

“Arms for Development” in Sierra Leone: Its Comprehensiveness and Missed Lessons Learnt

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Introduction

At the first Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the implementation of the 2001 Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, former Secretary-General of United Nations, Kofi Annan, said, “small arms and light weapons kill more than half a million people each year ... In the 1990s, small arms were the weapons of choice in 47 of 49 major conflicts. ... those arms exacerbate conflict, spark refugee flows, undermine the rule of law, and spawn a culture of violence and impunity.”¹

Small arms are those weapons designed for personal use, and light weapons are those designed for several persons serving as a crew. Based on this broad definition and on an assessment of weapons actually used in conflicts being dealt with the United Nations, the weapons are categorized into “small arms,” “light weapons,” and “ammunitions and explosives.”² In general, the term “small arms and light weapons” (SALW) tend to be used as a generic term covering the weapons of the categories. SALW are of particular advantage for irregular warfare or terrorist and criminal action. Since SALW are capable of being carried, they allow for mobile operations where heavy mechanized and air forces are not available or are restricted in their capabilities owing to difficult maintenance, jungle or urban terrain.³ Therefore, it is

¹ United Nations Press Release, DC/2871, July 3, 2003.

< <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/dc2871.doc.htm> > (accessed on 19th March, 2012)

² UN Document, A/52/298, paras.25-26.

³ *Ibid.*, para.27.

understandable that recent conflicts make full use of SALW because of the characteristics of the advantages, causing significant casualties as a result.

Collection and control of SALW is a crucial issue in post-conflict societies. This is because it is difficult to start any peacebuilding activities as well as post-conflict election under conditions that many illegal and uncontrolled SALW are rampant and deteriorate security. It is true that Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), especially its disarmament part, is a process to deal with SALW after conflict. However, it is impossible to perfectly collect all the weapons through the process. There have been not a few cases that many SALW still remain on the spot even after disarmament.

SALW collection in exchange for development assistance is one of the important approaches in such a case. Development assistance can be utilized as a strong incentive to promote arms collection and as a significant contribution to support reconstruction in post-conflict societies. This type of SALW collection was implemented in Mali, Albania, Cambodia, Niger and so on, expected as “useful in regions where conflicts come to an end and where serious problems of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons have to be dealt with urgently.”⁴

In Sierra Leone, this type of SALW collection named “Arms for Development” (AfD) was launched by the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2004. The AfD was also highly expected and evaluated in the United Nations. For example, Kofi Annan said, “community empowerment programmes that include combatants are continuing, as is a UNDP arms for development. If implemented properly, this reintegration programme should be a tool to promote trust and confidence between ex-combatants and receiving communities.”⁵ It is interesting that he regards the AfD as a “community empowerment programme” and a “reintegration programme,” rather than a SALW collection programme. Annan’s expectation suggests that it can have positive impacts on empowerment and reintegration as well as simply collecting SALW in Sierra Leone.

⁴ UN Document, A/54/258, paras.55, 59, and 60.

⁵ UN Document, A/60/705, para.50.

In addition, former head of UNDP, Kemal Derviş, also positively touched the AfD in his closing statement at the forth Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD IV) in 2008. According to the press release from UNDP, “it [TICAD IV] encapsulates the stories of ordinary people in Africa whose lives have been transformed through interventions by TICAD –inspired projects. Indeed, one young woman in Sierra Leone whose life has drastically changed through the ‘Arms for Development’ project personified this when she said ‘I do not want to look back but want to study hard and become a lawyer, I see a bright future in front of me and I believe that I can achieve my goals.’ I am confident that TICAD is not only a high-level global forum, which of course it is very successfully, but also and more importantly, about improving the lives of Africa’s people so that they can live with dignity, hope and opportunity for the future.”⁶

However, what the heads of the UN pointed out is just one aspect of the AfD or its results, even if it is true. According to a fieldwork conducted by the author in Sierra Leone between November 2009 and October 2010, the author found some serious problems, especially from the viewpoint of the community members as the beneficiaries. By making use of the results of my fieldwork and examining various progress reports concerned, this paper will focus on negative aspects and their implications to the AfD and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. This is because it is difficult to deepen understanding of the case of Sierra Leone without examining negative and “unsuccessful” aspects, especially where some heads of the UN have already shown high expectation and evaluation to the AfD.

First, this paper will confirm basic outline of the AfD referring to the related reports. Then, it discusses that one of the characteristics of the AfD is its comprehensiveness which can be a reason for problems mentioned later. Second, this paper will point out three serious problems of the AfD which were found through the fieldwork: (1) most chiefdoms could not receive development assistance as one of the incentives, although the community members cooperated in arms collection in the

⁶ “Closing statement of Kemal Derviş: TICAD IV,” in the UNDP Newsroom of the UNDP website. < <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/>> (accessed on 13th March, 2012).

context of the AfD; (2) although 16 chiefdoms could receive development assistance, in some chiefdoms of them development assistance were not necessarily utilized for their peacebuilding; and (3) the AfD promised provision of alternatives to arms surrendered, such as wires and nets to make hunting traps, for the community members including hunters, but many of them never received alternatives as well. It is said that the AfD officially closed in 2010. Therefore, it is unlikely to resolve these problems in the context of AfD, although some community members still wait for development assistance and alternatives without knowing the end of the AfD.

These problems are scarcely discussed in the annual progress reports from 2005 to 2009 and even in the final report presented in 2010. Therefore, the third part of this paper focuses on what the reports say, especially about the AfD's "challenges," "constraints" and/or "lessons learnt." Then, it discusses that although the reports points out a variety of "constraints," "challenges" and/or "lessons learnt," they could not necessarily indicate them and draw "lessons learnt" effectively. This is why the paper will conclude with a recommendation of a detailed analysis and evaluation. This is because it may be difficult not only to avoid some kinds of negative results but also to find effective "lessons learnt" conducive to improve the AfD as an important approach of SALW collection in post-conflict societies, without such analysis and evaluation.

1. "Arms for Development" in Sierra Leone and its Comprehensiveness

First of all, it is necessary to confirm basic contents of the AfD, with referring to the reports concerned.⁷ The AfD was launched by the GoSL and UNDP in 2004, to tackle the problem of increasing crime rate and insecurity as a result of the illicit proliferation

⁷ GoSL and UNDP. "Arms for Development: Draft Annual Report," unpublished report, 2004: "Arms for Development UNDP Sierra Leone: Progress Report 2005," unpublished report, 2005: "Arms for Development UNDP Sierra Leone: Progress Report 2006," unpublished report, 2006: UNDP. "Arms for Development UNDP Sierra Leone: End of Year 2007 Progress Report," unpublished report, 2007: "Arms for Development Report as at 31 December 2008," unpublished report, 2008: "Standard Progress Report," unpublished report, 2009: "Arms for Development: End-of-Project Review Report," unpublished report, 2010.

of SALW after the war. The aim was to “build confidence, stability and security, through capacity building of national security institutions, local communities and civil society.” It focused on the following three main activities: (1) community arms collection; (2) developing new ways to stem the illicit trade in weapons; and (3) supporting the revision and eventual implementation of the national firearms legislation.⁸

In all chiefdoms where arms collection was carried out, the first step of the exercise was to support local communities in appointing a Project Management Committee (PMC). Each PMC was composed of seven members representing chiefdom authorities, community-based organizations, social workers and community leaders. During the arms collection phase, they were tasked to supervise and facilitate the collection process, and to establish contacts and liaison with the Police at the chiefdom level. Once the arms collection was completed, they were to focus on implementation of development assistance in exchange for the arms collected. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) supported them by providing training sessions in each of the chiefdoms. In the plan of AfD, these PMCs were supposed to be transformed into Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that later would be officially registered by the GoSL, in order to place them in a stronger position to seek funding and undertake other development projects after the completion of the AfD.⁹

In order to promote arms collection, there were at least four approaches adopted. First was waiver from legal prosecution. Sierra Leone Police (SLP) cooperated with the AfD and extended to respecting of an official waiver from legal prosecution, granted to those who voluntarily surrendered weapons in chiefdoms.¹⁰ Second was sensitization. The AfD contracted the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA), which is an umbrella network of civil social organizations and has interests in small arms control, to carry out community sensitization. SLANSA and

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2004, p.4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.7.

PMC were engaged in community sensitization, with making use of posters and T-shirts. These materials which printed the message “Kolhat dae bring gentry” (“peace will bring prosperity” in Creo, one of the local, official languages) were distributed to community members. Together with SLANSA, the AfD representatives, PMC members, other local community-based organizations, media, and spiritual and religious leaders participated in promoting voluntary surrender of SALW in local communities.

Third was to provide development assistance as an incentive. Once all the weapons had been surrendered, a verification exercise was undertaken in the chiefdom by SLP with monitoring from UNDP. This consisted of a random search of houses in 30% of the villages in the chiefdom. The villages to be searched were selected according to information gathered from the community members on the potential location of the remaining gun owners. If no weapons were found, a “weapons-free” certificate was to be granted to the chiefdom. Any chiefdom that successfully went through arms collection and was proven to be “weapons-free” was qualified for development assistance from AfD. A block grant, of approximately Le 43 million (US\$ 18,000 at that time) served to provide a substantial incentive for the community members including hunters and other arms holders to surrender their own guns.¹¹ Development assistance was expected that it could address pressing communal needs, to be identified by the communities themselves through a democratic vote in the chiefdom.

Forth was to provide alternative means to guns. Part of the AfD was to provide hunters with alternative means of livelihood to reduce dependency on firearms. In the plan of AfD, a budget of Le 2 million (around US\$ 800) was allocated to each of the targeted chiefdoms to buy traps and nets for hunters.

In addition to these activities, UNDP worked closely with the GoSL to enact a

¹¹ According to the report of 2004, the grant was “US\$18,000.” *Ibid.*, 2004, p.4. But, the ceiling of this block grant seems to have been not necessarily fixed on the AfD process. The report of 2007 mentioned “the community development project ceiling, set as US\$14,000 in 2003, is now in most cases inadequate for viable community projects ... By mid-2007, the ceiling of US\$14,000 was abandoned in favor of a flexible ceiling of approximately US\$300,000 which is being assessed on a case-by-case basis.” *Ibid.*, 2010, p.6.

new legislation on arms, ammunition and explosives. The Arms and Ammunition Act No. 14 (1955) and Sierra Leone's licensing procedure were highly centralized with outdated penalties, no longer serving as serious deterrents. Hence, there was a need to revise the legislation and to establish more effective and transparent firearms licensing process as part of a conflict prevention mechanism. In order to achieve this, the AfD included revision of the existing firearms legislation and enhancement of capacity of the newly established Firearms Licensing Bureau in its support.

Further, the Sierra Leone Border Strengthening Programme was also located in part of the AfD. This border programme was intended to focus on "institutional capacity building including policy and legislative reforms, training of personnel, provision of adequate logistics, establishment of an effective and coordinated interagency border security mechanism, including prevention, monitoring and oversight systems, rehabilitation and or construction of interagency border posts, promoting early warning responses aimed at reducing the incidence of smuggling and trafficking, creating greater awareness among policy makers, community leaders and civil society on the dangers of not protecting the border territories of Sierra Leone."¹²

This is how the AfD tried to support many activities such as arms collection, development assistance, capacity building of PMC, sensitization for the community members targeted, revision of the arms law and license system, transformation of PMC into CBO, and boarder control. It is clear that that one of the characteristics of the AfD was its comprehensiveness. To put it differently, the AfD was not a just arms collection programme, but comprehensive arms control programme. However, the comprehensiveness was not necessarily positive characteristics. According to the annual progress report of 2008, "the implementation of the AfD was hindered by unrealistic project targets."¹³ It is possible to discuss that too many activities and too wide range of targets could be an impediment to a progress.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2008, p.13.

2. Problems of the AfD

According to a fieldwork conducted by the author in 2010, there were at least three serious problems, especially from the viewpoint of the community members as the beneficiaries of the AfD.

First of the problems is that most chiefdoms could not receive development assistance as one of the incentives, although they cooperated in arms collection in the context of the AfD. According to the final report of the AfD, “in total 73 community projects were identified out of 92 chiefdoms that participated in the AfD,” but only 16 chiefdoms have completed development assistance projects (See, Table1). Although the report adds “the eleven ongoing projects will be completed by the end of June 2010,” it is undeniable that many chiefdoms could not receive development assistance, even if the ongoing projects is completed.

Table1 The Result of Development Assistance to the chiefdoms (As of 2010)

The number of chiefdoms participated in AfD	92
The number of chiefdoms identified their own development packages from AfD	73
The number of chiefdoms completed their development packages from AfD	16
The number of chiefdoms which have ongoing development projects from AfD	11

Source: UNDP, 2010, p.13

According to the annual progress reports between 2005 and 2009 with the final report of 2010, they show the numbers of the chiefdoms received development assistance during the process as follows (See, Table2). It shows that there has been no significant progress in terms of development assistance to the communities since 2008.

Table2 The numbers of the chiefdoms received development assistance in each year

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
The number of the chiefdoms received development packages from AfD	2	4	15	16	N.A.*	16

* The progress report of 2009 indicates no number of the chiefdoms received.

Source: UNDP, 2005, p.8: 2006, p.9: 2007, p.2: 2008, p.1: 2010, p.13.

It is natural that the community members have complaints about absence of development assistance. For example, a PMC member in Faama Town (in Nomo Chiefdom of Kenema District) said, “they [UNDP] did not do what they promised us. When you start something, you must end it. They did not end the project. My comment is that UNDP promised us development packages but [it] failed. We trained but never received even certificates. Those whom the guns have been removed always complain us that we took their guns from them. They always provoke and blame us.”¹⁴ A PMC member engaged as a public relation officer of Upper Bambara chiefdom (in Kailahun District) said, “development program is the opportunity community can work as one. But, I think we were betrayed by the project [AfD].”¹⁵ A PMC chairman living Lower Bambara chiefdom (in Kenema District) told that development assistance would contribute to the community as a peace symbol but it didn’t realize.¹⁶ These voices show that absence of development assistance which by right the communities should have received has brought about loss of potentially valuable opportunities and symbols as well as just complaints and disappointments.

What is important here is that some of the community members still wait for development assistance from the AfD, although it was officially closed in 2010. For example, the Paramount Chiefs and the community members of Dodo chiefdom and Langrama chiefdom (Kenema District), Malema chiefdom (Kailahun District), and Soa chiefdom (Kono District) wrote letters to appeal that their communities need the development assistances and the AfD should provide them as promised beforehand. The author passed the letters to Keeth Wright, the head of Peace and Development Unit of UNDP Sierra Leone country office in Freetown, on behalf of the community members. It means that it was difficult for the beneficiaries to get in contact with the implementers and there had been less communication between them, especially since

¹⁴ Interview with a PMC member in Nomo Chiefdom (Kenema District) who requested to be anonymous on 2nd September, 2010.

¹⁵ Interview with a PMC member in Upper Bambara chiefdom (Kailahun District) who requested to be anonymous on 22nd September, 2010.

¹⁶ Interview with a PMC chairman in Lower Bambara chiefdom (Kenema District) who requested to be anonymous on 15th July, 2010.

development assistance process.

Second of the problems is that although 16 chiefdoms could receive development assistance from the AfD, in some chiefdoms of them development assistance was not necessarily utilized for their peacebuilding. For example, Bramaia chiefdom (Kambia District) chose “community shop” as the development assistance from the AfD. It was intended to support more convenient lives in Bramaia and could have financially contributed to the community by returning sales money to the chiefdom. However, the chief at that time ran away with the fund and materials from the AfD, as a result the community members could enjoy no benefit.¹⁷ In Samu Chiefdom and Gbinleh Dixon Chiefdom (Kambia District) received four power tillers for their agricultural works and training for operators. However, they were abandoned, when the author visited in both chiefdoms. According to a PMC member, those power tillers were workable for less than a year after the handover.¹⁸ It means that the development assistances were not “sustainable.”

Of course, it is easy to attribute the result to the communities themselves, with pointing out “low capacity of the local communities” as repeatedly mentioned in the AfD reports. However, the implementers may not be irrelevant to it. If they monitored and supervised the process in another way, the implementers and the community members could have avoided the negative result. At least, it is safe to discuss that just paying attention to “low capacity of the local communities” cannot avoid such kind of result and improve the AfD as one of the important approaches of SALW collection.

Third of the problems is that the AfD promised provision of alternatives to arms surrendered, such as wires and nets to make hunting traps, but some chiefdoms never received no alternatives as well. As mentioned above, part of the AfD was to provide hunters with alternative means of livelihood to reduce dependency on firearms. A budget of Le 2 million (around US\$ 800) was allocated to each of the targeted chiefdoms to buy traps and nets for hunters. However, some of the chiefdoms could

¹⁷ Interview with a villager in Bramaia chiefdom (Kambia District) who requested to be anonymous on 3rd October, 2010.

¹⁸ Interview with a PMC member in Gbinleh-Dixon Chiefdom (Kambia District) requested to be anonymous on 7th October, 2010.

receive no alternatives from the AfD. According to the annual progress report of 2006, the number of the chiefdoms which received alternatives was 10.¹⁹ It is not clear that how many chiefdoms could receive them finally because the other reports of the AfD did not mention it. However, it is possible to point out existence of chiefdoms which could not receive alternatives as of 2010.

For example, a civilian living in Kalansogoia Chiefdom (Tonkolili District) said, “after the project the UNDP promised to give wires and hunting nets to the community members but they failed and we the field officers are presently facing lot of problems and treatment from our people because they accused us that we came with the UNDP to collect their local guns which they were using to hunt and feed their families. We are betrayed by the UNDP.”²⁰ Another civilian living in Kunike chiefdom (Tonkolili District) also said, “I will like to appeal to the UNDP. Please help the community people with funding traps and fishing nets to go about the works because they no longer leave guns to hunt and they were also using the guns to protect their farmlands from animals, but now it is difficult to protect the farm now. But, if we can have wire that we need to set traps for the animals that destroy our farms, then it will be our joy.”²¹ An ex-hunter living in Makari-Gbanti chiefdom (Bombali District) also mentioned, “I was happy to use it [gun] for hunt. I could sell animals. Now, nothing like that. I was using the money to school for tuition. I don’t have money to do it. I don’t have the trap and materials like wire.”²² This was how the community members, especially hunters, in their chiefdoms where alternatives were not provided, aggravated their complaints.

3. “Constraints,” “Challenges,” and “Lessons Learnt” in the AfD Reports

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2006, p.9.

²⁰ Interview with a villager in Kalansogoia Chiefdom (Tonkolili District) who requested to be anonymous on 4th May, 2010.

²¹ Interview with a villager in Kunike chiefdom (Tonkolili District) who requested to be anonymous on 26th April, 2010.

²² Interview with a villager in Makari-Gbanti chiefdom (Bombali District) who requested to be anonymous on 20th April, 2010.

As discussed above, there were some serious problems for the targeted communities of the AfD. Then, what are the reports saying, especially about its negative results? The third part of this paper focuses on the AfD's "challenges," "constraints" and/or "lessons learnt."

The annual progress report of the AfD (2005) shows the following points:²³

- The extension of field activities to other parts of Sierra Leone would represent a huge logistical challenge for the sub-office in Makeni. Therefore, the decision was taken to open a second sub-office in Kenema to manage field activities in the East of the Country;
- Security situation in the region remains a concern for all field activities and especially community arms collection;
- Condition of the Sierra Leone road network remained a constant throughout the year;
- The low level of qualifications among community members has been a constraint in the implementation of the development projects. The problem has been addressed by AfD and GTZ by creating training modules for the PMC. More work needs to be done;
- The continued delay in the adoption of the new Arms and Ammunition legislation has been a constraint on community arms collection throughout 2005;
- The need to design proper indicators of success for AfD;
- To put more emphasis more emphasis on the delivery of alternative means of livelihood for hunters; and
- The need to design a proper strategy for weapons collection in the Freetown urban area.

If we summarize them by picking the keywords up, the AfD confronted "the extension of the field activities," "security situation," "road conditions," "low capacity of the beneficiaries," "delay of the new arms law and license system," "indicators of

success for AfD,” “delivery of alternative means,” and “weapons collection in Freetown.” Strangely enough, the contents and descriptions of “constraints’ and “lessons learnt and recommendations” in the report of 2005 are totally same as those in the annual progress report of 2006.²⁴ If we literally understand them of the both reports, the AfD could neither resolve any constraints nor find any new additional constraints in the year 2006.

However, in actuality, the AfD was evaluated in March 2006. The annual progress report of 2007 touches the results of the evaluation by writing “among the major issues highlighted in the evaluation report were lack of verifiable indicators of achievement, absence of an evaluation framework for capacity building and sensitization, need to improve collaboration with state security actors, the slow rate of delivery of community projects and improper storage of collected weapons. The evaluation acknowledged the objective constraint posed by the limited achievement to enact the new firearms legislation.”²⁵ In addition, the annual progress report of 2007 shows the following points:²⁶

- Enthusiasm is dwindling among gun owners to voluntarily surrender their weapons because of continued delays on the part of the Government to enact the new firearms legislation, which will provide new eligibility criteria for private possession of firearms in the country. Gun owners are now becoming reluctant to voluntarily surrender their weapons because of uncertainty about the return of their licensable weapons, given the absence of new legislation;
- The low capacity of stakeholders for community project management, also mentioned above, remains a serious challenge;
- The willingness of the communities to provide voluntary labour has been uneven and is generally lower than initially expected. (The much lower levels of voluntarism that were encountered in practice however, caused projects to have to rely much more on commercial and thus far more expensive arrangements for

²³ *Ibid.*, 2005, pp.18-19.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2006, pp.16-17.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2007, p.6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

implementation.); and

- Continued under-investment and lack of maintenance of the road network has resulted in even poorer road conditions, which is seriously hampering project activities.

If we summarize them including the results of the evaluation of March 2006, the key points can be “lack of verifiable indicators of achievement,” “absence of an evaluation framework for capacity building and sensitization,” “need to improve collaboration with state security actors,” “slow rate of delivery of community projects,” “improper storage of collected weapons,” “delay of the new firearms legislation,” “the low capacity of stakeholders,” “the unwillingness of the communities to provide voluntary labour,” and “road condition.” In addition, Sierra Leone had national election in 2007. The report mentioned it as well, saying “the project management, in consultation with UN Security Officials, therefore decided to halt all weapon collection activities during the election campaign and throughout the first and second round of elections to minimize chances of misunderstanding and any possibility of disturbance that the collection process itself might create.”²⁷

The annual progress report of 2008 shows the following points:²⁸

- The complex nature of the project set within a very difficult post-conflict implementation environment created a particular challenge. Systems and structures had to be rapidly developed to facilitate implementation. Many systems were often not robust or flexible enough to be able to support effective programme management or to respond in a timely manner to needs or problems identified in the field. The implementation of the AfD was hindered by unrealistic project targets, a result of insufficient planning and baseline research;
- Community members possessing arms were reluctant to hand them over owing to uncertainty regarding the return of their licensable weapons; and
- During project implementation, it became clear that local authority and community

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2008, pp.13-14.

capacity to manage and implement development projects was even lower than expected. Therefore, the community ownership approach envisioned in the project planning period was not fully realized. The impact of the training provided to PMC members was low because of their limited capacity to absorb the information ... as a result of these factors, community development projects were always implemented far behind scheduled.

The report mentions “systems and structures,” “delay of the new law and license system,” “the low capacity of the beneficiaries,” and “unrealistic project targets” as a result of “insufficient planning and baseline research.” The detail meanings of the “systems and structures” and “unrealistic project targets” are not necessarily clear in the report, but it is important to have pointed out them as constraints on the side of the implementers and within the AfD, which can also be some of the reasons for the negative results of the AfD.

In the progress report of 2009 listed the following points:²⁹

- Low capacity of partners was a serious challenge especially as it relates to understanding UNDP rules and procedures in the implementation of direct execution projects;
- Delayed in the release of funds for civil works community development projects led to late commencement of preparatory activities;
- Continued under-investment and lack of maintenance of the road network has resulted in ever poorer road conditions, which is seriously hampering project activities ... particularly during the rainy season, many communities in many parts of Sierra Leone are close to inaccessible.

Then, the final report of 2010 writes “the complex nature of the project with its many different components set within a very short timeframe and difficult post-conflict implementation environment created that was heightened by the all-pervasive sense of urgency and emergency was a particular challenge. Systems and

structures had to be rapidly developed to facilitate implementation. Many systems were often not robust or flexible enough to be able to support effective programme management and to respond, in a timely manner, to the needs or problems identified in the field. Overall, the implementation of AfD was impeded by insufficient and non-research based-planning which set unrealistic project targets for the project.”³⁰ In addition, it listed the following three points as “lessons learnt.”³¹

- The AfD could have been most effectively implemented if its various components (namely, community awareness raising and arms collection, capacity building of PMCs, and implementation of community development projects) were separated into three subproject intervention;
- The expectation that the entire process of arms collection (preparatory activities, capacity building and public awareness, community arms collection process and “weapons-free” certification in any given chiefdom will be completed in four month turned out to be grossly unrealistic. In practice it was found that in each community the process took more than one year; and
- It was noticed that in many of the chiefdoms where diamond mining was an important activity, there was a general lack of community spirit, it was difficult to organize community sensitization meetings and hence to implement an arms collection programme.

“Systems and Structures,” “unrealistic project targets” and “insufficient planning and baseline research” as constraints and challenges of the AfD are mentioned again. In addition, the report pointed out “separation of the AfD activities into three subprojects,” “delayed process of arms collection,” “lack of community spirit” as lessons learnt of the AfD.

Based on the information of the “constraints,” “challenges” and/or “lessons learnt,” they can be illustrated as follow (See, Table3).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2009, p.5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2010, pp.15-16.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.16.

Table3 “Constraints,” “Challenges” and “Lessons learnt” in the AfD reports

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Extension of the field activities	✓	✓				
Security situation	✓	✓				
Road condition	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Low capacity of the beneficiaries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Delay of the new law and license system	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Indicators of success for AfD	✓	✓				
Delivery of alternative means	✓	✓				
Weapons collection in Freetown	✓	✓				
Unwillingness of the communities to provide voluntary labour			✓			
National election of 2007			✓			
Systems and Structures				✓		✓
Unrealistic project targets				✓		✓
Insufficient planning and baseline research				✓		✓
Delayed in the release of funds for civil works community development projects					✓	
Separation of AfD activities into three subprojects						✓
Delayed process of arms collection						✓
Lack of community spirit						✓
Lack of verifiable indicators of achievement			※	※		※
Absence of an evaluation framework for capacity building and sensitization			※	※		※
Need to improve collaboration with state security actors			※	※		※
Slow rate of delivery of community projects			※	※		※
Improper storage of collected weapons			※	※		※

✓ Points mentioned in the report

※Points followed the results of the evaluation of March 2008

This is a summary based on the “constraints,” “challenges” and/or “lessons learnt” in the annual progress reports from 2005 to 2009 and the final reports of 2010. Of course, it is not deniable that the related points are included in other parts of the reports, although as far as the author read them, the above summary contains almost all the points concerned. It is also undeniable that the way to summarize what the reports say about the AfD’s “challenges,” “constraints” and/or “lessons learnt” by picking the keywords up can have limitation to express accurate messages of the reports.

Nevertheless, they may not be obstacles to discuss the following three points.

First of all is that although the reports points out a variety of “constraints,” “challenges” and/or “lessons learnt,” it is difficult to understand them systematically and identify causal relations to concrete negative results clearly. For example, in the final report (2010), “systems and structures had to be rapidly developed to facilitate implementation. Many systems were often not robust or flexible enough to be able to support effective programme management and to respond, in a timely manner, to the needs or problems identified in the field. Overall, the implementation of the AfD was impeded by insufficient and non-research based-planning which set unrealistic targets for the project.”³² It might have been true that the targets of the AfD had been “unrealistic” in the first place. However, what we should pay attention to is that the AfD did complete development assistance to 16 chiefdoms as mentioned before. It means that some chiefdoms did receive them, and while others did not, under the same “systems and structures” of the AfD. It is difficult to understand what differences were between some chiefdoms and others, at least from the reports.

Second is that the reports say little about local circumstances and their relations to the results of the AfD, except for one of the lessons learnt in the final report, or “in many of the chiefdoms where diamond mining was an important activity, there was a general lack of community spirit.” The progress reports consistently point out “low capacity of the community members” as constraints of the AfD. For example, in the report of 2008, “during project implementation, it became clear that local authority and community capacity to manage and implement development projects was even lower than expected. Therefore, the community ownership approach envisioned in the project planning period was not fully realized.”³³ Certainly, “low capacity of community members” might have been one of the chronic constraints to the AfD and the common constraints among the targeted community members. Then, however, why the results were different among the targeted chiefdoms? To put it differently, “low capacity of community members” cannot be a clear answer to the question: why some

³² *Ibid.*, 2010, p16.

³³ *Ibid.*, 2008, p13.

community could receive development assistance, and while other could not, under the common situations of “low capacity of community members.” The AfD was implemented in as many as 92 chiefdoms. The cases of the 92 chiefdoms should not have been exactly the same in the first place. The reports don’t necessarily have implications on which reflected various regional circumstances and local varieties.

Third is that the reports could not deepen qualities of discussions on the “constraints,” “challenges” and/or “lessons learnt,” although the AfD had been implemented for as many as seven years from 2004 to 2010. For example, the progress report of 2008 says, “the impact of the training provided to PMC members were low because of their limited capacity to absorb the information ... as a result of these factors, community development projects were always implemented far behind scheduled.”³⁴ This is repeated in the final report of 2010 again, in short “the training provided to members of PMCs was quite low because of their limited capacity to absorb the information.”³⁵ The reports basically tend to repeat same points annually and consistently complain about “low capacity of the community members,” but they have never been delved into more details for the AfD process.

The reports give various “constraints,” “challenges” and/or “lessons learnt,” which can be reasons of negative results, but they don’t necessarily give a clear answer to the question: why some community could receive development assistance, and while other could not. It means that one of the significant opportunities to avoid same kinds of negative results and improve the AfD as an important approach of SALW collection for future was missed.

4. Conclusion

The AfD was not a just SALW collection, but comprehensive SALW control, including many activities concerned and a wide range of targets. However, its

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2010, p12.

comprehensiveness was not necessarily positive characteristics of the AfD and could be a reason of negative results of the AfD. One of them was that some chiefdoms could receive development assistance from the AfD, while others could not, under the same AfD. It is natural for the latter to complain about the negative results and feel “betrayed by the AfD.” The gap is not small between expectations or evaluations of the heads of UN and actual results of the AfD, especially negative ones. It can mislead those who are interested in the AfD and peacebuilding of Sierra Leone. That is why the reports of the AfD should have roles and responsibilities to avoid misleading them.

It is not rare that a project has both positive and negative aspects. But, same kinds of the negative results can be produced again and the AfD cannot be improved both academically and practically, without paying attention to its negative aspects. To put it differently, examining them can bring hints for improvement of the AfD and peacebuilding to Sierra Leone and its communities. In that sense, another roles and responsibilities of the reports should be that they evaluate negative results in detail and provide “lessons learnt” on the basis of the detailed evaluation.

However, the reports points out a variety of “constraints,” “challenges” and/or “lessons learnt,” but they could not necessarily play their roles and responsibilities effectively. It is difficult to understand them systematically and identify causal relations to concrete negative results clearly. In addition, the reports say little about local circumstances and their relation to the results and could not deepen qualities of discussions about the “constraints,” “challenges” and/or “lessons learnt” on the process. In that sense, this paper discusses that one of the significant opportunities to avoid same kinds of negative results and improve the AfD as an important approach of SALW collection for future was missed.

Considering important position of development assistance in the AfD, it is crucial to draw significant and effective “lessons learnt” from negative impacts by way of a detailed analysis and evaluation, which is a recommendation from this paper. Of course, in actuality, implementation of such analysis and evaluation cannot be easy both financially and logistically. Nevertheless, the experiences of the AfD should be utilized more for future and the voices of the community members tell the importance

of such analysis and evaluation.

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