

## **HANDS' WORTH PART TWO.**



## **HOUSING AND RESTITUTION.**

### **THE PROBLEM OF HOUSING.**

***The focus of our project in this Section is, “HOUSING AND RESTITUTION”.***

***This problem has been, and is still, one of the most acute problems that Sierra Leone in particular and the Mano River Union in general is facing, during and after the civil and political conflicts in the region.***

***During the recent period of civil war, there was a lot of devastation and vandalism of lives and property. Houses, recreation centers, schools and hospitals were burnt down, leaving many people homeless.***

***This factor led to the displacement and movement of many people within the country and the sub region, in the search for a safe home. Many people went to live in other countries. Today, we have both internally displaced people, ( IDP) and externally displaced people (Refugees), living in neighboring countries, languishing and indefinitely waiting on Resettlement programmes, and much needed restitution: either to come home or to stay and integrate in another community.***

***This problem has led to overcrowding in urban areas, such as the capital city of Sierra Leone: Freetown. This movement has become devastating and has caused many problems of traffic congestion, youth unemployment, shortage of accomodation, crime, drug abuse, prostitution and diseases like HIV/AIDS, etc.***

***Many Internally Displaced People (IDPs) have contributed to the heavy traffic in Freetown. The word "Traffic" is not only limited in meaning to the flow and control of moving vehicles and other means of transportation, but also the flow of movement of people (pedestrians). Both traffic on wheels and on foot has become very heavy and has lowered people's speed of movement, and caused an increase in accidents.***

***Most of those people involved in micro-businesses (under one hundred thousand Leones), are Internally Displaced People ( IDPs) who were previously living in the areas devastated by war and mining like Kono, and the Northern Districts very close to the Capital.***

***Their trading has created a lot of problems by blocking pedestrian routes, thereby causing a lot of accidents and risks to passers-by in the very narrow, poorly serviced streets of Freetown. Sometimes, if passers-by happen to collide with their fragile businesses set out along the footpath, they will fall heavily on that person, and may even beat him/her up.***

### **YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT.**

***The increasing movement of people from affected areas has caused a mounting youth unemployment problem, as well as heavy competition for employment in the capital; leaving the rural areas to decline.***

***Since the number of job opportunities are very limited, many of the better trained and more level-headed youths are unemployed. This has made them very disgruntled and frustrated, especially if they find themselves in isolated urban ghettos and slum areas, where they may often be found sleeping in parks, cemeteries, markets, verandas, makeshift shacks or zinc huts, as they cannot afford the cost of housing.***

## **RENTS.**

***As a case in point, even many of the disabled have been evicted from private rented accommodation, simply for the reason that they could not afford to pay their landlords. They now sleep in front of the Central Mosque at Wilberforce Street.***

***Rent has become very difficult to pay in Sierra Leone since the end of the war. The problem has caused a lot of population movement, and has been exacerbated by the involvement of many organizations and foreign nationals, including private companies, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Peace Keeping Forces and UNOMSIL, who have been paying in Dollars, Pounds and Euros, etc. As a result, the demand for houses has become very high, which has meant that only the wealthiest can afford them. Rents have risen and are often expressed in Dollars, rather than in Leones (our own currency), in order to hide their magnitude.***

***There have been some post-conflict projects to rebuild, rehabilitate and resettle ex-combatant and war victims, but there are many better ways the government could have adopted to encourage the construction of new housing for returnees in a post-conflict country like Sierra Leone, which have not been tried. These include the lowering or waiving of tariffs on building materials, to motivate imports at low prices for the people.***

***The increment of the tariff on imported cement, (to discourage importers and encourage the monopoly of LEOCEM) is a big setback, multiplying the shortage of houses, and incrementing rents. The cost of a bag of cement made by LEOCEM (which is a key building material), is 36,000.00 Leones.***

## **CRIME RATES:**

***Crimes like burglaries, house breaking, pick-pocketing, snatching cellphones and handbags, and Armed Robberies too, etc, are becoming more common than ever before in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The basic problem is the overcrowding, and the increase in unemployment and homelessness; and a growing number of youths without homes or jobs who are forced into the above crimes to survive.***

## **DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION:**

***DRUG ABUSE*** Is also on the increase, as a result of housing, unemployment and rent problems, which have forced many people, mostly young, to become vulnerable to drugs like marijuana and narcotics such as cocaine and brown-brown, etc. These drugs have complicated the situation further causing many young people to lose control over themselves and become violent. The seizure of a plane last year that landed in Freetown airport with several tons of cocaine is a case in point of how important this problem is.

## **PROSTITUTION:**

***In addition to the above stated problems, many women and girls have become prostitutes in order to cope with the cost of living, especially in the most devastated areas where many have become commercial sex workers to survive the housing problems.***

***By being involved in commercial sex, they have also become main agents and carriers of one of the world's main killer diseases: HIV/AIDs. Their contacts with various men, mostly married and unmarried, have accelerated the transmission and spread of sexually transmitted diseases.***

## **ENCOURAGING REFUGEE CAMPS:**

***Internationally also, many Sierra Leoneans are still stranded in exile in Guinea. Many of whom were key people in their original dwelling places and communities. After these were devastated as a result of the war, they are now finding it very difficult to return.***

***Those who lack dwelling places are currently undergoing the worst living conditions, while waiting on UNHCR in vain to resettle them, which is seen to be very unlikely or not at all possible. Instead, we are thinking of projects for housing, rehabilitation and restitution, as a key motivation to bring them back on board the nation's development, if they cannot remain abroad.***

***We have suggested therefore, a pilot project for the construction of Low Cost Housing, using locally available materials and resources, like***

***bricks made from chevron blocks. This will help some people to gain employment in construction, and create opportunities for low-rental housing that can provide the basis for other community services, and sustainable youth entrepreneurship.***

***Also, the construction of low cost housing can prevent the problems and hazards created by the non-recognition of “Squatter” settlements by the government and municipal authorities.***

***This leads to poor or no public services, such as water, sanitation, waste collection access, storm drains, schools, or clinics, etc, in settlements like Kroo-bay and other slums in the hills and valleys of Sierra Leone.***

### **DELIVERABLE RESULTS**

***Therefore, to help our proposed project meet the budgetary standards, we hope to use locally available materials like “aggregates” (made from sand and stone), cement and lime, water, burned bricks, timber and sticks; together with locally supplied tools and equipment such as hoes, shovels, axes, pickaxes, wheelbarrows, hoists, etc.***

***Using local raw materials, we will contact small-scale building material companies, which can be involved in the production of appropriate building materials that will be useful for this purpose, with the need to ensure the quality of our products (building materials).***

***Since this is a community services project, it is very important to apply community management schemes and labour-based approaches to meet our objectives. We can do this by encouraging a step-by-step process for the project implementation, as well as for the maintenance afterwards.***

***The gender issue is also going to be considered as paramount because gender discrimination has been a major problem faced by women in our country, as well as in many other African countries, which has slowed down, and is slowing down, our economic and social growth and development.***

***So, we have to encourage women’s participation in this construction project as they are among the people who are its main beneficiaries. Many of them at present find it very difficult to run affairs in their homes, as***

**many of the men on whom they formerly relied for assistance, were killed in the war.**

**We will also adopt Community Action Planning (CAP) for the project to succeed by involving the affected community in the process.**

**We will also aim to meet our objectives by mobilizing the community to become involved in the construction work on the houses, by offering them the required facilitation skills.**

**We recognize that “the role of the educator is to present to the community in a challenging way the issue that are already present in a confused way”. (Mao Tse Dong ).**

**By using a labor based approach, we can meet our goals because the construction and maintenance work will be carried out using local supported labour, and light equipment which satisfies the required standards and qualities, in a cost effective manner. This approach does not mean substituting machines with workers at any cost; but we are aiming at creating employment for youths.**

**Since this is a construction project, we will seek information on the necessary contracts and agreements in order to guarantee the safety and security of the work and the structures.**

**The above steps and procedures cannot bring the deliverable results required to meet our objectives without the role of the Site Supervisor to carry out the following functions:**

- **To ensure good quality work, by the day to day supervision of labour, regarding its standards of workmanship and site organization;**
- ✓ **To supervise the contract and the contractors, to ensure their strict adherence to the terms and objectives set out in the contract.**
- ✓ **To maintain accurate records on the site, including the site log in which details will be entered covering daily work, unscheduled work or incidents, non-standard work, and other occurrences like rain or other difficult weather conditions, etc.**
- ✓ **Ensuring that the safety regulations are fully observed.**
- ✓ **Giving the contractor instructions for work on the site.**
- ✓ **Communicating with the adjacent community and any organizations involved in the project.**

***By fully observing and utilizing the above measures, we hope to be able to free ourselves from the poverty trap that we are caught in, as illustrated.***

### **SITE ORGANIZATION.**

***This is to highlight the duties and responsibilities of the management of the construction work from start to finish. This involves the Site Supervisors/Agent; Group leaders/Foreman and the laborers to carry out the approaches using both direct and indirect labour.***

***The supervisor will represent HURRARC along with HINYA, for the direct implementation of the project.***

### **SITE WORK, GROUP LEADERS /SUPERVISOR:**

***The construction of low cost housing is characterized by several activities, which will be the responsibility of groups of people appointed by the supervisor. Each group will be headed by people responsible for the various jobs on the site. These Group Leaders will have specific responsibilities and authority as set out below:***

- ✓ ***To be answerable to the site supervisor.***
- ✓ ***To be responsible for training the laborers.***
- ✓ ***To be responsible for managing and supervising certain operations such as setting out and clearing the site, earthworks, structures, etc.***

### **LABOURERS:**

***These are the workers who will accomplish the day to day tasks such as excavating and removing earth at the beginning of the site work, etc. Labourers may be skilled or unskilled.***

### **WORK ORGANIZATION:**

***We have arranged the allocation of the construction work in various ways, under the care of various group leaders, for the best use of labour, materials and tools. These can be achieved by the following:***

### **PRODUCTIVITY:**

***By this, we have evaluated the amount of work that could be reasonably completed by the labourers over a particular period of time. This will help the site supervisor to utilize the limited amount of time, resources and materials at our disposal.***

### **REMUNERATION:**

***We will ensure that people are paid for their work to construct low cost housing, by adopting the following three fold payment classification recommended by the ILO to allow labor incentives in this type of work: the day work system, the piece-work system, and the task-work system.***

### **THE DAY WORK SYSTEM:**

***We have set a period of time (at the beginning), over which workers will be paid a fixed sum for each day, in turn for working a given number of hours, for jobs such as site clearance, removing obstacles and posts, water carrying, etc.***

### **THE PIECE-WORK SYSTEM:**

***We will outline later the payment system for work, according to its length, quantity and productivity.***

### **MANAGING THE LABOUR:**

***The main objective of the Hands' Worth project is to allow Local Community Based Youth Organizations to actively participate in employment-generating projects, and adopt fair principles of employment and recruitment.***

***We will first discuss and agree on the project and on the conditions of employment with all the people in the community, taking into consideration the various interests of all the parties involved. As this is a Community Service Project, irrespective of how much other people may be its beneficiaries, the people in the project's immediate vicinity must be the ones to benefit the most, in terms of employment and sustainable***

***Social Responsibility Gains. This will convince people to stay, or to return to places where they had migrated from, to mitigate the overall trend towards urbanization.***

### **RECRUITMENT OF CASUAL LABOUR:**

***We will recruit Laborers at public meetings a week or two before the start of any actual site work; using a secret ballot system in a situation where the turnout of volunteers is greater than the number of labourers required.***

### **LABOR SCHEDULE:**

***In order to control the overall progress of our work, we will develop a labour schedule to include all the requirements for labour and materials, and the various operations, which will be calculated properly before the start of the project, so that the community can be well informed about arranging any necessary activities.***

### **DISPUTE SETTLEMENT:**

***We will give the Site Supervisor the key responsibility of settling disputes between the workers, as well as any which may develop between them and the community, because any such disputes will be major deterrents to the project's progress and its productive output.***

### **EXTERNAL FACTORS:**

***If the project is properly and successfully implemented, it is hoped to lobby the government and other NGOs to provide housing and the effective restitution of property for displaced persons and refugees, especially for those IDPs that are overcrowding Sierra Leone's capital ( Freetown ), and others languishing in refugee camps in Guinea, etc.***

***We have already designed an agricultural project called "Joseph's Mission", for "The Youths Hands' worth Revolution" project. ( with a national formula calculated to enhance sustainable food security, with a counter cyclical process ).***

***This is referred to as the Pilot Stage of the Sustainable Project for "Housing and restitutions of properties in all the African Sub regions"***

***HURRARC is trying at present to implement a part of this formula for the Sierra Leonean refugees currently in Guinea and the rest of the Sub-Region who did not meet the resettlement criteria abroad, but who could be brought on board to accomplish the work of National Youth Development and Empowerment.***

***Therefore, the successful completion of this project will be a training aid, and an example for the bodies concerned like the UNHCR, to provide alternative reassurance for our refugees, according to the “ twenty three “ (23) principles of Sagio Pablo Pinheiro ” approved and adopted by the U.N. in 2005.***

***We will consider how ” **The Hands' Worth project** ” can collaborate with the UNHCR in the implementation of its requirements to provide shelter, a source of sustainable food security, and employment for IDPs and refugees; in order to eliminate their continuing dependency on the government, and on all those citizens whose work supports the government, and other donor bodies, etc.***