

Evaluation of Search for Common Ground Programming in Liberia

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I. Executive Summary

From 31 July to 12 August 2006, a three-person team carried out an evaluation of Search for Common Ground/Talking Drum Studio programming in Liberia. We were asked to evaluate several different elements of Search for Common Ground (SFCG) programming in Liberia. These areas are:

- a. Media program
- b. Outreach program
- c. NGO partnership strategy
- d. Synergy between the Media and Outreach activities.

The research activities consisted of interviews with TDS staff, fieldwork in four up-country locations involving interviews and focus groups with local community members and NGO partner representatives, key informant interviews with NGO partners in Monrovia, and focus groups with radio listeners in Monrovia.

A. Media program

Generally, TDS has good name recognition and is well regarded in the nation. They are especially well known for their radio work, with dramas being the most popular programs. They are also well regarded for their community drama programs and for organizing various fora for political debate in the country.

A few suggestions for improvement of an already strong program:

- Increase production in local languages, perhaps by increasing training opportunities for interns from local radio stations.
- There was a great demand for a program on school issues in the focus groups.

The larger issue facing the media program is how they will change to meet the changing needs of the post-war nation. That is, will TDS become another radio production organization, or will it focus on peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

B. Outreach program

The outreach program includes various elements. Essentially, any activity that is not part of the media program is considered part of the outreach program. The primary activities of the outreach program have been working with local NGO partners to establish “peace committees” in eight communities in three different counties chosen through a conflict mapping procedure for intervention. The outreach program has also been involved in putting on several “peace festivals” and in community drama around issues of returnees, DDDR, and elections.

In each community chosen for intervention, residents from across all social distinctions (gender, age, ethnicity, religion, ex-combatant status, etc.) were invited to a training workshop in which they were taught how to resolve conflict at the community level. After the trainings, in each community around a dozen people were chosen to make up a

peace committee, tasked with identifying nascent conflict in their community and to attempt to solve it through conflict resolution techniques.

The peace committees have had various degrees of success.¹ In Ganta, the committee achieved some early successes, most importantly having the mosque in town reopened for worship. However, enthusiasm fell off when it was clear members would not be paid for their work and, more importantly, when it became clear that they would not be able to resolve the deep-seated ethnic land issue in the community. The land issue is now to be solved by a government task force (though there is still conflict around that resolution framework.) Despite the current tensions, the Peace Committee (and TDS) played an important role in bringing the land issue to national attention.

In Zwedru, the peace committee has been successful at resolving various land disputes and is well respected by the community and by UNMIL forces in the area. They have benefited by being partnered with a well known local NGO.

In Gbarnga, the original peace committee collapsed due, perhaps, to the lack of payment to committee members who were involved in many other NGO-funded and political activities. The local NGO partner and TDS decided to redirect their attentions in Gbarnga to supporting the fledgling Bike Riders Association. The majority of bike riders in the town are young ex-combatants, so it was determined that helping them organize would address the issues of reintegration of ex-combatants, help create a vibrant civil society, address traffic safety concerns, and attend to conflicts between the bike riders and their customers. Gbarnga is perhaps too big a town for the creation of one peace committee to deal with all the various constituencies, so the strategy of focusing on the Bike Riders Association was an appropriate and ultimately successful re-direction.

In Foequelleh, the Peace Committee has been very successful at identifying and resolving conflicts ranging from violence between ex-combatant youth to power struggles between the District Commissioner and the Paramount Chief. The members of the committee are mainly female and credit the training they received as being crucial to their success. The Peace Committee in Foequelleh was successful in part because they were able to fill a leadership vacuum. However, there is still the potential for future conflict in Foequelleh as the majority of Muslim former residents have not returned to the community to reclaim their property.

Although we were not able to observe some of the other outreach strategies first hand, we heard reports in our interviews and focus groups about some of them. In particular, the Peace Festivals were extremely popular and seemed to have a measurable impact. The election education campaigns were also cited as successes by various respondents.

¹ Although there are eight Peace Committees, there was only time to evaluate four of them. However, the four communities were chosen so as to represent each of the three counties, each of the three partner NGOs and both large towns (with radio stations) and smaller villages (without radio stations.)

C. NGO Partnership

Big Monrovia-based NGOs reported good partnerships with TDS in their various (mainly media and advocacy related) activities.

With the three local NGOs who partnered with TDS for the “Next Steps in Peace” work, there was capacity building in all different directions. That is, in addition to community members learning from the NGOs, TDS learned from its experience of working with the local NGO partners and the NGO partners learned from working with each other.

However, there were different experiences for each of the three local partners,

1. DEN-L is obviously the strongest. Their community work was closest to what was envisioned in the proposal, that is, they worked with communities as DEN-L and not as representatives of TDS. Their skills training had a real impact. They were flexible. They prepared Peace Committees (and Bike Riders Union) for self-sufficiency.

2. CJPS. We saw their work only in Ganta, but there were some issues. The Peace Committee didn't know them by name, but only as a representative of TDS. They seemed unclear on the limits of the program, that is, they weren't able to clearly communicate to the committee that they were not providing development aid. They had not prepared the committee for self-sufficiency. In their defense, Ganta had the most difficult underlying issues of any of the communities we studied.

3. SEWODA. They gained a lot from their partnership with TDS in terms of training and skills. They however had some of the same issues as CJPS in terms of confusion regarding the nature of the project. They thought there should be more development aid, and they hadn't prepared the peace committee to be self-sustaining.

D. Synergy between Media and Outreach

One of the driving ideas behind the Next Steps in Peace program is the idea that the media and outreach activities of Talking Drum Studio would work in concert, supporting and indeed even building on each other.

This worked in some ways and not in others. From the Key Informant interviews, we found that people in Monrovia had heard about some of the outreach activities through TDS radio programs. In particular, they knew about TDS bringing together people around the Nimba land issue and they had also heard about the Peace Festivals. However, in the local communities, members of the peace committees didn't feel that their activities were being covered by TDS, indeed they had better coverage from community radio stations. (CJPS said they had to do their own publicity.)

The media people need to be brought closer to the outreach people, and really work in concert with them. Indeed, the media people need to see their work at TDS not just as journalism but as peace-building work.

Recommendations

1. The media people need to move closer to the outreach people. They are excellent at what they do, but they need training to see that they are part of a peace-building organization first.
2. The resource and information flow is not always clear to the NGO partners or to the peace committees. Clarify the financial mechanism.
3. TDS should Include more measurement and evaluation in their ongoing work. In addition to helping find a future direction for the organization, it will help clarify the project for the partner NGOs. Make the PMP a more specific and user friendly tool.
4. Bring the Peace Committees of the various communities together for a “lessons learned” and networking event.
5. There should be more local language programming, perhaps through training more community radio station interns at the Gbarnga studio.
6. In the post war era, there should be a move towards more media training in the Common Ground method. In the future TDS could break into (1) a training program sponsored by SFCG and (2) a local media organization. The two organizations could fruitfully partner.

II. Description of “Next Steps in Peace” Project

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) partnered with three Liberian NGOs to implement programs in Bong, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh counties directly supporting two of the objectives of the USAID Next Steps in Peace Program.

Strengthen and expand constituencies for peace, and
Address causes and consequences of conflict.

In eight communities, local partners provided peace-building and conflict resolution training to cross sections of stakeholders, and assisted with the establishment of “Peace Committees” to identify and attempt to resolve local conflict.

The project was designed to:

- Increase local capacity for early identification of conflict and resolution of that conflict,
- Increase participation of all social groups (women, youth, various ethnic and religious minorities, ex-combatants, etc.) in local decision making and governance,
- Increase flow of information about issues critical to Liberia’s transition, such as elections, DDDR, and returnee issues

Community outreach was designed to work in complement with SFCG’s already successful media activities including radio production, support for community radio stations, drama groups, and sponsorship of events such as community fora and Peace Festivals.

Finally, the strategy of partnering with local NGOs was meant to build the capacity of those partners, but also to work more closely with local communities by working with organizations they already knew and trusted.

III. Methodology

“...one of the strange dilemmas of peacebuilding is that if objectives of peacebuilding or conflict resolution are realized, then nothing unusual happens. In successful intervention nothing really is conspicuous. It is easy to see what goes wrong, but success often goes unnoticed.”

From “Strategic and Responsive Evaluation of Peacebuilding: Towards a Learning Model” by NPI-Africa and NCKK-CPBD Project, March 2001

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- a. Media program
- b. Outreach program
- c. NGO partnership strategy
- d. Synergy between the Media and Outreach activities.

A fairly large listener survey was carried out in 2005, so it was determined not to be necessary to reproduce that work now. Essentially, we knew that the radio program was going well. Therefore, we limited our scope to four focus groups drawn from the population of greater Monrovia, with men and women participants both young and old.

In addition, we did interviews with some key informants, many of whom have partnered with TDS in the past, regarding the media program they had mainly positive things to say

TDS is working in three counties in eight communities with three different NGO partners. Due to time constraints, we chose to evaluate activities in four communities, chosen to represent all three counties and all three local NGO partners. We also specifically chose to work in large towns with community radio stations as well as one smaller town without a community radio station.

The bulk of our time was spent in upcountry locations. The three team members first worked together in Ganta to develop the case study methodology, and then we split up and each of us repeated the exercise in a different community (Ola in Zwedru, Clementine in Gbarnga, and Susan in Foequelleh).

In each community we interviewed the local NGO staff, the members of the peace committee (individually and as a group), town or village authorities, representatives of various social groupings (women, Muslims, elders, youths, ex-combatants, etc.), representatives of community radio stations (if any), parties to conflicts resolved by the peace committees, and other randomly selected community members.

Through this method, we then triangulated the sometimes contradictory information to come to a general assessment of the work of the peace committees, the success of the NGO partnerships, and the degree of synergy between the outreach and the media work.

Following the recommendations of the SFCG evaluation manual² we made sure that we interviewed at least 25% of respondents identified by the evaluators and not by TDS staff or NGO partner staff. In addition, we were careful to be sensitive in interviews regarding conflict issues, e.g. land tenure.

² Church, C. and M. M. Rogers (2006). Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programs. Washington DC, Search for Common Ground. See Especially Chapter Eleven, "Ethics in Evaluation"

IV. Results

A. Media Programming

1. Radio Programming

According to TDS self-reporting, TDS programs run on ten stations around Liberia, and are heard 103 times per week. The dramas are the most frequently aired and are the most popular (see the focus group results below.)

Show Title	Weekly airings (including repeats)
Soap Opera/Today is Not Tomorrow	29
Jujay Drama	19
One Step Beyond (talk show)	12
Common Ground News	11
Young Citizen	11
Woman	9
TDS Up-country	9
YES Features	3
TOTAL	103

In addition, Situation Report, the program on refugee issues, is produced in Monrovia and aired in four stations in Cote d'Ivoire (in Tabou, Danané, Guiglo, and San Pedro) twice weekly for a total of eight airings weekly.

2. Focus Group Summary

According to the Terms of Reference, one goal of the evaluation was to determine Liberians' perceptions of SFCG/TDS:

With the end of the civil war, SFCG/TDS shifted its focus from transforming an ongoing violent conflict to facilitating the transition to peace. This evaluation will survey how Liberians perceive SFCG/TDS:

- How credible is SFCG/TDS as an honest broker?
- What reputation does SFCG/TDS have amongst different stakeholders?
- What role do people think SFCG is playing?
- What do people understand to be SFCG/TDS's unique approach?
- What weaknesses do the people perceive SFCG's program as having?
- What else could/should SFCG be doing?

These questions were addressed through Focus Group surveys with four groups of regular TDS listeners (divided into four groups as follows: young women, young men, older women, older men), and by Key Informant interviews with people involved in NGO work in Monrovia.

Focus Group conclusions

1. All groups are concerned about the issues of security, availability of jobs, training opportunities, elimination of tribalism, re-orientation of the values of Liberians, rape, reconciliation, issue of ex-combatants etc.
2. All groups listen to the radio as a source of news and listen to and trust the radio stations to provide them the news.
3. There is gender preference for some programs. For example, One Step Beyond appeals to the men more than the women while Today is Not Tomorrow (the radio drama) appeals across the gender divide.
4. All groups use lessons learnt to resolve conflicts in their lives and think the programs are relevant because they treat everyday issues.
5. All groups enjoy the programs but have problems with either the language which they think is too posh or the timing being too short to enable them enjoy the program.
6. All believe that TDS programs are different from other programs because of the emphasis on reconciliation and peace-building in all the programs, wider geographical coverage, and the professionalism of the presenters.
7. All groups recommended that TDS should venture into TV production, expand its partnership with local organizations and radio stations, and have more programs focused on school, health and sanitation issues

Key Informant Interviews Summary

In the opinion of those interviewed, the main issues affecting post-war Liberia are: managing public expectations, reconciliation, mobilizing public support for government programs, health (HIV/AIDS), security, access to employment and social facilities, proliferation of small arms, sanitation, overpopulation in Monrovia, and a weak justice system.

Most people described TDS as an NGO working on conflict transformation through the use of media and drama. TDS's work in Liberia was held in high regard. Everyone thought that SFCG's work was significant, useful and meeting the needs of the local community through use of media, drama and trainings. Their use of simple Liberian English and the vernacular was seen as good at reaching the people that most need the messages.

Many people mentioned the work done during the election period as exceptional, especially the training of the reporters that were sent into the field during the elections. Respondents found that after the training, reporters were fair and balanced in their reporting. Several people mentioned that the level of the education of voters was increased because of the campaign embarked upon by TDS.

When asked about non-radio programming, respondents were generally aware of TDS's facilitation of workshops, participation in strategic planning meetings, and partnership with Action Aid on the YES program. However, very few people knew about other outreach work that had been done by TDS. If they had heard of the Peace Committee work – it was often because they heard about it through the radio.

In response to the question about experience partnering with TDS, we heard:

- I. There is need for capacity building within the organization to enable the staff to best support each other. Some people need to be reminded of the peace-building mission of the organization.
- II. They are an easy organization to work with because there is not a lot of bureaucracy or hierarchy.
- III. The fact that SFCG is an international NGO is both a benefit and a challenge to the functioning of TDS. For example, as an international NGO they are sometimes hampered from reacting quickly to local events, because they may have to pass certain decisions by their international headquarters. However they benefit from the strength of being a local organization. Some felt that local organizations should be at the forefront of Liberian reconstruction, but TDS was seen as an international organization with a strong local dimension.
- IV. (From the UNMIL radio manager) SFCG should consider taking over the UNMIL radio once UNMIL pulls out of Liberia. They have experience in producing good programs and have listener recognition.

When asked for any weaknesses or challenges TDS was facing

Oscar is the only person in the office who can write a project proposal or project design, if he left, no one else would be able to immediately take on the task. More Monitoring and Evaluation is needed including staff evaluations, this could even take a regional dimension. People may have the academic training, but not always the technical skills needed. (Tornorlah Varpilah)

B. Outreach Programming

The outreach programming is mainly focused around the eight identified communities, but there is other broader outreach as well. Below we report on the four communities in which we conducted evaluation exercises.

1. Ganta

1.1 Present Situation.

Two years ago, the situation between the Mandingoes and the Mano/Gio was so tense there was no communication between the two parties. However, now there is no communal violence in Ganta, but the potential for violence is still high. In particular, the land issue between the Mano/Gio and the Mandingo populations is still sensitive. Most

Mandingoes have not returned to the community. From a prewar population of several thousand (3,555 Muslim families according to the Mandingo community representative), only fifteen to twenty families now reside in Ganta. Some come to trade in the market through Mano or Gio proxies, but they return to Guinea at the end of the trading day. There is greatly reduced economic activity since the war. For example the number of booths registered with the Marketing Association have decreased from 1000 to 300-400. The city officials are firmly placed on the Mano/Gio side of the conflict. The government has empanelled a commission to look into the land issue in Nimba county, but they have not yet resolved anything. The Mano and Gio are looking to the government commission to settle the issue, but the Mandingoes do not feel their interests will be fairly represented there, so they are looking for other options.

The Mosque in Ganta

1.2 The Peace Committee

The Peace Committee is made up of representatives from different tribal groups (Mano, Gio, Mandingo), different religions (Christian and Muslim), different genders (roughly 40% women and 60% men), and different age groups. The chairman of the group is very active. Their main achievement was the cleaning and reopening of the mosque on the main road after it had been damaged in the war and was occupied by a carpentry shop. They also carried out various cross border activities, including reaching out to Mandingoes formerly residing in the town and now living in refugee camps in Guinea. They also arranged a cross border visit between the security forces along the Liberia/Guinea border.

The committee showed some frustration that the land issue turned out to be too big for them to resolve, and now they are looking to the government for solutions. The committee lost some momentum after some early success due to the intransigence of the community.

The drama group has done over thirty performances in schools and in surrounding communities about reconciliation and on election education.

1.3 NGO Partnership

The relationship between the Peace Committee and the CJPS representatives is cordial. CJPS has especially reached out to youth through drama training. CJPS was the first group to begin to broker peace between the Mandingoes and the Mano/Gios in Ganta.

On the other hand, they weren't very good at developing the idea of self-sufficiency in the peace committee. There was also a branding problem, in that no one identified the work as a CJPS activity and rather saw them as agents of TDS. (They said they tried to address this issue, but were not successful.)

CJPS wasn't able to clearly communicate to the committee the underlying philosophy of the project. This led to confusion about what kind of projects could be funded. For example, they wanted to do development projects.

1.4 Radio synergy

There are two community radio stations in Ganta. Both have MOUs with TDS and have a good relationship. Radio Kerghema in particular has hosted call in programs on community issues, including the land issue. The Peace Committee said they had a good relationship with the station manager. A member of the Radio staff is receiving training at the Gbarnga TDS regional office.

There was some TDS media coverage. TDS organized a workshop on the Nimba land issue and broadcast it on some of their regular programs. There was also correspondent coverage of the cross-border meetings with Mandingoes living in Guinea.

1.5 Analysis

The conflicts in Ganta were caused by long-standing issues including past strategic alliances and political choices. Therefore, they will not be so easily resolved. Given the difficulty of the situation, the Peace Committee has made some major achievements, especially in creating a forum for dialogue. The reopening of the mosque was their biggest symbolic achievement. Addressing the structural issues that are the foundation of the problem is beyond their capacity. The difficulty in resolving the problem also has to do with opportunities created for the Mano/Gio by the Mandingoes current exclusion, for example, they have been able to move into economic spheres formerly dominated by the Mandingoes.

1.6 Table of respondents

- Muslim community members, eight people, one woman, including the imam and the Ganta representative of the Mandingo Association.
- The District Commissioner
- Radio Station staff at Radio Keghema (spelling?) and Radio Y Echo
- Two members of the Peace Committee who are Mandingoes living in Guinea.

- A community elder
- Vice Chairman of the City Council
- Two ex-combatant representatives
- Representative of Concerned Women
- Special Assistant to the Mayoress
- Chairman of the City Council
- A journalist from the Inquirer newspaper, based in Ganta
- Four representatives of the Marketing association (the chairlady, the assistant superintendent, the secretary general, and the judge)
- The Immigration Supervisor for Ganta
- Two Mandingoes working at the Ivorian garage.
- One Mano Carpenter doing skills training for ex-combatants
- Three young male community members
- Five members of the drama group
- Ten members of the peace committee

2. Zwedru

2.1 Present Situation:

Zwedru is at present trying to recover from the effects of the war in Liberia just like the other communities. The main conflict issue in Zwedru is also land and the uses to which it could be put. The present source of conflict is also between the Krahn and the Grebo but this could be attributed to the strategic alliances and choices made in the past now having repercussions on social relations between the two tribes. Businesses have started operating again and from direct observations made and interviews conducted, the ownership of these businesses cuts across the tribes (Fullah, Mandingos, Krahn, Gio, Sappo, Lorma) and also included foreigners like Nigerians, Malians, Ghanaians, and Lebanese. The Mandingos are also observed to be well integrated in the town. The Mandingo area of the town is bustling with reconstruction activities. Interviews conducted also revealed that the Mandingos feel safe living in Zwedru and confirmed there have been no overt or covert attempts to intimidate them or exclude them from communal activities. The mosque, which is a symbol of unity and security for Mandingos have been rehabilitated and prayers are being held at all times of the day without fear of molestation. The market is also bustling with activities and like the business district, there are no complains of exclusion or intimidation. Traders from all parts of Liberia (Mandingos, Gios, Lorma, Grebo, Krahn etc) were observed selling their wares unmolested. Interviews with traders from the various tribes also revealed the same pattern of freedom of trade without molestation. The marketing association officials also confirmed what the traders and the business people said. The market has not reached its pre-war population of one thousand tables but at present hosts five hundred traders per day. The City officials in conjunction with the housing and property committee and UNMIL have also devised a very ingenious way to solve the land and property crisis in Zwedru that may have national application. With the realization that most lands were leased or sold without

documents, proof of ownership will be based on the evidence of neighbors that the person claiming the property was residing there before the war. Secondly, all lands and properties handed to previous owners are to be re-surveyed as a claim of ownership while all land transactions are to be registered with the city council to prevent duplicity in the sale of lands. At present, an estimated 50% of the Mandingos, 35% of Grebo, 60% of Gios and 75% of Krahn have returned to Zwedru. Ex-combatants are also well reintegrated within the town and from interviews conducted they are better behaved and now rely on the police and the courts to enforce their rights. The Police Commander confirmed an increase in the crimes like burglary and petty stealing but a dramatic drop in crimes like assault, vandalization of public and private properties and disorderly conduct within the past three years.

2.2 Peace Committee

The peace committee was formed to find a more traditional approach (Dialogue and logical reasoning) to resolving conflict and building confidence of the various tribes in the peace process. It is pertinent to note here that the peace committee in Zwedru has at least 60% recognition in Zwedru town and is perceived by all segments of the population to be committed and unbiased in its interventions. The committee has ten members (5 male and 5 female) and has a chairperson directing the affairs of the committee. The committee is made up of representatives of the various ethnic groups in Zwedru (Krahn, Grebo, Mandingo, Gio) and interestingly, a representative of Nimba County indigenes residing in Zwedru. The lack of tension in relative terms in Zwedru could be attributed to the efforts of the peace committee. They have among other important achievements resolved the land dispute between the Grebo and the Krahn and got the Krahn to lift the restrictions placed on types of crops that could be planted by non-Krahn members of the community. The committee was also instrumental in the restoration of the Kpelleh village after resolving the dispute between the Kpelleh and the Krahn and the re-opening of Toe's town market to facilitate inter-County commerce between Nimba and Grand Geddeh Counties. In all, the committee has intervened to resolve 12 cases in conjunction with local authorities, resolved 19 cases with the elders and community members and settled 8 property cases in conjunction with the property and housing committee. The committee has two land issues pending and one ethnic discrimination case pending. The peace committee enjoys the support of all stakeholders in Zwedru and works closely with the civil authorities and UNMIL in its interventions. It also helps that the committee is not seen as a threat by civil authorities including the police and was also praised by the education staff for the positive impacts of its sensitization messages and drama presentations in changing the attitude of students to education and relations with teachers and fellow students.

The committee is constrained by logistical support for its activities and sometimes has to offset transportation and feeding expenses from its own resources. The possible source of conflict identified by the committee is the alleged sexual harassment of young girls in the town by Ethiopian soldiers which has strained the relationship between the soldiers and the community youths and seen as a possible source of

conflict by the committee. The female committee members go to the Ethiopian barracks in the night to chase these girls with limited success. The committee is proposing to take the issue to the child protection agencies and human rights section of the United Nations.

2.3 Local NGO partnership

SEWODA is the local partner of TDS in Grand Geddeh. SEWODA is primarily focused on getting more women involved in development activities but has also performed creditably well in managing the activities of the peace committee. The NGO is well known in the community and enjoys a high level of trust from community members who believes that the organization is not working for against the interest of any ethnic group in Grand Geddeh. Its perceived neutrality has assisted the organization to intervene successfully in various issues ranging from land disputes to improving commercial and social relationships between indigenes of Grand Geddeh and Nimba Counties. SEWODA monitors and reports on the activities of the Peace committee and was also involved in sensitization and awareness raising activities through drama, sports, radio talk shows, trainings and community meetings to reduce ethnic tension. SEWODA has also carried out voter sensitization before the elections and post-election sensitization through focus groups and community meetings. SEWODA was also instrumental in the re-opening of Toe's town market and settling of the trade dispute between Nimba and Grand Geddeh traders. Without support from TDS, SEWODA has been able to provide support for the cultural troupe in Zwedru, build a meeting hut and implemented agricultural projects to support women. The lessons it has learnt from partnering with TDS include the following: 1. Capacity building of partners enhances their abilities to achieve objectives of community oriented programs 2. It is possible to reap the dividends of peace-building activities within a short time with concerted efforts from all stakeholders. 3 Identification of possible flashpoints in communal relations and devising of solutions beforehand go a long way in diffusing these flashpoints before they happen.

2.4 Radio synergy

The Zwedru community has a radio station (Radio Smile). The station signed an MOU with TDS to broadcast nine different programs and has in addition to these programs; provide coverage for the activities of the peace committee including hosting of talk shows aimed at promoting dialogue within the communities. The station has also benefited from trainings to build the capacity of the staff. The stations' influence on the community is positive and it is an integral part of the community as the only source of news from Monrovia and the rest of the world. The relationship between the radio station and the local partner has been professional and cordial with the station donating free airtime to broadcast messages and appeals from the peace committee to the community. The management of the radio station thinks its activities could be enhanced with technical support from TDS, empowering the station to produce local language programs and use of actresses based in the communities to improve local flavor and for the community stations to start

commercializing their activities to prepare them for the time when the funding from TDS will cease.

2.5 Analysis

(Figure out what to put here.)

2.6 List of Interviewees for Zwedru Evaluation

- Mandingos at the Mandingo quarters – 6 persons
- Business district – 6
- Radio station – 1
- SEWODA representatives– 4
- Drama group – 3
- Civil authorities – 1
- Police – 1
- Marketing Association – 3
- Youth Representative – 2
- Ex-combatants – 2
- Peace Committee members – 10
- Education sector – 3
- Women rep. – 2
- Market women - 8
- Foreigners – 5
- Mandingo Representative - 1

3. Gbarnga

3.1 Present Situation

Presently, there is no communal violence in the city of Gbarnga. The main issue of discontent for many in the city is the issue of land and rightful ownership. This does not take an ethnic or religious dimension, but there have been large scale incidents of illegal re-selling of land (sometimes by people that do not own the land in the first place).

Because of the country's 14 year civil war, where many of the young people lived under extenuating circumstances, many of them, especially ex-combatants act disorderly and exhibit unruly behavior in the community, but some are starting to go to the police to settle disputes they may have amongst themselves. The evaluator was given an example by the police of two motorcyclists that were arguing over money that one owed the other. This dispute was brought to the police to settle. Many young people have explained they do not trust the justice system; an individual can wait 3 months in jail before his case is taken to the court system.

3.2 The Peace Committee

The first Peace Committee in Gbarnga was first established after a workshop training session run by DEN-L. Members of the committee were appointed from the participants of the workshop, from a variety of communities in the city. There was a healthy mix of women and men, but the members were not being compensated financially and were engaged in various other community activities. There were given drama training done with the first Peace Committee. Due to heightened civil society activity before the elections, there were many NGOs getting involved with difference civil society issues. The Peace Committee decided to disband.

Gbarnga's functioning group that presently meets under the benefit of the Next Step Program is the Bong Motor Cycle Union. There was a strategy meeting held with the partnering NGOs and it was decided that to help build civil society the project could support the Motor Cycle Union. There are presently 450 members and the leadership is made up of 12 people. They are young men, 90% are ex-combatants. There are no women presently in the Union. The Union meets the 1st Sunday of every month at the DEN-L compound.

The main achievement of the Motor Cycle Union has been their ability to enable safety and leadership training for many members of the Union. The general population has experienced a positive perception change when it comes to the Motor Cycle riders. There have been seven leadership training sessions and two safety training sessions. The Union has started to register and number the bikers to enable them to be tracked. They have also ensured that no one under the age of 18 rides a motorbike. There was a big problem of underage driving at the start of the motorcycle initiative. At the onset, many of the riders were seen as a nuisance and danger to their community. There has been a significant reduction in the number of accidents since the safety training. Customers now say that they can talk to their driver to ask him to slow down and he listens. Three billboards have been erected at different junctions in the city promoting safe motorcycle riding. Spot messages promoting safe motorcycle riding ran on the local radio station between Dec 2005 and April 2006.

The Motor Cycle Union has shown signed that they have built capacity and has some level of self-sufficiency; this is evident because even though DEN-L is often engaged with discussion involving the city and police authorities, they do discuss smaller issues independent of DEN-L like motor cycle accidents with the police.

One of their constraints is the fact that the Union is growing so quickly, and many of the newer members have not had the benefit of the safety training that was provided earlier. They want to charge dues, but have had problems collecting them, when they are successful in this they hope will help them assist members of the union if they get into an accident.

3.3 NGO partnership assessment

The relationship between the Motor Cycle Union and DEN-L was a good one. DEN-L was mainly able to provide training activities and explain the guidelines of the project. Four members of DEN-L staff were part of the project: the Project Officer, Project Coordinator, (part-time attention of the Director and finance person)

DEN-L had the strongest capacity of all the local NGOs employed with this project. DEN-L training provided a great platform for building the capacity of the group. There was growth within the institution on a personal and individual level. On an individual level, the project officer grew tremendously during the life of the program. She gained in personal confidence while working with the local communities and other partners. The staff members that were engaged in the program were able to have brainstorming sessions with other partners that strengthened their understanding of their larger work. The staff also had additional access to training sessions being run by USAID led by AED aimed at building capable partners building program. This training was especially beneficial to the Financial Officer who has since incorporated some of his new skills learned into the financial management of DEN-L.

One of the challenges in measuring DEN-L's impact on the wider community through the Next Steps program, was that DEN-L was engaged in a variety of community services, (Community leaders training, Women's development program, Peacebuilding, Theatre for peace, Relief, Agriculture Program, Scholarship schemes for girls), this made it often difficult to for community members to distinguish between them. Although it was clear to the community that DEN-L was executing the work.

3.4 Radio Synergy

There is one community radio station – Radio Gbarnga in the city. The station plays some of TDS programs. The Motor Cycle Union had no connection with this radio station. There is a limited media and outreach synergy in the city of Gbarnga. For example, the media related staff of the TDS team based in Gbarnga was unaware of the existence activities of the 'Peace Committee' (Motor Cycle Union.) Most people knew of the work of the Talking Drum Studio, but did not see any connection with the Motor Cycle Union.

There was some coverage of TDS programs, notably a dialogue that was hosted in Gbarnga that was covered by TDS.

3.5 Analysis

Their community work was closest to what was envisioned in the proposal, they worked with communities as themselves: DEN-L and not as representatives of TDS. The impact of their skills training was evident by the members of the community and the evaluator. DEN-L showed great flexibility and ingenuity to shift gears after the first Peace Committee was disbanded. There was success in Gbarnga because the Motor Cycle Union is prepared and gaining more self-sufficiency, because DEN-L helped them build

relationships with city authorities and learn how to lead and organize their own group effectively.

3.6 Respondents

- Bong Motor Cycle Union – 6 members of the committee - Vice President, General Secretary, 2 Field Agents, Chaplain, Vice President of Operation
- Police Commander
- Two newly trained Jr. police officers
- Assistant the Superintendent
- City Mayoress
- Two of the initial members of the first Peace Committee
- Senior Advisor to the City Council
- Director of DEN-L, Project Officer, Program Coordinator
- Male Shop owner
- Bike riders times 6 (new bike riders & established bike riders)
- Pedestrian middle aged man
- Young woman selling on side of street
- Fish roasting woman
- Teenage boy training to be a carpenter

4. Foequelleh

4.1 Present Situation

Foequelleh is presently at peace. There have been conflicts over the last two years, but they have all been successfully resolved, often with the help of the Peace Committee. However, most of the Muslim former residents of the community have not yet returned. Some young ex-combatants have returned to town, and are mostly involved in youth-led community development projects. Everyone reported that the tensions of two years ago have nearly evaporated.

4.2 The Peace Committee

A member of the Peace Committee described their work this way: “when we see trouble in a household, we go there.” Everyone interviewed said that the Peace Committee has been very successful in Foequelleh. They have resolved a wide range of conflicts, involving various sectors of the society. They have even been able to take some conflicts out of the formal system and decide cases informally to the satisfaction of all participants. The town mayor said, “I work together with the Peace Committee. If someone takes a case to them, and they resolve it, I accept the decision. They take longer to resolve conflicts than I do and they look for the root causes. As a result, their solutions are more long-lasting.”

There are more women than men on the Peace Committee (and indeed the group was called “the Peace Women” by several respondents.) One female member said that her involvement with the Peace Committee had given her the strength to speak her mind in public meetings and to become more directly involved in community decision making.

The peace committee has been involved in a number of cases, including: traveling to Guinea to talk a case of a man from Foequelleh who was murdered in Guinea, resolving the dispute between the Paramount Chief and the District commissioner, intervening between two families whose young men became involved in a violent dispute that spread to both families and had gone as far as the courts in Gbarnga, resolving conflict between teachers and students, traveling to neighboring communities to discuss tensions between ex-combatants and others, resolving conflict between two nearby communities who now brush the road between their villages and trade at each other’s markets, establishing new rules for student conduct regarding ethnic slurs, and others.

One community elder said that the greatest success of the Peace Committee was the successful reintegration of ex-combatants, especially their work on the youth group’s community cassava project.

4.3 NGO Partnership

There is a good working relationship with the DEN-L representative. She has made the goals of the project, as well as the limitations of the funding, very clear to members of the peace committee. She is well known to members of the community as someone who is always close to them and helping them to resolve conflict. (Several people commented that when the Chairperson of the Peace Committee died unexpectedly, representatives from DEN-L came to the funeral, and that really touched them.) The District Commission said about DEN-L, “They don’t enforce what to do. They always ask us how we can solve a problem. We do group discussions and decide for ourselves.”

Several members of the Peace Committee talked about the importance of the training they received from DEN-L in order to do their work properly. The head elder said that, aside from the Peace Committee work, the conflict resolution training has improved his ability to solve cases as an elder and as a patriarch. He has learned to give and accept feedback, so people can more easily admit when they did wrong. He said in a public meeting, “as old as I am, I am always ready to hear about peace.”

The DEN-L representative was very clear about the goals of the program. After the mayor suggested that Peace Committees be started in many more communities, she responded that the Foequelleh people could help people in surrounding communities start their own Peace Committees. She asked the Peace Committee, “If the funding stops, will you still be working?” The Secretary responded, “We will still work. The donor will leave but the idea won’t leave.”

4.4 Radio Synergy

There is no local radio station in Foequelleh, and even the regional stations are hard to receive. Most respondents explained that they were too busy on the farm to spend time listening to radio anyway. A few who do listen to the radio said that they know TDS programming and enjoy it, but that they have never heard any coverage of the activities of Peace Committees. Others reported that they only listen to Kpelle language programming.

Members of the Peace Committee remember having their voices recorded for the radio when they traveled to the Peace Festival in Ganta. Others said that TDS had come to town and interviewed them about the elections, but none heard their voices played back on the radio.

The drama group has been quite active in Foequelleh and has good recognition among the public. They said they had done thirteen different dramas in Foequelleh and in surrounding villages, especially with election education messages.

4.5 Analysis

The Peace Committee in Foequelleh filled in a vacuum in leadership that existed in the town right after the end of the conflict. Most importantly, there was a conflict between the District Commissioner and the Paramount Chief that was keeping traditional conflict resolution processes from functioning smoothly. As a result, the Peace Committee was quickly accepted by the community as a necessary alternative. Due to the hard work and many successes of the Peace Committee, they are now a well-respected alternative dispute resolution structure.

Members of the committee are so happy with the functions of the group, that they are requesting funds to spread to other nearby communities. However, the DEN-L representative is wisely counseling them to remain focused on their own community.

Two possible points of contention remain. First, very few of the Muslim former residents have returned to the community. (Before the war there were approximately 200 Muslim residents, now there are approximately fifteen.) Although the male heads of the two Muslim families in town said that they are satisfied with the arrangements made to deal with a return of other Muslims, there may well be conflict when people arrive and find their land occupied by someone else. Second, the Peace Committee in some ways has undercut the function of the elders, who have lost an important revenue stream by allowing alternate conflict resolution. The elders realized that something new was necessary in the tense post-conflict era, and also the peace committee sometimes included as elements of their decisions the requirement for disputants to pay damages to the elders. However, it is not clear whether this new method of conflict resolution will eventually supplant some of the power of the elders, or whether the elders will, at some point, struggle to regain their old positions of power.

4.6 Respondents

- Peace Committee (12 members)
- Marketing Superintendent
- District Commissioner (also a member of the Peace Committee)
- City Mayor
- Paramount Chief
- Elders (six elders, including the head of the elders)
- Women's Head (and member of WIPNET, another women's peace group)
- Youth Representatives (five)
- Ex-combatant representatives (three)
- Trainer of the drama group (and member of the peace committee)
- Muslim Representatives (three)
- Representatives of general community (three: older male tailor, young mother, school girl)

C. Table of Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) results

According to the Terms of Reference:

The evaluation will determine the degree to which the NSP project contributed to the expected results defined in the Performance Monitoring Plan (indicators outlined in the PMP need to be taken into account in evaluation design):

- 1.1 Information on the peace accord, the transition, and the DDDR process is widely available and accessible
- 1.2 Participation in the social reintegration process is broadened
- 1.3 Collaborative problem-solving skills are improved, particularly for residents of border communities
- 3.1 Inter and intra-community interactions and relationships are improved.
- 3.2 Ex-combatants and their resident communities are prepared to live together and are equipped to peacefully address problems that arise
- 3.3 Functioning mechanisms are in place for citizens and civil society to influence government decision-making on resources and priorities.

The challenges of completing the quantitative aspect of the evaluation were many. In the first place, the indicator design did not make it easy to collect numerical answers. They seem to need narrative responses in many cases. Secondly, there was no initial or baseline data to compare to. So, for questions that ask for "percent increase" or even "increase in the number of persons" we had to rely on people's own self reporting about the state of affairs two years ago. Therefore, this is not a very satisfactory table of results, but it is included here for some degree of quantitative comparison.

In the future, Monitoring and Evaluation should be designed to be user friendly with easy to compile results. Involving partners in the evaluation process (with an easier set of questions) could even be used to increase buy in and to better explain the goals of the program.

PMP Performance Indicator	Ganta	Zwedru	Gbarnga	Foequelleh
1.1: Number of Radio Programs on the peace process aired on stations in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone where there are Liberian refugees	Situation Report is produced in Monrovia and aired in four communities in Cote d'Ivoire twice a week.			
1.2: Increase in the number of persons who say they are informed about the peace process as a result of SFCG programs	The focus group data from Monrovia leads us to believe that SFCG radio programming is effective as conveying information about the peace process. The 2005 survey data reports...			
1.3: Number of live theater performances in target communities disseminating information on the peace process	30	32	0 by the bike riders (but DEN-L has a separate drama group)	13
2.1: Number of ex-combatants in target areas expressing confidence that community members are accepting them	They indicate they are well received, as they fought on the side of "the community"	For most, no problems. The Grebo ex-combatants are experiencing some small problems.	Ex-combatants express satisfaction, but some members of the community complain about motorcycle riders.	All, thanks to the peace committee.
2.2: Number of ex-combatants disaggregated by gender represented on community committees	Not many, though there is an ex-combatant woman in the drama group	None on the peace committee. One is a youth representative.	Most riders are ex-combatants (365 out of 450)	They are a large proportion of the youth committee
2.3: Percent increase in target groups,	Impossible to answer. Question is too broad.			

disaggregated by ex-combatants, returnees, and host community members, working together on community issues.				
3.1: Number of dialogues involving diverse social groups facilitated in target communities by types of conflict	Peace Committee has facilitated: 7	With local authorities: 12. With elders: 19. With the UNMIL property and housing committee: 8	N/A	13
3.2: Percent increase in number of people engaged in social interactions along border communities.	There is free border crossing. The number of tables in the market has risen from 0 to 400, many of those from Guinea.	From 100 to 500 traders in the market from all over.	N/A	Not a border community. N/A/
3.3: Number of interventions jointly taken by peace committees to foster peace and reconciliation.	10	39	N/A	15
4.1*: Number of joint conflict prevention strategies/actions taken by community members in target communities	Impossible to answer in such a short time, and difficult to count.			
4.2: Percent reduction in communal violence in target communities	There was a lot before, and now there is none.	There is now none.	There is now none.	There was some between youths, and some

* 4.1 to 5.2 were renumbered from the original PMP to avoid duplication.

disaggregated by religion, ethnicity, economics and property rights.				between ex-combatants, but now there is none.
5.1: Number of development issues prioritized by civil society organizations.	Impossible to answer in such a short time, and difficult to count.			
5.2: Number of prioritized development issues jointly addressed by community members, representatives of civil society and policy makers	Impossible to answer in such a short time, and difficult to count.			

V. Analysis

PEACE COMMITTEES

The TOR asked:

- 1) To assess the extent to which SFCG's program in Liberia strengthened local capacities for peace in the eight targeted communities.

The peace committees evolved as an alternative way of resolving community based conflicts at the community level with as less rancor as possible after community focus group meetings pointed to the preference of the community people to settle their differences the traditional way without necessarily getting the courts and civil authorities involved. However, peace committees still need the approval of the city councils to operate. The approval to operate was obtained without too much stress when the various city councils realized that the peace committees will in no way threaten their authorities and influence.

Most of the peace committees have played significant roles within their communities in restoring a semblance of normalcy and reducing the tensions that were threatening the fragile peace existing among the various ethnic groups. The peace committee in Ganta was able to return the Ganta central mosque to the Mandingo tribe after reversing its use as a carpenter workshop. The return of the mosque to the Mandingo tribe has reduced the ethnic tension in Ganta and has created the basis for the return of some Mandingos from Guinea where they are presently based. In the same vein, the Zwedru peace committee was able to reduce the tension between the Krahn and the Grebo tribes by getting the Krahn to reverse the embargo on leasing of farmland to the Grebo but also getting them to lift the embargo on restrictions on what could be planted on such leased lands.

The composition of the peace committees also differs significantly with each community. While in Ganta, the peace committee were mostly elderly, semi literate and have more men than women, the Zwedru committee has relatively younger members who are more educated, have had more exposure and holds liberal views on ethnic relations. More prominence is also given to women in the committee in Zwedru since a woman is the Chairperson of the committee there. The Forquelleh committee has more women represented in the committee than men.

The composition and attitude of the city council officials is another success or failure factor in the activities of the peace committees. In Ganta, the city council is not giving enough support to the peace committee and not seen to be neutral in the land disputes in the town thereby complicating the job of the peace committee and making it lose its credibility with a section of the community. The non-neutrality of the city council officials is also responsible for the limited success of the peace committee in Ganta. The Ganta peace committee also wants to be paid for serving on the

committee. In Forquelleh, the peace committee has more women than men of varying ages and education, committed to the achievement of peace and have traveled to Guinea in its efforts to resolve conflicts and ready to continue working on the committee when the funding must have stopped. The peace committee is also responsible for the decision taken by the community to relocate Mandingos whose lands have been expropriated by the indigenes in order to diffuse the tension between the two groups. In Zwedru, the peace committee has the cooperation of the city council and its activities are enhanced with the attitude of the city officials who have shown high level of intolerance to ethnic profiling. Zwedru has remained relatively peaceful and the interaction between the different ethnic groups is seen to be cordial. The tension observed in Ganta is absent and everyone we spoke to freely admitted that they felt safe living in Zwedru.

The capacities of the peace committees to deal effectively with crisis in the communities could also be related to the capacities of the local partners tasked with building the capacities of the peace committees.

NGO Partnerships

The TOR asked:

2) To critically examine SFCG's understanding and approach to partnership as it affect its abilities to engage and the effectiveness of its engagement.

According to the Terms of Reference:

SFCG Liberia has four types of partnerships

- Partnerships with radio stations
- 3 Local NGO partnerships
- Government partnerships with the Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Information, the National Election Commission, Liberia Reintegration, Reconciliation, and Reconstruction Commission, County Leadership, and the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration
- Community-level partnerships such as Action Aid, World Vision, Liberia Women's Initiative, Justice and Peace Commission, and others, as well as with community-based groups.

Partnerships are critical for this program and are undertaken as a strategic and an operational strategy in Liberia and across SFCG's programs in Africa and globally. The evaluation will focus on how effective different partnerships are in terms of:

- How appropriate they are for program implementation?
- What challenges were faced and what was done or could be done to address them?
- How have the partnerships contributed to strengthening local capacities for peace?

How durable are these capacities?

- Generally what lessons have been learnt, and what factors are critical to improved partnership?

Partnership with SFCG, and local NGOs (DEN-L and CJPS) SEWODA
Specific cooperation with TDS:

From the viewpoint of all the partners the working relationship has been cordial and an open forum has been created for discussion of any issues that have arisen. The initial relationship started with a brainstorming session that included all the parties involved. Strategic planning throughout the process for the project has included all partners equally.

Capacity building:

One of the main goals of the Next Steps for Peace Project was to build local capacity throughout the implementation of the project.

CJPS:

The individual and institutional capacity of CJPS was indeed strengthened. The Project Coordinator for the Next Steps in Peace Program gained personally because he was able to take part in PRA training and conducted assessment exercises. He got a chance to share ideas and experiences with the partners that he would otherwise not have had access to. Institutionally, CJPS benefited from some materials and equipment. CJPS not only gained from relationship with TDS but gained from having affiliations with DEN-L. Because DEN-L is an established institution based in Gbarnga, CJPS was able to gain from their training expertise and sometimes their equipment.

We saw their work only in Ganta, but there were some issues. The Peace Committee didn't know them by name, but only as a representative of TDS. They seemed unclear on the limits of the program, that is, they weren't able to clearly communicate to the committee that they were not providing development aid. They had not prepared the committee for self-sufficiency. In their defense, Ganta had the most difficult underlying issues of any of the communities we studied.

DEN-L:

DEN-L also had their capacity strengthened on a personal and individual level. On an individual level, the project officer grew tremendously during the life of the program. She gained in confidence while working with the local communities and other partners. The staff members that were engaged in the program were able to have brainstorming sessions with other partners that strengthened their understanding of their work. The staff also had additional access to trainings being run by USAID led by AED aimed at building capable partners building program. This training was especially beneficial to the Financial Officer who has since incorporated some of his new skills learned into the financial management of DEN-L.

DEN-L's community work was closest to what was envisioned in the proposal, that is, they worked with communities as DEN-L and not as representatives of TDS. Their skills training had a real impact. They were flexible. They prepared Peace Committees (and Bike Riders Union) for self-sufficiency.

SEWODA:

The staff of SEWODA received training from TDS/SCFG in conflict transformation and community development. The trainings were primarily aimed at developing the capacities of the Project Coordinator and County Coordinator to perform better in the monitoring of the peace committee and reporting of its activities. They however had some of the same issues as CJPS in terms of confusion regarding the nature of the project. They thought there should be more development aid, and they hadn't prepared the peace committee to be self-sustaining.

It was SFCG first opportunity to work with local partners and has brought much added value to their work. Local partners know that situation better to work with them.

The three different local NGOs that were selected to be a part of this project were partly based on the fact that each had different strengths and skills to offer to their community. DEN-L has established training programs, CJPS has engaged the youth in community activities and SEWODA has connected with the women in their activities. Because of these particular strengths, they each have a different relationship with Peace Committees, which enables each Peace Committee to interact differently with their communities and have different outcomes.

One of the issues observed in Ganta and Zwedru was NGO brand recognition. The community members did not easily recognize the name CJPS, or SEWODA but identified the work being done as TDS activities. The staff of CJPS identified this as an issue and they tried to tackle this problem by creating banners and T-shirts that included the CJPS logo in conjunction with the TDS and USAID. TDS already had high recognition in the town from its radio programs and maybe the fact that the vehicle used

Challenges

The major challenges that were expressed by the parties were delays in provision of monthly reports by local partners, and a delay in provision of resources and funding on the part of TDS.

There was capacity building in all different directions. TDS learned from working with local NGOs and NGOs learned from working with each other. Overall partnership idea was good one and the lessons learnt can be used to continue local partnership using the basic strategy devised in this project.

Synergy Between Media and Outreach

According to the Terms of Reference:

Model of Integrated Media/Outreach Approach:

SFCG uses both media and outreach to effect change in Liberia. While both methods can produce results independently, the Next Steps in Peace Project model integrates the methods in order to increase effectiveness.

- The evaluation will focus on how the approach works internally by examining collaboration, integration, communication, and understanding;
- How the approach is realized externally examining a sample of locations that were

specifically targeted by the project.

One of the driving ideas behind the Next Steps in Peace program is the idea that the media and outreach activities of Talking Drum Studio would work in concert, supporting and indeed even building on each other.

This consists of a kind of feedback loop of impact. First, the impact of the outreach program should be amplified by the media program's coverage of their activities. For example, people living in rural communities throughout Liberia would hear about a successful case of conflict resolution in a similar town and imagine that they could apply the same lesson in their own situation. "If they can settle their differences in Gbartala, we can do it too!"

Second, the media program should benefit from the activities of the outreach program as they would be provided with a steady stream of conflict resolution-themed news stories growing out of the activities of the various peace committees. Furthermore, the field staff in the outreach programs would already have made contacts with all the stakeholders in various conflicts they are working on and could facilitate correspondent access.

Third, hearing news of their activities on national radio would serve as another incentive for people to become actively involved in the activities of Peace Committees. And so on. In this way, the two programs would not simply be operating side by side but in fact multiply each other's effects.

To investigate whether these effects existed as planned, we included in our sample of four communities both communities with active local radio stations (Ganta, Gbarnga, and Zwedru) and one with no radio station (Foequelleh). The hypothesis was that those communities with radio stations would have more active peace committees

We discovered that in each of the community case studies that community members felt there was little coverage of their activities in TDS programs. In Ganta, while TDS did discuss the land issue on several of its regular programs, the coverage did not make central the role of the peace committee in working towards resolution of the issue. (Is this true? Am I overstating it?) In Gbarnga, the Bike Riders Association said that there had been jingles made about traffic safety, but that they were no longer airing. The head of media in the Gbarnga office did not see his job as working together with the outreach team to buttress their work. (Again, am I overstating?) In Zwedru..... Finally, in Forquelleh, with no radio coverage, the peace committee was among the most accepted by the local community of the four communities we investigated.

However, I don't think this means we should abandon the idea of synergy between media and outreach activities. The evidence rather points to the fact that not enough effort was made on the part of TDS, and particularly on the part of the TDS Media program, to achieve that synergy.

I believe this state of affairs points to a split within TDS-Liberia between the media program and the rest of the organization. The culture of the media program seems to be that of “objective journalism” whereas the organization as a whole is meant to be working towards the goal of peace-building and conflict resolution. The solution lies in getting the members of the media program to see themselves as *more* than simple journalists, and rather as peace-builders. Of course, part of what is needed to build a peaceful society is free access to information, and good journalism is a part of that. But what should set TDS apart from other media organs in the nation is a commitment to techniques of conflict resolution.

Evidence for this split within the organization comes primarily from interviews with TDS staff, coupled with the observation that community members in the four case study communities do not feel that the activities of their peace committees have been covered on the radio. In essence, the other programs in TDS are aware of what the media program is doing, but the media program is not as aware of the activities of the other programs. In their defense, media has been the central activity of TDS since its formation in 1997 and the Next Steps in Peace Program represents a challenging new way of doing things. However, there is a certain defensiveness on their part, I found, to the idea of being told what to cover and how to cover it. Perhaps more effort needs to be made within the organization to reach out to them and explain the underlying strategy of synergy between outreach and media, and to make it clear that TDS is not the same as other media outlets.

Further analysis

1. It is difficult to foster real civil society in a context of battling NGOs. (e.g. sitting fees)
2. Everyone likes the drama, but it is unclear how to measure the impact.
3. What explains the different outcomes in the four communities studied? Was it underlying issues, the vibrancy of the peace committees, the efforts of the local NGO?
4. Things that aren't measured by the PMP. A plea for qualitative evaluation.
5. Do Peace Committees supplant traditional Conflict Resolution frameworks? (the power of the elders) They include the elders on peace committees, and indeed consciously include everyone. Is the aim a thorough going social shift e.g. to the inclusion of women, or is the goal more a short term crisis intervention?

VI. Recommendations

- The media people need to move closer to the outreach people. They are excellent at what they do, but they need training to see that they are part of a peace-building organization first.
- Regarding the media program, A few suggestions for improvement of an already strong program:
 - Increase production in local languages, perhaps by increasing training opportunities for interns from local radio stations.
 - Add a program on school issues (corruption among teachers, extra classes, sexual harassment, etc.). There was a great demand in the focus groups.
- The resource and information flow is not always clear to the NGO partners or to the peace committees. Clarify the financial mechanism.
- TDS should include more measurement and evaluation in their ongoing work. In addition to helping find a future direction for the organization, it will help clarify the project for the partner NGOs. Make the PMP a more specific and user-friendly tool.
- Bring the Peace Committees of the various communities together for a “lessons learned” and networking event.
- There should be more local language programming, perhaps through training more community radio station interns at the Gbarnga studio.
- In post-war Liberia, the focus of programming has naturally shifted from conflict-resolution to governance issues. TDS needs to be continuously assessing how to continue the mandate of focusing on peace-building on conflict resolution themes and stories. Perhaps there should be a move towards more media training in the Common Ground method. In the future TDS could break into (1) a training program sponsored by SFCG and (2) a local media organization. The two organizations could fruitfully partner.

VII. Appendices

Appendix A: Brief Biographies of Evaluation Team

Susan Shepler, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at American University in Washington D.C. She received a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in Social and Cultural Studies in Education. Her academic interests include youth and conflict in Africa, reintegration of former child combatants, and peace-building. In 2006, her Ph.D. dissertation on the reintegration of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone won the award for Outstanding Dissertation in Comparative Education from the Comparative and International Education Society. In addition, She has consulted with UNICEF, CIDA, and SFCG. She has published book chapters and articles on youth and culture, the specific issues of girl soldiers, and on African politics.

Olaide Omidéyi is a Nigerian national with six years experience in peacekeeping, humanitarian and development programs in both Sierra Leone and Liberia. He was involved in the DDRR programs in Liberia and Sierra Leone and managed the DDRR camps and Community Empowerment Projects (CEP) component for the UNDP and UNHCR in Lofa County in Liberia. He is a trained community development professional and can utilize PRA methods in project evaluation.

Clementine Lue Clark is currently finishing her master's degree in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis University. Her primary research interest is in the role of the faith-based community in peace-building efforts. Other studies and research include the key role of the catholic lay group, Sant'Egidio in ending Mozambique's civil war, and Burundi's failed power-sharing attempts in 1992. She has worked with the international NGO Initiatives of Change on various peace-building projects promoting dialogue in the African Great Lakes Region focusing on Uganda and Burundi.

Evaluation Team (and others) in Ganta

Appendix B: List of Key Informants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
Massa Crayton	Program Support Office, Action Aid
Etweda Cooper	Chairperson of Liberian Women's Initiative
Tornorlah Varpilah	Deputy Minister of Health for Planning
Dan Saryee	Liberian Democratic Institute, Head of Union of Civil Society Organizations
Frank Sainworla	Assistant Station Manager, Radio Veritas
Joseph Robert Mensah	Chief of Radio/Executive Producer, UNMIL radio
Sharon Pauling	Supervisor Program Officer USAID
James Yarsiah	Program Manager, Creative Associates LTI
Thomas Du	Senior Program Officer, National Democratic Institute
J Augustine Toe	National director, Justice and Peace Commission. Coalition of Civil society of Liberia
George William	Executive Director, Liberian Democracy Watch
Benjamin Lartey	Secretary General, Liberian Council of Churches

Appendix C: Key Informant Questions

Name_____

Position_____

1. In your opinion, what are the main issues affecting post-war Liberia?
2. Do you know about SFCG/TDS? What do you understand their mandate to be?
3. What is your opinion of their work in Liberia?
4. What do you think the main impact of their work has been?
5. Do you know of any (or any others – if they have already mentioned some) TDS sponsored NON radio program activities? Elaborate.
6. Has your organization ever partnered with TDS in Liberia? Elaborate. (Prompt for positive and negative responses).

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

Questions for Focus Groups in Monrovia

1. What are the most critical problems you are facing since the end of the war?
2. What are the main issues facing the nation since the end of the war?
3. Do you feel informed about developments in the nation?
4. Why do you listen to the radio?
5. What radio stations do you frequently listen to?
6. What radio station do you most trust? Least trust?
7. What kind of problems and issues do TDS programs talk about?
8. What is your favorite TDS program to listen to and why?

For each program theme (“Today is Not Tomorrow” and “One Step Beyond”) ask the following questions:

9. Is this a program you've heard on the radio?
10. How often have you listened to this program?
11. Is this program relevant to your life?
12. Do you use the information you receive to make decisions?
13. Is the program easily understood?
14. What could make the program better or more useful?
15. Do you trust TDS programs?
16. Are you aware of any TDS activities that are not radio programs?
17. How do TDS programs affect your life?
18. How are TDS programs different from other programs you hear on the radio?
19. What weaknesses do TDS programs have?
20. Have you ever used something you've learnt in a TDS program to resolve a conflict in your life?
21. Do you ever discuss TDS programs with your family or friends?
22. What role is TDS playing in post-war Liberia?
23. What would you like to see TDS do in post-war Liberia?