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BUILDING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS DURING POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY

A study of skills training in Jendema, Sierra Leone

Master´s Thesis
in Economic Geography

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFRC – Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

APC – All People's Congress

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CSW – commercial sex worker

DAC – Development Assistance Committee

DDR – disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration

DFID – Department for International Development of the UK Government

DYFC – Digloma Youth Friendly Centre

ECOMOG – Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire Monitoring Group

EFA – Education for All

FCA – Finn Church Aid

GLC – Global Link Consultancy for Capacity Building

GNP – Gross National Product

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HDI – Human Development Index

IDP – internally displaced person

MDG – Millennium Development Goal

NGO – non-governmental organization

OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

RADA – The Rehabilitation and Development Agency

RUF – Revolutionary United Front

SLPP – Sierra Leonean People's Party

TVET – technical and vocational education and training

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nation's Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO−UNEVOC – UNESCO's International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

There are 1,5 billion people in the world living in countries affected by conflict, violence or fragility (WB 2011b, 1.) Hence, living in a conflict and dealing with its aftermath is an everyday reality in many parts of the world. Thirteen out of sixteen West African countries are listed by United Nations as "least developed countries", which makes West Africa one of the poorest and least stable areas in the world. After the countries got their independence there have been at least 58 coups or attempted coups and lots of civil wars, and there are still many active rebel groups left. (World Development Report 2011, 56). Besides, three-quarters of the 1,4 billion people who live in extreme poverty, referring to surviving on less than 1,25 USD a day, work and live in rural areas. (IFAD 2010, 9.) The target group of this study is people that belong to these above-mentioned categories that make them vulnerable: they live in poor and rural post-conflict circumstances. Sierra Leone is ranked among the least developed countries in the world (UNDP 2011, 126). The rural poor were also the ones who suffered the most during the civil war that the country experienced between 1991 and 2002 (CIA 2012; Cheru 2008, 5-7). The fieldwork for this study was carried out in the south-eastern countryside, close to the border to Liberia in a small Sierra Leonean village called Jendema.

Since the mid-twentieth century there have been lots of different kinds of strategies to improve the situation of the rural poor that especially stress the agricultural growth and regional development. Despite the numerous policy interventions rural livelihoods have still in general improved only little, and the migration has increasingly been seen as the fastest way to move out of poverty. Thus, the rural poor are often described as "chronically poor". Whereas the policy goals formerly concentrated on agricultural growth and regional development, the focus is today on sustainable development and poverty alleviation; more broadly achieving the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. Lots of efforts have been made to bring those strategies also better in line with the aspirations of rural people themselves. The livelihood approach is one response to the disappointing results of the previous approaches. According to Chambers (1997, 1748) there are two essentials that are both ends and means in development thinking; livelihood and capabilities. Those elements contribute to the

overarching end, which is well-being. In a post-conflict context livelihood has still another role as well. “As employment grows in a post-conflict country, so will the chances for a lasting peace”, as Beasley (2006, 5-6) put it.

The livelihood approach helps to achieve a more holistic understanding of livelihood, showing that besides material well-being it also includes other non-material dimensions and that the rural livelihoods cannot be understood without taking the whole household into consideration (Zoomers 2008, 147-148). The objectives of this study are also closely linked to the Millennium Development Goals that all the 193 member states of the United Nations have agreed to achieve by 2015. Those goals aim among others at eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, fighting HIV/AIDS, empowering women and achieving universal primary education (UN 2010).

1.2. Post-independent Sierra Leone

This study took place in Sierra Leone, a West-African country bordered by Liberia, Guinea and North Atlantic Ocean, which has a total area of 71 740 square kilometres and a population of 5,5 million people. (CIA 2012.) The study itself was implemented more specifically in the south-eastern part of the country in the Pujehun district in a small rural village called Jendema, next to the border between Sierra Leone and Liberia. (Figure 1.) Pujehun district is situated about 200 kilometres from the capital Freetown and has an estimated population of 151 000 people. (RADA 2009, 3-4.)

Figure 1 Map of Sierra Leone and index map of Africa (©Mapinfo Professional)

Sierra Leone's independence was fixed in April 1961 by the United National Front and the British Government. (Zack-Williams 2008, 17; CIA 2012.) After that the country has suffered extremely poor governance, economic mismanagement and over a decade-long civil war between 1991 and 2002. The democratic system that existed upon the independence was progressively dismantled and replaced with a centralized regime that put an end to the local government and imposed a one-party rule in 1978 (Cheru 2008, 5), and All People's Congress (APC) as the ruling party (Zack-Williams 2008, 20.) The conditions that were necessary for national development were eroded by corruption and rent seeking of the politicians. Especially the rural population was deprived of infrastructure, education and health care, since the power and resources were concentrated in Freetown, the capital. (Cheru 2008, 5-7). The youth were excluded from

Sierra Leonean politics, both at the national and community levels, which for its part also drove the sense of frustration and marginalisation. (Moore, Squire & MacBailey 2003, 4.) During the period of the one-party dictatorship between 1978 and 1989 the GDP per capita declined by over a third and so spread the poverty, which eventually led to a decade-long civil war.

There was already a multi-party constitution approved in 1991, but the elections scheduled for 1992 were halted by a military coup. Four years later the democratic rule was restored with the election of President Kabba (Cheru 2008, 5-7), the leader of the Sierra Leonean People's Party (SLPP) (Zack-Williams 2008, 23), who continued as the head of state until the elections in 2007. However, the democracy did not last for long, once the insurrection by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) had started to spread throughout the countryside from the neighbouring Liberia with the support of the Liberian warlord Charles Taylor already in 1991. (Cheru 2008, 5-7; Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 66-67.) The RUF was unsatisfied with the removal of the corrupt APC dictatorship (Zack-Williams 2008, 21) and concentrated especially besides on occupying the districts where most of the diamonds situated also on mining the diamonds, which were then exchanged for weapons. (Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 66-67.)

The president Kabba was unseated in May 1997 by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), but only until February 1998, when he was restored to power by the ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire Monitoring Group) forces (Cheru 2008, 5-7). A group of Mende hunters that also supported Kabba and his government were called the Kamajors (Zack-Williams 2008, 23). President Kabba and Foday Sankoh, the leader of the RUF, then finally signed the Lome Peace Accords in July 1999 with the help of the United Nations (UN) and ECOMOG. That paved the way for the formation of a government of national unity in November the same year. (Cheru 2008, 5-7.)

The implementation of the Lome Peace agreement and thus also the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of the ex-combatants proceeded until April 2000. The forces of RUF tried to exploit the departure of ECOMOG forces by trying to ascend to a dominating position before the UN Mission to Sierra Leone was firmly established in the country. Because of all the vandalism the RUF committed against the UN, the British troops had to come to UN's assistance, before the situation settled down. After the Abuja Agreements made in the years 2000 and 2001 the DDR process could

be resumed for real, and by February 2002 President Kabba officially declared that the war was over. (Cheru 2008, 5-7.)

By that time 120 000 people had lost their lives, thousands more had had their limbs amputated and a lot of civilian as well as government property, including farms, mines and structures, had been destroyed (Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 64). 65% of the school buildings were destroyed or burnt down. All in all half of the infrastructure was destroyed, and also up to half of the population displaced, which had subsequent effects on families and communities. Many people sought for refuge also outside Sierra Leone, largely in refugee camps in Liberia and Guinea. (Moore, Squire & MacBailey 2003, 1-3). The areas that suffered damage the most in Sierra Leone, already from the early stages of the war onwards, were the remote rural regions. (Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 66-67). During the war Sierra Leone was fast slipping down the Human Development Index (HDI). Between the years 1985 and 1995 only 38% of the Sierra Leoneans had access to health services and between 1990 and 1995 only 34% per cent had access to safe water and 11% to sanitation. (UN 1996.)

After the civil war there have been already two successful elections in Sierra Leone, out of which the latest one was won by the present president Ernest Bai Koroma. However, there is still a lot to do on the economic and political front before the democracy and peace in the country can really be consolidated. The public confidence in the institutions of the state is not yet at the level it used to be, due to all the misrule and shattering memories of the civil war. To restore the integrity of the state and sustain peace ultimately depends on good governance and abolition of the social injustices. Efficiency and responsiveness of public institutions are to be improved and a climate created where every citizen feels that he or she is part of the development of the nation. This means for example providing thousands of marginalized youth and ex-combatants an alternative to the assault rifle. (Cheru 2008, 5-7.)

1.3. Research problem and structure of the study

Rural livelihood is a multifaceted issue, especially in a post-conflict context. It still needs to be examined from many points of view, both in practice and in research. This study will examine *the role of skills training in sustainable livelihood building in a West African, Sierra Leonean village called Jendema.* The sub-questions are as follows;

1. *What kind of impact has the skills training had on the youths' lives in Jendema in terms of the livelihood of their households?*
2. *How does the skills training contribute to the empowerment of the youths in post-conflict Jendema?*

The study is based on interviews and observation done in the field between 15th of November and 11th of December in 2009. The study was carried out in cooperation with Finn Church Aid, which is one of the largest non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Finland working with development issues and providing humanitarian assistance (About FCA). In the field FCA is cooperating with the Rehabilitation and Development Agency in Sierra Leone (RADA), which is a local non-governmental organization focusing especially on micro-level issues related to HIV/AIDS, livelihood and primary education. The skills training centre called Digloma Youth Friendly Centre (DYFC) was established in Jendema, Sierra Leone by RADA. (RADA 2008, 1.) Hence, RADA was also the local partner supporting the implementation of this field study. In this study the focus is at the local scale of analysis.

The structure of the study is following. Chapter 2 discusses the key concepts used in this study: post-conflict, poverty, development, empowerment and sustainability in the context of livelihood. The post-conflict reconstruction is presented as living circumstances and as a developmental process from the point of view of the non-governmental organizations. Chapter 3 outlines the sustainable livelihoods approach, which serves as the theoretical framework for this study. It is appropriate for this case because of its holistic nature. The objectives of the sustainable livelihoods approach can be boiled down to six, which are explained more in detail in Chapter 3. Two of these objectives are especially relevant for this study. The approach aims at increasing the sustainability of poor people's livelihood by promoting better access to high-quality education, information, technologies and training and a social environment that is more cohesive and supportive. (DFID 1999). These are also objectives of the DYFC. Furthermore, the possibilities and challenges of the vocational skills training are discussed. Chapter 4 presents the research design, providing detailed information about the process of the field study with its challenges and limitations and describing the research approach. Chapter 5 describes the post-conflict Sierra Leone as context for livelihood building and presents the DYFC and the graduates that form the target group of the interviewees. The findings based on the study are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter 6 discusses the results of the study. Chapter 7 provides a summary.

2 UNDERSTANDING POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

Working with development in a conflict-affected state has apart from the normal challenges also its own characteristics. Section 2.2. of this chapter tries to get an understanding of what the post-conflict situation is like and Section 2.3. how the reconstruction process then usually proceeds. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the wide-ranging themes this study deals with; post-conflict reconstruction, poverty reduction, development, empowerment and sustainable livelihood, one must first be clear about what is more precisely being referred to with each of those concepts. Therefore some key terms are discussed first in Section 2.1.

2.1. Key concepts in analyzing post-conflict societies

2.1.1 Post-conflict

Africa is often spoken in a context of conflicts. The peace is in many cases fragile, which makes the applying of the term "post-conflict" difficult. Although a war is considered over, human rights violations, cross-border insurgency and localized rebellious activities still often continue after a regime change. Thus after a period of disturbed peace the war may even reoccur. Therefore moving from conflict to recovery is crucial, but not always that easy. According to Addison (2003, 3) recovery has two types of objectives: narrow and broad-based. The narrow one is peace, which is achieved by ending the widespread and continuous violence. The broad-based objective is recovery, which includes the improvement of the incomes and human development indicators of the majority of the people, especially of the poor.

The reconstruction in general includes many actions, like peace building, securing political stability, improving the state administration, resettling of the refugees and the internally displaced persons, demobilizing the ex-combatants as well as rebuilding the economic and social infrastructure (Addison 2003, 8). However, Addison (2003, 15) reminds that if the conflict is to be stopped and poverty reduced, reform cannot be separated from recovery. Bad policies, biases in public spending and taxation, and discrimination of some social groups are to be changed, if the broad-based recovery is to be achieved. Still the fact that a lot of civil conflicts often soon relapse into another

conflict obscures the conception of a real post-conflict environment (World Development Report 2011, 58).

In this study the post-conflict context refers to a region that is in the process of recovering from an armed conflict, and has not yet reached the level of development, or the economical and political stability that prevailed in the area before the conflict. The region is neither yet ready to sustain a development work completely on its own. Hence, in this study the post-conflict context is seen as the transition period that starts after the emergency relief and ends when the region is able to continue with its development work by itself. The development work in a post-conflict region can also include some characteristics of emergency relief.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which is one major aid-donor in the world, distinguishes fragile states in four different stages, among which Sierra Leone was already in 2008 already counted in the least fragile, "early recovery" -stage. That means that at the time of the interviews there was a possibility of being post-conflict: low capacity, but high will. (Brannelly, Ndaruhutse & Rigaud 2009, 31.)

2.1.2 Poverty

Poverty in general can refer to any kind of deprivation with respect to health, education, social life, material consumption or spiritual freedom, just to name a few. The high intensity and occurrence of poverty can be seen as a failure of the economy to generate remunerative livelihoods for the people. (Adauta de Sousa, Addison, Ekman & Stenman 2003, 35.) In participatory approaches, such as livelihood approach, poverty is often intended to be defined by the things that matter to poor people themselves, in order that the poverty reduction strategies could then target the real needs. (White 2008, 25.) One must remember not to consider the poor a stable, identifiable group of people (IFAD 2010, 57).

On a larger scale poverty is a result of economic, social and political processes that interact with each other and often reinforce each other in a way that further worsens the state of deprivation in which poor people live. Poor people live without fundamental freedoms of action and choice, and often lack proper food and shelter, health, education as well as job opportunities. They may face extreme vulnerability to illness, economic dislocation and natural disasters. They are often incapable to influence the key decisions

that affect their lives. The consequences of poverty are also affected by social norms within the community, which may lead to exclusion of women, ethnic groups or other socially disadvantaged people. (World Bank 2001, 1-2.)

Poverty is often divided into absolute and relative poverty. Absolute poverty can be measured against a specific benchmark, such as being able to buy food to eat or for literacy being able to write your own name. Instead relative poverty is measured against social standards, which in developing countries can refer to food, whereas in industrialized countries being able to go out once a week. (White 2008, 25.) Friedmann (1992, 55-71) sees poverty as a form of social disempowerment. Others may live poorly by some standards, but still do not consider themselves poor. Some are poor only temporarily meanwhile others have accepted it as some kind of a natural condition. According to Sen (1999, 87) poverty is deprivation of basic capabilities. This perspective does not still deny the point of view of income being one of the major reasons of poverty, since the lack of it may be one of the principal reasons for individual's capability deprivation.

Hence, poverty hinders poor people from leading the kind of life that is commonly recognized, and the escape from their current situation may often seem impossible. Therefore the key to reduce poverty is the promoting of opportunities and empowering the poor themselves. That is done for example by stimulating the economic growth, making markets work better for the poor and building up their assets, including addressing the inequalities in the distribution of endowments like education. (World Bank 2001, 1-8.) The livelihood approach represents a multidisciplinary view of poverty (Zoomers 2008, 148). Therefore in this study the poverty is understood in all its dimensions.

2.1.3 Development

Development is a term that can be used both descriptively and normatively. It can illustrate a present condition or project a desired, in other words value-laden alternative. It can either refer to the end of social change or to the means for reaching this end. It is no less important *how* development is pursued than *what* benefits are gained. (Goulet 1995, 1.) In development studies the concept of development is normative; development is always seen as desirable, and it is believed that it can be spurred from outside. (Koponen 2007, 12-15.) According to Chambers (1997, 1743) the everlasting challenge

of development is “to do better”. Every state strives for development one way or another (Todaro 2000, 77).

In economic terms development traditionally refers to gross domestic product (GDP) or if net income from abroad is also added gross national product (GNP) per capita (Thirlwall 2008, 37). The changes in the structures of production or employment towards industrialization are also often seen as development (Todaro 2000, 14). However, there are also social indicators connected to these definitions of economic development, such as progress in literacy, better health care or education (Todaro 2000, 14). While GNP growth is absolutely necessary to meet all essential human objectives, countries differ in the way that they translate growth into human development and poverty reduction (UNDP 1997, 8).

Friedmann (1992, 38-42) reminds that economic growth is not necessarily equivalent to development and that if the policy decisions are merely based on them the national income accounts may apart from being imperfect also be even misleading indicators. They do not take into account for the rural poor very typical subsistence activities in agriculture, housework or otherwise informally organized production, nor reflect the social valuations. According to Friedmann it is impossible to define development “from the outside”. In order to pursue a legitimate judgement of a development policy the civic participation is therefore essential. “Alternative development” is what Friedmann calls the improving of the conditions of life and livelihood for the excluded majority. If progress is wanted towards that kind of development the whole idea of economy must be thought again from the bottom up. Alternative development must happen *with* the people rather than *for* them (Friedmann 1992, 105).

Defining social or economic development is thus a complex issue, which has been among others further reflected on by two prominent thinkers in the field; Denis Goulet and Amartya Sen. According to Goulet (1995, 41-45) there must always be three basic components or values included in the definition of development: *life-sustenance, esteem and freedom*. Life sustenance refers to basic needs, such as housing, food, clothing and minimal education. Hence, although a country had a high average standard of living and a good growth performance it cannot be called fully developed if large sections of population are still left without the provision of basic needs. Esteem relates to the feeling of independence and dignity, whereas freedom to the ability of people to govern their own destiny. A country cannot either be considered fully developed if it is exploited by others or if its citizens are trapped in the margin of subsistence with no

education nor skills. (Thirlwall 2008, 38.)

Sen (1999, 53) sees development as individual's freedom to lead the kind of life he or she wants. As means to this freedom he sees many social, economical and political arrangements, such as high-quality education, freedom of speech or increment in gross national income. Hence, according to Sen the restrictions on freedom should be eliminated primarily, like for example poor economic opportunities or intolerance. These freedoms and their instrumental roles in policy will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

The thinking of Goulet and Sen among others has influenced the construction of alternative measures of social and economic development, out of which one of the most popular is the human development index (HDI) of the United Nations (Thirlwall 2008, 39). The HDI is today based on three variables: the standard of living measured by gross national income per capita, education measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling and health measured by life expectancy at birth (UNDP 2011, 127).

2.1.4 Empowerment

Empowerment is a concept that many mainstream development agencies had adopted by the mid-1990's. Initially it was seen as a necessary component for challenging unequal social, political and economic structures and considered as a “weapon of the weak”. Today, besides participation and partnership, it is a crucial part of the development discourse. (Parpart 2008, 355.)

What is seen as empowerment or development of human resources, however, depends on the point of view. First, Parpart (2008, 358) argues that besides being an outcome, empowerment is also a process. Janssens (2009, 974) understands empowerment in the context of effective choices. That refers to the capacity one owns to make choices that can also be translated into desired actions. For the capacity there are two kinds of conditions; first the context where the actor operates that has to be suitable and second the actor has to be able to envisage the options and make the choice. This idea reflects Amartya Sen's (1984, 497) thoughts about people's “entitlements” and “capabilities”. Sen defines entitlements as “the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in a society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces.” Living conditions, in other words what a person can be and can do Sen

(1985, 25-26; 48) calls “functionings”, and the ability to achieve those basic functionings “capability”. In practice capability thus includes several aspects, for example to be well-nourished, to have proper clothing, to keep track of what is going on and what others are talking about, to lead a life without shame and to be able to visit and entertain one's friends. This study concentrates more on Sen’s ideas in Chapter 3.

2.1.5 Sustainability in context of livelihood

Sustainability is a concept that has many dimensions, all of them still important to the sustainable livelihoods approach. In this approach sustainability is an important qualifier because it implies that the progress in poverty reduction is lasting and not fleeting. The Department for International Development of the UK Government (DFID, 1999) defines sustainable systems as follows:

“Sustainable systems, whether livelihoods, communities or national economies, accumulate stock of assets; they increase the capital base over time. Unsustainable systems deplete or run down capital, spending assets as if they were income, and so leaving less for the future generations.”

The sustainable livelihoods approach aims at environmental, economic, social and institutional sustainability. Environmental sustainability refers to conserving or even enhancing the productivity of natural resources for the use of future generations. Economic sustainability in the context of the livelihoods of the poor is achieved when the basic level of economic welfare is achieved and can be maintained. Social sustainability refers to a minimal social exclusion and a maximal social equity. (DFID 1999.)

For Robert Chambers (1992, 14) social sustainability means maintaining a decent livelihood in the long run, and has two dimensions, out of which the other one is positive and the other one negative. The negative dimension refers to the ability of an individual or a household to cope with and recover from stress and shocks like declining wages or some ecological change leading to lower productivity and is thus reactive. The positive dimension is proactive and refers to enhancement of capabilities in order to adapt to and create change and assure continuity for future generations. DFID (1999) calls this already institutional sustainability, which is achieved when the prevailing structures are capable of continuing to perform their functions over time. DFID acknowledges that only few livelihoods, however, qualify as sustainable across all these

dimensions. This study is especially interested in the livelihoods' economical and social dimensions of sustainability.

In practice livelihoods can also be seen as sustainable when they are resilient to external shocks, do not depend on external support, maintain the productivity of natural resources in the long run, and do not undermine the livelihoods of the others (DFID 1999). Chambers (1992, 12) reminds that sustainability in other words shows how assets and capabilities are utilised, maintained or enhanced in order to preserve livelihoods.

2.2. Special characteristics of post-conflict circumstances

2.2.1 Breakdown of basic services and support networks

The impacts of conflict are always complex and wide-ranging, spreading from individuals and communities to regions and countries. (Baingana, Bannon & Thomas 2005, 3-4.) The development in conflict-affected regions lags considerably behind in relation to other developing regions on almost all the indicators that are taken into account in the Millennium Development Goals by the United Nations. According to the World Bank's (2011b, 63) World Development Report for a country that has gone through civil war it takes on average 14 years of peace to recover to its original path. The poverty rate in countries that were affected by a violent conflict between 1981 and 2005, to the group of which Sierra Leone also belongs, was on average about one fifth higher than in other development countries. The longer the conflict goes on, the more it affects negatively the progress of poverty reduction. A medium-size developing country pays for its civil war in economic terms more than thirty years of its GDP growth. (World Bank 2011b, 59-63.)

The uncertainty is a factor that should also be considered throughout the recovery. It is present in the conflict countries during the war and persists long into peace. The rising uncertainty distorts the decisions of communities, the private sector and the state, and thus further contributes to the impoverishment. During the uncertainty of the wartime the communities become unsure about their markets and withdraw to subsistence production, thereby losing opportunities to diversify their livelihoods, and thus their incomes fall. The focus is on short-term survival rather than on investment for

the future. The uncertainty also undermines the state and its institutions, and the corruption and the exploitation of the wartime situations replaces the long-term planning of the national interest. (Addison 2003, 5.)

Social capital, like the trust that keeps up the safety nets within the community, degrades as the communities lose members or turn against each other because of the recruitment of the children to the armed forces (Addison 2003, 5). The breakups of families and communities lead to increased amount of internally displaced people (IDPs), who are generally unable to engage in productive activities. Often they do not have any safety nets, which could prevent them from sliding into poverty. The displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers still have to try to adjust to new circumstances, cope with their loss and somehow regain the feeling of normalcy. (Baingana et al. 2005, 3-4.)

Due to forced displacement, breakup of families and communities, sudden destitution and collapsed social structures the conflicts cause widespread insecurity that persists long after the conflicts have ended. Insecurity, violence and displacement then lead to the breakdown of social services, such as education and healthcare. (Baingana et al. 2005, 3-4.) The households' investments in education fall, because their expected return in the long run decreases and also because the private rates rise and the households are no more able to pay the school fees (Addison 2003, 5; Baingana et al. 2005, 4). Compared to other developing countries in conflict-affected countries people are in general more than three times as likely to be unable to send their children to school, and twice as likely to see their children pass away already before they reach the age of five. They are also more than twice as likely to be undernourished and suffer from the shortage of clean water, which may have long-lasting effects that harm the physical as well as the cognitive activities. (World Bank 2011b, 59-63.)

The rural environments are especially vulnerable to violent conflicts. Conflicts cause the destruction of basic food crops, disruption of communities and spread of AIDS that debilitates the workforce and thus increases the dependent rates. The poorest in rural areas often become the frontline victims of the war. There have been tendencies of rural differentiation, marginalization, erosion of livelihood systems and disempowerment of people. Especially when it comes to public education and income-earning opportunities the socio-economic profiles between rural and urban areas vary a lot. Therefore Mullen (2008, 144-146) reminds that in remote and poor rural communities all the contributions that are made for income-generating opportunities, product market opportunities, labour

mobility, off-farm product development, micro-credit programmes and small rural business are of great importance.

2.2.2 Human consequences

The human consequences of conflicts are major. They cause direct costs, such as losses of lives, destruction and handicaps, as well as indirect costs, like displacement of people, loss of family members, destruction of social networks, traumas, depression and a common instability. (World Bank 2011b, 59-63.) Whereas the direct impacts of a violent conflict fall on young men, like ex-combatants, the women tend to suffer more from the indirect effects (World Bank 2011b, 6). Especially the people who have experienced or witnessed violence in forms of targeted killings, amputations, gender-based violence or physical maiming tend to have psychosocial problems. In practice the mental disorders can include sleeplessness, nervousness, fear, anger, aggressiveness, depression, alcohol and substance abuse, and violence. Hopelessness and helplessness are triggered also by the persistent insecurity and poverty. All these problems manifest then in decreased productivity, and poor nutritional, health and educational outcomes. (Baingana et al. 2005, 1-6.)

People who have witnessed violence also have a higher risk of getting involved in illegal activities. The lost human and social capital caused by having been brutalized as victims or coerced to be child combatants or otherwise witness violence can then become a great impediment to social progress in the future. (World Bank 2011b, 88-89.) The lack of education besides affecting a country's human capital potential also has an effect on the provision of mental health and psychosocial support for children and youth (de Jong & Komproe 2002, 1793-1795). Vandana and Potter (2008, 398) remind that in order to secure development goals in the long run all children out of school should thus be targeted.

Women, for their part, have a higher risk of being subjected to violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, prostitution, or forced marriages and pregnancies. The gender-based violence may have been used as a weapon in war, in order to subordinate and to intimidate, or happen due to the collapse of moral and social order. (World Bank 2011b, 59-60.) The most vulnerable ones who most likely have suffered from violence are often stuck in their home, which hinders them from earning their livelihood or keeping up their social networks, which further makes their lives more insecure. On the other

hand the gender roles change because of a violent conflict and due to that women's participation in the economic activities may also increase. (World Bank 2011b, 59-63.) The informal sector is usually more important to women than men, but, however, there are still more girls than boys that drop out of primary education in order to be able to help in the maintenance of the household (Adauta de Sousa et al. 2003, 36). On the other hand, poor families may rely on their children's economic contribution and hence the children are therefore kept out of school (Baingana et al. 2005, 4). All in all the education of the young people in general gets often interrupted. Conflict affects schooling in many ways; by destroying the infrastructure, displacing the teachers, destroying social capital and interrupting all the functions. However, if only even the fear of violence and insecurity is still present, the people are often too afraid to travel to schools. Besides the security a violent conflict also jeopardizes the human dignity. (World Bank 2011b, 59-63.)

Poverty is also a great determinant of a post-conflict context. The concept of poverty was already defined in Chapter 1, but here its further consequences are discussed through a deprivation trap (Figure 2) that focuses on poverty's disempowering effects. Hence, the poor may often find themselves in a poverty trap, where the disadvantages interlock and thus in a way trap people in their deprivation, where poverty strongly determines the other factors.

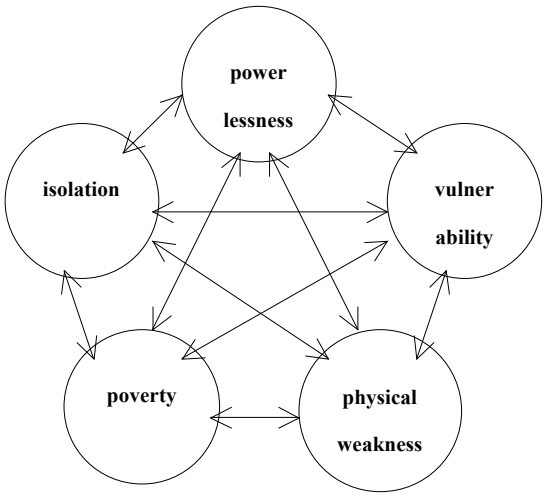

Figure 2 Deprivation trap (modified from Chambers 1983, 112)

First, *poverty* often leads to *physical weakness* because of the lack of food or the

inability to reach the health services, and thus malnutrition further leads to low immune response to infections. The physical weakness contributes to poverty through the lowered productivity of weak labour, and to *isolation* because of the lack of time or energy to attend different kinds of social events. Because of the health or the inability to pay the schooling fees or to buy a bicycle to go to work the poor get more easily isolated. Isolation includes both spatial and informational dimensions and hence refers to remoteness, being out of contact, and lack of education. The poor are out of reach of the basic services and hence do not receive any education. Bargaining is more difficult for illiterates and thus they get more often cheated when buying land for example. They are also ignorant of what the powerful are doing and thus more *vulnerable* to their exploitation. Facing a crisis is hard for the poor, since they lack the assets to meet contingencies and are not able to work any harder, start with new activities or negotiate help. The lack of time and energy also contributes to *powerlessness*. Poverty goes with powerlessness because the lack of wealth often includes low status and thus the poor do not get heard and are neither able to demand what is meant for them. (Chambers 1983, 112-114.)

2.3. Post-conflict reconstruction process

Conflicts have always many destructive effects and cause economic, social and human costs that last for generations. Therefore the question concerning the recovery is rather how these effects are dealt with. (Addison 2003, 5.) According to Adauta de Sousa et al. (2003, 40) in order to help the communities to reconstruct after the conflict there are two kinds of challenges. The first one is the immediate humanitarian assistance, and the second the improvement of longer-term prospects of the community. Apart from water and sanitation the latter one includes already the education and micro-enterprise development. They do not only serve as immediate help for people to cope with their daily lives, but also as a foundation for the future prosperity. These elements must be designed to sustain themselves also beyond the wartime, and that is achieved the best by including the communities themselves in the designing process. This study focuses especially not on the immediate humanitarian aid, but on the post-conflict reconstruction with a long-term prospect.

2.3.1 Poverty reduction and restoration of public trust

The state and the social institutions have a great effect on the potential for economic growth and poverty reduction in the country (World Bank 2001, 9). However, when the physical and the human capital as well as the infrastructure are all destroyed, a question about the priorities arises; what should be constructed first and who are the main beneficiaries of the chosen priorities (Addison 2003, 5). In this section a few guidelines to the recovery process are discussed. First of all, in order to successfully take care of both immediate and longer-term needs the humanitarian assistance, reconstruction as well as the development cooperation should all be well coordinated together. Thus all the factors in the recovery process, the government, donors and the non-governmental organizations should cooperate, which often is a challenge in a country with weak institutions. (Adauta de Sousa 2003, 40.)

Because each conflict is unique, the resulting social phenomena, however, also vary a lot, depending on the nature, length and intensity of the conflict. Therefore also the conditions for the development work may be completely different. To plan the development programmes according to the World Bank's (2011b, 255-258) World Development Report some general practical points of view should to be taken into account that both help to build the citizens' trust in collective action and also contribute to the long-term institutional transformation towards a stable developing environment. A couple of them are pointed out here.

First, multisectoral community empowerment programmes that combine for example social and cultural activities with vocational training are important in order to strengthen the relation between the community and state from the bottom up. Considering women in the programmes is also crucial, and their empowering economically might even bring better results in improving the status of women than other programs linked to the gender action plans. (World Bank 2011b, 274.) . Zack-Williams and Gbla (2008, 79-83) state that a country cannot in other words afford to marginalize women, who constitute 51 per cent of the population. Women must be entitled to full citizenship rights, including rights to land, to participate in politics and decision-making, and freedom from patriarchal oppression, as they often are the major contributors in the agrarian activities, especially in the subsistence farming. Girls must thus have the same opportunity as boys to education, skills training and employment. It is also stated that involving women in economic activities and recovery processes for

longer-term empowerment and generation of jobs not only benefits themselves but also their families and communities (World Bank 2011b, 163). Many of those youths that have had active role in the war and guns as their ”temporary power”, face a trauma of unemployment and poor living conditions in the peacetime, which thus places them in a frustrating and vulnerable condition. (Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 79-83.)

Second, the employment issue is brought out. In order to stop the vicious circles of violence where many people are stuck in, they should be offered productive roles in the society. Besides planning the programmes to reinforce social cohesion and job creation in the long run, vocational training and life skills are important elements as well. Especially the ex-combatants may have low skills levels which make it even more difficult for them to find sustainable employment. (World Bank 2011b, 274.) In order to be able to build livelihood opportunities after an armed conflict, there is still a challenge that lies first in reintegrating the people back into the civil society. The process of reintegration is often complex and suffering from lack of resources. After the war a lot of people, especially youths, remain trapped in cycles of violence only because of the lack of skills and abilities to acquire and sustain themselves in proper occupations. (World Bank 2011b, 6-8.)

The unemployed young people are also a remarkable factor in destabilizing the peace. The civil wars in general have a high rate of recurrence, and therefore keeping the peace is an important point of view in the post-conflict reconstruction work. (Geneva Declaration – – – 2006.) Between 1945 and 2009 out of all the countries in the world that experienced some kind of a conflict, the majority of 56% relapsed to another one (Walter 2010, 1). Besides, there are over a hundred states that have signed the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (2006) that proclaims the “living free from the threat of violence” as “a basic human need” (Geneva Declaration – – – 2006). Always when the social cohesion is lost, the likelihood of another violent conflict increases. Restoring the public confidence in basic collective action at a very early stage is therefore very important, and can be achieved for example through early wins in the post-conflict reconstruction work. (World Bank 2011b, 5.) According to Beasley (2006, 5-6) along with securing the physical environment like shelter, food, healthcare and other fundamental needs even short-term jobs should be a priority. The World Development Report stresses also the need to build or to transform legitimate institutions that deliver “security, justice and jobs” in tandem to the citizens and offer a stake in society to groups that may otherwise get more respect and recognition from

engaging in violence than in legal activities. Hence, at the moment when the soldiers become demobilized the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) plays a crucial role in offering them the possibility to regain a productive role in the civil society. They should thus be given other opportunities; recognition and respect within the legal frames instead of the armed forces. (World Bank 2011b, 6-8.) Factors that trigger violence in a post-conflict situation are exactly unemployment and idleness, although often associated again with social identity, respect and exclusion issues (World Bank 2011b, 74-79). The idle and unemployed youths, especially the ex-combatants and displaced people, are also easier to recruit back to troops. In a civil war often the line between civilian and combatant is blurred, which makes the reconstruction processes then even more complex. (World Bank 2011b, 6-8.) However, the TVET is not only important for the ex-combatants, but helps the whole community to rehabilitate its social and economic fabrics and infrastructure (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2007, 5-7). Besides the income, the employment dynamics have thus also to do with status, respect, and social cohesion (World Development Report 2011, 6).

In order to make the business life possible the infrastructure, such as electricity and transportation should be prioritized and only after that the investments in skills. Developing links between consumers, tradesmen and producers and helping them in financing is thus important. The traditional vocational training programs that do not have any clear links to the labour market are also shown to be ineffective. It, however, may take even a generation until the private sector has recovered well and is capable in absorbing new entrants sufficiently. (World Bank 2011b, 274.) Over the past three decades there has also been a great concern about the transmission of HIV/AIDS and its impact on households, communities and livelihoods. Therefore taking the HIV/AIDS-prevention into account in the livelihood programmes is of great importance. (Vandana – Potter 2008, 397.)

2.3.2 Empowering human resources

Sen (1999, 53) defines development as individual's freedom to lead the kind of life he or she wants. He distinguishes five distinct types of freedoms: political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. Relevant to this study are especially the economic facilities and the social opportunities. Economic facilities refer to the opportunities that people have to utilize economic

resources for consumption, production or exchange. It is also important to consider the distributional and aggregative questions, because it definitely makes a difference how the probable additional incomes are distributed. According to Sen the employment opportunity and level of unemployment should be included in the definitions of development, because for most of the people the issues that crucially determine their entitlements have to do with their ability to sell their labour and the price of commodities. Their entitlements also depend on the power relations in the society, and the spatial distribution of resources; how the state has geographically been able to provide its welfare. (Thirlwall 2008, 39.) Social opportunities in turn refer to the arrangements that society makes for example for education and health care that influence individual's conduct of life. Each of these opportunities and rights alone or complementing one another increases the capability of a human being and should thus be boosted by public policies. The provision of social opportunities such as education and literacy facilitates economic participation such as possibilities to participate in trade and production, which for its part contributes in generating personal abundance. Sen notes that "with adequate social opportunities individuals can effectively shape their own destiny and help each other", instead of playing only passive roles in the development programs. (Sen 1999, 38-39.)

Robert Chambers (1992, 5-6; 1997, 1748) having adapted and further developed Sen's ideas about capabilities reminds that capabilities are both an end and a means of livelihood. A livelihood contributes to the enhancement and exercise of capabilities and capabilities enable a livelihood to be gained. In other words, the enlargement of capabilities through learning, training, education and practice contribute to better living and well-being. Within the general concept of capability there is also a subset of livelihood capabilities that refer to the ability to cope with stress and shocks and to find and take advantage of livelihood opportunities. These capabilities are besides reactive also proactive, since they include exercising foresight, gaining access to information and using services, experimenting, exploiting new resources, competing and collaborating with others. (Chambers 1992, 5.)

Thus a question arises how these capabilities and entitlements can then be boosted, since they are evidently an important part of one's empowerment. All the young people should be given the opportunity to acquire knowledge and develop their attitude, values and skills that further enable them to develop their capacities to work, participate fully in their society, have control over their own lives and continue learning. According to

UNESCO (2000, 16-18) for individual empowerment education at all levels is crucial, as it is that also for broader social and economic development as well. For women's empowerment an especially important factor besides continuing education is the literacy. Literacy contributes to lifelong learning, sustainable livelihoods, active citizenship, good health and improved quality of life for individuals. The possibilities and challenges of education, in this case especially skills training, are discussed more in detail in Chapter 3.

Hence, the whole idea about empowering human resources begins at the individual level, and this is relevant for the study at hand (Chapter 3). Therefore, in order for the development interventions in the post-conflict contexts to be effective it is essential to take into account and understand individual's personal standpoint and his or her perceptions about the situation. As the society develops besides the individual's views also the commonly known perceptions of minimum living standards will be upwardly revised. (Chambers 1992, 5.)

In a post-conflict context one challenge is, however, to achieve the kind of conditions empowerment requires. Although the conflict has ended, the mental health of individuals and communities does not easily revert to type, but is rather traumatized and stigmatized by psychosocial disorders. Therefore it is increasingly recognized that in order to ensure an effective and sustainable reconstruction and reduce the likelihood of future conflicts the mental health and psychosocial needs in post-conflict situations have to be addressed. (Baingana, Bannon & Thomas 2005, 1-6.) Especially the ex-combatants besides mental health problems also face the fear of stigmatization, and thus avoid looking for help and talking about their problems. They are concerned that if they admit the need for help it might harm their careers, and reduce peer confidence in their abilities. (Hoge, Castro, Messer, McGurk, Cotting & Koffmann 2004, 15-17.)

3 LIVELIHOOD BUILDING THROUGH VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY

All the people interviewed in this study lived in the Sierra Leonean countryside, where there were a lot of unemployed young people, who faced really poor social and economic opportunities after the civil war (Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 79-83) The vocational skills training centre DYFC was established in 2007 to improve their situation (RADA 2009, 5). Hence, the rural sustainable livelihood approach is considered an appropriate theoretical framework for this study. That is also what this chapter's Section 3.1. deals with. First it is discussed, how the people in developing countries usually make their living and then more specifically familiarized with the sustainable livelihoods framework. Last, Section 3.2. deals with the possibilities and challenges of vocational training in a post-conflict context.

3.1. The livelihood approach

3.1.1. Making a living

Making a living is fundamental to people's survival across the Global South and it also reflects the complex array of everyday practices that people engage in. Ways of making a living in the Global South can only be fully appreciated if they are analysed holistically, recognizing their complexity, fluidity, illegality and informality. They are often ridden with inequalities, both in terms of structures that shape opportunities but also in terms of the skills, capital and opportunity that individuals possess. (Williams, Meth & Willis 2009, 211.)

Understanding the way people make a living has never been unambiguous. Mainstream neoclassical and structural approaches tend to assume that what determine economic behaviour are broader structures such as economic system or market forces, and thus overlook the actions and roles of individuals. Whereas those strategies that undermine the holistic understanding and thus bear the risk of oversimplification focus for example on the household head as the only significant income earner that usually is male and adult, a holistic understanding recognizes the value of female and child labour as well. The holistic understanding takes into account a lot of different kind of factors

like the income generated by sex workers, the value of growing food for household consumption, or the combination of formal and informal work plus seasonal farming. One of the various academic and policy-based outcomes of the criticisms of those mainstream approaches is the livelihood approach that provides a far more flexible and holistic approach to understanding the ways of making a living. (Williams et al. 2009, 212-213.)

Much of the work that is done within the Global South happens within the informal economy, which can be often very unprofitable and exploitative for many workers. “Informal”, in this study, refers to an economic activity that takes place outside of the formal controls and legislation or otherwise through non-formalized employment relations. Informal work also often occurs alongside or in conjunction with the formal work, and so separating them is not always reasonable. Traders may sell on the street food products that however are purchased wholesale from formal sector companies. The informal work can range from previously mentioned example to home-based work, sex work, hairdressing or even criminal activities. Hence, the informal work is very much characterized by its heterogeneity and internal inequalities, referring to gender differences as well. In the Global South the informal economy is the primary source of employment for women. Women often cluster in the most poorly paid and least secure sections of the economy, with only limited prospects of long-term capital accumulation. In contrast, men are more likely to employ themselves as entrepreneurs that also have other employees. Differences may however also arise depending on lots of other reasons as well, such as education, training, wealth or the nature of the market where people work. Men for their part may suffer from the expectations that are associated with their success. (Williams et al. 2009, 217-219.) An important factor to be considered as well within the informal economy is child labour. Especially in contexts of extreme vulnerability child workers might be a fundamental survival strategy for the households. (Williams et al. 2009, 234.)

Friedmann (1992, 40) also reminds that people are not just an abstract category of labour that acts mechanically, but socially connected human beings that live in families, households and communities and who interact with each other. Over time in their particular place that they inhabit they construct their own typical patterns of social practices. Therefore in order to examine the alternative development, the prevailing conditions of life and livelihood must be considered at a spatially distinctive scale. This study was implemented at very local level and is thus considering the livelihoods of the

graduates of the DYFC and their households and its possible wider impacts.

3.1.2. Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

Sustainable livelihoods approach focuses particularly on poor people living in the rural areas of developing countries (Williams et al. 2009, 216). It is an approach to analyse the objectives, scope and priorities for development. It does not only assist with the implementation but puts people at the centre of the development analysis and thereby aims at increasing the effectiveness of development assistance. (DFID 1999). Livelihood studies see the rural poor themselves as agents that shape their own future, and focus on what people have, rather than what they lack (Zoomers 2008, 148).

According to this approach sustainable poverty reduction will be achieved only if the support from outside the household works with people in a way that is consistent with their prevailing livelihood strategies, social environment and abilities to adapt (DFID 1999). The livelihood studies have showed that since the mid-1990's there has been a tendency towards the diversification of the livelihoods of the rural poor, and that the income no longer comes from agriculture only (Zoomers 2008, 149). Sustainability is also an important component to this approach as well, which contains a social, economic and environmental dimension. The notion of sustainability was already discussed in more detail in the first chapter of this study.

The sustainable livelihoods approach is holistic in a way that it is applicable across geographic areas and social groups, recognises the multiple influences on people and tries to understand the relationships between them and their joint impact upon livelihoods. Whereas many development activities tend to focus on either macro or micro level, the livelihoods approach attempts to include them both in the analysis. Instead of only examining the outcomes it stresses the importance of the processes of making a living. Thereby it tries to gain a realistic understanding of what people's livelihoods are shaped by and how one can adjust these factors in order to produce more beneficial livelihood outcomes. (Williams et al. 2009, 217; DFID 1999.)

The concept of livelihood can be defined at different hierarchical levels, out of which, however, the household level is still the most commonly used (Chambers 1992, 8). Instead of analysing the needs the approach focuses on the strengths and recognises people's inherent potential which in the end refers to the factors that have poverty-reducing potential. Thus it aims at removing those constraints that hinder the realisation

of the potential. Although the approach is encompassing its objectives can still be boiled down to six. In order to increase the sustainability of poor people's livelihoods it aims at promoting:

- better access to high-quality education, information, technologies and training and better health and nutrition
- a social environment that is more cohesive and supportive
- better access to infrastructure
- more secure access to financial resources
- better management and more secure access to natural resources and
- an institutional environment that is supportive for numerous livelihood strategies and promotes equitable access for all to competitive markets (DFID 1999)

The approach is originally based on the ideas of Robert Chambers that were created in the mid-1980s and have since then been developed by Chambers himself, Gordon Conway and many others. Although the value of the approach within the social sciences has been debated it has gained importance globally, and its impact and popularity are still evident by its wide adoption and adaptation by national as well as international organizations. The Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom's Government is an especial proponent of its application as a framework in development interventions. (DFID 1999; Williams et al. 2009, 216-217.)

A livelihood in its simplest interpretation refers to a means of gaining a living (Chambers 1992, 6). Chambers and Conway (1992, 7-8) have still defined it more thoroughly as follows:

"A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term."

The sustainable livelihoods framework is presented below in Figure 3. The framework can be applied and the sustainable livelihood outcomes assessed at different levels, including individual, household and region scales (Scoones 2005, 5). This study considers the framework especially from the point of view of the individuals and their households.

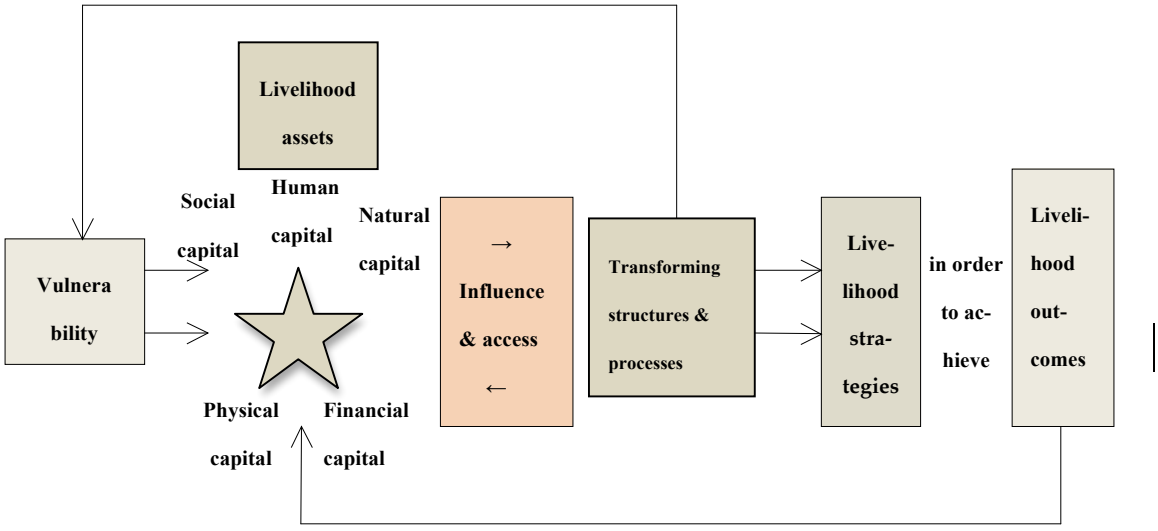

Figure 3 The sustainable livelihoods framework (DFID 1999)

Starting from the left, people are understood to operate within *a context of vulnerability*, where they have access to certain livelihood assets, in other words poverty reducing factors. In this study the vulnerability context besides the poor rural environment refers to the post-conflict context as well. Livelihood is thus considered in terms of access to different types of *livelihood assets*: *produced, natural, human, social and cultural capitals*. (Bebbington 1999, 2022.) Compared to the commonly known division that is seen in Figure 3 financial and physical capital is sometimes replaced by produced capital and cultural capital is added. The prevailing social, institutional and organisational environments determine the value and meaning of these assets and thus influence the *livelihood strategies.* Hence, the ways in which people combine and use their assets that are available to them and that meet their own livelihood objectives then help them to acquire the desired *livelihood outcomes*. (DFID 1999.)

Especially when people's livelihoods are no longer based on natural resources only but a wider range of assets, income resources and product markets, Bebbington (1999, 2022) argues that it is important to have a comprehensive conception of the resources that people need to access in the process of composing a livelihood. He also notes that

"*people's assets are not merely means through which they make living: they also give meaning to the person's world. (…) assets (...) are not simply resources that people use in building livelihoods: they are assets that give them the capability to be*

and to act."

This corresponds to Amartya Sen's (1999, 87) ideas about poverty as a lack of capabilities. For example working as a carpenter requires human capital such as knowledge, skills and health. Social capital needed in carpentry includes all the networks that are needed in order to run the business, such as help from family members and friends. Natural capital needed is wood. A carpenter needs physical capital such as all the tools and equipment and some kind of a building where to work. Financial capital includes cash and savings or an access to credit in order to be able to invest in the business. However, one must remember that the carpentry not only requires the above mentioned assets but also builds them. Human capital is accumulated by working and thus improving skills and acquiring knowledge. Carpentry creates financial capital by providing income. Social capital is created if the carpenters for example work together in order to improve their livelihood. Equity is also a concept that is often, besides capability and sustainability, linked to livelihood. That accentuates the equal distribution of assets, capabilities and opportunities and pursues the end of discrimination against the minorities, women, and all the weak. (Chambers – Conway 1992, 3-4.)

How people make their choices concerning the livelihood strategies depends also on what livelihoods, poverty and development mean to them. Bebbington (1999, 2033) reminds that besides being concerned with the ways in which assets are translated into income one should also be concerned with their impact on people's sense of well-being. Chambers (1997, 1748) describes well-being as the experience of good quality of life, which again refers to a very personal interpretation of it. According to him good quality of life would most probably include elements such as access to basic services, health, security and freedom for fear, peace of mind, good relations with others, love, friendship, choice, creativity and fun. In other words, besides the income people's assets affect the poverty status and quality of life by affecting human experience. Hence, it is important that the people themselves are allowed to define the criteria for well-being, which is something that the livelihood approach takes into account (Chambers 1997, 1748.)

Bebbington (1999, 2022) notes that through Jürgen Habermas' (1981) idea about the communicative action the assets can be seen as vehicles for instrumental action referring to making a living, for hermeneutic action referring to making living meaningful and for emancipator action referring to challenging the structures under

which one is making a living. When examining poverty through assets it is important to include in the analysis all the social, political and economic relationships that create poverty or wealth and their contingency. Besides survival, assets should therefore be also associated with empowerment and change. Bebbington (1999, 2022-2023) claims that social capital may be even prior to access to material resources when determining the livelihood strategies, because it enables the access to other actors and affects the power structures and rules through which the use of resources are produced.

Chambers (1992, 16) reminds that the assets are vulnerable; for example stores can be robbed. The pentagon of the assets makes the users of the livelihoods analysis also think about the substitutability between different kinds of capital. There is no consensus on whether a decline in for example financial capital can be compensated for by an increase in social capital. It can also be hard to even measure certain types of capital and the feasibility of the interchanging types of capital will also depend on the environment in which people live. (DFID 1999.) According to Bebbington (1999, 2033) people especially in rural areas may choose to desist from migration in order to live in a cleaner environment and close to relatives, although they would have better income opportunities elsewhere. Likewise in many livelihood strategies people may voluntarily overconsume a specific capital asset, for example human capital by sending their children to work instead of school or changing into work which causes bad health. In other words, increase in access to one capital can decrease access to another. Hence, livelihood strategies are attempts at continuous management and modification of different capital assets.

Zoomers (2008, 148) argues that one weakness of the livelihood approach is that it focuses too much on the ability of people to cope with crisis and keep up their current position rather than on the possibility of moving up the social ladder. Another criticism Zoomers sees in the approach is that it neglects the structural limitations that the rural poor often face. In reality their access to assets or capitals may not be at all that great or they may not be able to use them to accumulate capital.

3.2. Possibilities and challenges of vocational training

Whereas education previously was viewed as an expenditure or consumption that still did not have any positive impact on the total output of goods and services of a society, it is nowadays considered an investment in human capital that further contributes

significantly to the economic growth (Arnove – Franz – Morse Cordova 2005, 314.) If the families invest in education, the private rates of return they get are said to be at least as high as the returns they would get from other investments. Especially educating a girl has a high pay-off, although there still remains a lot of discrimination against girls and women in the education system. Children have, however, a bigger chance of going to school, doing well there, and being healthier and better nourished, when their parents are also educated. (UNESCO 2003, 3-4.) Managing education systems and creating accessibility at all levels has thus become crucial in development work (Vandana – Potter 2008, 398), and it is generally held that schooling contributes positively to human development also by boosting economic growth, creating productive labour force, improving health and controlling fertility (Dyer 2008, 436). Human welfare and progress are ultimate objectives of all development policies and hence many of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) are also related to education (Vandana – Potter 2008, 397). Since 1948 the right to education has been accorded a fundamental and universal human right by the United Nations (UN 2012). An international initiative Education for All (EFA) was also launched first in Jomtien in 1990 and then reaffirmed in Dakar in 2000 to "bring the benefits of education to every citizen in every society" (The World Bank 2011).

Education in general is still a broad concept that has to be defined more precisely. The post-conflict context for its part creates challenges to education, as noted in Chapter 2. Hence, in this study instead of the general term education the concept of skills training is used to refer to a kind of training that besides the vocational skills training also includes training of life skills, such as literacy, numeracy and knowledge about HIV/AIDS. In this section the general conceptions of skills training are discussed.

According to the International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO 1997) the vocational education and training (TVET) is "education which is mainly designed to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade or class of occupations or trades." In a post-conflict context this definition is, however, too restrictive, because the TVET programming in that situation also aims at reintegration, economic spurring, physical reconstruction and recovery from trauma. That is why UNESCO's Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO 2001, 7) define the TVET broader as "an integral part of general education, a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work, an aspect of lifelong learning and a

preparation for responsible citizenship, an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development, and a method of facilitating poverty alleviation". In the World Development Report (World Bank 2011b, 161-162) life skills training programmes are also called "second-chance programmes" for those who have not completed primary education. They have a positive impact on youth directly by increasing their chances of acquiring employment and indirectly by providing them information and skills to make good decisions, to reduce their chances of engaging in risky action and thus provide better prospects for a successful life.

In the reconstruction work the vocational training has been somewhat neglected for most of the last century. That might be due to the strict separation between relief and development assistance, out of which education has been considered to be part of the latter. Hence, assistance to education has in general not belonged to the humanitarian and immediate post-conflict aid. The increased interest in the experiences and roles of children and youth, as well as the commitments to universal education have, however, in recent years began to bridge the gap between the relief and development assistance, and made the education the fourth pillar of humanitarian response already in emergency situations. The TVET programming is also often connected with the reintegration phases of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes (UN 2006), within which the provision of skills training for the ex-combatants is seen as a priority. (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2007, 1-2.) In conflict-affected situations education assists in normalising the situation for the people and thus in minimizing individual's psychosocial stress, when his or her normal environment has been shaken. It is also essential in restoring one's confidence in the future, and instrumentally in making it possible to develop a peaceful society. Educational activities that include other community members also play an important role in rebuilding family and community cohesiveness. (Pigozzi 1999, 1-2.) The ex-combatants' opportunities for sustainable employment are also constrained by their low skill levels. In order that their vocational training programmes are effective they should though also include straight links to the labour market. (World Bank 2011b, 161).

In many conflict-affected situations informal sector and agriculture are the most probable sources of employment. Therefore a good approach to creating jobs and generating incomes is supporting self-employment. The challenges to self-employment are often lack of marketplaces, lack of access to informal savings and financial services and lack of appropriate training that is designed for those who may have had only

limited education and thus lack even basic skills such as numeracy and literacy. (World Bank 2011b, 162.) Adult illiteracy is a big problem for human resource development, especially concerning women. The role of female education in promoting good health has been emphasized a lot, because while increasing women's access to income it also increases their ability to benefit from important health information and make good use of health services. (Vandana – Potter 2008, 398.) On the other hand education plays also a critical role in preventing emergencies like wars and in fostering a peaceful society.

Education is still not the only key to success for the society to become peaceful, but one of the various social institutions that strive for that. However, ignoring it would also mean ignoring the ways to create awareness and acquire the knowledge and skills to improve the society in the long run. (Pigozzi 1999, 5-6.) It is still important to remember the idea that as the role of the local educational institution increases, the role of the international actor should decrease (World Bank 2011b, 19).

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to understand the research approaches Creswell (2003, 3) suggests that three framework elements need to be considered: the philosophical assumptions referring to *the knowledge claims*, the general procedures of research called *strategies of enquiries* and the detailed procedures called *methods*. The nature of the study is outlined first in Section 4.1. The methods such as collection of data and data analysis are discussed in Section 4.2. Section 4.3. covers evaluation of the study.

4.1. Research approach

This study adopts the views of the constructivist school of thought in terms of knowledge claims (Creswell 2003, 6-8). According to constructivism the social reality and meaning are all the time being constructed by the society (Koponen 2007, 20-21). Individuals develop subjective meaning of their experiences, which may be multiple and diverse. It is the task of a researcher to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. In a research situation this means that questions are often kept open-ended. The researcher has to take into account the contexts and backgrounds of the individuals and at the same time recognize that also his or her own background has an effect on how the responses are being interpreted. The focus of the analysis is thus on interpretation. (Creswell 2003, 6-8.) In the context of this study the constructivist point of view means that knowledge and meanings of the issues discussed are being constructed during the interaction, in other words during the interviews between me as the researcher and the graduates. For instance, the study does not rely on any general understanding of development or poverty, but creates meaning for them together with the target group itself, taking their rural post-conflict context into account. However, the fact that the interviewees come from different backgrounds than me is also intended to be acknowledged. Therefore the interviews were conducted in depth and with no hurry. I was also living and spending time in the village outside the interviews, in order to familiarize myself with the local way of living and thus to be able to understand the interviewees better and interpret them more correctly.

Including only qualitative or quantitative methods is a shortcoming of many approaches that are being applied in the social sciences today. Instead of drawing a clear

distinction between a qualitative and a quantitative study the use of mixed methods is also an option. (Creswell 2003, 3.) Qualitative studies often construct social reality or cultural meaning. They focus on data in the form of words (Miles & Huberman 1994, 9); on the interactive processes where the researcher is involved. The words are thus based on interviews, observation or documents (Miles & Huberman 1994, 9). Their key factor is authenticity and the values are present and explicit in the study. Qualitative studies are situationally constrained and analyzed thematically. (Mikkelsen 2005, 142.) This study is qualitative by nature. It was carried out in the field by observing, gathering all possible relevant documents and making semi-structured interviews. However, because there were as much as 33 interviews arranged, the qualitative data was later also partially transformed into quantitative, enabling the representation of interviewee data in descriptive tables. Later on the data was processed manually; typed up, divided into themes and analysed.

4.2. Collection and analysis of data

In qualitative studies the data collection is typically carried out in close proximity to the local setting for a specific period of time (Miles & Huberman 1994, 9). Based on the diverse nature of the information required for this study and also to improve the reliability and validity of the study (Mikkelsen 2005, 96), various information-gathering methods were employed, including reviewing of all the pertinent documents, interviewing graduates and employees of the Digloma Youth Friendly Centre and observing the situation on the spot to support the other information gathered. During the whole trip I also kept a diary, where all the interview situations where described in more detail.

The expedition began on the 16th of November, as I arrived in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. The first two days were spent arranging the practicalities, getting to know the culture and otherwise preparing for the field study, until the final destination was reached. The interviews took place between the 18th of November and the 8th of December. Most of the time I stayed in a little rural village called Jendema, next to the border to Liberia, in the most southern Sierra Leone. Some of the interviews were made in the nearby villages called Gohn, Malema and Bombomhun, since some of the youths had moved there after their graduation. I made also a three-day-trip to Bo in order to

visit the other RADA staff members, since the headquarters of RADA are situated there. After having finished all the interviews in Sierra Leone two more days were still spent in Monrovia at the office of FCA.

The purpose, about which RADA was also informed in advance, was to interview at least twenty graduates from the DYFC, out of which approximately half would be women and the other half men. Because of the qualitative method chosen, twenty interviews were initially regarded as a sufficient sample to represent the graduates. A wish had been made that the interviewees would have participated in different types of skills training programmes. No more particular plans for the practicalities were made beforehand, so the progress of the study depended much on RADA and circumstances of the field.

Already in the beginning it was noticed that the length of my stay in the village would allow more interviews to be carried out than it was planned at first. Since a bigger sample was only seen as increasing the reliability and enriching the sample of the study, three interviews per day were agreed as an optimum interviewing rhythm per day. This meant that the planned number of the interviews could be even doubled. Three interviews per day was also in the end the rhythm most of the days followed. I always tried to have at least a tentative plan for the following day according to the graduate's wished sex and field of study, but many times the days still proceeded circumstantially. Interviews were also made on Saturdays, since it was the market day in Jendema, and many graduates were reachable then. Sundays were taken off. In the end there were 33 graduates interviewed, out of which 20 in Jendema, 6 in Malema, 4 in Bombomhun and 3 in Gohn. I was taken to the nearby villages with the interpreter by a motorbike. Approximately halfway through the stay in Jendema I came up with some further questions and also started to doubt whether all the questions posed already had been answered properly, so I started to reinterview the graduates that were still reachable. All the reinterviews were conducted in Jendema.

In the beginning of each interview the study and myself were introduced to the interviewees by the interpreter. It was also made clear that I was an independent student, doing the study in cooperation with the Finn Church Aid, but not representing RADA. Later it was also added that I wished for honest answers and personal opinions. I also asked for a permission to record the interviews, which was fine for every interviewee. I also wrote down all the answers and the interviews were recorded only to enable the recheck in case there was still some confusion left with the answers and thus to increase

the reliability of the study.

The interviews were semi-structured, which means that the questions were open-ended and relevant issues could be unexpectedly followed up with further questions or probing (Mikkelsen 2005, 89). The interviewees were also handed in the questionnaire in order to have the possibility to read the questions themselves, although most of them only listened to me and the interpreter and answered the questions verbally. Especially because of the linguistic barrier during the interviews the questionnaire many times served only as a frame of reference, as the same questions had to be asked in different kinds of ways. The questionnaire is found in its entirety as an appendix in this study (appendix 1). The interviews were always intended to be conducted only in the presence of me, the interpreter and the interviewee. Sometimes the circumstances of the interviews were challenging, for instance when the interviews were made at the market place or elsewhere surrounded by plenty of the villagers trying to listen to or participate the interview. In some cases the interviews were then moved to be held in another place, or in case none of the participants of the interview was distracted, the people were allowed to quietly listen to the interview.

The analysis of the data includes three phases; data reduction, data display and the drawing of conclusions. The data collected for qualitative studies is not usually directly accessible for analysis, but requires processing like editing, simplifying, correcting field notes, transcribing and typing up. Then it has to be organized or coded. In this study charts were included in the data display at this point. Finally, the data is ready for the drawing and verifying of conclusion that includes making deductions based on the findings. (Miles & Huberman 1994, 9-12.) In this study after the data collection each of the interviews was opened up and the answers of each interviewee were transcribed so that each of them comprised a coherent story. In some cases it was easy to pick up the answers from the questionnaire, but sometimes the recorded interviews had to be listened once again in order to be sure what the interviewee had really said. The answers were also divided into themes and interview data on those themes was compiled in tables in order to illustrate the results better. The results were then compared and reflected with the chosen theoretical framework. At the centre of the sustainable livelihoods framework are the rural poor themselves, their strengths and aspirations and the circumstances they live in. (DFID 1999; Zoomers 2008, 148.) Therefore the focus of this study was also at the local scale of analysis, mainly tied to the individual and household level, and thus the interviews that the study was mostly based on were also

intended to be thorough in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the target group's perspective. Finally, the conclusions were drawn based on the study findings, in order to answer the research question about the role of skills training in building sustainable livelihoods during post-conflict recovery.

4.3. Evaluating the study

Validity and reliability are the classic evaluation criteria for a study. Reliability traditionally refers to the possibility to replicate and generalize the results and validity to whether the question measures the issue that was intended to be measured. (Yates 2004, 55.) In qualitative research the validity and reliability depend in the end largely on the skills of the researcher, because it is the person who does all the observing and interviewing and makes the important choices regarding the study (Miles & Huberman 1994, 38). Reliability, then, is not important only for its own sake, but as a precondition for validity, because as an example an unreliable measure cannot be valid. A threat to reliability is any careless act in processes of the study. (Lincoln & Guba 1985, 292.)

It is often advisable to undertake all the interviews personally, in order to ensure familiarity with the whole sample and to maximize the consistency of approach to interpretation (Simon 2006, 165). If research assistants are needed, great care should be exercised in their selection, in order to obtain someone who has appropriate skills, which are for example local language capability or enough formal education to understand central ideas of the study. In this case it was assumed in advance that the researcher and the interviewees could communicate with each other in English without any interpretation. In the field, however, it turned out very soon that an interpreter was needed. Whether the dialects of English or Creo were too different, or the interviewees could not speak English at all, and the researcher did not understand the local languages Creo or Mende either. Because it was still very important that both of the parties would understand each other fluently, a local employee of RADA started to interpret the interviews. Nevertheless, the interpreter was not a professional, although according to the researcher still fluent in all of the languages; Creo, Mende and English. The interviews were still not interpreted word by word, and the researcher got the impression that some things that the interviewees said, did not reach the researcher. Every time that the translation was very much shorter than the answer the interviewee

had given, the researched tried to ask for correction and more precise interpretation, which was not always available. All in all, the researcher got the impression that the answers were many times shortened and all the nuances might not have been communicated, although the main idea was however transmitted. Sometimes the interpreter also tried to answer for the interviewee, and the researcher had to advise her often not to do so.

The presence of the interpreter also might have had an effect on how the interviewees reacted and answered, because the interpreter was familiar with most of the interviewees, and worked for RADA. This effect, however, could be both positive and negative. It might have encouraged especially some girls to answer to the questions and talk more freely in general, because the interpreter herself was a woman as well. On the other hand it might have had an effect on how the graduates talked about RADA, since there was a representative of that organization present. Still the help and support of the interpreter was invaluable in the study that could not have been completed without it. It was also good that the time all in all spent in the field was no less than a month, because that way the researcher got to learn at least some of the local customs and adapt to the Sierra Leonean way of living, which helped in conducting the interviews.

5 IMPACT OF SKILLS TRAINING ON THE LIVELIHOOD AND EMPOWERMENT OF THE YOUTHS IN POST-CONFLICT JENDEMA

The study setting is described first in this chapter in Sections 5.1. and 5.2. The civil war and the time after the independence of Sierra Leone were already described briefly in Chapter 1. This chapter, then, goes on describing the time after that and the consequences of the civil war for the development of the country. Also the Pujehun district is presented as well as the Digloma Youth Friendly Centre where the graduates had all had their training. From Section 5.3. on the findings of the study are represented, as the interviews of the graduates are gone through.

5.1. Post-conflict Sierra Leone as a context for livelihood building

After the civil war in Sierra Leone, the UN peacekeepers left the country in 2005 and after that the national military has been in charge of the country's stability. The armed forces of the UN still remained on the sidelines during the latest presidential election in 2007, when the President Ernest Bai Koroma was elected for a five-year term. The democracy is now slowly being reestablished. The new government is prioritizing development, job creation, and elimination of endemic corruption. (CIA 2012.)

After the civil war, the compositions of the communities were no longer the same (Moore, Squire & MacBailey 2003, 3). In the civil war between 1991 and 2002 about a third of the population of Sierra Leone got displaced and tens of thousands died (CIA 2012). Many children were grown up in refugee camps without their parents, and households became run by females who had lost their husbands in the war. The divisions within communities were intensified by many years of separation and arrivals of new members into the communities. Ex-combatants were afraid to return home, because of the fear of reprisal, whereas the kidnapped or raped teenage girls were ashamed to go home and lost their hope. Once united communities had to learn again how to understand, trust and work with each other. Community members might return with new exposures, especially women who have learned new skills and attitudes in different kinds of skills training centres or other participatory programmes. In moments like that there is a great opportunity for change, but also a risk for a further internal

conflict. The new exposures question the traditional norms and patterns and thus might create frustration and even conflicts, if they are not managed constructively. (Moore, Squire & MacBailey 2003, 3.)

When the conflict started in 1991, the forces of the RUF used the Pujehun district, where the Jendema village is also situated, as an entry point to Sierra Leone. The district was thus destructed the most and is considered one of the most vulnerable districts in the country with respect to security, food and also other vulnerabilities. The RUF also conducted a lot of recruitment into its forces in the district. Pujehun district is comprised of twelve chiefdoms, Jendema belonging to the Sorogbema chiefdom. The main ethnic groups of Sorogbema chiefdom are Mende that constitute 97% of the population. The other minority group is Vai. Islam is the dominant religion in the chiefdom. In the whole country English is the official language, though its regular use is limited to a literate minority only. Other languages are Mende in the south, Temne in the north and Krio, first language for 10% of the population but understood by 95%. (CIA 2012.) The main activities in the Pujehun district are farming, fishing, diamond mining and cross border trading. In Sorogbema chiefdom youths form up to half of the population. The majority of them were exposed to different kinds of human rights abuses during the civil war, and due to a number of issues such as HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation or trafficking the young people face poor social and economic opportunities. (RADA 2009, 2-3.) In the Pujehun district the HIV prevalence rate is significantly higher than in other parts of the country (RADA 2009, 9).

Many areas, the eastern and the northern provinces in particular, found their educational infrastructures completely destroyed by the rebel groups. Schools were considered as symbols of the central government and were therefore looted and burnt down. Children who had fled with their parents were not always able to attend school, especially when the family had a complex itinerary moving from one place to the other as the security situation changed. Some children at schooling age had the opportunity of starting school when their parents fled to provincial capitals, but were later removed from there in order to help their parents in doing petty trading to sustain the family. (UN 2003, 9.)

According to the most recent human development index (HDI) the country has been today ranked among the least developed countries in the world; more exactly being the 180th developed country out of the total of 187. HDI tries to look beyond the GDP, which in Sierra Leone per capita is 808 USD, for a broader understanding of wellbeing

by taking into account three different dimensions; a decent standard of living, a long and healthy life and access to knowledge. In Sierra Leone 41% of the adults aged 15 years or above are literate, life expectancy at birth is 47,8 years, and expected years of schooling 7. (UNDP 2011, 130.) In 2009 there were by estimation 49 thousand people living with HIV/AIDS (CIA 2012). The unemployment among largely unskilled young people, many of who have participated in the civil war, is still a challenge for the country that has to be addressed. The youths have a long history resisting the marginalisation within society, and struggling for survival and relevance and to have a meaningful future where they can claim their full rights as equal citizens of Sierra Leone. (Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 79-83.)

Sierra Leone is endowed with substantial mineral, agricultural and fishery resources and nearly half of the population at working-age are engaged in subsistence agriculture. Manufacturing is mainly based on the processing of raw materials and light manufacturing for the domestic market. Diamond mining accounts for nearly half of Sierra Leone's exports. (CIA 2012.) The economy of Sierra Leone is still under great distress. The economic dimension to peace in Sierra Leone includes the idea that the country should benefit from its resources in a way that does not generate any potential to conflict or competition over access or distribution. Thus, the economic programmes and legal frameworks related to mining and other economic investments need to be put on, as well as the rehabilitation of the basic infrastructure. The roads, water supply and electricity are among others the basic factors that contribute to better communications and thus also impact the economy significantly. (Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 82.) As regards the physical as well as social infrastructure of the country there is still a lot to do before they recover fully from the civil war. There is a lack of electricity and access to clean and safe drinking water in the whole country including the capital, which still makes the everyday life a struggle for the majority of the people in the country. (Wais 2008, 56.) Taking into account the structure of the economy in Sierra Leone, there is a need to link economic growth to social development and poverty reduction. (Zack-Williams – Gbla 2008, 82.) The lack of opportunities for individual advancement and a bleak future for many youths leads to their growing frustration and resentment against the policymakers, who they see as corrupt and even indifferent to the problems of the country, although the reasons for the economic and social problems in Sierra Leone are complex. (Wais 2008, 56.)

According to RADA (2009, 3-4) in the Pujehun district the training of unqualified

teachers and the supply of learning materials was still by the time the study was conducted in progress. Because of a few Community Health Centres the endemic diseases and mortality rates have dropped. The awareness of HIV/AIDS has also risen. The provision of seeds and tools and income generation activities has resulted in an increase in food security. However, there is still a lack of school structures, trained teachers, infrastructure, especially as regards constructing the road network that is an important factor in providing access to markets. The community representatives have felt that although the country is directed towards development, the Pujehun district is still left aside to struggle on its own.

5.2. Digloma Youth Friendly Centre and target group of the training

The capital of Sierra Leone is Freetown, but this study was executed in a village called Jendema, next to the Mano river border bridge between Sierra Leone and Liberia (CIA 2012). The Rehabilitation and Development Agency (RADA) of Sierra Leone established the Digloma Youth Friendly Centre (DYFC) in Jendema, Sorogbema chiefdom in the Pujehun district, in July 2007 to serve both as a vocational skills training centre and a HIV/AIDS resource centre. This CORBHA project that the graduates interviewed in this study participated in, was established because of various issues; low income level, lack of skills, high level of illiteracy, increase in commercial sex working and criminal activities, or child labour. (RADA 2009, 5.) The aim was thus to empower youths through the skills and para-skills training largely in the areas of masonry, carpentry, tailoring, gara tie-dye and weaving. The para-skills consist of literacy, numeracy and knowledge about the causes, transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS. The idea was to prevent the extension of HIV transmission and to mitigate the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on the rural poor communities in the Pujehun district. (GLC 2009.) Gender, human rights and peace education are also included in the training programme. (RADA 2009, 5.)

The CORBHA project was funded by the European Union and Christian Aid UK & Irish Aid and ended in March 2009, when the first students graduated. (RADA 2009, 1.) At the end of the training each graduate was given a start-up kit that helped in the establishment of one's own business. RADA provided mentoring support and encouraged the graduates to build solidarity groups where the graduates would also

support each other with each one's small-scale businesses. (RADA 2009, 5.)

The target group of the training and thus the direct beneficiaries of the project consist of vulnerable and disadvantaged youths, aged between 15 and 35 years, who come from the rural communities along the border between Sierra Leone and Liberia. The concept of disadvantaged people refers in this case to ex-combatants, physically challenged, sexually abused, single parents or victims of trafficking. (RADA 2009, 5.) There was not any special selection process for the training programme. The employees of RADA were rather doing word-of-mouth marketing about the training in the nearest villages. The basic studies for each skills training programme lasted for 9 months and cost 40 000 leones[1] for men and 30 000 leones for women. The advanced skills training lasted for 6 months and cost 50 000 leones for everyone. However, the year 2009 was only the first one when RADA was collecting the entrance fee, before that the training was entirely free of charge. (Magbaan, interview 8.12.2009) Up to the time of the interviews conducted for the study 380 students had had training in the DYFC: 243 women and 137 men (DYFC 2009) and 260 graduated: 129 women and 131 men (RADA 2009, 5).

5.3. Background of the interviewees

Some background information was gathered from all the interviewees. The information regarding the living conditions of the respondents is important for the study, since it helps to understand the diversity of the income generation models within the households that are also taken into account in the livelihood approach used in this study. The living conditions and marital status of the graduates are presented in Table 1. When illustrating the results the numbers were not converted into percentages automatically in order not to give a skewed picture. The sample is still quite small and already a small number of people can seem a lot more significant crowd illustrated in percentages. Therefore percentages are thus only applied in some cases. The numbers in the tables represent the actual number of the respondents. Concerning the table it should be also noted that the sum of the numbers in the cells in each row is not equivalent to the total number of male of female respondents, since the respondent can belong either to many different variable groups or to none of them at the same time. However, the number of

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1 In December 2009 10 000 leones were worth 1,72 euros. (Yahoo! Finance 2012)

2 Again noted that in December 2009 10 000 leones were worth 1,72 euros. (Yahoo! Finance 2012)

the graduates that have been posed each question is always mentioned in parentheses on the left hand side of the table.

Table 1 Background variables of the interviewees concerning marital status and living conditions

	Single	Married	Dependents	Lives with relatives	Lives with a partner
Women (15)	6	9	13	12	8
Men (18)	9	9	13	13	9
Total (33)	15	18	26	25	17

Altogether 33 graduates were interviewed, all aged between 15 and 36. There were three more men interviewed than women. 55% of all the respondents were married and all of them except one person were also living with their partners. The majority of 79% had also dependents living with them, the average number of children in the family being 2. Altogether 78% of the respondents were living with some relatives. Considering the marital status and the living conditions of women and men separately, there were no significant differences. Women seemed to have dependents a little more often than men. Having dependents means in this case that the respondents have children who they are supporting, independent of whether they are their own or not. It has to be pointed out that bringing children into the classroom was permitted during the training programme of the target group of this study. After that it was prohibited, because it was considered a distraction to the concentration of the students. (Magbaan 8.12.2009.) All in all the absolute majority of the graduates, all except for two, live with more than one person, and nobody lives alone. One young man lives with his friends. In Section 5.5. it is further discussed, how the graduates then use the money and manage their economies within the households.

Asked about their past and condition during the civil war the interviewees gave various responses that can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Background variables of the graduates concerning their history

	CSW	Ex-combatant	Victim of traf-ficking	War spent out-side Jendema
Women (15)	8	-	1	7
Men (18)	-	4	-	9
Total (33)	8	4	1	16

Out of all the respondents 8 women had been acting as commercial sex workers (CSW). Because of the delicacy of this theme the researcher got the impression that some women may have been somehow too ashamed or too shy to have admitted that, hence the number in reality could be even a little higher. 4 men had had to join the rebels and have thus worked as combatants. Only one person told that she was a victim of trafficking. She was told that she was taken from her home to be sent to school, but instead she ended up selling cold water on the streets. Almost half of the respondents spent the wartime in some other area than Pujehun district, for example in Freetown, in Kenema or in the capital of Liberia, Monrovia, until they ended up in Jendema or nearby villages.

The graduates were also asked about the reasons and motives why they decided to apply for the training and how they heard about it. Almost half of the respondents had heard about the DYFC through RADA's direct marketing, and almost as many from a friend or a relative. In the majority of 70% of the cases the youths could mention a reason or a motive that encouraged them to apply for the training, which in every case was some kind of a discontent with their prevailing living conditions; whether they were tired of earning their living by farming or cart pushing, they wanted some change or progress in their lives or just simply get some other things to do instead of roaming around idle. One woman told that she wanted to be more independent of her husband and his money. A commercial sex worker wanted to get another job so that she could stop her current work and settle down. One man wanted to be able to support his family more and help other people by making furniture for them. Some people just wanted to learn new skills and acquire knowledge. These youths had some kind of a motive to apply for the training, whereas the rest of 30% were just encouraged or even forced by other people, or did not have any special reason to apply.

5.4. Empowering skills

In this section the skills and their impact on the youths' lives in terms of their empowerment is discussed. In order to get an understanding of what aspects the graduates consider belonging to their human capital and what they see as their "capabilities", "entitlements" and "functionings" (Sen 1985, 25-26; 48) that are included in the definitions of empowerment in this study they were asked to mention the most important skills for themselves acquired in the DYFC and how those skills have improved their lives. The changes in the relationship between the graduates and their communities were intended to be understood, since the role of households and communities is significant in the region and thereby forms and integral part of their living conditions or "functiongs". For empowerment in a post-conflict context the full participation in the society (UNESCO 2000, 16-18) and social cohesion are also important aspects (World Bank 2011b, 274). Empowerment in this study is also discussed in the context of effective choices, referring to the capacity one owns to translate the choices into desired action. Therefore the graduates' expectations concerning the future were also asked in order to find out whether they considered themselves capable to accomplish their missions.

First, the vocational skills training fields of the graduates are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Graduates' fields of studies

	Tailoring	Gara tie dye & weaving	Carpentry	Masonry
Women (15)	5	10	-	-
Men (18)	6	-	7	5
Total (33)	11	10	7	5

The majority of 11 persons had studied tailoring, 6 men and 5 women. Gara tie-dye and weaving was studied by 10 women. On the contrary carpentry was studied by 7 men and masonry by 5 men only.

When asked about how the students feel about what they really learned in the DYFC apart from the vocational skills, the answers included knowledge of HIV/AIDS, literacy, numeracy, human rights, advocacy, life skills in general, communication skills,

business skills, sports, gender issues, child abuse, decision making, to talk openly and expose oneself in front of the public, and how to help one's family. Out of all the skills learned the interviewees were asked to mention the most important ones. When assessing the answers in Table 4 one should remember that the numbers in the cells represent how many times each skill has been mentioned; for example one same person could have mentioned all of the three at the same time.

Table 4 The most important skills acquired in the DYFC according to the graduates.

	Vocational skills	**Knowledge of HIV & AIDS**	**Literacy**
Women (15)	9	9	3
Men (18)	16	9	1
Total (33)	25	18	4

The vocational skills and knowledge of HIV/AIDS were absolutely considered the most important skills or knowledge acquires, the former mentioned 25 times and the latter 18 times. Literacy was included among the three most important skills 4 times, and both knowledge of gender issues and numeracy once. Out of 17 who responded the question whether they were literate before starting the training in the DYFC only 2 persons said they could somehow read and write, the others were all illiterate. Two persons could not prioritize any specific skill, because they considered all of them of great concern. The vocational skills were more appreciated among men compared to women, since 89% of them mentioned the skills among the most important ones, whereas out of women 60%. Knowledge of HIV/AIDS was mentioned 9 times by both women and men. Literacy seemed relatively more important for women than for men.

The graduates responded to an open-ended question how the training in the DYFC has all in all affected their lives. The answers are presented in Table 5. It should be noticed that again the numbers in the cells represent how many times each skill has been mentioned.

Table 5 How the skills acquired have improved everyday life of graduates

	Able to earn a living	Engaged in work instead of being idle	Have gained self-respect	Know how to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS	Able to conduct business better when literate	Able to support family
Women (15)	10	5	10	6	4	2
Men (18)	10	10	9	5	5	8
Total (33)	20	15	19	11	9	10

The answers varied a lot, but still some characteristics were found. Earning one's living or having money of one's own was mentioned 20 times, relatively it was a little bit more often mentioned among women than men. 15 respondents appreciated that they are now engaged in work instead of troublemaking or roaming around idle. This was mentioned by more than half of men, but only one third of the women. 19 respondents told that they gained a lot of self-respect during the training and feel now more self-conscious, self-confident and independent of the others. For women this seemed relatively more important than for men. The knowledge of HIV/AIDS was of great concern to one third of the interviewees, out of whom the women appreciated it relatively even more than men. The absolute majority, 75% of the former or present commercial sex workers mentioned the knowledge of HIV/AIDS crucial for them and thought that it could have saved their lives, because before the training they were ignorant of the disease or did not know how to be protected against it.

More than half of all the respondents noticed that their attitude towards the other sex had changed. All in all the majority of the respondents told that their social skills, like the way they look at the other sex or other people, make friends or behave in front the public had changed to the better. Men thought that way relatively a little more often than women. The increased self-esteem or feeling of independency was not included in that number.

In general the interviewees told that they do not have multiple partners anymore, but only one at a time. Women said that after the training men cannot fool them anymore, and men for their part said that they had learned to appreciate women more. Literacy

and numeracy was mentioned in almost one third of the cases as an enabling tool for conducting the business by themselves. The respondents were happy to be able to recognize their own names in contracts, spell their name and sign contracts. Supporting the family by building a better shelter, buying better food or paying the children's' school fees was especially important to one third of the respondents. This was mentioned by 44% of the male and 13% of the female respondents. A former commercial sex worker mentioned that she does not feel like a victim anymore, now that she is able to earn her own living. In the subsistence economy where the rural poor live, "the economy of affection" is also of critical importance. It is based on reciprocal exchange among kin, neighbours and friends. (Friedmann 1992, 17.) Because of the important role of relationships in this study the interviewees where thus asked who they consider their closest persons; in other words who they consider to build their community (Table 6). Again the numbers in the cells correspond the times each of the variable groups has been mentioned.

Table 6 What the graduates consider their "community"

	Family	Neighbourhood	Friends	Whole village
Women (15)	8	5	2	2
Men (18)	12	3	4	3
Total (33)	20	8	6	5

The clear majority of all the respondents mentioned their family, out of them the respondent was relatively a little more often female than man. The neighbourhood was mentioned 8 times altogether; also relatively a little more often mentioned among women than men. Friends were mentioned 6 times, relatively more often among men than women. The whole village was considered as the respondents' community 5 times, relatively more often mentioned among men than women.

When asked about the expectations or attitudes that the community members had when the youth started in the DYFC, it emerged that even 24% of them had been mostly discouraging and saying that the youth will not complete the courses or either learn anything, because of their past or other reasons. 7 women were discouraged whereas only one man. The other 76% of all the respondents told that their community members

were encouraging them and whether hoping that the training would help them to settle down, motivating them to study hard even by giving money or expecting to have for example a professional carpenter in the town.

The interviewees were asked whether their relation to the community, which they had just defined, had somehow changed after the training. Everyone agreed on that it had changed positively. The reasons were that the people respect and listen to the graduates more now that they see that they have been able to complete the training and learned a lot. People come to talk to the graduates more and also ask for help concerning any kind of problems, but especially related to the skills they have learned.

However, the relationship between the commercial sex workers or ex-combatants and their communities seemed to have changed even more compared to other cases. *The commercial sex workers*, also those who still work as ones, said that people's attitudes towards them have totally changed. Before they used to even despise them and did not take them seriously, because they only saw them running from one man to another or roaming around the streets. They thought that the women could not ever get married. However, nowadays that they see that the women's lives have changed, they have made an effort and acquired the skills, people consider them equally intelligent and responsible and come to talk to them more often. The former commercial sex workers are happy that they are more stable now and no more that much dependent on men. The present commercial sex workers say that their lives have changed a lot to the positive, but they are still hoping that they could some day stop working as CSWs completely. They are still also happy that men cannot fool them anymore like before. *The ex-combatants* told that their relation to other people has also changed totally after the training, because nowadays people respect and trust them and come to talk to them more. Before they were often scared of them, because they were considered rebels who can use guns, and people thought that the only thing they could do is fight. Now the ex-combatants themselves have also acquired social skills and are more interactive.

The interviewees were also asked in Table 7 how they thought they were helping their communities regarding all the knowledge and skills they had acquired. Again in the table the numbers represent the times each variables have been mentioned.

Table 7 How the graduates themselves think that they can be of help to their community

	Taking advantage of new skills	Financially	By informing about the DYFC	By helping the others with everyday problems	By informing about HIV/AIDS
Women (15)	12	3	3	4	2
Men (18)	14	6	3	1	2
Total (33)	26	9	6	5	4

The clear majority of all the respondents mentioned that they helped the other community members through the vocational skills they had acquired; by sewing clothes and building houses for them for example, but also by teaching those skills for those who wanted to learn. 9 respondents told that they helped their closest ones financially by lending money, even giving it to people who need it. For their work they charged their friends or relatives in general less than the others. Men seemed to be giving more financial help than women. 6 respondents told that they helped the community by informing them about the Digloma Youth Friendly Centre and encouraging them to apply for the training as well. 5 respondents, out of whom 4 were women, told that they helped their community members with different kinds of everyday problems, advised them and informed them about any possible issue always when needed. Disseminating information about HIV/AIDS was also mentioned 4 times.

The researcher also wanted to find out how the interviewees see success, if they feel like having succeeded, and what expectations they still have concerning the future. All of the respondents agreed on the claim that the training in the DYFC had opened up new possibilities concerning their future. Talking about success the clear majority 70% of the respondents mentioned that acquiring the skills and being able to work through them is what is included in their successful life. The other views of success were related to achieving a goal, getting the things you want, living in peace and without problems, leading a happy and healthy life, changing one's life to the better, having responsibilities and being married. The majority of the respondents thought that they had succeeded in their life and that they consider themselves happy, after having finished the training.

Only one woman, still working as a commercial sex worker, told that she feels confused with her life, but has still got hope.

Concerning the future the interviewees had more or less same kind of expectations that are presented in Table 8. The numbers represent the times the variables have been mentioned and the graduates' dreams can thus include lot of different things at the same time.

Table 8 Graduates' expectations concerning the future

	Continue with the work that is enabled by the skills	Build an own house	Wishes concerning the family	By helping the others with everyday problems	Give financial support to others
Women (15)	11	7	5	4	3
Men (18)	17	7	5	1	5
Total (33)	28	14	10	5	8

The absolute majority of the respondents, still more men than women, wished to continue with the kind of work that is enabled by the skills, deepen the know-how and earn more money. All of the masons and carpenters, and a majority of those who had studied gara tie-dye (91%) and weaving (60%) agreed on that. Talking about the future a little less than half of all the respondents, out of whom 80% were masons, mentioned that they would like to build a bigger and better house for their family. 30% of all the respondents had expectations concerning the family; whether they wanted to have more children or find a good partner. On contrary, 21% of the respondents mentioned especially that they would not want to have any more children, since the work had become such an important factor in their life. 24% of all the respondents, more men relatively, also mentioned that they would like to be able to support some other family or community member more in the future. All of those who wanted to have children still told that if only possible, they will educate their children as well.

All of the interviewees thought that the training was all in all qualified, but not everybody agreed on whether the nine months of training was enough. The majority of (70%) of the respondents thought that the nine months was not enough time for them to

learn the skills properly. Still there were the other 30% of all the interviewees, who thought that the training did last long enough for them, out of whom half had studied gara tie-dye and weaving. It is to be noted that that year all the graduates had the possibility to continue to the advanced studies, except the trainees of gara tie-dye and weaving.

The researcher was also informed of 22 interviewees' years of graduation, which are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 Years of graduation

	2007	2008	2009
Women (10)	4	3	3
Men (12)	3	4	5
Total (22)	7	7	8

In 2007 had graduated 7 respondents, in 2008 as well 7 and in 2009 8 persons. More than half, 17 of the all the 33 respondents were going to do the advance studies in the DYFC, whereas 12 were sure that they were not going to continue. Out of them still the majority had studied gara tie-dye and weaving, so actually only two had made the decision not to continue. One carpenter would have liked to continue, but he hadn't got enough money yet to pay for the start-up fee. 4 of the respondents were still hesitating whether to do the advanced studies or not. At the time the research was done the period for applying was still going on.

The graduates were also asked whether they had any suggestions regarding how to improve the training in the DYFC. One third thought that additional kinds of skill should be taught, such as hairdressing, auto mechanics or catering. According to some graduates there were already enough tailors, masons, carpenters and weavers in the region. Also marketing skills were mentioned as well as skills in communicating with the customers. A little less than one third also wished that more tools or machinery were be available in the training programmes. One graduate who was working as a night-guard in the DYFC wished for a fence that would go around the training centre. He thought it is distracting if people pass by the centre when there are people studying. All the classrooms do not necessarily have any walls. A few of the respondents also would

have liked to continue the studies in the field they had graduated from.

5.5. Livelihood and household economics

In this section the graduates' livelihoods and economics of the households are discussed and thus the impact of the training on them. In a post-conflict context the employment is important for the recovery. (World Bank 2011b, 274). The aim of this section is to find out what the livelihood strategies of the graduates are that they choose to pursue the desired livelihood outcomes, in other words how they combine and use the capabilities that were discussed in the previous section. (DFID 1999.) Therefore the graduates are asked about their occupations before and after the training in the DYFC. Also the economics of the households are discussed, since the focus of the scale of analysis in this study is at household level.

Table 10 The graduates' former occupations

	Farming	Petty trading	Working as CSW	Doing nothing	Going to school	Working as cart pusher
Women (15)	1	6	8	4	1	-
Men (18)	9	1	-	3	2	3
Total (33)	10	7	8	7	3	3

Asked about what the youths were doing before they started the training in the Digloma Youth Friendly Centre the answers varied between five alternatives. It should be noticed again that one person could have mentioned various options. The majority of 10 respondents were formerly earning their living by farming. Petty trading was the livelihood of 7 respondents, out of which in the majority of 4 of the cases the interviewees also acted as a commercial sex worker. Working as a CSW was altogether mentioned by 8 women. 7 respondents told that before starting the training they did not do anything. There were also 3 interviewees going to school and 3 men working as cart pushers just before starting in the DYFC. The interviewees were asked how they make a living after their graduation from the DYFC and the results can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11 Formation of livelihood

	Having 2 occupations at the same time, the other one enabled by the skills	Only work is the one enabled by the skills	Work does not have anything to do with the skills
Women (15)	8	3	4
Men (18)	8	8	2
Total (33)	16	11	6

It emerged from the study that the majority of 16 persons that formed 48% of all the respondents were having at least 2 occupations at the same time, out of which the skills for the other job were acquired in the DYFC. The other occupation they were practicing was in the majority of 10 cases farming, in 5 cases petty trading, one man was working as a night guard in the DYFC and one woman as a teacher in an elementary school.

A third of the respondents or in other words 11 persons were only doing the kind of work that is enabled by the skills acquired in the DYFC, out of whom 8 were men and 3 women. For them farming was only a source of additional income or a way to help the family to supply food. Petty trading was practised by 6 persons, 5 women and 2 men. The rest of 6 persons, 4 women and 2 men were not working at all through the skills that they had acquired in the DYFC. For example three women were working as commercial sex workers. Two of them also did some petty trading and the third one had studied gara tie-dye and weaving, but could not work, because all her materials had been stolen. One man who had studied tailoring was working as a motorbike driver and one woman who had studied gara tie-dye was staying home taking care of the children, and doing petty trading at the market on the weekends. In Table 12 the occupations that the respondents were practising after having graduated are summed up altogether, independent of whether that occupation was primary or secondary source of income.

Table 12 Occupations practised by the graduates

	Tailoring	Gara tie-dye and weaving	Masonry	Carpentry
Women (15)	5	6	-	-
Men (18)	5	-	5	6
Total (33)	10	6	5	6

In total tailoring was practised by 10 persons, gara tie-dye and weaving by 6 women, and masonry and carpentry by 6 men each. It emerged from the study that those who regularly did some work through the skills were working in groups of 8 other people on average, also women and men counted separately. Masons worked in groups of 12 persons, carpenters in groups of 8 persons, tailors in groups of 7 persons and those who practised gara tie-dye and weaving in groups of 6 persons on average.

The researcher tried to find out which factors the interviewees' livelihoods really consist of by posing questions about their possible business plans, including costs, profits, earnings and all the finances in general. It emerged from the study that many of the youths were in fact very ignorant of all the business matters and money-related issues. They might even sell the products they have produced themselves at a loss, in other words at a price that does not even cover all the expenses. It is also very much in common that the customers were charged according to their capability to pay, so that the poor pay less and often relatives and friends as well. In the long run this may still impoverish the people even more and is not very motivating for the beginning business persons. However, some graduates still had an idea of the costs and profits of their products and thus of their earning in the end.

In this case a working week is defined as 6-days long, since the market in Jendema is on Fridays and Saturdays and most of the interviewees are thus working there as well. The sums that are presented from next paragraph on represent an average of what the respondents thought that their costs and profits could be. However, these questions were only answered by 14 of the graduates. The answers are divided according to training fields.

The tailors produced approximately 11 pieces of clothing per week, and sold 11 pieces of clothing as well. The calculations were made assuming that producing a

child's clothe would take approximately half the time compared to an adult's clothe, and producing a suit would take approximately 1,5 times longer than producing an adult's clothe. That is based on what the researcher was told in the field by the graduates. The material costs were mentioned as the only costs that the tailors have. The average costs per each cloth were 8 thousand leones[2], based on which the weekly costs would have been 88 thousand leones. The customers paid 17 thousand leones on average per each cloth, which in a week would have made 187 thousand leones. Considering that the average profit per each piece of clothing was 9 thousand leones the profit would have been 99 thousand leones per week. On average the tailors told that they earned 98 thousand leones per week. Since some of them seemed to be underestimating and some of them overestimating, these are the most correct numbers that can be presented under these circumstances.

Most of the carpenters' responses seemed so incoherent that they could not be trusted. One respondent was obviously lying, so his answers were left out completely. The only coherent and reliable answer the researcher got was from a man that has an own shop and employees that work for him. He told that he produces one single bed in two weeks on average, which would have made two beds in a month. The material costs to make one single bed were 150 thousand leones, which consist of 6 boards worth 120 thousand leones plus paint and handles worth 30 thousand. The customers paid 200 thousand leones for one single bed, so the profit for one single bed would have been 50 thousand leones. The carpenter told that he earned approximately 80 thousand leones per month, which was quite close to the profit of 100 thousand leones he would have made if he had produced the two beds per month.

Gara tie-dye and weaving were considered in this case again as one. The ones that practise gara tie-dye and weaving were used to produce a bunch of clothes together once a month and then leave for selling them to nearby villages, even to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. However, the process of making the suits, dresses and bed sheets lasted from one to two weeks. On average they produced 10 suits per month. The monthly costs were approximately 177 thousand leones and consisted of the threads and ink. The customer paid 43 thousand leones per one suit, out of which the vendor got 17 thousand leones profit. The earnings were thus 98 thousand leones per month on average.

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[2] Again noted that in December 2009 10 000 leones were worth 1,72 euros. (Yahoo! Finance 2012)

The masons generally agreed that the construction work could be done only during the dry season. When there were rains, which means approximately half of the year, they had to find another job, if they had not been able to save enough money during the dry season. However, during the rains they could still do some repairing work. Usually it took approximately one year to build a house from the beginning, while doing some repairing work at the same time. The costs were 50 thousand leones for the materials and 230 thousand leones salary to each worker. On average the customer paid 500 thousand leones for a house, so the average profit was 220 thousand leones. A mason earned on average 20 thousand leones per month from the repairing work and 230 thousand leones per year from the construction work.

17 of the interviewees were asked about the monetary policy within their family and the results are seen in Table 13.

Table 13 Monetary policy within family

	Use money together	The graduates are providers	The graduates are provided by others
Women (10)	7	1	2
Men (7)	3	3	1
Total (17)	10	4	3

The majority of 59% of the respondents answered that they spend money together with their family members. Within the family members 24% of the interviewees told that they are the providers of food, medicine, clothing and possible children's school fees and 18% of the interviewees told that they are mainly provided those things by some other family member. Hence, it can be seen that it is more appropriate to study the livelihoods of the graduates at the level of their households, since it is very much in common to share the earnings within it.

In Table 14 it is presented what the family members of the graduates do for living. However, this question was only answered by 15 respondents.

Table 14 What the graduates' family members do for living

	Farming	Petty trading	Going to school
Women (8)	5	1	2
Men (7)	3	3	1
Total (15)	8	4	3

The majority, 8 of them were farmers. 4 of the respondents' family members did petty trading. 3 of the respondents' family members were going to school. One respondent told that her husband is staying at home and one that his brother works as a tailor.

17 of the interviewees were also asked what they do with the money they earn and the results can be seen in Table 15.

Table 15 What the graduates do with their earnings

	Support some other person	Save some of it	Re-invest some of it for the business
Women (10)	10	4	2
Men (7)	7	5	4
Total (17)	17	9	6

All of them told that they were also supporting some other persons than themselves economically, which again supports what was already previously noted that the earnings are often used jointly. 9 people told that they put some of the money to the bank or otherwise save it for the future. 6 of the respondents told that they reinvest some of the money for the business.

14 of all the interviewees were also asked whether they supported economically some other person apart from those who they live with or if that kind of a person supports them. 6 persons told that they support some other person, who was however in most cases some other family member, with whom they just do not live. On the

contrary, when asked whether some other person supported the youths themselves, only 2 women answered yes. The other woman was supported by her elder brother and the other one by a friend from the United States that sends her medicine.

6 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

This chapter discusses the findings of the study with relation to earlier understanding of post-conflict reconstruction as informed by the livelihoods approach. Conclusions are drawn based on the theory and empirical findings. First, the sustainable livelihoods approach is discussed in light of the experiences of post-conflict reconstruction in Jendema (Section 6.1.). Second, the role of skills training in building sustainable livelihoods in Jendema is discussed so as to highlight the findings of the study (Section 6.2.). Finally, findings are used to consider the future prospects of concerning the Digloma Youth Friendly Centre (Section 6.3.).

6.1. The sustainable livelihoods approach in light of the experiences of post-conflict reconstruction in Jendema

The sustainable livelihood approach served as a theoretical framework for studying the role of skills training in post-conflict reconstruction. Besides solely referring to a means of gaining a living (Chambers 1992, 6) livelihood according to Chambers and Conway (1992, 7-8) is composed of one's capabilities, assets such as resources, stores and access, and the activities required for a means of living. According to the sustainable livelihoods framework (DFID 1999) the people operate within a context of vulnerability, which in this case refers to the rural post-conflict situation. They have access to certain assets, or “capitals” (Bebbington 1999, 2022), which in this case are especially skills, knowledge, health, networks, tools and equipment, and savings or access to credit.

The aim of the Digloma Youth Friendly Centre’s training programme was to empower the youths through the vocational skills and para-skills, such as literacy and numeracy (GLC 2009). The demand for that kind of skills was already evident in the rural post-conflict context the people lived in. At the end of the training the graduates were given a start-up kit, provided mentoring support and encouraged to build their own solidarity groups in order to support the establishment of their own businesses (RADA 2009, 5). Hence, it is justified to talk about livelihood building in this context.

In post-conflict situations education has been considered as being part of the development assistance that comes only after the immediate post-conflict aid, although

that gap tends to be decreasing and education thus tends to become part of the humanitarian response already. Often it is connected with the reintegration phases, prioritizing especially the ex-combatants (UN 2006; UNESCO-UNEVOC 2007, 1-2). The DYFC was established five years after the civil war in Sierra Leone had ended, thus it would rather be a part of the development assistance already. As the DYFC comprises education and small-scale business development, it is according to Adauta de Sousa et al. (2003, 40) considered to be part of the longer-term reconstruction process. According to Addison (2003, 3) the object of the training for recovery would also be defined broad-based, because it includes human development indicators in addition to incomes. This refers to the human development index that today includes the aspects of the standard of living, education and health (UNDP 2011, 127). Education is the aspect of development this study deals with. The focus of the programme were especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged youths (RADA 2009, 5), who also needed to be prioritized and offered a productive role in the society in order to help them out of the cycles of violence and poverty. (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2007, 5-7.) Hence, concerning education in post-conflict context there are certain aspects that have to be considered in particular.

Elements that are included in the extensive definition of vocational education and training (TVET) in a post-conflict situation are preparation for occupation and effective participation in the world of work, an aspect of lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship, and facilitation of poverty reduction (UNESCO 2001, 7.) The training in the DYFC that the target group of this study assisted in falls thus evidently under this category as well, since the training programme besides the vocational skills also included life skills (RADA 2009, 5; GLC 2009). Over the past three decades there has also been a great concern about the transmission of HIV/AIDS and its impact on households and livelihoods. (Vandana – Potter 2008, 397.) Therefore it was important that the DYFC also included the provision of knowledge about HIV/AIDS in its training programme.

This study examined the role of skills training in sustainable livelihood building in a post-conflict context. Based on the livelihoods literature it is explored first what a sustainable livelihood in a rural developing region is and how it can be improved. According to Mullen (2008, 144-146) any kind of contributions that are made for income-generating opportunities and small rural business, such as the vocational skills training in the DYFC, are of great importance, since rural conflict-affected regions are

especially vulnerable, referring to fall of food crops, disruption of communities and spread of AIDS. According to Zoomers (2008, 149), for already more than a decade the livelihoods of the rural poor have tended to get more diverse than traditionally, when the income was merely based on agriculture. In Jendema, before the vocational skills training centre was established, farming was practised by no more than approximately a third of the respondents as principal occupation, which supports Zoomer's statement. Petty trading and cart pushing were other former occupations mentioned by the graduates. This also supports the statement that the "informal" work is often the primary source of income in rural developing regions. (Williams et al. 2009, 217-219.)

However, it should be taken into account that in the post-conflict circumstances the respondents lived the possibilities for choosing one's means of gaining a livelihood were not numerous and many youths were also completely idle. In the Pujehun district where the target group of the training comes from the access to assets, or capitals was very deficient before the DYFC. Most of the youths were poor and illiterate, their knowledge about HIV/AIDS was insufficient and they lacked vocational skills, which hindered them from finding sustainable employment. Their social skills were poor, and especially the ex-combatants and commercial sex workers felt stigmatized in their communities. These are common difficulties in conflict-affected regions (World Bank 2011b, 274). According to Chambers' (1983, 112) deprivation trap, the youths found themselves in a circle, where the disadvantages, such as poverty, vulnerability, powerlessness, isolation and physical weakness, interlocked with each other and thus worsened their possibilities of progress. However, the deprivation trap does not take into account the fact that in post-conflict region no basic services existed, such as education. Although the graduates had had money they could not have been able to attend any trainings before the DYFC, because there were none. Hence, in most of the cases the graduates lacked the capabilities, assets and activities that according to Chambers and Conway (1992, 7-8) were needed for a livelihood, let alone a sustainable one.

Sustainability is an important qualifier of a livelihood, because it indicates that the advance in poverty reduction is really lasting. According to the Department for International Development of the UK Government (DFID 1999) a sustainable system accumulates the stock of assets and thus increases the capital base for the future generations. According to Chambers (1992, 14) the enhancement of capabilities that can create and adapt to change is substantial regarding the sustainability of a livelihood. In

post-conflict circumstances the economic or political stability has not yet been totally reached (Addison 2003, 3). Literacy, numeracy are skills that, apart from vocational and life skills, increase the capital base of the graduates and thus sustainability by providing security and facilitating the adaptation to changes. Literacy enables the youths to read and assimilate information, count the profits and sign contracts regarding their businesses. The literate people are for example able to take better advantage of the health services. (Vandana – Potter 2008, 398.) Most of the youths were illiterate before participating in the training programme. *Therefore in the conflict-affected fragile region the skills that helped in adapting to change were a significant factor in creating sustainable livelihoods.*

6.2. Discussion of findings of the study

The first research question of the study was to examine what kind of impact the skills training has had on the youths' lives in terms of the livelihood of their households in Jendema. First, *by providing training the DYFC has supported the building of livelihoods*. As noted above, before the DYFC many youths in Jendema did not have any kind of livelihood at all. As idleness and unemployment may trigger violence, keeping them down conversely contributes to keeping peace in the region, which is also an important factor in the post-conflict context. (World Bank 2011b, 74-79.) The kind of work that is enabled by the skills acquired in DYFC had in the majority of the cases become a considerable part of the income generation of the youths after the training, either as a primary or secondary source of income. The youths would not be able to practice their occupations without having acquired their vocational skills, and even though they for some reason lost their current job they have still got the skills and all the knowledge they have acquired in the DYFC. *The skills remain a capital base that cannot be stolen from the youths and that will thus facilitate their job search in the future*. This is important, as the reconstructing systems in post-conflict contexts should be designed in a way that they sustain themselves and thus comprise foundation for the future prosperity (Adauta de Sousa et al. 2003, 40). Agriculture remained an important source of income within the households, but was no longer the only one the youths depended on. Almost half of the graduates were personally engaged in subsistence farming. According to the livelihoods approach taking the subsistence farming into

account is important, since it often has a great impact on the wealth of a household as a whole (Williams et al. 2008, 217-219). Hence, *the income-earning methods within the youths' households were definitely diversified by the skills training in the DYFC, although in many cases their workloads doubled compared to their previous situation.*

All of the interviewees lived with some other person, in most of the cases with their children, and had thus also other mouths to feed besides their own. In most of the cases the people also shared their earnings and use money together within the family, which made the income-earning methods within the households more complex. Many graduates' family members' occupation was farmer. All of the respondents told that they were supporting some other person with their earnings. It is generally stated that involving women in economic activities and generation of jobs benefits besides themselves also their families and communities (World Bank 2011b, 163). Based on the finding of this study, however, no significant differences were seen between the sexes regarding the use of money, as men supported other persons financially equally as much as women did. Economic sustainability is achieved when the level of economic welfare can be maintained (DFID 1999) *The DYFC thus contributed to economic sustainability of the livelihoods of the youths by providing them besides access to capabilities, also to other assets, such as financial resources to build the stores, acquire the tools and gain sufficient profits, and networks to have support and sustain the demand the youths needed in order for their businesses to sustain their households.*

The second research question of the study was to examine how the training contributed to the youths' empowerment in the post-conflict context. The main reason to apply for the vocational skills training according to the graduates was the discontent with their prevailing living conditions and a will for progress. After the training more than a half of the graduates felt that they had gained self-respect. More than a half also said that their attitude towards the other sex had changed and the way they behave in front of a public or with other people. Especially men were happy about their improved social skills, but on the other hand women, out of whom some were working as commercial sex workers, felt that men cannot fool them anymore like they used to. After the training the graduates were more independent of the other household members they lived with, principally economically, and women especially in relation to decision-making and social status as well. In Sen's (1984, 497) terms the graduates had thus gained more "entitlements" and enlarged their "capabilities" through the training that had accumulated their capital bases for the future. *In Jendema the DYFC acted as the*

provider of the life skills they needed for their empowerment. (Chambers 1992, 5-6; 1997, 1748.)

Social sustainability is achieved when social exclusion is minimal and social equity maximal (DFID 1999). Hence, in order for the social sustainability to be accomplished the social exclusion that often in post-conflict context concerns especially the ex-combatants, victims of trafficking or sexual abuse and commercial sex workers, has to be diminished. This is in line with the objective of the sustainable livelihood approach that suggests among other things that better access to more cohesive and supportive social environment should be aimed at (DFID 1999). Asserting social cohesion and minimizing exclusion in Jendema is important in regard to mitigating violence, restoring the public confidence in collective action and thus keeping the peace (World Bank 2011b, 5; 74-79). This study suggests *that the social equity among the graduates had risen.*

Also sexual discrimination needs to be abolished. (World Bank 2011b, 88-89). The ex-combatants and commercial sex workers did not face the kind of discrimination after the training that they used to, but were considered as more equal members in their communities, and also more integrated in the daily chores of them. For the empowerment in a post-conflict context the full participation in the society is important (UNESCO 2000, 16-18). In Jendema, the role of the community is significant and thus it is an integral part of the youths living conditions or "functionings" as well. *In this regard the ex-combatants and commercial sex workers benefited even more from the training in the DYFC than the others*, since the training that clearly decreased the youths' feeling of stigmatization and encouraged the youths to be more interactive.

Janssens (2009, 974) sees the empowerment as owning the capacity to make choices that can also be translated into desired actions. *According to this study the graduates were thus in the process of empowerment*, proceeding towards achieving their desired livelihood outcomes. By continuing studying or working they believed they were able to improve their living standards and develop themselves as human beings; especially in relation to their social skills. What was hindering them, in terms of the sustainable livelihoods framework, was the lack of access to the livelihood assets.

The rural post-conflict context then determines the value and meaning of the social and human capitals that the graduates have gained. That evaluation further influences the livelihood strategies that the people choose based on their own aspirations in order to obtain the desired livelihood outcomes. (DFID 1999.) Bebbington notes that the

assets are more than just means of making a living and thus give meaning to the person's world and capabilities to be and act. In this regard the interviewees' personal definitions of well-being and good quality of life are relevant. (Chambers 1997, 1748.) Hence, it was important to get an understanding of what the desired outcomes of the graduates are, in other words what livelihood, poverty and development mean to them.

All the graduates except one interviewed in this study could agree that they considered themselves happy and successful, after having finished the training. The interviewees where further asked, how they saw success or happiness, which can be to some extent seen as synonyms for well-being and good quality of life. For the absolute majority of them the skills acquired in the DYFC were somehow included in the definition of success. Being able to work and make their own living was very much valued. As Chambers (1997, 1748) presumes that the definition of good quality of life commonly includes elements like access to basic services, freedom of fear, good relations with others, and choice, also the respondents in this study mentioned similar points: living in peace, leading a healthy life, changing one's life for the better, achieving personal goals and being. Hence, also their expectations of the future included the skills; whether they wanted to deepen their know-how, or continue their work that is enabled by the skills they have acquired and thus earn more money. That was mentioned by the absolute majority of the graduates. Other expectations that less than half of them mentioned were related to their family situation, to their housing and to helping other people financially or otherwise supporting them. The income or in this case the lack of it is thus still also related to one's capability deprivation (Sen 1999, 87), as it was very often mentioned among the most important factors that contribute to successful and happy life.

These were the things the target group of this study valued the most and that represented good life for them. As it is characteristic to the livelihoods approach the poverty is then as well intended to be defined by the things that matter for the poor themselves (White 2008, 25). According to Sen (1999, 87) poverty is lack of capabilities. Therefore, based on what the graduates defined as a happy or successful life it can be concluded that the lack of capabilities that would contribute to these elements that are important for the graduates: work, earnings, knowledge, challenges achieved, good relations with other people, health or family, can be seen as poverty. Consequently, the social standards are also defined, compared to which the relative poverty is measured. (White 2008, 25). *Against these perceptions the graduates do not*

necessarily consider themselves relatively poor anymore after being trained in the DYFC.

In conflict-affected regions the rate of pregnancies is often high (World Bank 2011b, 59-60). Consequently, also most of the graduates of the DYFC had dependents they were living with. That could be seen as a disincentive concerning the studies, since the children require a lot of time and attention. According to UNESCO (2003, 3-5), however, those children have then also a higher possibility of going to school and succeeding there, since one of their parents is educated. All of the respondents of this study agreed on that they will educate their children in the future, if they only have the chance. In this regard *the fact that the graduates have dependents is a positive factor concerning the development of the region in the future, as it gives hope that the benefits of the training programme will be lasting in the long run.*

6.3. Future prospects of livelihood building and reconstruction in Jendema

In post-conflict contexts other benefits of the skills training programmes are that they assist in normalising the situation and restoring confidence in the future (Pigozzi 1999, 1-2.). As stated above, the graduates felt more confident concerning their future after the training compared to what they used to. In order for the vocational training programmes to be effective straight links to the labour market are, however, of great importance (World Bank 2011b, 161). In principle the demand for that kind of know-how the youths had acquired was evident in the village. Some of the graduates were still of the opinion that there were already enough tailors, masons, carpenters and weavers in the region and that in the future they would not all have enough work to do. According to the interviews the graduates were also not always very aware of how to conduct their businesses carefully. Some wished to have more marketing skills. Based on the discussions about the profits the graduates said they were gaining it appeared also that they were not all very well informed about the economic issues and some of them even sell their products with unprofitable prices. Hence, the management of their finances and marketing skills was still insufficient and would be of good use in order for the graduates to improve their businesses in the future.

According to World Bank (2011b, 274) the infrastructure, such as electricity and

roads, should be prioritized in order to make the business life possible and only after that the investments in skills. This, however, was not realized in Jendema, although the state of the infrastructure was by the time of the interviews inferior. In the village there were only a couple of small generators of electricity. The roads that led to the village were full of huge potholes. The people in the village complained about the situation of the infrastructure a lot, but not especially regarding the management of their business. The infrastructure did not come up during the interviews of the graduates at all. It may be, however, that when their businesses expand in the future, the role of good roads and electricity becomes more important.

The vocational training in the DYFC still did not end with the CORBHA project, but was planned to continue. This would indeed contribute to the long-term poverty reduction in post-conflict Sierra Leone by improving livelihoods and mitigating the socio-economic impact of the civil war. The idea of the new programme was to consolidate the effects and impact of the previous CORBHA project. The programme aimed at further improving the capacity of targeted communities to expand the sustainable and gender sensitive sexual and reproductive health rights programmes and HIV services, focusing continuously on youths and vulnerable groups. The objectives are also the improvement of the quality of the skills training and enhancement of the micro-enterprise development. The local artisans' and other stakeholders' knowledge and skills in advocacy were to be strengthened so that they would be able to identify issues affecting them and thereby to engage duty bearers to address those issues. Collaborative work and shared learning were also objectives of this project that was then planned for the next three years. (RADA 2009.) The graduates interviewed in this study wished to acquire training in more diversified skills areas, such as hairdressing, catering and car and bicycle repair. Those are also the areas the Finn Church Aid has especially planned to contribute through its prospective financing (Waismaa 2009).

7. SUMMARY

Three-quarters of the all the people of the world that live in extreme poverty are situated in rural areas. Dealing with the aftermath of a conflict is everyday reality all over the world, but especially in West Africa, where there have been numerous coups and civil wars after the countries have got their independence. Already since the mid-twentieth century there have been various attempts to improve the situation of the rural poor, but their livelihoods have improved only little. As the developmental policy goals have shifted from agricultural growth and regional development to sustainable development and poverty alleviation, the focus of the studies has also moved on the aspirations of the rural people themselves. One response to the disappointing results of the previous attempts to improve the situation of the rural poor is the livelihood approach that also served as the theoretical framework for this study. It tries to get a more holistic understanding of the livelihood, for example by taking the whole household into account and recognising the so called informal work as well that is very commonly practised in developing countries.

This study was carried out in Sierra Leone, a West-African country that has experienced a civil war between 1991 and 2002 and is thus still today ranked among the least developed countries in the world. The south-eastern district of the country called Pujehun was devastated the most, because the rebel forces that came from Liberia used the area as an entry point to Sierra Leone. That is also where this study was conducted, more specifically in a rural village called Jendema. The majority of the target group of this study, youths living in the Pujehun district, were exposed to different kinds of human rights abuses, sexual exploitation or trafficking during the civil war and faced thus very poor social and economic opportunities.

The objective of this study was to examine the skills training in building sustainable livelihoods during post-conflict recovery in the Jendema village. A Finnish NGO called Finn Church Aid enabled the field study together with a local cooperator, an NGO called RADA that provided vocational skills training for young people in a skills training centre called DYFC. The study was based on the review of all the pertinent documents and on interviews and observation in the field within approximately a period of one month at the end of 2009. The study was qualitative by nature. Altogether 33 youths were interviewed that all had graduated during the so-called CORBHA-project between the years 2007 and 2009 and studied tailoring, masonry, carpentry, gara tie-dye

or weaving. In addition, a field animator of RADA was also interviewed. She also assisted in organizing the interviews and translated most of the interviews that were semi-structured by nature.

The first sub-question of this study was to find out of what kind of impact the skills training of the youths had in terms of the livelihoods of themselves and their households after graduation. The livelihoods of the target group of this study were diverse and consisted of various income-earning methods. Because of the training some graduates' workloads, however, even doubled. Before the DYFC the livelihood of the graduates was mainly made of farming, petty trading, and acting as commercial sex workers. Many of them were not doing anything. After the skills training the farming lost a little of its importance as the principal source of income, but still remained important especially regarding to subsistence farming. It was very common that the graduates had two jobs at the same time, out of which the other included that kind of work that is enabled by the vocational skills acquired in the DYFC: masonry, carpentry, tailoring, or gara tie-dye and weaving. Other occupations that some of the graduates were practising were petty trading, working as motorbike drivers and some still as commercial sex workers.

Within a household it was usual to spend money collectively. The graduates themselves had the chance to support some other people with their earnings, some of them also managed to save some of it, and some re-invested some money for their future businesses. Against the general perceptions, no significant differences were seen between the sexes regarding the use of money, as men supported other people financially equally as much as women did. The sustainability aspect of the livelihoods economic dimension refers to all the skills the graduates have acquired in the DYFC. The training increased the access of the youths to their human capital that further contributes to their choices concerning their livelihood strategies, which they make in order to gain the desired livelihood outcomes. After being trained in the DYFC the graduates did not necessarily consider themselves relatively poor anymore. The capabilities, knowledge and skills they acquired will also contribute to their work situation in the future, even if a crisis should occur. However, the graduates economic know-how was still imperfect and concerning accounting and marketing they would have needed some more support.

The other sub-question of the study was to find out how the skills training contributed to the empowerment of the youths in a post-conflict context. In a rural and

poor post-conflict context, all the people could be considered vulnerable. However, the ex-combatants and commercial sex workers in Jendema were still in an inferior position, stigmatized and thus discriminated in their communities. Hence, they benefited of the training even more than the others. In general still the training in this regard increased the access of the graduates to their both human and social capital. Most of them gained self-respect and because of the social skills they had learned they were more encouraged to interact with other people. Their attitudes towards the other sex had changed and the people felt more as equal members of the community, compared to the previous situation. Some women also felt less dependent on men. After the training the graduates were thus in the process of empowerment, as the training had enlarged their "entitlements" and "capabilities". Literacy and numeracy were also considered very useful among the graduates. All the graduates agreed that they will educate their children in the future, if they only have the chance, which was also a positive factor concerning the development of the region in the future, as it gave hope that the benefits of the training programme will be lasting in the long run.

The skills training was all in all an effective way of improving the sustainability of the graduates' livelihoods. By providing the skills that increased the profitability of graduates' livelihoods it helped to maintain the economic welfare in the future and by providing life skills and encouraging the graduates to work together it helped to minimize the social exclusion and maximize the social equity. In a post-conflict context those skills that facilitate the adaptation to changes are of great importance.

Generally speaking, the DYFC provided significant vocational and life skills to the young people living near the Jendema village that further enabled the building and diversifying of their livelihoods and contributed to their empowerment process after the devastating civil war they had experienced. It increased the youths access to their human and social capitals that further contributed to the election of their livelihood strategies they made in order to gain the livelihood outcomes that depended on each one's own aspirations. The graduates saw future more positively and agreed that within some period of time they would be able to achieve their desired goals concerning their work and family situation in particular.

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Magbaan, Rosaline, field animator, RADA-SL. Interview 8.12.2009, Jendema, Sierra Leone.

APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

The interviews of the graduates were conducted based on this questionnaire.

Personal Information

1 Age

2 Sex: Male Female

3 Marital status: Single Married Dependents

4 What is your living arrangement?

with parents, with children, with other relatives, with friends etc.

5 What did you do before you went to the DYFC?

Did you work? Where? Were you helping at home? Any previous studies?

6 Tell me about your childhood

ex-combatant/ trafficked victim/ sex worker/girl mother etc.

7 Why and how did you decide to apply for the training at the DYFC?

How did you hear about the DYFC? Was the idea to apply for the training yours or were you encouraged by some other people? What motivated you?

Study

8 When did you graduate?

9 Are you going to do the advance studies?

10 What were you studying at the DYFC?

masonry, carpentry, tailoring, gara tie dye, weaving

11 What did you learn at the DYFC?

the vocational skills vs. does she/he mention some other life skills/ literacy /some principles etc.

12 Where you literate before going to the DYFC?

13 What do you think were the 3 most important things you learned at the DYFC?

14 In which ways have the skills you learned at the DYFC improved your life?

new skills to be able to work/ to feel more self-confident/ literacy to be able to sign contracts or to read newspaper/ social skills to better understand other people/ etc.

15 Do you think the training at the DYFC has an effect on other things in your life that do not have anything to do with your livelihood?

Has the training changed the way you think about yourself? Improved your self-respect? Changed your attitudes concerning the marriage?

16 Did you find the DYFC worth the effort? In which way?

If not, why?

Do you think the training had all in all more positive or negative impact on your life?

17 Would you have any suggestions to improve the training?

Work

18 How do you earn your living these days?

Why have you chosen to earn your living that way? If not taking advantage of the vocational skills, why?

19 Do you have a business plan?

a) What are the costs and for what?

b) How much does the customer pay?

c) How much is the profit per one unit?

d) How many units do you produce per week/month?

e) How many units do you sell per week/month?

20 How much do you earn?

21 What can you get with the money you earn per week/month?

22 What does your wife/husband/parent do for living?

23 How do you spend money within your family; who pays for what?

24 Do you support any other person with your earnings?

25 Does any other person support you economically?

26 Do you work alone or in a group?

If in a group, with whom? Do you work for somebody or are an entrepreneur? Why have you chosen it that way?

27 Do you think the training was qualified, now that you have been using your skills in practice? Was one year of training enough to learn the basic skills for the job?

The role of the community

28 How would you define the community you live in?

Is it your friends/ family/ neighbors/ the whole town?

29 What expectations did the community have when you started at the DYFC?

Were they encouraging/discouraging? Did they expect that your life would somehow radically change after the training?

30 Has your relation to the community changed after the training?

How do people see you these days? Do you think your community respects you more now? Do people listen to your opinions more? Has your conception of your community changed? Are you now responsible for some things in your community you weren't responsible for before? Are you allowed /prohibited to do something differently than before?

31 Do you think that you benefit or change the whole community while using your new skills learned at the DYFC?

How? Are some chores now possible to do that weren't before? Do you do things differently in the community now after the training? Have you had an impact on the attitudes in your community?

Success and happiness

32 How would you define success?

33 Do you think you have had a successful life?

How? Do you feel happy? If not, do you feel the training at the DYFC led your life to the wrong direction?

34 What do you expect from the future?

How do you feel about your possibilities? What would you like to do? What do you think you can do? Do you have plans to study/work more/get married?

35 Do you think the training at the DYFC has opened up new possibilities concerning the future?

Questions left out later;

- Do you think you would be doing the same thing if you hadn't been trained in the DYFC?
- Do you think you make good use of the skills learned at the DYFC?
- How do you think you could benefit or change the whole community with the new skills you learned at the DYFC?
- Has your conception of success changed after the DYFC?