checkbox"/>									
2	Vocational Training Rehabilitation and Resettlement in Bumpe	<input type="checkbox"/>									
3	Wellington Comm Mgt Team Training in Leadership and Management Skills		<input type="checkbox"/>								
4	Agric Support to Women Vegetable producers' Gps in Foredugu section				<input type="checkbox"/>						
5	Human Rights and Civic Education					<input type="checkbox"/>					
6	Rokel Community Centre								<input type="checkbox"/>		
7	Konia Skills Training Programme, Dama								<input type="checkbox"/>		
8	Women Vocational Training Centre in Krooby, Freetown									<input type="checkbox"/>	

The Effects of Levels of Community Participation on Peacebuilding

Improved Livelihood

Community participation in reintegration programmes can improve community livelihood. In Sierra Leone, the destruction associated with the conflict affected individual livelihoods thus, many reintegration programmes focussed on economic rather than social and political activities. The Skills Training Programme in Konia, Dama, was a 12-month community reintegration programme planned and implemented by Dama Chiefdom to provide employable skills such as weaving, cotton processing, embroidery, and tailoring to the youth aged between 18-35 years. The community used local facilitators from the chiefdom and within the district to train beneficiaries. According to a local committee chairman, *'qualified locals were given the chance to apply for the position as facilitators and this attracted local artisans as well as those from the district.'*⁶ The use of locals, according to a community member, *'created employment opportunities for them to better their living conditions'*⁷. Apart from employment creation, the local artisans also improved upon their skills for the betterment of the community. In Konia, the use of other facilities such as embroidery machines made some of the facilitators to develop additional skills alongside their own.

An interview with community members revealed that apart from creating employment for the locals, the programme facilitated community reintegration. All the respondents interviewed agreed that communities contributed their quota through community works in support of the programme. Moreover, community members were

⁶ An interview with a committee chairman in Konia Dama on 5 May 2009.

⁷ An interview with a member of community management committee in Konia, Dama on 15 April 2009.

abreast with the progress. A respondent remarked that *'the local facilitators kept them informed about the programme from beginning to the end; and this included the provision of financial statements, and progress reports'*⁸. The use of local facilitators in community reintegration programme improves their livelihood and facilitates peacebuilding.

Conversely, the Women Vocational Training Centre in Krooby, Freetown was initiated by the Youth Action International (YAI), a local NGO based in Freetown, to provide one-year, two-phase reintegration programme in computing, tailoring, and hairdressing for women between the ages of 18-30 years who lack education, training and employment. Prior to the commencement of the programme YAI conducted needs assessment survey (NAS) to identify skills needed for the community. As part of the programme, YAI used external facilities⁹ to train and manage the programme.

An interview with community members revealed their dissatisfaction about the use of external facilitators for the programme. Out of 10 respondents interviewed 8 of them criticised the use of external facilitators. A community member remarked that *'we (Krooby community) were excluded completely from the training process because our own people did not get the opportunity to be employed. In spite of the fact that the programme benefited our daughters and wives, the use of local facilitators would have been more beneficial'*¹⁰. Though YAI employed the services of two locals from the community to liaise between the NGO and the beneficiaries, the community felt that they had the capacity to have provided facilitators for the programme. Getting

⁸ An interview with a community member in Konia Dama on 5 May 2009.

⁹ Here external facilitators do not mean foreigners but also Sierra Leoneans who do not come from the local area

¹⁰ An interview with a community member in Krooby, Freetown on 5 April 2009.

more community members in an employable position in post-conflict environment make them financially independent; thus, improving their livelihoods.

Evidently, the level of community participation differs in these two programmes, meanwhile both programmes aimed at creating employable skills to facilitate the reintegration process. The Women Vocational Training used external facilitators for the training, thus preventing local facilitators to be used. The use of external facilitators created a feeling of resentment among community members because they had the capacity to do so. Despite the fact that external facilitators were used, the Krooby community was given a concession to select participants and also provide two liaison officers for the training. These officers were put on monthly salary to liaise between the community and the programme implementers on all matters affecting the participants, and also provide some administrative support. The level of community participation in this programme was more than just informing and consultation, but can be classified as partnership. In comparison, the Konia Skill Training was initiated by the community and employed the services of local facilitators. The use of local facilitators provided opportunity for more people to be financial independent. The level of community participation for this programme can be classified as ownership. In post-conflict contexts, lack of employment can create further conflict; therefore, programmes which create job opportunities for locals are vital for improvement of livelihood.

Second, community participation of reintegration programmes can enhance human security. In Foredugu, the Agricultural Support for Women Vegetable Producers'

Groups Programme was initiated by KCDA¹¹, the chiefdom development umbrella organisation, for six villages¹². The programme aimed at improving food security through the provision of seeds, tools and expertise for the farmers. As a community organisation, KCDA used local knowledge to plan the cultivation to coincide with the rainy season. The community involvement in the programme facilitated its sustainability. An agricultural extension officer remarked: *'the use of community organisation in planning and implementation of the programme encouraged the community to support the programme. Although the programme targeted women in the communities, their husbands assisted them greatly in clearing the land for the vegetable production, and they continued to assist the women through the process'*¹³. Community involvement in this programme from its inception contributed to the continuity of the programme even after the funding from CARE International ceased. A community approach to programmes facilitates sustainability and helps improve food security in communities.

On the other hand, the Vegetable Crop Rehabilitation and Income Generating Programme in Fonikoh, Kenema was initiated by CARITAS, an NGO, to provide tools, seeds, fertilisers, material and technical assistance for women in vegetable production. CARITAS organised series of meetings with the women concerning the availability of land, market for the products, and preservation of crops after harvest, but the community's involvement in the planning and implementation process was limited. This resulted in the delay of planting of crops. A beneficiary lamented that *'CARITAS did not consult the community adequately about the programme and this affected crop production. The NGO initiated an agricultural activity for us when the*

¹¹ Koya Community Development Association

¹² The villages are Malenkie, Rogbom, Kurankoh, Mabuya, Malegbeh, Romaka.

¹³ An interview with an agricultural extension officer in Masiaka on 18 April 2009.

*planting season had already started.*¹⁴ Also, in another argument to stress the fact that the agricultural programme was ill-timed due to lack of community participation, a beneficiary said, *'we had to take instructions from the NGO because our suggestions were not considered at all'*¹⁵. The lack of community participation can affect crop production that relies solely on weather conditions.

Considering these two agricultural activities, it was evident that the one in Fonikoh lacked community participation, which affected the timing of planting and subsequently the harvest. Communities were informed about the programme but did not participate actively in the planning and implementation process. The lack of community participation resulted in termination of the programme immediately after funding from CARITAS ceased. However, the vegetable production in Foredugu was locally owned so communities managed their own programme through participatory process. Using local knowledge, crops were cultivated to coincide with the main farming season. *'A good harvest was made at the end of the farming season; crops were sold to generate income for the farmers, and also consumed locally'*¹⁶. This programme was more sustainable because the women continued with the farming activities when the programme was officially completed. It could be argued that agricultural programmes, which are planned and implemented by communities, are likely to be sustainable; and these can help improve human security.

Third, community participation in decision making processes can enhance good governance at the local level. Community decision making processes such as

¹⁴ Interview with a programme beneficiary at Fornikoh on 23 May 2009

¹⁵ Interview with a programme beneficiary at Fornikoh on 24 May 2009.

¹⁶ An interview with a community member in Foredugu on 8 May 2009

community management committee that was democratically elected can give people a stake in a society to address issues through the use of ballot box rather than resorting to conflict. In Rokel, a 10-member community management committee (CMC) was elected through a democratic process to plan and implement the Community Centre Project. The members were elected from the community, and the election was supervised by the national commission¹⁷ responsible for the reintegration process. An interview with 12 respondents revealed that about 90% agreed that the election for the selection of the management committee was free and fair. The election offered an opportunity for all groups such as ex-combatants, IDPs, refugees, and other community members to be represented. Moreover, a 25% and 15% quota system was given to women and the disabled respectively so that all groups could be represented. An interview with a member of the management committee states: *'the democratic process in which the committee was elected gave people the opportunity to be represented. Even women were encouraged to stand for elections.'* Though women were not equally represented as men, the quota system offered them an opportunity to contribute their quota towards community decision making.

On the contrary, in Wellington, the 28-member management team for the Community Management Team Training in Leadership and Management Skills project, which was organised by Grassroots Gender Empowerment Movement (GGEM), a local NGO, was selected from already existing organisations such as the Board of Trustees of Wellington Community Centre; Union of Wellington Association or Social Affairs (UWASA); Wellington Area Development Association (WADA); and the Civic Development Unit (CDU). In total, 7 people were selected from each of the 4 existing

¹⁷ An interview with a member of CMC in Rokel on 12 April 2009.

institutions to make up the number. This process of selecting the management committee was later opposed by community members leading to the closure of the only community centre which was being managed by the team. At the time of my field work, the case was still pending in court. A community member remarked that *'using the existing organisations did not give us opportunity for other members within the community to be represented'*¹⁸. He lamented that over the years, the community had not seen anything meaningful in terms of community development from the management team.

Comparing these two management committees, it was evident that the selection process for the Wellington team was fairly easy but the undemocratic process eventually led to conflict in the community, and this resulted in the closure of the community centre. The level of community participation for the selection of the management was partnership because the Wellington community selected the committee members with GGEM, the local NGO which offered them the training. Despite the fact that the selection procedure was very simple, it did not help in reconciling the community; rather, it created division amongst them.

On the contrary, the level of community participation for electing the management committee in Rokel was ownership. The committee was democratically elected, and this process brings community members together and facilitates community cohesion. Moreover, the democratic process puts structures in place for subsequent electioneering process in communities. In post-conflict contexts, democratic process can be time consuming and very expensive to implement, but if there is the need to

¹⁸ An interview with a community member in Wellington on 5 April 2009

transform a community from a period of conflict to normalcy where development can thrive in the long-term, then efforts should be made to include all groups in this process for a more effective peacebuilding.

Fourth, community participation in reintegration programmes can enhance social reconstruction. In Masiaka, the Human Rights and Civic Education Programme was initiated by the community to raise awareness of human rights violations by strengthening the capacity of the participants in the areas of recognition, respect, and protection. Activities of the programme included a 4-day training workshop for facilitators and service providers; a 2-day joint workshop for members of the security services; and a 2-day workshop for offenders to say sorry to their victims for the atrocities caused during the war, and also sensitising the community to recognise and to respect human rights. It was a non-judicial process adopted by the community.

The programme brought different organisations such as health, police, and other para-military services to work together and help create social bonding among locals. An interview with a police officer who participated in the programme pointed out that the programme helped him to interact with other security personnel on issues affecting the locals. He said prior to the training, *'I did not know how important it was to share ideas with other security services, but the course made me to learn one thing: that human rights issues affect us all.'*¹⁹ According to the police officer, the course facilitated the creation of a Complaints, Discipline, Internal, and Investigations

¹⁹ An interview with a police officer in Masiaka on 8 April, 2009.

Department (CDIID) in Masiaka Police Station to assure the community that their human rights issues will be protected.

Apart from the direct beneficiaries, it was apparent that the programme facilitated social cohesion among community members. About 90% of respondents agreed that the programme helped them respect the rights of their colleagues and facilitated social reintegration. It was evident that prior to the programme; domestic violence was widespread without the community knowing that their human rights were being violated. *'We have gone through a series of abuses from childhood without reporting these cases. We didn't even know they were forms of abuse until this programme. This is beneficial to us, our children, and the community'*²⁰. The programme created awareness about human rights abuses and violations in the community.

On the other hand, the Vocational Training for Rehabilitation and Resettlement Programme in Bumpe, which was initiated by SLOIC²¹, an NGO, to provide employable skills in building construction for the youth, experienced difficulties in providing social reconstruction among community members. The programme aimed at providing carpentry and masonry skills to the youth so that they could help rebuild the community but many beneficiaries migrated from Bumpe to seek greener pastures elsewhere on completion of the programme. A first-come-first-serve recruitment process made beneficiaries to feel that they were selected based on their own effort and therefore not obliged to stay and develop the community. Besides, the community did not show much commitment in the programme; thus leaving the beneficiaries on

²⁰ An interview with a community member in Masiaka on 9 April 2009.

²¹ Sierra Leone Opportunities Industrialization Centre (SLOIC) was formed in 1976 by Ferenke Kargbo to help the youth acquire vocational skills. The Centre engages in skills like carpentry, masonry, home management, auto mechanics, electricity, and general agriculture

their own to go through the programme. On completion, most of them abandoned any community rebuilding process.

About 80% of respondents indicated that the programme failed to achieve community reconstruction. They were of the view that the community did not benefit much from the programme. An interview with a community member highlighted his frustration as follows: *'upon receiving training, most of the youth left this community to seek greener pastures in the city and left the old folks behind. They did not help in rebuilding the community; instead, they went to use the acquired skills for their personal gains. No one will help us rebuild our community apart from ourselves and that is why the government trained the youth free of charge. In fact, this community did not benefit much from the skill training'*²². The lack of community participation from the onset of the programme contributed to lack of commitment on the part of beneficiaries to assist in rebuilding the community.

Evidently, the Vocational Training for Rehabilitation and Resettlement Programme in Bumpe did not have clear objectives. Beneficiaries were unaware that the programme was aimed at rebuilding their community; thus, they left the community in search for jobs in the cities. A beneficiary commented that *'we thought the programme was meant to provide us with employment as part of the reintegration process.'*²³ The programme lacked community participation and commitment because communities were only informed and consulted about the programme. The lack of community participation contributed to the beneficiaries deserting the community; thus, creating divisions among community members. On the other hand, the Human Rights and

²² An interview with a community member in Bumpe on 18 May, 2009.

²³ An interview with a programme beneficiary in Bumpe on 22 April, 2009.

Civic Education Programme in Masiaka had clear objectives and expected results. The programme was planned and implemented by the community. It was locally owned, thus the community showed much interest in the programme. Local organisations such as police, para-military, health, and other community groups' that participated in the programme facilitated social reconciliation for effective peacebuilding.

Concluding Discussion

Based on the above discussions, the question I will like to pose is: to what extent does community participation in reintegration programmes effective in ensuring peacebuilding? Clearly, the discussions revealed differences in levels of community participation in various programmes which claim community-based status. Based on the above discussions, Table 2 represents the levels of community's participation in all the programmes. The levels of community participation range from informing and consultation (tokenism) to citizens' control (ownership). As shown on Table 2, the levels of participation for the Women's Vegetable Production in Fornikoh, and the Vocational Training for Rehabilitation and Resettlement in Bumpe can be described as 'informing' and 'consultation'. This is because communities did not participate actively in such programmes. However, the Women Vocational Training Programme in Krooby, Freetown, and the Wellington Community Management Team Training in Leadership and Management Skills can be termed as 'partnership' because communities were given some concessions to take part in the programme. In Wellington for example, the community worked with GGEM in the selection of the management team training. As described by Bartle's (2007), these programmes

cannot claim CB status due to the levels of community participation, thus, they can be described as CL programmes.

Table 2: Levels of Community Participation

Project Title	Informing	Consultation	Placation	Partnership	Delegated Power	Citizens Control
Women's vegetable production in Fornikoh	x	x				
Vocational training for rehabilitation and resettlement in Bumpe	x	x				
Wellington community management team training in leadership and management skills	x	x	x	x		
Agric support to women vegetable producers' Group in Foredugu section					x	x
Human rights & civil education in Masiaka					x	x
Rokel community centre					x	x
Konia skills training programme in Dama					x	x
Women Vocational Training Programme in Krooby, Freetown	x	x	x	x		

Source: Author

On the other hand, the levels of community participation for the following programmes can be described as community ownership: (1) Agric Support to Women Vegetable Producers' Group in Foredugu Section; (2) Human rights & civil education in Masiaka; (3) Konia skills training programme in Dama; and (4) Konia skills training programme in Dama. These programmes were planned and implemented by the communities using CMC and local facilitators. Unlike the programmes initiated

by NGOs, communities participated actively in these programmes. In post-conflict communities, programmes that are initiated by communities bring different groups together for social reconstruction. These programmes can therefore be termed as CB as defined by Bartle. Table 3 shows the classification of CB and CL programmes

Table 3: Community-based and Community-located Programmes

Cases	Project Title	CB	CL
1	Women's vegetable production in Fornikoh		x
2	Vocational training for rehabilitation and resettlement in Bumpe		x
3	Wellington community management team training in leadership and management skills		x
4	Agric support to women vegetable producers' Group in Foredugu section	x	
5	Human rights & civil education in Masiaka	x	
6	Rokel community centre	x	
7	Konia skills training programme in Dama	x	
8	Women Vocational Training Programme in Krooby, Freetown		x

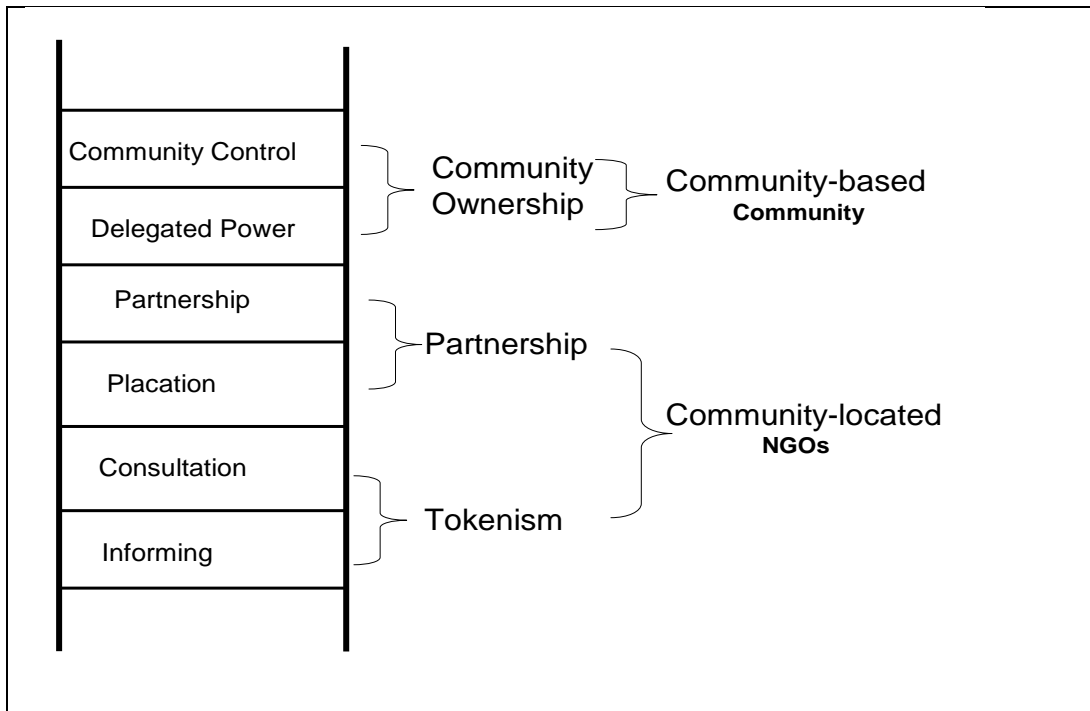
Source: Author

Based on the above discussions, I argue for six rungs of community participation in relation to community reintegration programmes as follows: tokenism (informing, consultation); partnership (placation and partnership); and community ownership (delegated power and community control). Figure 2 shows the six rungs. Tokenism is the minimum level of community participation where communities are informed or consulted about a programme. At this level, NGOs conduct needs assessment surveys to identify problems facing the community, and decide on the type of project which is of importance to the community. However, identifying a project with the community

does not mean that the community will be involved in the planning and implementation process. Partnership is the next level where NGOs start giving some concessions to communities for them to begin to take active part in the programme. Here, communities can form a management committee to advice or work in collaboration with NGOs. They can be given the task of selecting participants for training, or providing local labour in support of a programme. The highest level of the ladder is community ownership where citizens take control of programmes. At this level communities plan and implement programmes by delegating powers to management committees that are elected by the community. Based on these levels of community participation, tokenism and partnership are what this research termed as CL programmes, and they are mostly implemented by NGOs; whilst community ownership programmes are referred to as CB. These discussions show that most NGOs programmes lack community participation to be referred to as community-based approach.

In spite of the fact that NGOs programmes restrict the levels of community participation in community reintegration programmes; this paper cannot conclude that all community reintegration programmes should have only local ownership. This is because in the immediate aftermath of conflict it is difficult sometimes for communities to have the capacity to initiate own programmes. In such situations, the paper agrees with the USAID definition of community-based which focuses on the participation of communities in programmes that are initiated by NGOs. However, upon settling down, communities should be encouraged to plan and implement their own reintegration programmes.

Figure 2: 6 Rungs of Community Participation of Community Reintegration Programmes



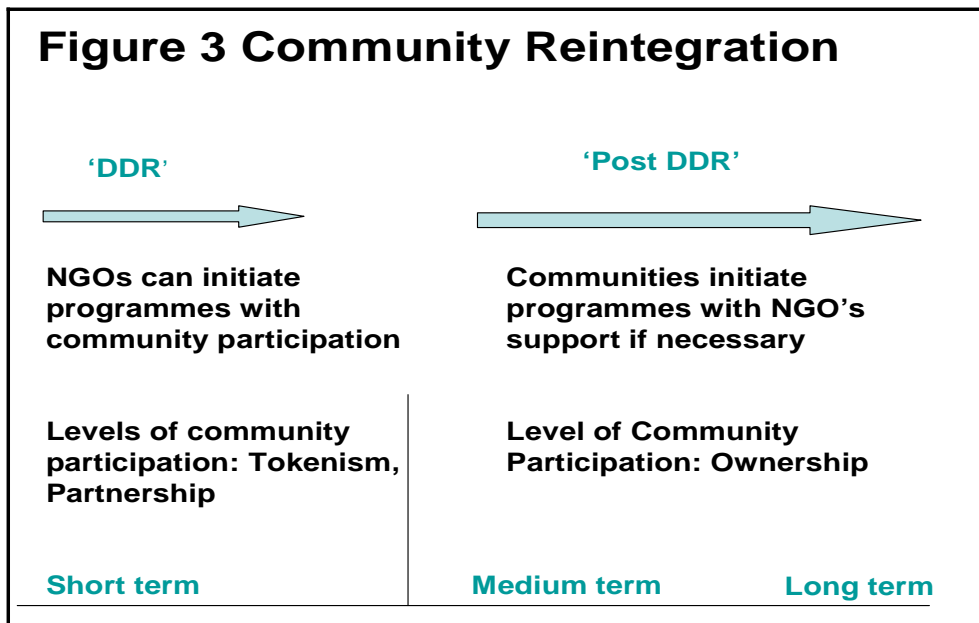
Source: Author

Considering the time table of the programmes spanning a period of 10 years, it can be argued that reintegration is a long-term process rather than a programme; thus, the international community needs to take that into consideration in defining community-based approach to reintegration programmes. For instance there is the need to start thinking about ‘DDR²⁴’ and ‘post DDR²⁵’ reintegration programmes (see figure 3). Whilst community reintegration programmes in the ‘DDR’ phase can be initiated by NGOs with community participation, the ‘post DDR’ phase could focus on programmes with local ownership. When communities are assisted to initiate own

²⁴ Here, ‘DDR’ refers to reintegration programmes which are implemented in the immediate aftermath of conflict, normally in a short term period. Generally, it is official, and a date is set by DDR policy makers to complete this process.

²⁵ Post DDR’ refers to reintegration programmes after the completion of the official DDR programme, which takes place between medium to long-term period with the aim of achieving effective peacebuilding in post conflict communities.

programmes, they are empowered with valuable skills which could be used in subsequent programmes to facilitate the peacebuilding process. It can be argued that the transformation of communities from a period of conflict to normalcy depends on active participation of community members. This paper recommends that local ownership is fundamental to a more effective peacebuilding, especially during the medium to long term period.



Source: Author

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