



Exploitation of Poor Communities in Sierra Leone

False Promises in Reconstruction and Development

Ryann Elizabeth Manning

The inaugural volume of the Justice and Development Working Paper Series consists of three papers on local-level dynamics of justice and governance in Sierra Leone. These essays — one about the interaction between local councils and traditional authorities, another one about the power relations between youth and their elders, and a third one about false development promises - are the products of qualitative research conducted in 2006 and 2007 by the World Bank Sierra Leone Justice for the Poor team. The papers aim to enrich our empirical understanding of the workings of justice and governance in the country. The goal of Justice for the Poor, in Sierra Leone and elsewhere, is to employ such knowledge to improve development practice.

Abstract

Exploitation of poor villagers by fraudulent development practitioners is a startlingly common occurrence in postwar Sierra Leone. A recent research project found that virtually every rural community visited by researchers could recount an experience (and often several) in which individuals or organizations promised to deliver development projects and other benefits, collected money from community members under the guise of registration fees or beneficiary contributions, and then disappeared.

Community members almost never took action to find out what happened to the projects, to hold the individuals accountable, or to get their own funds reimbursed. (The few exceptions are notable and informative.) When asked why they did nothing, most gave a version of the same explanation: We are illiterate and poor, we don't know the person's name, we don't know the name of his organization, we don't know how to find him, we can't afford to go look for him, and we probably won't get any justice if we do. What would you have us do?

This paper looks at how simple measures could help minimize the opportunity for fraudsters to take advantage of communities, and make it easier for exploited communities to seek redress. Local councils and councilors can play an important role in implementing these measures, as can legitimate civil society organizations. The central government can monitor organizations, enforce regulations and codes of conduct, and deregister the worst offenders. Ultimately, however, it is communities themselves that must take primary responsibility for scrutinizing and holding accountable any strangers who arrive with briefcases, white jeeps, and big promises.

The *Justice and Development* Working Paper Series serves as a platform for new and innovative thinking on issues of justice and development and features work from World Bank staff and from external authors. *Justice and Development* disseminates the findings of work in progress to encourage a more rapid exchange of ideas about development issues and justice reform. Papers carry the name of the authors and should be cited accordingly. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views of the World Bank and its affiliated organizations, or those of the Executive Directors of the World Bank or the governments they represent.

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Exploitation of poor villagers by fraudulent development practitioners is a startlingly common occurrence in postwar Sierra Leone. Research conducted by the World Bank’s Justice for the Poor and Understanding Processes of Change in Local Governance (J4P/LG) project¹ found that virtually every rural community visited by the research team could recount an experience (and often several) in which individuals or organizations promised to deliver development projects and other benefits, collected money from community members under the guise of registration fees or beneficiary contributions, and then disappeared.

Some cases may have been legitimate projects that were never realized for one reason or another, or the visitors were misunderstood to be making promises that they never intended to make. At the extreme, organizations might exist simply to write proposals and receive funds without ever delivering any benefits, and may need a community presence (such as signboards or evidence of meetings with community leaders) to do so.

Many of the false promises are clearly cases of fraud and malicious intent. In one case recounted to the research team, a man brought castor oil seeds and told community members he would build a factory to process the crops into fuel for airplanes. He promised to make them all rich, and demanded a registration fee of Le 25,000 per couple (more than \$8, a significant amount of money in a rural village) in return for a packet of seeds. Many people paid the fee and spent valuable time and energy cultivating and harvesting the seeds, but the man never came back.

Sadly, such practices are not new to Sierra Leone. Similar behavior during and immediately following the country’s civil war is documented by Richards et al. in their 2004 analysis of social capital in Sierra Leone. They argue that “Enhanced scope for fraud ... has, more generally, been a major negative feature of the humanitarian interregnum,”² and describe some of the “devious practices” by national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs):

In the weeks before a major international agency carried out a needs assessment, it was not unusual for a ‘briefcase’ NGO to collect money to register villagers... either claiming to be the advance guard of the legitimate agency, or making bold promises of aid of its own which it never could fulfill. Where villagers tried to mobilize themselves to approach a donor directly, NGOs sometimes stepped up to act as

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brokers, charging community groups fees (sometimes as high as Le5 million) to write proposals... We met widespread local disillusionment with these NGO practices at the village level.³

The authors note that such stories are not unique to Sierra Leone, but rather common in conditions of postwar recovery. What is clear from the more recent J4P/LG research is that these practices continue today, long after that immediate recovery period has ended.

The deceptions and broken (or false) promises are heartbreaking not only for the financial cost to communities—for whom registration fees and other contributions are often quite substantial—but for the dashed hopes. Such experiences begin to erode communities' trust in outsiders, making future community work more difficult, though often the communities' desperate hope for improved conditions outweighs their mistrust. As one woman told researchers, "We are villagers and we need help, and where will such help come from if not from such outsiders?"

In the cases discovered by the J4P/LG research team, community members rarely took action to find out what happened to the projects, to hold the individuals accountable, or to get their own funds reimbursed. In one poor and isolated village in the northern province, one of the first in which researchers heard about such "false promise" cases, the research team leader asked with surprise why the villagers did not take any action. The villagers were equally surprised to hear her suggest that they might take action. They then voiced one version of the answer heard in many villages: We are illiterate and poor, we don't know the person's name, we don't know the name of his organization, we don't know how to find him, we can't afford to go look for him, and we probably won't get any justice if we do. What would you have us do? Instead, they and most other communities simply "lef di case to God."⁴

Exceptions to this were therefore notable. In one chiefdom, a group of amputees brought their case to a local paralegal organization. They had been promised water wells, skills training, and other benefits by several international organizations, but the organizations never delivered. The paralegal organization followed up, with significant help from an American law student working with the organization at the time, and with sustained advocacy—as well as threatened legal action—managed to get nearly all of the promises fulfilled. However, this case was different from most in that it was an actual project that was poorly executed, rather than a false promise never intended to be kept. It also involved several legitimate and widely known international NGOs, whose local subcontractors had absconded with money or failed to complete the work. The involvement of the legitimate organizations provided a more viable avenue for redress. The presence of the paralegal organization was also important, giving the amputees a mechanism (which most communities lack) to place pressure on the organizations involved.

In another chiefdom, community members were several times victimized by false promises to rebuild houses destroyed during the war. The last time, a group of young people led an effort to seek redress, eventually reporting the man responsible to the police. (See box for details.)

Fighting a False Promise

This case took place in a chiefdom badly damaged during the war, in which many houses and other structures were burnt to the ground. After the war, several people came to the chiefdom promising to help people rebuild their houses or to provide temporary shelter. Some seemed like well-intentioned projects that were never completed, while others seemed less legitimate. One man from a neighboring village collected a registration fee of Le 4,000 per household from a number of people, despite giving no information about his organization or affiliation. He never came back, and the community did nothing to pursue him.

In 2005, another man—Mr. K—came to the chiefdom promising a project to rebuild houses burnt down during the war. He said if people built the houses to wall height, his project would provide zinc roofing, iron rods, and other materials to finish them. He was at first turned away by the paramount chief, who said the project's timing was bad, as people were busy on their farms. He then returned, accompanied by a senior political official born in that chiefdom (a "son of the soil"). This time the paramount chief consented, though reluctantly, lest he be accused of driving away development resources.

The senior official and Mr. K then called a meeting in the chiefdom headquarter town and announced that through an NGO represented by Mr. K, the chiefdom would receive 94 houses allocated among the two major towns and two smaller villages. Mr. K said that beneficiaries should mold blocks and acquire other local materials for the construction of the houses, and he would provide cement, zinc, nails, and other necessary materials.

Given their prior experiences, it might seem surprising that people trusted Mr. K and were willing to pay. Many said, however, that the presence of the senior official gave them confidence. As the head teacher, a 60-year-old man, said, "We saw [the official] with him so we thought he was credible."

A committee composed of authorities and prominent men in the chiefdom was formed to determine who would benefit, based on the criteria of poverty and need. Beneficiaries were required to pay a Le 5,000 registration fee and to provide food for two visiting surveyors while they pegged the plan for their houses. But the registration process was marred by corruption and bias. Several of the people selected as beneficiaries declined the offer because they lacked the means even to lay the foundation or to pay the Le 5,000 fee. The two surveyors started taking bribes as high as Le 50,000 to replace the names of the chosen beneficiaries with other names, and the minimum fee soon rose from Le 5,000 to Le 15,000. In the end, beneficiaries did not reflect the poorest of the chiefdom, but included chiefs, headmen, and relatively well-off members of the community.

After registering, people worked themselves or paid contractors and laborers to build their houses up to wall height. Some spent significant amounts of money, as high as Le 300,000–500,000 (\$100–\$165); for comparison, government teachers make between Le 150,00 and Le 300,000 (\$50–\$100) per month.

With their houses completed or under construction, people waited for Mr. K to return. Some say they never saw him again after the registration, while others say he stopped by the chiefdom from time to time to check on the building process. Eventually, however, he disappeared. Months later, as the first rains of the rainy season began to fall, people started to worry that without cement and roofing materials to protect them, their new homes would be washed away. All the hard work and financial investment would be for naught.

Eventually, some of the project beneficiaries decided to take action. At first, this effort was uncoordinated, with several individuals taking independent and parallel action. One educated young man

reported the matter to the police. A chiefdom elder went to visit Mr. K himself, and gave him more money to “fast-track” the project in Freetown. A head teacher went to see the government official who had helped bring the initial project, and also approached the paramount chief, who called the government official himself and offered Le 20,000 of his own money to help support the effort.

Later, two of these young men summoned a meeting at the chiefdom headquarters, inviting those who were affected by the housing scheme, as well as some “stakeholders” in the chiefdom. At the meeting, people agreed to contribute Le 5,000 each (approximately \$1.33, equal to the annual local head tax), and the head teacher collected and managed the money. In total, the men collected (according to one of those involved) Le 450,000, which was to be used to pursue Mr. K and “facilitate the court case.” The men used some of the money as transport to go in search of Mr. K and to formally report him to the police. (It is not entirely clear how the rest of the money was used; some may have gone to informal and illicit “fees” for the police to pursue the case, but it seems unlikely that the full amount was used this way.)

Several days later, one of the men sent word from the district headquarters that Mr. K had been arrested and was in police custody. The police also requested all victims to prepare and submit claims. But Mr. K was only in police custody for a few days before the town received word that he had been released. They then sent a delegation of 10 people to the district headquarters, where they tracked down the government official. He was visibly angry with them, but accompanied them to the police headquarters, where the official instructed the police to call Mr. K and ask him to come in.

Mr. K denied taking money from the villagers, but the police searched his bag and found documents bearing the villagers’ names. He was rearrested and charged with obtaining money by false pretense, a criminal offense. The police later determined that the NGO that Mr. K said he worked for did not exist.

The delegation returned to the chiefdom with a promise from the police to inform them of the court date. A few days later, Mr. K was charged in the magistrate court. According to the police, he pled guilty and was fined between Le 200,000 and Le 300,000 (\$67–\$100). However, neither the police officer in charge nor the community members were present at the hearing, and researchers were unable to find any record of the case among the magistrate court records.

The community members found out about the court case only after the fact, and then only after going to the police station themselves to follow up. Most of them now believe that the government official intervened to get Mr. K off the hook, perhaps by conniving with the magistrate. The police confirm that the official got involved, and harassed them to file charges in court before the investigation was complete.

Whether or not the official intervened on Mr. K’s behalf, the outcome of the case had nothing to do with what community members were initially seeking. Almost all respondents reported that their primary goal was not punishment of Mr. K but compensation or the delivery of the promised housing materials. They went to the police in the hope that that would sufficiently pressure Mr. K to complete the houses or at least repay the money. “All we wanted was for our houses to be completed because putting him in jail will not solve the problem,” said a town section headman, a 70-year-old man.

Instead, the community accepted defeat. “I was the first to withdraw,” said the headman quoted above, “because an authority had already intervened. If we report a case to the police, we expect the [official], as our own authority and brother ...[to] help us, but he didn’t do so... I was afraid of [him] jailing me if I continued to pursue the case.” Others said there was no point in pursuing further, as the houses had already collapsed.

One 50-year-old man, a headman from one of the smaller villages, traveled to the district headquarters himself to verify the story of those who were pursuing the case. Once he found out the case had already

been heard and decided by the magistrate court, he decided it was time to go home and “lef di case to God” (leave the case to God). “If the case has gone to court it is no longer a matter for me, it is for government,” he said. “I am tired, I want to go back to my village.”

This outcome also bolsters the claim, often heard in communities, that what you need to win a case is a “big man” on your side. Similarly, if you are going up against a “big man,” you are not likely to prevail. As one respondent said, “We are poor, we don’t have money... How do you expect me to go and fight a man who has power and money?”

A number of factors probably combined to enable this community to take action where so many other communities gave up. First, the losses in this case were particularly large; beneficiaries had paid quite significant amounts for registration (and bribes), to feed and lodge the surveyors, and to build their houses up to wall height. Second, thanks to a biased and corrupt beneficiary selection process, the victims were not the poorest and most marginalized members of the community, but included those with education, connections, a familiarity with the district headquarter town, and generally much more courage and many more tools with which to pursue the case. Third, there were highly educated and active spokesmen willing to take the lead; two of the three ringleaders even lived in the district headquarter town at the time. As one of these spokesmen, a 35-year-old man living in the district headquarters, said, “If we had not taken up the matter nobody would have.” Fourth, many community members believed they had a “big man”⁵—in the person of the senior government official—on their side, though ultimately they came to believe that this man betrayed them. Finally, unlike many cases of false promises, the community members actually knew the name and other details of the person who initiated the project—as well as the official who accompanied him—and knew how to find him to follow up.

Nonetheless, despite these advantages, the community received no benefit from its effort to hold the fraudster accountable. In the view of many community members, they lost because they were up against the power of a “big man.” This may be true. However, it is also true that the criminal justice system—even if operating fairly—would not have delivered the compensation that community members were seeking. Instead, it would have punished the wrongdoer with prison or a fine paid to the state. This would not have satisfied the local conceptions of justice, which centers on restitution to victims rather than (or as the primary form of) punishment of wrongdoers.

Helping Communities to Protect Themselves

Simple measures could help minimize the opportunity for fraudsters to take advantage of communities, and make it easier for exploited communities to seek redress. A few suggestions are listed below. These would also help hold organizations and individuals accountable for other types of broken promises, including legitimate but poorly executed projects.

A number of different organizations and institutions, including traditional authorities, local councils, the central government (particularly the NGO unit in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development), the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), and responsible civil society organizations (particularly umbrella or oversight bodies such as the Sierra Leone Association of Non-

Governmental Organizations, SLANGO), could play a role in implementing these recommendations. A discussion and summary chart suggesting who could be responsible for which actions is included at the end of this paper. Ultimately, however, it is communities themselves that must take primary responsibility for scrutinizing and holding accountable strangers who arrive with briefcases, white jeeps, and big promises.

- **Inform communities about the prevalence of schemes to deceive and defraud them under the pretext of development promises, and urge them to ask for details, including business or identification cards, from any visiting individuals.** Communities outside of the chiefdom headquarter town should also ask for evidence that the paramount chief has been informed and has approved a particular project. When in doubt, or when the practitioners are asking communities to contribute funds or labor, the chiefdom could send a representative to visit the organization's office or otherwise verify its legitimacy. Local councilors can do this quite easily for organizations based in the district headquarter town, especially if local councils keep a list of organizations working in the area.

Community radio stations, civil society organizations, local councilors, and chiefdom authorities—once they are informed themselves—can help spread information about this risk and the protective steps that communities can take. SLANGO has done at least one such sensitization campaign, and may have materials or lessons from that experience. The use of local languages and of innovative methods of dissemination can help ensure the messages reach (and are understood by) all types of people and communities. This is particularly important because the most uneducated and marginalized populations are probably also at the greatest risk of exploitation.

Justice for the Poor (J4P) and the Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), working in partnership with the Future Leaders Action Group for Education (FLAGE), experimented with community drama as a means of communicating such messages. The effort was a great success. FLAGE performed a skit based on the housing case study described above, after which J4P and CGG members facilitated a discussion about the prevalence of false promises and steps the communities could take to protect themselves. Community members responded with enthusiasm to the performance and participated actively in the discussion.⁶

- **Encourage communities to keep logbooks of visitors to their communities.** This is a simple but potentially effective step. The most fraudulent individuals and organizations could still provide false information, but the requirement to register their details would possibly discourage some individuals intending to operate under the radar. The record could also provide communities with the information needed to later locate and hold individuals accountable in cases where promises are not kept.

Though many Sierra Leoneans cannot read or write, it is usually possible to find at least some literate people in each chiefdom, if only due to the presence of civil servants such as court clerks, treasury clerks, teachers, or nurses. Some villages will not have any literate individuals but could be encouraged to keep a book anyway, and ask visitors to list their own details. Alternatively, they could require that visitors sign the chiefdom logbook. Local councilors and paramount chiefs could check logbooks periodically, as could legitimate organizations working in the area.

The World Bank-supported GoBifo community-driven development program, currently being piloted in two districts, requires participating communities to keep such logbooks. In visits to these communities, the research team found community members insistent on the use of the logbook, kept in a simple notebook and held by a designated (and literate) community member. It may be worthwhile to evaluate the success of this pilot effort—and specifically its impact, if any, on the incidence of false development schemes.

- **Provide free and accessible avenues for communities to file complaints and seek redress.** Many communities choose to do nothing when victimized by fraudulent development practitioners because they do not know how to seek redress, or because they lack the resources or connections needed to succeed.

Formal justice mechanisms are often not the most accessible avenue for poor villagers and, as in the housing case, may not deliver the outcome communities want and need. Civil cases at the level of a magistrate or higher court would be far too expensive for communities to pursue without outside support. Community members also likely do not understand formal legal proceedings and are at risk of being out-manuevered by savvy adversaries. Local (customary law) courts, on the other hand, would usually be unable to take action against individuals who came from outside the chiefdom and have subsequently left the area; moreover, chiefdom police lack the resources to deliver summonses or enforce compliance outside the confines of their own chiefdom.

That said, public prosecutors, public interest lawyers, or other interested parties might support communities in pursuing formal legal remedies, whether criminal or civil. A few high-profile convictions or settlements might serve as a deterrent to potential fraudsters. Formal legal avenues could be strengthened by an expansion of civil remedies for these sorts of fraud, and a linking of civil remedies to the criminal process (for example, such that a police-prosecuted fraud case could also result in an injunction requiring compensation to the aggrieved party).

For most cases, however, alternative mechanisms will be extremely important, though many of these derive their authority, in part, from the background threat of formal legal redress. In some cases, this may be as simple as finding individuals or organizations able to exert pressure on the fraudulent parties. Paralegals and other civil society organizations could play this role, as could local councilors, paramount chiefs, or well-connected “native sons”⁷ of the community. The use of negotiation and mediation, and the threat of legal action or other sanctions, could be enough in many situations to obtain the delivery of promised benefits or the return of fraudulently collected money.

A free, user-friendly, and accessible complaints mechanism is also essential when mediation and threats do not yield results. There are many forms that such a complaints mechanism could take, and many institutions in which it could be housed, from the local councils to the ACC and SLANGO.

The most important criteria for any such mechanism is that it be easily accessible (logistically, financially, and culturally) to the rural communities most often victimized by

these frauds. Offices in Freetown or in provincial headquarter towns are far too distant for most communities. Even district headquarter towns are often seen as too far away for people from poor or remote areas, though local councilors or other go-betweens could help lodge complaints at a district level. Given the dramatic spread of cell phones in recent years, a complaints hotline may be the most accessible mode of all. Mechanisms must also be financially and culturally accessible, that is, they must be free or nearly free and procedures familiar to, or at least comfortable for, individuals and communities.

- **Support communities trying to hold development practitioners accountable.** In those rare cases where communities do try to hold these individuals accountable, they should receive support and encouragement from outside actors. Experience shows that youths, local leaders, and educated community members often play a leading role in such efforts, and should therefore be targeted by initiatives to provide the information and skills they need to succeed.

Community-based paralegals⁸ have also proven effective in providing such support, and have found some success in holding development organizations accountable. Supporting paralegal efforts may therefore be an excellent way to empower communities to seek justice, not only in the case of false development projects but also in a range of other problematic situations.

- **Issue warnings and enforce sanctions against organizations engaged in bad practices.** This is most likely the role of the central government. The NGO unit of the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning does claim to investigate accusations of fraud and take action against those responsible, but a representative acknowledged that they had never actually carried out an investigation that had led to such action.⁹ With the necessary resources and a clear mandate, the unit could play this role. It may also be possible for local councils to play a similar role at a district level, and the government of Sierra Leone and its development partners—particularly those supporting decentralization—may want to explore this possibility.

It is essential, however, that steps be taken to ensure that any efforts to increase the regulation or control of civil society organizations (whether by local or central government) does not simply add an unhelpful level of bureaucracy or, what would be worse, an opportunity for graft or state oppression.

Finally, instead or in addition to state enforcement, civil society organizations could take responsibility to monitor their own and to “name and shame” those engaged in malpractices. Umbrella organizations such as SLANGO may be particularly appropriate for this role, though individual organizations could also take this on.

The chart below summarizes these recommendations and suggests which institutions could take responsibility for their implementation. Ultimately, there are a number of different approaches that could help protect communities from these sorts of abuses and, when abuses do occur, enable them to access justice. Even a relatively modest effort could make a difference.

Helping Communities to Protect Themselves

	Traditional Authorities	Local Councils	Central Government	Anti-Corruption Commission	Civil Society
Inform communities re: risks of fraud and how to minimize risks	X	X Councilors can help check credentials, e.g., by visiting the organization's office at the district HQ			X Including community radio
Encourage communities to keep logbooks	X	X Councilors could also check these books periodically			X
Provide free and accessible avenues for complaints and redress			X Such avenues must be at district or subdistrict level	X If the ACC opens offices at district or subdistrict level, or takes on a few high-profile cases	X Particularly umbrella or oversight organizations
Support communities trying to hold practitioners accountable	X	X			X Particularly paralegal or legal aid organizations
Issue warnings and enforce sanctions against organizations		X District councils could monitor organizations and take action against bad organizations	X Particularly the NGO unit of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	X	X Responsible organizations or community radio programs could "name and shame"

Appendix A– Research Questions

As outlined in its concept note,¹⁰ the J4P/LG project set out to answer a long list of research questions:

1. Who are the main authorities or power holders in the communities? Where do they derive their authority and legitimacy?
2. What are the prevailing social norms and governance rules regarding how collective decisions are made, how public resources are mobilized and utilized, and how authority is exercised? Do different groups have noticeably different attitudes towards, and perception of, authorities and different degrees of participation in collective action?
3. What kinds of systems and mechanisms are utilized to resolve and manage grievances and to lodge claims against state or nonstate authorities, and why? Are certain groups or communities more likely to pursue justice? If so, why?
4. What trajectories do the grievances follow, and why? What are the outcomes of these processes, and what factors influence the results?
5. How do the mechanisms employed, the trajectories, and the outcomes differ with respect to:
 - a. the characteristics of individuals and communities involved (and why)?
 - b. the characteristics of particular grievances (and why)?
6. What barriers to effective justice and governance exist, and which individuals, groups, and communities are most affected? How are these barriers overcome, or how could they be overcome? Which groups have a vested interest in maintaining the barriers?
7. How are the answers to all of these questions changing over time? How and why does local-level justice and governance improve or deteriorate?
8. What is the impact of external justice and governance interventions? Do they affect people’s attitudes towards authorities, their participation in public affairs, and their perception of influence? Do they trigger change in what people demand and obtain in relation to justice and governance? Do they result in more just outcomes? Are their effects sustainable beyond the end of the intervention?

To that end, the planned qualitative research would both “map local power structures and sources of authority and legitimacy” and “track how people attempt to resolve disputes or claims.” The concept note proposed two categories of grievances on which research would focus: first, grievances involving land and natural resources and second, grievances involving local authorities (including claims either to or against local authorities, broadly defined.)

As research and training progressed, however, it became clear that this research agenda was overly ambitious given the time and capacity constraints. The team therefore focused on the second category of grievances—those involving local authorities—and narrowed the research questions somewhat. In particular, question 8 was addressed only superficially, and several other questions were addressed only in part. Future research, whether by The World Bank or others, could usefully follow up on those areas not covered exhaustively in this project.

Appendix B – Acknowledgements

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- Manning, R. n.d. “Research Methodology: Justice for the Poor and Understanding Processes of Change in Local Governance.” Justice for the Poor, World Bank, Washington, DC. Unpublished. Available at <http://www.worldbank.org/justiceforthepoor>.
- Richards, P., K. Bah, and J. Vincent. 2004. “Social Capital and Survival: Prospects for Community-Driven Development in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone.” Social Development Paper 12, World Bank, Washington, DC. <http://go.worldbank.org/LSZNSGU3D0>. Accessed March 2009.
- Timap for Justice, <http://www.timapforjustice.org/>.
- World Bank. 2006. “Justice for the Poor and Understanding Processes of Change in Local Governance: Sierra Leone, Concept Note.” Working Paper 40038, Justice for the Poor, World Bank, Washington, DC. <http://go.worldbank.org/OFT6RJUL80>. Accessed March 2009.

Endnotes

¹ This paper is based primarily on research conducted in 2006 and 2007 as part of The World Bank's Justice for the Poor and Understanding Processes of Change in Local Governance (J4P/LG) project, implemented in partnership with the Campaign for Good Governance and Timap ("Stand Up") for Justice, two civil society groups in Sierra Leone. Research was conducted throughout the country, in a range of rural and peri-urban areas aiming to reflect Sierra Leone's geographic, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity. (Very little research was conducted in the larger urban areas.) The bulk of research was carried out by a team of local researchers, who had received intensive training in qualitative research methods at the outset of the project and who worked under close supervision and support from international J4P members. Research was primarily qualitative in nature, using anthropological and ethnographic techniques, particularly in-depth semistructured interviews and participant observation. The team did not conduct formally constituted focus group discussions, but the nature of communal village life meant that individual interviews sometimes developed into group discussions. The main four research sites were in the Bombali (Northern Province), Moyamba and Bo (Southern Province), and Western Area Rural districts; in addition, team members spent time in another five of Sierra Leone's 13 districts (for a total of nine) during either the preliminary scoping research or core qualitative research, or in the administration of a study of local customary law courts. In total, original qualitative research contributing to this paper totaled approximately 83 distinct person-weeks of time. Core research covered approximately 31 villages in four chiefdoms, and involved at least 460 interviews with 360 individuals. Other related research, particularly the preliminary scoping research, involved dozens of additional interviews in a wide range of locations. The appendix provides a list of the core research questions. For more information about the research methodology, including the rationale behind the selection of the main research sites, please see R. Manning, "Research Methodology: Justice for the Poor and Understanding Processes of Change in Local Governance," available at <http://www.worldbank.org/justiceforthe poor>.

² P. Richards, K. Bah, and J. Vincent, "Social Capital and Survival: Prospects for Community-Driven Development in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone," *Social Development Papers* 12 (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004), 26. The authors define the humanitarian interregnum as "a period in which the state was absent from the countryside due to war" (24).

³ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴ A common expression meaning "left the case to God" in the local creole language, Krio.

⁵ In Sierra Leone, politically, economically, or socially powerful people are known as "big men." People look to such individuals to support and protect them, as part of a longstanding system of patrimonial politics. Governance and justice at a local level (and, to a large extent, at all levels) are both strongly entwined with this system of "big man-ism." The belief (often justified) is that without a "big man" or patron, an individual or community would have little hope of accessing justice or other benefits.

⁶ For more information about this dissemination activity, see G. Jalloh and L. Braima, "Leh Wi Tok for Change Wi Village': Community Dissemination of Research Findings," *Justice for the Poor Briefing Note* 2, no. 3 (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2008).

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTJUSFORPOOR/Resources/J4PBriefingNoteVolume2Issue3.pdf>.

⁷ These are people born in the community or born outside but to a family with roots in the community. They are also referred to as "sons of the soil."

⁸ The J4P team is most familiar with the work of Timap for Justice, which has community paralegals in 12 offices across the Northern and Southern provinces of Sierra Leone, supported by lawyers based out of the headquarters in Freetown. (For more information, see <http://www.timapforjustice.org/>.) There are other paralegal programs in Sierra Leone, however, including one run by the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) and another by the Access to Justice Law Centre in Makeni, Bombali District.

⁹ Mr. J.B. Turay, Senior Development and Planning Officer, NGO Unit, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Interview March 11, 2008.

¹⁰ "Justice for the Poor and Understanding Processes of Change in Local Governance: Sierra Leone, Concept Note" Working Paper 40038 (Washington, DC: World Bank, December 2006), <http://go.worldbank.org/OFT6RJUL80>.

¹¹ This paper does not attempt to include an exhaustive review of literature, but does cite a few relevant materials.

List of papers

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