

## **Cover Page**

**Name of Organization:** Defence for Children International Sierra Leone

**Program/Project Title:** Strengthening Children and Youths advocacy work

**Program Duration:** 3 years (January 2015 to December 2017)

**Target Areas:** Kabala, Koinadugu District, Sierra Leone

**Total Budget:** € 32,550.01

**Amount requested from Stichting Taiama-Andreas and  
Dutch Lenten Campaign: :** € 27,000

Yr1: € 9,000; Yr 2: €9000.69; Yr3: € 9000.69

**Contribution of DCI-SL:** € 5,548.72

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## **I. Brief Organizational Information:**

Defence for Children International is a global child rights movement that has its head quarters in Geneva. It was founded in 1979, the first International year of the Child. DCI was one of the drafters of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Defence for Children International Sierra Leone (DCI-SL) is the Sierra Leonean chapter of Defence for Children International. It was founded in 1998 by a group of legal practitioners and teachers during the civil conflict in Sierra Leone, a period in which the rights of many children and women were violated with impunity. It was one of the first human rights organisations that started documenting and denouncing violence against children during the civil crisis in Sierra Leone. As a local chapter, DCI-SL is independent and raises its own fund for its operations based on the needs of children and national development agenda set up by the Government of Sierra Leone also giving consideration to international trends.

DCI-SL is currently operating in seven districts spread out in all four regions of Sierra Leone. The head office is in Freetown and 5 branch offices in Bo, Kenema, Kono, Makeni, and Moyamba district. It conducts satellite projects in Koinadugu and Pujehun districts though no offices have been established in these two districts as in the case of the others. It is registered with the Government of Sierra Leone as a national child rights advocacy organization and a company limited by guarantee. The main thrust of DCI-SL's work is to provide socio-legal assistance to children in conflict with the law and child victims of violence as well as influencing policies and strengthening of child protection mechanisms that guarantee the protection and development of the child. In all of DCI-SL's work, child participation is a core component because the organization believes that civil right of children is a fundamental human right.

DCI-SL is the leader of the DCI movement in Africa and represents Africa sections on the International Executive Council of DCI. DCI-SL is currently the chair of the Human Rights Defenders Network in Sierra Leone, past chair of the Child Rights Coalition Sierra Leone, member of the National Legal Aid Board, member of the National Taskforce for Human trafficking and National Child protection Committee to name but a few. DCI-SL is currently being funded by UNICEF, ICCO, Plan International, DCI/ECPAT Netherlands and Fund for Global Human Rights

## **II. Project background and context**

Sierra Leone is a country where nearly three-fourth of its population consists of young people below the age of 35years and nearly half of the population are children below 18 years. In recent times, Sierra Leone has made progress in reforming laws and formulating new policies to protect children and advance their rights. These policies include the Education Act 2004, the Anti Human Trafficking Act 2005, the Child Rights Act 2007 and the Sexual Offences Act 2012 to name but a few. However, the adoption of these policies has not created desired impact on children and young people. Child abuse is still very common and widespread in the

country. Today, these rights abuses happen as a result of the failure by those in a position of power to respect and protect those rights.

Young people are often marginalised and ignored in decision-making and development process. The government is not doing much to invest in them. For example the net school enrolment rate for primary school currently stands at 64%. This means that 36% of children of primary school age in Sierra Leone are not in school and are subsequently more vulnerable to exploitation, child labor, violence, abuse and trafficking.<sup>1</sup> Lack of adequate and sufficient sanitary facilities for girls in schools, persistence of gender-based violence and negative societal attitudes towards girls, including girls facing harassment at school by teachers; increasing rate of pregnancy of school-aged girls contribute to the dropouts from school. High rates of school drop-out, especially when transiting from primary to secondary level, with regional and gender disparities, and the lack of opportunities for children who drop out of school to have alternate forms of education, including vocational education continue to increase vulnerability of children to trafficking and other forms of exploitation and violence.

Currently, Government is working with its partners including UNICEF, DCI-SL, Plan International and other NGOs to build child protection system in the country. A strong component of child protection system strengthening is capacity building of children and young people themselves so that they can add their voice to the process and also be in the position to resist potential abusers especially when protection system is weak. In this respect, DCI-SL and Plan International have been working together to strengthen and harmonise young peoples groups at national and district level so that they can work together. This has been done in Western area, Moyamba, Bombali, Port Loko and Kailahun Districts. With additional support from DCI Netherlands, the initiative was extended to Bo and Kenema districts. Koinadugu/Kabala is one of the districts that have not had such a network. This limits the opportunity for children and young people in Kabala to meaningfully participate and contribute to development processes at district and national level. Hence this project is designed to fill in this gap.

**III. Goal:** To have a functional, vibrant and influential network of children and youths in Kabala, Koinadugu district Sierra Leone

#### **IV. Objectives**

- To strengthen and harmonize the work of existing children and youth groups for effective participation
- To influence the District Council to include child protection into their development agenda
- To support advocacy work of children and youths in order to assist them contribute to addressing issues that affect them particularly at the local level.

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF Sierra Leone and Statistics Sierra Leone , Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4, 2011

**V. Target-** Children (between 14 and 17 years) and youths (between 18 and 21 years)

***1.0 Objective 1: To strengthen and harmonize the work of existing children and youth groups for effective participation in district and national development***

**Activities**

**1.1 Mapping of existing children and youth groups in Kabala-** There are already existing children and youth groups such as the Children's Forum Network and other groups in Kabala. However the works of the different groups are usually fragmented and not producing desired impact on its members and other children. In this regard a survey will be done in Kabala to identify the different children and youth groups that were established to do child/youths rights advocacy. A simple questionnaire will be designed to survey the existing groups. Once done, the data will be analysed to produce an inventory of existing groups with their details

**1.2 Formation of a network of the existing groups identified-** As done in other districts, DCI-SL will bring together the different groups identified in order to form a network called Children and Youth Advisory Board (CYAB). Through similar approach, this network has been formed in Western Area, Bo, Kenema, Portloko, Kailahun, Bombali and Moyamba Districts. The district executives also came together to form a national body called National Children and youth Advisory Board (NCYAB). This will be replicated in Koinadugu district so that the children and youths in Koinadugu will be able to catch up with their counterparts in the other districts. The Kabala CYAB will also be incorporated into the national network with the other district CYABs. The formation of the network will be achieved through consultative meetings. The network will comprise of forty members in equal gender proportion

**1.3 Training and coaching/mentoring of members of CYAB-** DCI-SL will provide training for members of CYAB. The training will focus on the following topics:

- Child Rights and child abuse
- Advocacy/lobby strategies and skills
- Social mobilization
- Gender and gender based violence
- Planning- using child friendly tools
- Monitoring and evaluation- using child friendly tools

The training will consecutively be organized in each of the years of the project. This will be followed by coaching and mentoring in the areas of institutional capacity development including financial management.

**1.4 Development of working documents**

Following the formation of the network (CYAB), DCI-SL will work with the executive to facilitate development of working documents for the network. The working

documents will include the statute, strategic plan and work plan and code of ethics. These documents will be put together through active participation of the CYAB members at workshops and meetings. Child friendly tools such as the “Canoe and the Bucket” tools will be used to work with the children and youths to develop their working documents. Canoe and Bucket tools are child participation tools used to work with children to carryout knowledge and capacity assessment of themselves as individuals and as a group. They can then use their findings to develop plan for capacity development and program implementation for themselves

**1.5 Organise monthly meetings-** The CYAB will be having their general meeting once every month. The monthly gatherings will be done in child friendly manner so that the children will not be bored. It will not be organized like formal adult meetings but one that can combine discussion of serious matters as well as integrating recreational activities. The meetings will include but not limited to the following agenda items:

- Update from the executive
- Planning for the coming month
- Drama
- Story telling and sharing of jokes
- Games
- Invite a role model to give a talk
- Life skills building

### **1.6 Output**

- List/inventory of children and youth advocacy organisations/clubs compiled
- Children and youth advocacy network established (CYAB)
- Working documents developed- including statute, strategic plan, work plan, letter head and code of ethics for CYAB
- Simple financial management system developed and managed by the treasurer of CYAB
- Monthly meetings held with concrete action points

***2.0 Objective two: To influence the District Council to include support for child protection and participation programmes into their development agenda***

### **Activities**

**2.1 Lobby with the Koinadugu District Council for support-** As a way of gaining recognition and working towards sustainability, the executive of the CYAB and DCI-SL will lobby with the Koinadugu District Council to include support for child protection and participation into their development plan and budget. This will include influencing the District Council to provide a secretariat (space) for the network (CYAB). To do the lobby constructively, DCI-SL and CYAB executive will

develop a concept note highlighting justification for their request and how it can contribute to the work of the Council and development of children and the district at large. Using the concept note as a guiding document, DCI-SL and CYAB will organize several meetings with authorities of the District Council until the goal is achieved.

## **2.2 Participation in the process of preparation of the Developing Plan and budget of the District Council**

Both CYAB and DCI-SL will monitor the process of preparation of the Development Plan of the District Council and try to get involved. Once a relationship is established between the Council and CYAB and DCI-SL, there is a high possibility that the Council will invite both DCI-SL and CYAB to participate in the activities that will lead to the preparation of the Development Plan of the Council in accordance with the Local Government Act, which obligates Local Councils to put together their development plans through wider consultations. Getting the CYAB organized and recognized by the Council shall make this a possibility.

## **2.3 Output**

- Concept note for lobbying with the Koinadugu District Council developed
- Lobby meetings held with the Koinadugu District Council
- Participation of CYAB and DCI-SL in the process of preparation of the Development Plan of the Koinadugu District Council

## ***3.0 Objective three: To support advocacy work of children and youths in order to assist them contribute to addressing issues that affect them particularly at the local level.***

As mentioned above, DCI-SL will facilitate the development of a work plan and budget for the network. The plan will be realistic and in harmony with school schedules of members of CYAB. It will contain child friendly activities that take into cognizance schoolwork and domestic responsibilities of the members. This will include supports that will enable the network to carryout school outreach, life skills building and participation at national policy development process that affect children. This will include the following:

**3.1 School Outreach-** Members of CYAB will develop a time table for visit to different schools to talk to their peers about different issues including ebola, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, sexual violence and other emerging issues. The CYAB members will organize themselves to be doing school outreach by batch. Each visiting should comprise of about five members

**3.2 Contribution towards the process of Constitutional Review-** The Government has set up the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC). This committee is charged with the responsibility to coordinate the review of the national 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone. This move came about as a result of persistent criticisms from CSOs, feminists, journalists and politicians relating to the major gaps that they have identified in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone, which continues to maintain discriminatory practices and human rights

violation in the country. One of the strategies that the committee has planned to carryout is district consultations of different categories of people including women and children. Children and youths cannot participate and contribute meaningfully towards the review if they are not prepared to do so. Hence DCI-SL will be working with the CYAB in Kabala to develop a position paper that will highlight their concerns and recommendations for the committee. The CYAB members will be mentored and prepared well to participate in meetings and workshops that will be organized by the committee to obtain concerns and recommendations from the people. In addition to the participation of the CYAB in constitutional review meetings and workshops, they will also submit their position paper to the committee for consideration.

**3.3 Commemoration of international child rights days-** In Sierra Leone, the most popular child rights day is the Day of the African Child June 16. On this day, children usually expect an opportunity to be engaged in educational and recreational activities designed for the commemoration of the day. They have recognized this day as their day. However, June 16<sup>th</sup> is usually only commemorated in Freetown and the other major cities by the Government and partners. In smaller towns like Kabala, children would hardly enjoy the opportunity to enjoy this day. As a result, this project will be filling this gap in Kabala by supporting children and youths to organize their own program. DCI-SL will work with the CYAB to plan and prepare their own program based on the theme of the year. The theme of DAC is usually designed by the African Union in consultation with the CSO Forum on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which DCI-SL is part of.

**3.4 Life skills building-** DCI-SL will organize series of life skills building sessions for members of the CYAB using different strategies. The sessions will focus on building human assets, which include building knowledge and skills that make young people get confidence, feel resourceful and resistant to violence. Life skills building will be done in the second and third year of the project.

### **3.4 Output**

- 30 schools in Kabala reached with sensitization messages on teenage pregnancy, ebola, early marriage, sexual violence and any other emerging issue
- CYAB position paper on constitutional review submitted to the Committee
- Day of the African Child – June 16<sup>th</sup> commemorated by CYAB
- 40 Children and youths equipped with life skills

### **4.0 Outcomes of the project**

- Functional and sustainable advocacy network of children and youths operational in Koinadugu District
- Increase in District Council support towards children’s programme in Koinadugu district including establishment of children’s secretariat within the Council premises
- Concerns of children and youths from Koinadugu District given consideration by the Constitutional Review Committee.

## 5.0 Project implementation plan

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Responsible agency/person</b>
Mapping of existing children and youths advocacy groups	Jan 2015	-	-	DCI-SL Project Officer
Formation of CYAB	Jan 015	-	-	DCI-SL Project Officer
Training of CYAB (including refresher trainings)	Feb 015	Feb 015	-	DCI-SL Project Officer
Organise monthly meeting of CYAB	Feb to Dec 015	Jan to Dec 016	Jan to Dec 017	President of CYAB
Coaching/mentoring of CYAB	Feb to Dec 015	Jan to Dec 016	Jan to Dec 017	DCI-SL Project Officer
Development of CYAB Working documents	Mar to May 015	-	-	DCI-SL Project Officer
Lobby District Council to support children's programmes	May to Dec 015	Jan to Dec 016	Jan to Dec 017	Executive of CYAB
Life skills building	May to Dec	Jan to Dec	Jan to Dec	DCI-SL Project Officer



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Commemoration of Day of the African Child	Jun 015	Jun 016	Jun 017	Executive of CYAB
Participation in the preparation of Development Plan and Budget of District Council	Jun to Oct 015	Jun to Oct 016	Jun to Oct 017	Executive of CYAB
School Outreach				
Development and submission of CYAB position paper for constitutional review	Jan to Dec 2015	-	-	Executive of CYAB

### **Management of project**

This project will be implemented and managed by DCI-SL based on the terms and agreement that will be signed between DCI-SL and Cordaid. A project officer will be assigned to the project as full time staff that will be based in Kabala to facilitate implementation of the project with the target group. The DCI-SL Regional Programme Manager for Northern region, who is based in Makeni but will be making periodic visit to Kabala, will supervise the project officer. Once approved, a monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed for the project with clear activity timeline and indicators of results. Regular updates on the project will be sent to the Head of Programmes and Executive Director at the head office of DCI-SL based on the reporting schedules of DCI-SL projects. The project officer will be given support by the Programme Manager to organize trainings and lobby events. The project officer under the guidance and supervision of the Head of Finance will be responsible for the day to day financial management of the project in the field. This is because the small budget of the project cannot entertain hiring of a finance officer to be based in Kabala. The Head of Finance will provide all the basic financial management tools that enables the project officer to do proper requests and liquidation of moneys spent on activities. For transparency and accountability particularly for the benefit of the target group, a project management team will be set up in Kabala, which will comprise the DCI-SL project officer and some executive members of the CYAB. Their major role is to approve work plan and requests before they can be honoured at the head office of DCI-SL.

### **Project Sustainability**

This project is designed based on the right base concept. It is designed to empower and build the capacity of children and young people's advocacy network. One of the strategies for sustainability, which is included in the project is to solicit the support

of the Koinadugu District Council towards the operation of the network. The project will ensure that the district Council is able to provide space and logistics for continuity of the network. Additionally, working documents and tools that will be designed for the network will set in internal control measures that will build trust, solidarity and patriotisms. The activities of the network will be designed to be interesting and lively in order to sustain the interest of young people. Finally, the network will also be trained in fund raising including identification of local donors and contributors.