

# **Research and Evaluation Report**

## **Conflict Mapping and Media Programs Assessment: The Case of Liberia's Talking Drum Studio, October 1999**

*prepared for*

**Common Ground Productions**

*by*

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# INTRODUCTION

Common Ground Productions (CGP) is the television and radio production arm of Search for Common Ground, an NGO dedicated to the reduction and resolution of conflict throughout the world. CGP creates innovative programming that is dedicated to transforming conflict into co-operative action. Programs produced by CGP – often in partnership with other media companies or other broadcast outlets – emphasize a common ground approach that departs from the adversarial way in which issues are usually presented by the media. The aim is to show that even contentious issues can be examined in ways that inform and entertain, while still promoting the search for solutions.

CGP recognizes that the mass media play an important role in the mobilization of conscience around the world. Whether countering hate radio or promoting alternatives to divisive issues, CGP is dedicated to harnessing the power of the media for the purposes of peace and reconciliation. CGP established Burundi's first independent radio studio in May, 1995, at a time when hate radio was promoting fear and mistrust, fuelling the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people in Rwanda. CGP currently has television and/or radio projects in Angola, Bosnia, Burundi, Liberia, Macedonia and New York City.

## ***Liberia's Talking Drum Studio***

In the wake of Liberia's most recent outbreak of violence in 1996, Search for Common Ground sent an assessment team to evaluate the feasibility of using media – especially radio – as a vehicle to support peace, reconciliation and democracy. In January 1997, the Dutch Foreign Ministry provided Common Ground Productions with a grant to establish Talking Drum Studio (TDS). Additional support was provided in 1997 by USAID/OTI for distribution of radios and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) for post election programming. The Dutch Foreign Ministry, USAID/OTI and UNHCR provided support for Talking Drum Studio in 1998. This combined international support is enabling Talking Drum Studio to address its ambitious goal and objectives.

Talking Drum Studio's overall goal is to reduce political and ethnic violence by stressing themes of peace, reconciliation and democratization. The objectives for reaching this goal include:

1. using radio as a means for promoting dialogue among polarized groups and reducing ethnic and political tension among such groups by stressing themes of peace, democratization and reconciliation;
2. establishing a production facility where journalists of different ethnic backgrounds can produce together high quality programs dedicated to democratization, humanitarian affairs, reconciliation between conflicting ethnic groups and factions, and credible news and information;

3. creating radio programming that reaches the widest range of listeners through culturally appropriate language and format.

Over the past two years, TDS became a fully operational radio production studio on Bushrod Island in Monrovia. Two complete, insulated recording studios are available for the recording of news, music, and other programs. Equipment includes digital multi-track recorders and 16 track mixing capacity. TDS has a professional staff representing fourteen ethnic groups, ten counties and four political parties in Liberia. By working together, they provide balanced perspectives to their programs and serve as a working example of reconciliation. TDS is currently providing ELBC, Radio Veritas, Star Radio, Radio Liberty, DC101, Radio Liberia and Radio Hope with free regular radio programming. These seven radio stations provide FM coverage of Monrovia, while Star, Radio Veritas, and Radio Hope provide short-wave coverage of Liberia, and, to a limited degree, the sub-region.

### ***CGP's Evaluation Efforts***

Research-based communications models already exist as a result of more than 40 years of development communications practice in such fields as health promotion, education, and ecology and the environment. A substantial amount of innovative effort is required to adapt the key features of these models to meet the unique requirements of communication for peace-building/conflict resolution. Common Ground Productions is committed to this long-term process by taking incremental steps with existing projects to bring the field closer to this goal.

In this context, CGP recognized that its projects are creating a new type of journalism and that their impact need to be measured and lessons documented. CGP actively researched evaluators and evaluation methodologies with the rare combination of media and conflict resolution backgrounds. In February, 1998, CGP sent its chief academic advisor, Dr. Edward Palmer, to Liberia to design a means for quickly and reliably collecting data that can be used to measure the impact of a media project. Thus, Dr. Palmer created the CGP Rapid Survey Methodology (RSM): A New Survey Tool For Broadcasters in War Zones. In January, 1999, the RSM was replicated successfully with CGP's Studio Ijambo in Burundi.

The immediate purpose of the RSM was to gather information on the general patterns of radio listening, plus specific data on listener reactions to CGP programs, with emphasis on the following:

1. to determine the proportion of individuals who listened to radio, and, more especially, the number who listened to CGP programs and could accurately describe the issues they address.
2. to measure the over-all amount of radio listening for each hour of the broadcast day -- needed to guide program scheduling decisions.

3. to learn from respondents in a wide range of listener categories their perceptions concerning the acceptability and likely usefulness of the CGP programs as tools for peacemaking, reconciliation, and resettlement.
4. to gather detailed program reactions and advice of a formative (diagnostic) nature from key stakeholder groups, such as leaders of governmental and non-government organizations, other especially knowledgeable or influential individuals, and persons across a wide range of demographic categories -- done to identify strong and weak aspects of the subject matter and presentation.
5. to learn what measurable outcomes are brought about by the programs in the categories of knowledge, attitudes, and actions -- done to evaluate program effectiveness.
6. to allow for the acquisition of trend data -- needed to track changes in audience responses over time.
7. to perform situation mapping, which consists of measuring, for example:
  - (a) the extent, nature, and dynamics of resettlement conflicts,
  - (b) the nature and extent of disruptions in the traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution, and
  - (c) the presence of factors that might tend to advance or impede conflict resolution, ranging from ethnic feuds, war trauma, and counterproductive community attitudes toward returnees, to a spirit of grassroots generosity, tolerance, and innovativeness in the creation of coping mechanisms -- all of which are carried out for the two-fold purpose of identifying the priority needs that radio might attempt to address, and informing decisions on the establishment of curriculum content and goals (in terms of pre-intended audience outcomes), and on the choice of program formats.

Within that context a second research mission, funded by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), was undertaken in April 1999. The purpose of the mission was to extend the original purpose of the RSM to conduct a systematic mapping of the conflicts in Liberia for the purpose of developing research-based programming. This process would help TDS identify and understand the nation's media environment as well as its problems and priorities in moving towards a stable and lasting peace. CGP also anticipated using methodologies developed in Liberia in other countries dealing with conflict, such as Sierra Leone and Burundi.

The process and findings from the April 1999, research mission are the focus of this report. The first section of this report will describe the "Methodology" used during this mission- how it maintained the original RSM design while responding to emerging needs by adding new methodological components such as facilitated discussions and case studies. The second section will include a description of the "Sampling and Demographic Distribution" of the respondents to the audience survey. The third section will focus on the "Conflict Mapping". Data for this section will be drawn from the audience survey, key informant interviews, and the facilitated discussions. The fourth section will describe "Current Views and

Expectations of TDS Programming” based on data collected by the audience survey, interviews, facilitated discussions and case studies. A fifth section will include a discussion on “the Use of Responsive Programming”. This will be based on the data from the facilitated discussions, and will reflect the co-evaluators’ assessment and analysis of the conflict situation and the role of TDS within that conflict. A final section will include the co-evaluators’ recommendation to TDS, and to CGP.

# 1. METHODOLOGY

## *1-a. Principals and Strategies*

Systematic means of mapping a conflict area for the purpose of developing media programs is new to the fields of media and journalism. The initial CGP survey conducted in February 1998 was the first step in beginning a scientific and systematic understanding of Liberia's conflicts and the role of media and TDS in helping to stabilize the country and transforming its conflicts. The focus of that effort was an audience survey of a sample of the population in Monrovia, along with several key informant interviews. A similar process was used a year later in Burundi.

In the April 1999 research mission, the co-evaluators intended from the beginning to expand the methodological components. The rationale for this expansion was based on the documented effectiveness of using "triangulated" research models instead of focusing on only one method. Triangulated models utilize more than one research methodology to explore or explain social issues. Combining quantitative survey methods with qualitative interviews or focus groups, is one example of a triangulated model.

Consequently, in addition to planning and designing the audience survey, the co-evaluators planned systematic key informant interviews with officials representing a wide range of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The criteria for selecting these organizations were the significant impact of the war on the organization and its services, or the significant role played by the organization during or after the war. The evaluators also planned and conducted an extensive facilitated discussion with TDS's entire staff on the conflict situation and TDS programming.

Another factor behind the expansion of the research model was that this mission was on the borderline of research, in the technical sense, and evaluation. The information gathered was intended not only to inform interested organizations and scholars on media and conflict analysis, but also to provide research-based direction and tools to TDS staff. Thus, the co-evaluators directed their efforts towards receiving more input from the staff, and, more significantly, feeding research results back to them at the end of the mission.

The co-evaluators also emphasized, as a strategy, the need to maintain an open position regarding adding new research components or expanding the planned ones. This strategy proved successful on two occasions. In the first case, we added a key informant interview with a representative of an inter-faith organization after we learned that their role, especially in building peace and dealing with traumatized individuals, was significant. In the second case, we decided to initiate at least two case studies to focus on specific TDS activities in which a causal effect on peace-building could be researched.

## **1-b. Methodology Components**

Four methodological components were used: audience survey, key informant interviews, facilitated discussions and case studies.

### *1-b-1. Audience Survey*

The audience survey was designed on the design of the two surveys that were conducted in Liberia and in Burundi. The purpose of the survey was to collect information from a sample of the Liberian population on their perceptions of the conflict situation, TDS programs, and their radio listening habits. Compared to the previous two surveys, the survey included more open-ended questions. This increase in open-ended questions was due to the positive results that were documented because of using open-ended questions in the Burundian survey. The survey also included more questions related to the effects of the conflict on respondents, and their perceptions of the conflict situation. This increase in conflict related questions corresponded to the research mission's objective of conducting conflict mapping in addition and in relation to TDS programming.

The first section of the survey identified the location of the survey (city and intercept point), and the sample group (i.e., farmer, housewife, unemployed, etc.). The second section included qualifying information- that is, whether a person accepted to be interviewed, and if the person listens to radio at all. A negative response to either question led to terminating the interview. The next section included listenership questions such as times and places of listening, and frequency of listening to different stations. It also included an evaluation of how respondents trusted news on different radio stations. The following section focused on TDS programs. After asking if the respondent ever heard TDS programs and what issues were covered by TDS programs, the survey administrator played taped excerpts of five selected programs. After playing the excerpt for each program a respondent was asked if s/he had ever heard the program at all, the frequency of listening, and their opinions on how much the program achieved its intended goals. Illustration 1.1 includes a sample of the questions related to one program.

*Illustration 1.1: Sample of Questions about TDS Programs*

**Surveyor: Play the first tape segment (Woman)**

Question 11. Is this a program you have heard on the radio?

Yes                       No

***If no, skip to next tape segment***

***If yes: proceed to question 11-A***

Question 11-A. How often have you listened to this program in the last month? \_\_\_\_\_

Very often                       Sometimes                       Never                       Don't know  
or undecided

Question 11-B. Has this program caused you to think differently about the role that women can play in rebuilding Liberian society?

Very much                       Somewhat                       Not at all                       Don't know or  
undecided

Question 11-C. Does this program provide information on resources and services that are useful to women?

Very often                       Sometimes                       Never                       Don't know  
or undecided

Question 11-D. Do people like you discuss the issues raised in this program after listening to it?

Very often                       Sometimes                       Never                       Don't know  
or undecided

In addition to the questions about the five programs, respondents were asked about their opinion on how effective the programs were in addressing conflict related issues in Liberia. The set of issues included in those questions, such as education, children, trauma, were selected based on information collected during the key informant interviews and the facilitated discussions.

The following section titled "Respondents' Urgent Problems and Needs" included several open-ended questions whose aim was to identify individual problems and needs as a result of the war, expectations from TDS programs, and views regarding the state of the conflict and the war. Respondents were also asked about their vision of what would indicate that the conflict is over. Finally the administrators collected respondents' demographic information: education, age, gender, ethnic origin and religion.

The survey was conducted by ten Liberians who received a full day of training on survey administration by the co-evaluators. They were hired by the Liberian evaluation partner Communication Matrix, which provided technical assistance in survey administration, scheduling and data entry. Information on the sampling

process for the survey will follow in the next section on Sampling and Demographics.

### *1-b-2. Key Informant Interviews*

This research began with a series of key informant interviews of representatives from NGOs and government agencies. The main purpose of these interviews was to gather in-depth information on a wide spectrum of issues, from professionals in different fields. The research assumption here was that such in-depth information would enrich and provide insight to the “rapid” data collected via the audience survey.

Based on discussions with directors from Talking Drum Studio and Communication Matrix, we identified ten social and political sectors that we wanted to explore: political, women, youth, education, agriculture, religious, economic, refugee, health, and media. Due to the illness of one interviewee, we conducted interviews in nine of the ten sectors. The interviews focused on three topic areas:

1. The history and current status of the war and continuing civil crisis in Liberia: We included questions on the sources, manifestation and impact of the conflict; current obstacles to peace; and current activities and/or factors that encourage peace.
2. The impact of the crisis on each sector: We explored the current problems that the country is facing within the sector, the population groups that are impacted, current efforts to improve the situation, and factors that hinder progress.
3. The role of the media: We asked how media is used to support work within the sector and organization and then narrowed the discussion to Talking Drum Studio. We discussed their perceptions of TDS programming regarding their sector and their individual or organizational experiences working with TDS.

We concluded each interview with one final question that was designed as an attempt to develop some descriptive indicators of peace. We asked each informant to describe to us from a professional or personal perspective how he or she would know that the crisis was over, that peace had taken hold in Liberia. We asked each person to give specific indicators of change.

A list of interviewees, the interview schedule, and interview questions can be found in the appendices.

### *1-b-3. Facilitated Discussions*

In keeping with our goal to incorporate the needs and suggestions of TDS producers into this research, we presented some of our preliminary findings from the interviews to TDS staff as the introduction to a facilitated discussion on their perceptions of the crisis. We listened to them talk about the sources of continuing conflict in Liberia and elicited their indicators of peace. From there, we explored each of their nine regular programs to identify their target audiences, general objectives, and formats. We discussed the ways in which they monitor the impact of these programs and how each contributes to the overall peacebuilding mission of TDS. This session concluded with a discussion of the questions and issues they wanted to incorporate into the survey questionnaire. A summary of the findings from this facilitated discussion is included in the appendices.

#### *1-b-4. Case Studies*

Upon completing the facilitated discussion with the TDS staff on April 16, 1999, the evaluation team determined that using a case study approach was necessary to capture information related to specific programs that TDS staff had embarked upon. These programs were characterized by their immediate causal effect on the outcome of the issues addressed by these programs. In one case, the TDS staff was informed by its correspondent in Lofa County of the outbreak of violence between members of the Loma and Mandingo tribes. TDS's approach to the news of the violence led directly to minimizing the spread of violence, and to reaching a reconciliation agreement between the two tribes. In a second case, TDS's coverage of the high Liberian labor taxes on laborers from West African countries, who are members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), led to the government's adjusting of these taxes in accordance with the ECOWAS agreement.

Conducting the two case studies involved interviews with TDS staff, parties who were engaged in the conflict situation, and review of documents related to the conflict. The full interviews and copies of the documents may be found in the appendices.

## 2. SAMPLING AND DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

### 2-a. Sampling

The audience survey sampling plan followed the same method that was used previously with RSM in Liberia and Burundi: Quota and Intercept Point Sampling. The purpose of the quota sampling was to insure that members of different groups in the society were represented in the survey, especially such groups that could have been overlooked or under-represented if a random sampling approach was utilized. A new objective with the sampling process in this survey mission was to expand the survey to at least two locations outside Monrovia, in order to obtain responses that were representative of a wider range of the Liberian population.

On that basis, the co-evaluators, along with the directors of TDS and Communication Matrix, designed a sample of 400 Liberians distributed across Monrovia, Buchanan, and Kakata. The team then reviewed the sample categories that were used in the previous survey. Two strategies guided the team's sampling decisions: *To eliminate duplication and ambiguity, and to expand the quota size within each category.*

*Eliminating duplication and ambiguity* focused on three categories that were included in the 1998 survey: Others, Muslims and Christians. The "Others" category which included 40 respondents in the previous survey, did not specify the background of the respondents, while accounting for 10% of the total sample. Therefore the team decided to distribute that quota of 40 to other groups. For the "Muslims" and "Christians" categories, the team decided that, given that almost all respondents are either Muslims or Christians, the sampling of "religion" could be included as a question in the demographic section. Of course, such a question could be highly sensitive to ask in some societies. Therefore, the co-evaluators obtained the opinion of the ten survey administrators and some of TDS staff on whether asking about one's religion is improper in the context of this survey. Interestingly, the overwhelming majority of those we asked confirmed that it was not such a sensitive matter as to avoid asking. Therefore, these two categories were eliminated from the sample, and instead a question about religion was added to the demographic section. At least 97% of the respondents provided an answer to that question. These two categories were redistributed as well.

*Expanding the quota size within each category* was intended in part as a result of the key informant interviews, and in part to ensure that the sample size of each category could be statistically representative of that category's population. In the key informant interviews, most respondents indicated that women and children were affected the most by the war. Consequently, the co-evaluators decided that the "Housewife" category (which is the only female-exclusive category) should be expanded from the previous quota of 20 to 40. The quota for school students was also increased along with several other categories, as a result of "saving" 60 quota designations from the "Others, Muslim and Christian"

categories, and of eliminating the “Displaced” category (which accounted for 40 respondents last year). Each category was divided into an equal number of males and females, except for the housewife category and the taxi driver category- a profession dominated mainly by men.

Respondents were interviewed at interception points. Interception point sampling, as the term suggests, consists of intercepting respondents at convenient locations -- i.e., at locations where many individuals who fit each of the survey's designated audience categories can be found (Palmer, 1998). Interception point sampling, compared with other, more rigorous sampling methods, is especially suited to surveys carried out in conflict situations. It works well in disrupted circumstances where time is of the essence, the population is in a state of flux, the security situation is constantly changing, and financial and human resources are limited. Because it is a short-cut methodology, surveys can be carried out as often as necessary to keep up with changing circumstances.

Thus, in this survey, all the respondents required to fill the quota sample of school teachers were intercepted at schools, taxi drivers at the taxi garage, college students on the university campus, ministry professionals outside the particular ministry of interest, street vendors in the city's four main vending districts, and so on. For each of the categories, the Directors of TDS and Communication Matrix chose to fill its quota by drawing equal numbers of respondents from various regions within each of the three cities.

The following chart shows the sample distribution within categories and the three cities where the survey was conducted:

*Illustration 2.1: Sample Distribution*

|                                | Monrovia | Buchanan   | Kakata   | Total |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------|----------|-------|
| NGO workers                    | 20       | 10         |          | 30    |
| Ministry/Government Officials  | 20       | 10 (9)*    | 10 (11)* | 40    |
| University Students            | 30       |            |          | 30    |
| School Teachers                | 20       | 10         | 10       | 40    |
| High School Students           | 10       | 10         | 10       | 30    |
| Small Business/Cookshop owners | 20       | 10         | 10       | 40    |
| Market Vendors                 | 20       | 10         | 10       | 40    |
| Housewives                     | 20       | 10         | 10       | 40    |
| Unemployed                     | 20       | 10         |          | 30    |
| Taxi Drivers                   | 20       | 10         | 10       | 40    |
| Farmers                        |          | 20         | 20       | 40    |
|                                |          |            |          |       |
| Total                          | 200      | 110 (109)* | 90 (91)* | 400   |

(\*) The number in parenthesis indicates the actual number of respondents.

The chart above shows that the survey administrators were successful in obtaining almost a perfect sample according to the sampling design. Only one deviation took place in Buchanan with the category of government workers. This was compensated the next day by adding one respondent to the government sample of Kakata.

### **2-b. Demographic Distribution**

In addition to the information on their profession and the city of residence, demographic information was collected on gender, age, education, county of origin, and religion. The charts below include the demographic distribution for respondents across the three survey cities.

*Illustration 2.2. Demographic Distribution*

#### Gender

|        | Monrovia     | Buchanan    | Kakata      | Total        |
|--------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Male   | 94<br>47.0%  | 57<br>52.3% | 43<br>47.3% | 194<br>48.5% |
| Female | 106<br>53.0% | 52<br>47.7% | 48<br>52.7% | 206<br>51.5% |

#### Age

|               |              |             |             |              |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 25 or Younger | 41<br>20.6%  | 21<br>19.4% | 16<br>18.4% | 78<br>19.8%  |
| 26-40         | 125<br>62.8% | 62<br>57.4% | 56<br>64.4% | 243<br>61.7% |
| 41 or older   | 33<br>16.6%  | 25<br>23.1% | 15<br>17.2% | 73<br>18.5%  |

#### Education

|                         |             |             |             |              |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| No formal education     | 10<br>5.0%  | 3<br>2.8%   | 3<br>3.4%   | 16<br>4.0%   |
| Some primary            | 6<br>3.0%   | 12<br>11.0% | 9<br>10.1%  | 27<br>6.8%   |
| Complete primary        | 2<br>1.0%   | 7<br>6.4%   | 5<br>5.6%   | 14<br>3.5%   |
| Some high school        | 37<br>18.6% | 38<br>34.9% | 26<br>29.2% | 101<br>25.4% |
| Completed High school   | 45<br>22.6% | 31<br>28.4% | 16<br>18.0% | 92<br>23.2%  |
| Some post High school   | 59<br>29.6% | 10<br>9.2%  | 22<br>24.7% | 91<br>22.9%  |
| Completed University    | 23<br>11.6% | 6<br>5.5%   | 4<br>4.5%   | 33<br>8.3%   |
| Some post-graduate      | 16<br>8.0%  | 1<br>.9%    | 4<br>4.5%   | 21<br>5.3%   |
| Completed post-graduate | 1<br>.5%    | 1<br>.9%    |             | 2<br>.5%     |

#### Religion

|           |              |              |             |              |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Muslim    | 41<br>20.6%  | 5<br>4.6%    | 7<br>8.0%   | 53<br>13.4%  |
| Christian | 158<br>79.4% | 104<br>95.4% | 81<br>92.0% | 343<br>86.6% |

The demographic distribution shows that a fairly equal distribution of gender existed across the three cities. More of the Buchanan respondents were older than those in the other two cities. It was not surprising that the level of education was higher among respondents from Monrovia, the capital city. However, the overall literacy rate among respondents appears to be much higher than that country's published statistics. For example, the CIA World Fact Book of 1995 estimated that only 40% of the Liberian population age 15 or older could read and write<sup>1</sup>. This figure is far below the education rates among the survey respondents. This could be due to the fact that the survey was administered in cities, not in rural areas, where, according to the same source, 70% of the labor force population work in agriculture.

<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, while studying the findings in this report it is important to acknowledge that the sample may be representative of the population segments that we targeted in the three cities where the survey was administered, but not necessarily representative of the entire Liberian population, especially the rural one.

### 3. CONFLICT MAPPING

The mapping of the conflict in Liberia was conducted via the key informant interviews, the facilitated discussions with the TDS staff, and, to a lesser extent, the audience survey. The focus of the conflict mapping was on exploring the views of different individuals regarding the following issues:

1. Sources of the conflict in Liberia.
2. Issues of conflict in Liberia today.
3. Current stage of the conflict: Is the war over? Is the conflict over?
4. Effects of the conflict on the life of different groups.
5. Factors/efforts that encourage peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
6. Factors that hinder peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
7. Indicators of peace.

This type of conflict mapping may not correspond clearly to any of the standard conflict assessment tools that have been developed in the past two decades by scholars of conflict analysis and resolution (i.e., Wilmot and Hocker, Wehr, and Moore). The reason for this is that the conflict mapping in Liberia was intended to serve the unique needs of the media-based intervention of TDS. Most, if not all, conflict assessment tools tend to assume that the user of such a tool will use the findings in order to intervene using one of the traditional roles such as mediation or arbitration. Therefore, this assessment provided conflict-related information which was needed in order for TDS to be able to plan future programming and to assess the relevance of its programs to the current conflict issues.

In this section of the report, we will summarize the information collected for each of the conflict questions from the various data sources.

#### **3-a. Sources of the Conflict in Liberia**

The response that was repeated the most whether by key informants and by TDS staff was that the conflict was *not* about ethnicity or religion, which were actually manipulated or made to appear as the source of the conflict. Most interviewees and facilitated discussion participants mentioned the power struggle among “war lords” as the major source of the conflict along with the unfair distribution of wealth and resources across the country, and the control of resources and state power in a non-democratic fashion. Most respondents also emphasized that at times the conflict took the shape of an ethnic or a religious conflict, but that this was not the real issue.

For example, one interviewee said:

*“The sources of conflict were: Uneven distribution of national worth – minority of people living off of the majority. This situation built up for years and then it burst. It was not an ethnic conflict in its origin but in many ways became that.”*

Another interviewee said:

*“The sources of conflict were: A struggle for power; exploitation of differences to make other people look worse, as if they were the source of the conflict; lack of information and education on the part of people who are being used by those who are in power. This absence leads to people being used as pawns for power gain by others. Traditional conflicts between ethnic groups exist, but they’ve never been conflicts in the struggle for national power. Politicians have pushed groups at each other to create conflict.”*

In addition, at least two respondents mentioned an incident when one of the war lords tried to instigate the religious sentiments of his tribe. He was countered by people from his own faith who insisted on not letting conflicts with other groups turn into a religious war.

However, a few interviewees regarded ethnic and religious differences as fundamental sources of the conflict. One interviewee stated:

*“The ethnic conflict is manifested in land rights/tenure issues (e.g., properties that were taken over during the war that are not being returned to claimants/original owners). There are Christian-Muslim conflicts as well – lack of respect for religious cultures.”*

### **3-b. Issues of conflict in Liberia today**

Interviewees and participants in facilitated discussions discussed a variety of conflict-related issues in Liberia today. Naturally, respondents mentioned issues that were closer to their area of expertise or field of work; thus, an official in the Ministry of Education emphasized the collapse of the school system, while an official in the field of agriculture was concerned about the cycle of agriculture and trade. The complete list of these issues is included within each of the interviews and the written facilitated discussion. It is a valuable source of information for those interested in a detailed spectrum of issues facing the Liberian society today. For the purpose of this report, we summarized and grouped these issues into categories. This allowed for combining issues from different sectors if they were related to the same conceptual category. The following is a list of these categories including quoted examples from the interviews and the facilitated discussion:

### *3-b-1. Government Credibility and Effectiveness*

Most respondents expressed concerns regarding the ability of the current government to lead the country. Several were concerned about the motives and background of the top officials and their role during the war; others were concerned about the rampant corruption in all government sectors. Several respondents stated that the Liberian people, and the international community, do not trust the current government. Respondent statements included:

*“The dominant forces today are far removed from wanting change – they want to maintain the status quo of the past.”*

*“The government does not want to be held accountable for its actions and words. It is deemed subversive to document, repeat, explain or interpret the President’s words.”*

*“A ‘rogue state’ persists in which people with dubious credentials have congregated at the head of this state. They can no longer be identified as Americo-Liberians alone. There are illicit and temporary partners (national and international) – groups that were involved in supporting the war.”*

*“There is a serious lack of confidence in the current leadership. Even if the government is becoming more sincere, the trust was deeply broken. ‘Villains became victors’ in Liberia.”*

*“The government has little or no responsibility to the masses.”*

*“The government continues to be insincere in its behavior.”*

*“The government needs courage to face the real issues, to engage in dialogue. The government says that problems are solved, but without dialogue that is not possible. It has appointed some people from other tribes to high offices – but ultimately the success of these appointments will depend on the performance of individuals. Time will tell and heal.”*

*“Although alliances with the government are essential to progress at this time, the central government is so hard to deal with. It is hard to get them to accept responsibility on sensitive issues (e.g., child conscription).”*

The responses from the audience survey, too, supported the sense of frustration with abusive practices by government security members. Thirty-six respondents stated that among the problems they face as a result of the war are harassment and molestation from security personnel.

### *3-b-2. Ethnic and Religious Tension*

As described earlier in the section of Sources of Conflict, most responses indicated that ethnic and religious divisions were not a cause of the conflict, but were used to achieve other interests. However, as a result of the war and the incidents of ethnic and religious violence, those issues became real, and did in fact concern most of those we interviewed. Interviewees said:

*“A traditional intolerance and lack of appreciation between ethnic groups was intensified during the war.”*

*“The ethnic conflict is manifested in land rights/tenure issues (e.g., properties that were taken over during the war that are not being returned to claimants/original owners). There are Christian-Muslim conflicts as well – lack of respect for religious cultures.”*

*“Currently the conflict can be characterized ethnically. The warring groups have found strongholds within certain ethnic groups. Religion is an undertone to the conflict – more of a potential and actual problem. It may be seen as another possible means to an end for the powerful.”*

*“The ethnic conflict is being carried out at the elite level, not the villages. The ethnic power struggle is at upper levels. In the villages, ‘people to people, gardens are being planted’.”*

The facilitated discussion with TDS staff also showed that almost all of the participants viewed ethnic and religious tension in a similar way to the views of the key informant interviewees. The significance of the ethnic and religious tension was confirmed even further as several interviewees, survey respondents and TDS staff indicated that its eradication would be an “indicator of peace.” More details on indicators of peace will follow.

### *3-b-3. Damage to the Socioeconomic Infrastructure*

The war has taken a heavy toll on all aspects of the Liberian life. Respondents from different sectors described severe damage to the foundation of their sectors from agriculture to education to health to housing, etc. This also was echoed by the audience survey responses to the question: “Briefly tell me the most important problems you face because of the crisis.” Among the top rated problems were lack of health care and lack or delay of education. Among the examples of damage to the infrastructure mentioned by the interviewees were:

*“Reconstructing burnt villages from nothing has been very hard (some women went back to wearing grass skirts because they had no money.”*

*“Too many things are absent that represent normal life – health services, educational institutions, and jobs.”*

*“So far the civil war in Liberia has left so much to do – rebuilding roads and infrastructure. This is a great obstacle to peace. The farms-to-market roads are lacking, causing food to spoil and rot. Food storage and*

*processing capabilities are needed as well. Agriculture extension services are lacking, too.”*

*“Educational facilities were destroyed and/or looted. Teachers left their posts. All programs at all levels were completely disrupted. Data systems were broken down or destroyed. “*

### *3-b-4. Disruption of Family and Community Structures and Norms*

The war resulted in a death for almost every family, the displacement of most families (84% of the audience survey respondents reported that they were displaced because of the war), and more seriously, the collapse of established family and community norms and values. It was heart wrenching for the co-evaluators to read the oft-repeated statements made on the audience survey such as “My mother was killed in front of me,” “all my family was killed,” “our house was burnt,” in addition to listening to some of the traumatic personal accounts during the interviews.

These disruptions to the family and community affected women and children the most. They suffered the loss of their husbands, brothers and fathers, and they were forced to take on responsibilities for sheltering and feeding their families. Additionally, the spread of guns in the hands of young people resulted in violent outbursts against the helpless and the weak; values of respect to the elders and concern for the community were shattered. Interviewees said:

*“The social fabric of the nation was torn apart by war: The power balance of families shifted – young people had to become bread winners. Boys with guns took power and made mockery of elders, families, villagers.”*

*“The suffering was most serious for women and children. The conflict initially targeted men as soldiers so women and children had to take over traditional male tasks and responsibilities.”*

*“Many women had to hide their husbands from soldiers. Women and children were made to stand witness to the murder of their husbands and fathers – then the children were made to watch the rape of their mothers and older sisters.”*

*“Many men have rejected women because they were raped. The conflict ended up impacting women and children on many levels – more than men.”*

*“Children were hit the worst and now school has become a problem. Kids are too old for the appropriate grade level so they need remedial programs. Girls turned into women overnight, before even reaching puberty. Boys had it bad, too. They were in small-small units of security and now have no guarantee of a future. Adults have aged tremendously. Those who are fifty look seventy.”*

The collapse of family life and the rampant rise of poverty have led to the emergence of illegal profiteering practices. One interviewee described the emerging phenomena of misusing orphanages. Several individuals, capitalizing on the need for orphanages to accommodate the soaring number of orphans, established “fake” orphanages, hosting “ghost” orphans, in order to receive subsidies from the government and NGOs. Children of poor families are made to pretend that they are orphans living in the fake orphanage in order to receive illegal clothes and food, which are sold later in the black market. This phenomenon was also confirmed by TDS staff during facilitated discussions, and other interviewees.

### *3-b-5. War Trauma and Forgiveness*

As explained above, the war touched every home and every family. Women, children, men, elders, and youngsters all witnessed, firsthand, horrific atrocities committed against themselves or their loved ones. The traumatic effects from these events are still alive in the hearts and minds of almost every Liberian. Such effects could hinder individuals’ and communities’ efforts to re-establish themselves. The widespread presence of trauma among Liberians was confirmed by interviewees, TDS staff, and survey respondents. Among interviewee statements were:

*“Trauma counseling is necessary and more information for decision-making is needed.”*

*“The whole country has been traumatized.”*

*“Many teachers had some trauma counseling and education. This area probably needs more attention now.”*

*“There were repeated and cumulative occurrences of violence to the extent that kids were dumbfounded, families were torn apart. Everyone – every Liberian here or abroad – was negatively impacted by the war.”*

The audience survey revealed that almost every respondent indicated that s/he suffered from a traumatic event during the war. These events ranged from witnessing the murder of a loved one, to being raped, to losing a home, to being displaced, or to being held as forced-labor. Consequently, several interviewees, TDS staff, and survey respondents expressed the need to develop new means for seeking and pursuing forgiveness.

### *3-b-6. Basic Human Needs*

The devastation of the war resulted in threatening the very basic needs of Liberians. Almost all survey respondents, TDS staff and all interviewees indicated that lack of food, clean water, shelter, clothes, security, jobs, and education, in addition to the destruction of their basic social units such as the

family and neighborhood, were all prevalent problems in the society. Most people are still suffering on that very basic level, which, according to most conflict theorists (Burton, Rubinstein) could lead to the persistence of violent conflicts. Hunger, loss of property, no shelter or good shelter, no job, poor health care, lack of education, family separation, no clothes, and no safe drinking water, were among the most-mentioned personal problems endured by the 400 survey respondents. The following is a list of the top 15 issues and problems mentioned by survey respondents:

*Table 3.1. Top 15 issues and problems mentioned by survey respondents*

|                                     | Frequency | Valid Percent |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Financial problems                  | 97        | 11.7          |
| Hunger                              | 92        | 11.1          |
| Loss of family members              | 75        | 9.1           |
| Loss of property                    | 48        | 5.8           |
| Hardship                            | 46        | 5.6           |
| No job                              | 42        | 5.1           |
| Poor health care                    | 41        | 5.0           |
| Lack of education                   | 39        | 4.7           |
| Delay of education                  | 39        | 4.7           |
| No shelter or good shelter          | 36        | 4.4           |
| Security harassment and molestation | 36        | 4.4           |
| No safe drinking water              | 24        | 2.9           |
| No clothes                          | 23        | 2.8           |
| Family separation                   | 18        | 2.2           |
| Forced exile                        | 18        | 2.2           |
| Personal suffering during the war   | 17        | 2.1           |

Interviewees echoed the same issues as most severe in the society:

*“The poverty of the people is excruciating. There are few jobs, no food and only a few schools are open.”*

*“Health and labor systems are not reaching the full population; Education is poor or non-existent; There is no food security.”*

### **3-c. Current Stage of the Conflict: Is the War Over? Is the Conflict Over?**

A question regarding the stage of the conflict was asked in the interviews, the audience survey and the facilitated discussions. The question was asked in different ways across the three methods. Thus, it would be methodologically inaccurate to expect similar patterns of responses across the three methods. For example, in the audience survey, the question was:

Is the civil crisis over?

Yes       No       I don't know

In the interview and the facilitated discussion, when there was a chance to elaborate on the intended meaning of the issue, the question was worded as follows:

How do you describe the current stage of the conflict: Is the war over? Is the conflict over?

Obviously the audience survey question did not make a distinction between the conflict and the war, but instead, for the purpose of completing a timely intercept point survey, asked in a closed ended fashion about the state of the civil crisis in general. The following are the response frequencies to the survey question:

*Table 3.2. Is the civil Crisis Over?*

|             | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| Yes         | 288       | 72.0%   |
| No          | 71        | 17.8%   |
| Do not Know | 40        | 10%     |
| No Response | 1         | .3%     |

These responses did not vary significantly based on gender, age or education. However, a statistically significant difference ( $p=.006$ ) existed between the three survey locations. Respondents from Buchanan were more likely to report that the civil crisis was over (80.7%), compared to respondents in Monrovia (67.8%) and Kakata (71.4%); respondents from Monrovia were more likely not to report that the civil crisis was over (24.1%), compared to 7.3% in Buchanan and 16.5% in Kakata. These results suggest that Monrovia were the least to report that the civil crisis was over.

*Table 3.3. Comparison of the Three Locations on: Is the civil Crisis Over?*

|             | Monrovia | Buchanan | Kakata |
|-------------|----------|----------|--------|
| Yes         | 67.8%    | 80.7%    | 71.4%  |
| No          | 24.1%    | 7.3%     | 16.5%  |
| Do not Know | 8.0%     | 11.9%    | 12.1%  |

Most interviewees distinguished between the state of the conflict and the state of the war. The former, in the opinion of the majority, was not over, while the latter was over, or at least was taking a form different from 'the war with guns'. Most respondents were concerned that the sources of the conflict, as described earlier, still exist, fueled by an increased ethnic and religious tension, and ineffective government practices. Interviewees' statements included:

*“The silence of guns does not mean that the war is over. Physically, the war is over.”*

*“Peace has not yet been established. The maintenance systems of peace have not been established.”*

*“The war with guns is over but an economic war continues.”*

*“Liberia continues in a state of post-war conflict that is more serious than before.”*

*“The war is not over in Liberia. The conflict persists as tension under the surface even though the guns are silent.”*

*“Too many things are absent that represent normal life – health services, educational institutions, and jobs. The brain-drain has compromised the ability of agencies to rebuild; it seems as if the actual war has just begun even though the guns are silent.”*

*“To console ourselves, we say that the conflict is over. The whole country has been traumatized and ...we need everyone’s assistance to see that it doesn’t start again.”*

However, in the facilitated discussion, TDS staff appeared to be the least optimistic about the state of the war. Several of their comments indicated that they feared the potential for violent outbreaks, and they were concerned about the lingering effects of the war. These are a few of their comments:

*“War is on recess; Liberians want massive change and then war can stay back. But nothing is done yet – so war is only on recess.”*

*“The potential to reactivate war is real. So long as Liberia is at war with neighboring countries, the possibility of war here again is very real.”*

*“War is not over. President Taylor continues to support warring factions in other countries. We are not at peace until the government focuses on reconstruction here.”*

*“Unless we all deal with root causes, the war goes on.”*

*“Armed people are just there waiting for anyone to come along to hire them. (Former combatants, security forces)”*

*“War abounds.”*

*“The symbols of war are all around.”*

*“The horrors of war continue. It’s so hard to forget and forgive the past.”*

In summary, most of those who responded to the questions about the civil crisis, the war and the conflict indicated that the roots of the conflict still exist, that the war is no longer a war of guns. However, the challenges of reconstruction, building democracy, reconciliation and healing all seem as hard as a war. No doubt the majority feels and acknowledges the silence of guns, but concerns exist regarding a possible eruption of violence, and more concerns exist regarding the massive tasks of rebuilding the Liberian people and society.

### **3-d. Effects of the Conflict on the Life of Different Groups**

The question of how the conflict affected different groups in the society was asked in the interviews and in the facilitated discussions. The question, to an extent, was answered by most respondents in terms of *who was affected the most, and how*. The overwhelming consensus among interviewees and TDS staff was that women and children were affected the most. Geographically, several respondents asserted that the damage to the Southeast region of the country was much more severe than in other parts of the country.

Women and children were affected in several ways. The death of many men during the war, or their absence, disrupted the family structure. Women and children had to seek their own food and other needs. Children also were subjected to forced labor, and forced participation in combats. Many children learned to use guns, carried their own guns, participated in atrocities, and witnessed their loved ones being murdered, raped or mutilated. Women were suddenly responsible for the security of their families and even the security of their men at times; they were raped, abducted, abused, and thousands ended up with unwanted pregnancies. As indicated earlier, war trauma escaped no woman or child in Liberia. These are few quotes from the interviews:

*“The suffering was most serious for women and children. The conflict initially targeted men as soldiers so women and children had to take over traditional male tasks and responsibilities. Many women had to hide their husbands from soldiers. Women and children were made to stand witness to the murder of their husbands and fathers – then the children were made to watch the rape of their mothers and older sisters. Many men have rejected women because they were raped. The conflict ended up impacting women and children on many levels – more than men. If women had not come to the aid of the country, there would be no peace at all – the men were way too busy fighting to bring about peace.”*

*“Children were hit the worst and now school has become a problem. Kids are too old for the appropriate grade level so they need remedial programs. Girls turned into women overnight, before even reaching puberty. Boys had it bad, too. They were in small-small units of security and now have no guarantee of a future. Adults have aged tremendously. Those who are fifty look seventy.”*

*“Many Muslim women were captured and their children abandoned.”*

For the Southeast region, several respondents explained that the war affected that area severely because it was there that the war first started and spread to the rest of the country. In addition, the majority of the population there were from the Khran ethnic group which is a group that fought against many others including the Americo-Liberians. Finally, the poor roads and difficult transportation to that area hinders reconstruction efforts. Interviewee statements included:

*“The Southeast part of the nation suffered greatly during the war and is very isolated. The infrastructure there is non-existent.”*

*“The poor in Grand Gedeh and Nimba counties were hit very hard. They were the least well educated before the war but very involved in the struggle for power.”*

### **3-e. Factors/Efforts That Encourage Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution**

*“Liberian People’s Will!”* This statement was emphasized by almost everyone we asked the question “What factors or efforts encourage peacebuilding and conflict resolution?” Despite the severe effects of the war, people still believe that they have the strong will to move on from the war and to reestablish their society. Several interviewees and TDS staff explained that most Liberian people are not prone to fighting and war; they are naturally peace-loving people. In addition, they are exhausted from the war; they all suffered greatly on one level or the other. Therefore, there was an obvious sense of optimism during all the interviews and the facilitated discussions. The following are statements made regarding the Liberian people, and their will to reach for a peaceful future:

*“The will of the Liberian people to live and prevent further war and conflict keeps them going and searching for positive, creative solutions to the conflict.”*

*“Liberians are resilient – in general they do not dwell on bad things. They try to move forward. For example, the harvest was abundant this year even though the roads to market are impassable. People are still moving forward.”*

*“Liberians are very willing to start picking up the pieces. They are not naturally violent. The government should respect that non-violence and work with it.”*

*“People are saying: Never again will we fight. It’s better to jaw-jaw until differences are resolved.”*

*“The realization on the part of the people that even after the fighting, they still have to live together. They realize that they were pawns and now still have to work out the differences.”*

*“Liberians are tired of war.”*

*“Some Liberians have silently forgiven others even without discussion. This allows for reconciliation. (However, some have simply repressed their feelings and will eventually react to violence again if the circumstances arise.)”*

Other positive signs that were mentioned included an improved government attitude of listening to others, increased foreign assistance, and the establishment of conflict resolution mechanisms and commissions. These are a few quotes from the interviews:

*“Lots of assistance and goodwill among stakeholders and the populace.”*

*“Government is more willing to talk these days.”*

*“Commissions have been appointed which is the sign of a good beginning (Commissions on Human Rights and Good Governance). They are not yet effective, but they could be.”*

*“The government is not the only provider – churches run many schools with the government curriculum.”*

*“The UN is a savior – they have funded many programs.”*

*“I appreciate the role of NGOs in communities and schools. They are helping economically in some parts, where there is no other help.”*

*“A conflict resolution approach was taken recently in Lofa County; so it is starting here.”*

### **3-f. Factors that Hinder Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution**

The issue of what is hindering peace was raised mainly during the key informant interviews. Responses to this question resembled, not surprisingly, the points mentioned in the section above on Conflict Issues. Government credibility and efficiency seemed to be more emphasized in response to the question on factors that hinder peace, compared to any of the other Conflict Issues. The vast majority of respondents raised doubts about the ability, or even willingness, of the current government to lead the rebuilding efforts. Some were concerned about the suitability of policies to deal with current issues. Fewer were concerned about the perceived low level of international support. The following are examples of interviewees' comments on the government role:

*“Are the current governors really liberators? They paint themselves that way but appear really to use people as shields to get whatever they want/can of the power and resources and material goods.”*

*“Can leadership really come up from an armed struggle? The issue of transcendence to power is raised when those that inflicted the wounds on people are not ruling them.”*

*“Lack of national scale programs from government – their failure to help heal and wipe away the hurts of war”*

*“Inability of current governors to perform better than former governors. War didn’t achieve the change that could better the circumstances. It left Liberia worse.”*

*“Although alliances with the government are essential to progress at this time, the central government is so hard to deal with. It is hard to get them to accept responsibility on sensitive issues (e.g., child conscription). The challenge is to strike an accord with the government on important issues without compromising the rights of children.”*

*“There is a lack of policy that speaks to the needs of children. Some policy is dormant and there is also a need for new policies that address the needs created by the war – that go beyond the standard issues of health care and education.”*

*“The government needs courage to face the real issues, to engage in dialogue. The government says that problems are solved, but without dialogue that is not possible. It has appointed some people from other tribes to high offices – but ultimately the success of these appointments will depend on the performance of individuals. Time will tell and heal.”*

*“The government really appears to be above the law (cited 2 examples of car accidents caused by important government family members who have made no redress to the victims.)”*

*“There is unequal treatment under the law. Encouraging policies exist but the people responsible for upholding and implementing them are not interested due to ethnic bias.”*

*“The government needs more assistance, international support and investment in order to stabilize. It’s not getting what it wants/needs so is squeezing money out of every citizen.”*

In addition to the concerns about the government, other factors that hinder peacebuilding included inherent norms of selfishness, patriarchy, ethnic and class superiority, and poor economic conditions. These were the comments made by the interviewees:

*“The economic situation affects peace – there is less conflict when there are more resources to go around.”*

*“Personal interests are what promoted ethnic conflict and continue it. Some people try to create ethnic reasons for conflict instead of putting their efforts towards bettering civil society.”*

*“Liberian society is still quite patriarchal – violence against women is still accepted and boys are given educational opportunities in preference to girls.”*

*“Some continue to think that one tribe is more endowed than another to be the leader of Liberia. Society must be educated to understand that leaders can come from anywhere, any tribe.”*

*“There is deep-seated bias among the educated against others.”*

*“Illiteracy at the national rate of 75-80% stands in the way of real education.”*

*“There is not enough national dialogue about how we will resolve our conflicts.”*

### **3-g. Indicators of Peace**

Having collected information on how the conflict is manifested now in Liberia, what works for peace and what works against it, we found that another element essential to this research mission was to know people’s expectations of peace. This mission was intended to provide TDS with information that would help the staff in their program development so it was necessary to connect their creative programming to what people believed to be signs of peace. We asked what would happen in Liberia that would make respondents realize that peace was finally achieved, and that the conflict was over. This, we hoped, would help TDS staff develop programs that capture these signs and indicators, and make efforts to materialize them, thus bringing peace closer to Liberians.

This question was asked in the audience survey, the interviews and the facilitated discussions. Probably the best description of the responses to this question is that they all echoed the same issues that were included in the Conflict Issues section. Typically, the average person who responded to the audience survey on the street articulated his or her answer in a manner that reflected his or her immediate needs of security, food, shelter, clothing and education. But an interviewee representing a certain organization or profession usually focused the response on the issues related to his or her field. Yet, the fact remains that all of them thought of peace in terms of resolving the issues that were described earlier. Almost all responses from the audience survey, the interviews and the facilitated workshops echoed the following themes:

*better security; less hardship; good governance; restoration of community and family life; basic needs would be met- food, shelter, clothing, health; ethnic*

*differences would be resolved; human rights would be respected; women's roles would be respected; better roads; more jobs; more freedom and safety of movement; improved education; and, more international investment and better relations, especially with the United States.*

Examples from the audience survey include:

*"There will be education and the social problems like water and electricity will be over."*

*"At least nearly all of our problems will be solved because investors will come in."*

*"There will be more food. Schools will be less expensive and medicine will be enough."*

*"Poverty rate will be reduced."*

*"Yes! There will be more food, medicine and good drinking water."*

*"There will be more people coming home."*

*"There will be no transportation of arms to other countries by the government in power."*

*"If we succeed in reconciling with one another."*

*"There's a government on the ground; human rights abuses will be over."*

Examples from the key informant interview included:

*"People would be turning to police instead of running from them."*

*"Women would be involved in all levels of economic activity."*

*"Communities would be providing an enabling environment for children and families."*

*"Parents would take back their responsibilities as family caretakers."*

*"Reduction of arms in the streets."*

*"The USA would appoint an Ambassador to Liberia to stabilize relations between the countries."*

*"Removal of two major scars left by war by restoring electricity and pipe-born water."*

*"Restore the rule of law."*

*“Human rights would be respected and there would be redress available through the law.”*

*“Full restoration of educational systems so that they will support our nation’s development.”*

*“Lower cost of living.”*

*“Media freedom.”*

Examples from the facilitated discussion with TDS staff included:

*“Once I feel safe and secure, not plenty arms around.”*

*“I would be the happiest man in Liberia if we would restore relations with the great USA.”*

*“Armed men will be removed from the streets.”*

*“We will stop hearing rumors of war – and stop accusing each other.”*

*“We will tie normal friendships with neighbors and reduce arms.”*

*“If TDS can continue to go out and help rebuild lives in villages and counties, and then people also begin to eat, these would be signs of peace.”*

*“Arms on the streets would be gone. Their presence revives trauma for people everyday.”*

*“There will be a serious improvement in the education system.”*

A complete listing of the responses to this question from the audience survey, interviews and facilitated discussion is included in the appendices.

## 4. VIEWS AND EXPECTATIONS OF TDS PROGRAMMING

### 4-a. Background of TDS Programming

During this research mission, the co-evaluators conducted interviews with several individuals as part of their case studies. Probably the best description of TDS journalism came from one government minister. He commented that Talking Drum Studio's work was not regular journalism. The following is an excerpt from that interview:

*Illustration 4.1: Excerpt from an Interview with a Government Minister*

*How do you perceive TDS?*

*"They are constructive journalists. They have programs on reconciliation. Their drama always contains positive solutions and "lessons learned". They also emphasize the concept of "Common Ground", which was beneficial in reaching a peaceful resolution for both parties of the conflict in Lofa. TDS is not regular journalism; their approach is to enhance peace. This message is clear in all their programs."*

The producers at Talking Drum Studio engage in conflict resolution from a multi-channel approach to communication. They use various media formats and channels to stimulate the peacebuilding process in Liberia. Their professional training in development and behavior change communication as well as journalism makes them more than simply objective broadcasters. They respond to breaking news and on-going issues in different ways depending on the nature of the events and issues, the relationship of the events and issues to the conflict, the journalists' understanding of the social and political mechanisms that exist today in Liberia, the needs of their various audiences for information, education, and exposure to the selected issues, and the resources available to the studio. Their long-term goal of building a sustainable peace is founded on a commitment to the conflict resolution strategies of analysis, prevention and intervention vis a vis their journalistic approach. They calculate their initial responses to breaking events carefully with full awareness of the power of the media to inflame or calm, generate trust or fear, and expand or narrow the ensuing dialogue. The intuition that guides their response is evaluated in daily staff production meetings in which producers explore new ideas, share feedback and response to programs and interventions, exchange perspectives on current events, and develop short and long-term work plans.

#### *4-a-1. Thematic Programs*

Talking Drum Studio packages their peacebuilding radio broadcasting into nine thematic programs per week. The producers treat topics of interest to their target audiences either in a single program or in a mini-series format. They often address themes through campaigns developed jointly by producers from the various programs. This means that a particular health issue, for example, may be treated by an in-depth report on the women's program ("Woman"), by a taped round-table discussion with people representing different opinions on the issue ("One Step Beyond"), and then referred to by characters in a dramatic presentation by TDS performers ("Common Ground Drama") – all in the same week. Each of these programs would follow a basic conflict resolution strategy salient to the work of TDS such as giving voice to all parties to a conflict, building trust, analyzing the conflict, stimulating dialogue, reducing tension and modeling conflict resolution approaches among others. For a full description of TDS' nine thematic programs, please reference the appendix.

#### *4-a-2. Conflict Resolution Activities that Complement Programming*

As mentioned previously, TDS staff engages in a variety of creative conflict resolution activities that support and complement radio programming. These activities vary according to the nature and urgency of the news and issues at hand. They treat specific issues that are addressed in the thematic programs and support information campaign themes and messages. Sometimes a non-broadcast approach is selected as the initial response to breaking news. These complementary activities expand the impact of TDS on peacebuilding because they move beyond one-way broadcast communication to interpersonal and interactive communication in various public and private arenas. These multi-channel activities include:

1. Wire service-type distribution of print media which increases exposure for TDS and increases their opportunity to communicate news and information about issues and populations that otherwise are not covered by other media outlets.
2. Live performance drama in streets, schools, and other community locations that utilize an "investigative drama" approach and can be either follow-up to radio drama themes or drama written for the specific situation. It engages the audience in entertainment and critical dialogue while demonstrating conflict resolution strategies in action.
3. Regular and topical communication and meetings with government to maintain a dialogue with politicians on topical issues and build a "culture of trust" within which TDS and government can work together.
4. Convening "Media Against Conflict", an organization of media professionals who hold monthly meetings to assess their work re:

peacebuilding and to develop campaign conflict resolution messages for use across media type and media outlets. Media Against Conflict also furthers the professional development of journalists and other media workers.

5. Direct facilitation of conflict resolution processes which demonstrates conflict resolution strategies and methods as a realistic alternative to armed fighting and conflict. This activity directly aids peacebuilding in Liberia

#### **4-b. Views of TDS from the Key Informant Interviews**

During the interviews, we asked interviewees about how they perceived the role played by TDS in particular, and also asked them about any collaboration that they may have had with TDS. All respondents praised the role played by TDS; they found the subjects and issues addressed to be of significance and importance; others appreciated the presentation and the dramatization of these issues. The language used in different programs, they said, was suitable for many different segments of the society. All respondents also acknowledged the emphasis that TDS assigns to issues of peacebuilding, conflict resolution and reconciliation. They all agreed that TDS does contribute to the peace and reconciliation process in Liberia. One interviewee, whose work is connected to the Southeast region, stated that TDS was “well-heard” in that area of the country. He also appreciated that TDS’s correspondent in that region covered his organization’s activities, which facilitated people’s use of their services. Another interviewee indicated that TDS’s coverage of certain issues led to changes in government policies for the benefit of the people.

Interview responses included:

*“TDS is entertaining and informative. Its simple programming in simple language is fun to listen to and appealing. The TDS staff is qualified and complete. They cover diverse issues.”*

*“[I] think that ‘people in the echelon are listening’ to TDS. [I have] heard negative comments from the President about TDS – ‘TDS talks too much.’”*

*“They feel that TDS is sensitive to the needs of Liberians and effective particularly in its drama programs. People have been very much afraid in this country. Dramatic presentations dealing with salient issues give some satisfaction to everyone. They have observed some correlation between dramas and actions on the part of the government (vehicle registration/business licensing).”*

*“ TDS speaks language that people understand and airs news at a time when they can listen.”*

*“TDS can tell people what the situation is on the ground. It can’t really change anything, but can inform.”*

*“TDS has a different style of programming than other media outlets. They highlight the daily life of Liberian society, the everyday happenings. They don’t report too much on political news and expand the perspective of listeners by focusing on events outside of Monrovia. They practice developmental journalism with a focus on infrastructure and broad security issues. Their coverage of remote areas could result in government reactions to news in a positive way because government doesn’t always have a presence in rural areas.”*

*“TDS is very important in the SE region of the country. The reporting from there is good –the correspondent there always follows [my organization] around when they have activities.”*

*“TDS is effective because of its emphasis on local, simple, language. It is the only agency in Liberia whose full focus is on conflict resolution. They are doing a good job.”*

*“TDS did a drama program on over-age students with a slant for girls that was very good.”*

*“TDS programs reach the masses and help further the mission of peace.”*

The main concern that interviewees had was about reaching the rural population. Although TDS is “well-heard” in the Southeast, the fact remains that there is not sufficient broadcasting on the proper airwaves for the rural population. One respondent expressed concern about the possible misunderstanding of TDS programs, especially by government officials. The following are the comments relevant to these matters:

*“It would be useful to broadcast more programs on short wave frequencies to reach the really rural folks.”*

*“Farmers do have access to radios (one or two in every village). The challenge is the broadcast reach. Not enough short wave. A standard gathering time for listening is 5:00 PM –‘BBC time.’”*

*“The limitations that TDS and radio stations face are that many rural people do not have access to radios so they miss the benefits that TDS has to offer.”*

*“Some officials don’t understand the intent of TDS. The dramas can be misunderstood at times because of their focus on current issues. Some people think that TDS is trying to inflame rather than resolve issues.”*

Several of the interviewees indicated that their organizations have collaborated with TDS, or that TDS announced their events. Most of the coverage that TDS provided was in the form of news coverage of events held by the interviewees’

organizations, or interviews with organizations' staff. Other interviewees expressed interest in collaborating with TDS, and some of them indicated that they have been negotiating a role for TDS with their organization. They also discussed the specific activities that they thought TDS could help them with. These included children's programs, improving food-waste habits and food storage, health, and immunization and literacy campaigns. Only one respondent, who also expressed interest in collaborating with TDS, acknowledged that this has not materialized because of the difference in approach between TDS and his organization (the interviewee represented a religious organization).

#### ***4-c. Views of TDS from the Audience Survey***

The main focus of the audience survey was to assess the views regarding TDS among a representative sample of the Liberian population. The audience survey covered the following issues that relate to TDS and radio listening in general:

1. Radio listening habits
2. Frequency of listening to different radio stations, and views of their credibility
3. TDS's focal issues
4. Evaluation of five selected TDS programs
5. TDS's impact on Liberian life
6. Expectations from TDS

This section will include a quantitative analysis of the results of the audience survey on each of these issues. Whenever appropriate, statistically significant differences within four demographic groups (location of survey, gender, education and age) will be discussed. The education category was developed by collapsing the survey's nine choices for educational level into three groups: No or Low Education, Some Education, and High Education.

Chi Square tests were used throughout the survey to measure differences among groups; reported significant differences are at ( $p \leq .05$ ). A complete listing of the frequency and Chi Square results is included in the appendices.

##### *4-c-1. Radio listening habits*

Respondents were asked in this section about when they listened to radio last and how often they listened in different places. The majority of respondents indicated that they listened to the radio "yesterday" (82.5%), which indicated that the vast majority of respondents listened to radio very often. Significant differences existed based on level of education- those with no or low education were less likely to listen to radio as often as those with some or high education. No significant differences existed based on the other demographic variables.

Last listened to radio by education

| Level of Education |
|--------------------|
|--------------------|

|                     | No or low education | Some Education | High Education |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Yesterday           | 40<br>71.4%         | 239<br>84.2%   | 47<br>83.9%    |
| Within last 7 days  | 15<br>26.8%         | 37<br>13.0%    | 5<br>8.9%      |
| Within last 4 weeks | 1<br>1.8%           | 8<br>2.8%      | 4<br>7.1%      |
| Total               | 56<br>100.0%        | 284<br>100.0%  | 56<br>100.0%   |

Typically, most respondents reported that they listened to radio at their homes (94.3%), followed by place of work, in a car, and in someone else’s house. Fewer respondents from Kakata, and respondents with lower education, reported listening to radio at home, compared to respondents from the two other towns and to respondents with higher levels of education. This finding indicates probably that those in more rural areas with lower education levels do not have access to radio in their own homes; On the other hand, more educated, older, Monroviaans were more likely to listen to radio at the workplace compared to less educated, younger respondents from Buchanan and Kakata. More educated Monroviaans were also more likely to listen to radio in a car or in a drinking place.

*Table 4.2. Where do you listen to radio?*

|                      |       |
|----------------------|-------|
| Home                 | 94.3  |
| Work                 | 29.3% |
| Car                  | 28.3% |
| Someone else’s house | 26.8% |
| Street               | 11.0% |
| Market place         | 14.0% |
| Drinking place       | 4.5%  |
| Other                | 1%    |

*4-c-2. Frequency of listening to different radio stations, and views of their credibility:*

The table below shows the affirmative responses to the question “What radio stations do you frequently listen to?” and all responses to the question “How much do you trust the news presented by the following radio stations? It is noteworthy here that respondents do not have the same level of accessibility to all these stations, as their airing time and broadcast frequencies may affect their frequency of listening. In addition, not all these stations provide news programs on the same level. Therefore, the data here must be regarded with caution;

further interpretation requires additional information on the wave frequency, broadcast times, and level of news programming.

*Table 4.3. What radio stations do you frequently listen to? How much do you trust the news presented by the following radio stations?*

|                                | Percent Listen | How much do you trust the news presented by the following radio stations? |           |            |                        |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---|-----------|------------|------------------------|
|                                |                | Very Much   | Somewhat  | Not at All | Don't Know – Undecided |
| a. KISS FM                     | 60%            | 38.4%   | 31.4%     | 11.7%      | 18.5%                  |
| b. Veritas                     | 46.8           | 54.8  | 17.2      | 8.2        | 19.8                   |
| c. Star                        | 65.0           | 70.1  | 10.7      | 5.5        | 13.7                   |
| d. ELBC                        | 18.8           | 19.2  | 18.3      | 25.3       | 37.2                   |
| e. Radio Monrovia              | 45.0           | 34.8  | 24.9      | 11.5       | 28.8                   |
| f. DC-101                      | 41.0           | 30.1  | 26.7      | 12.7       | 30.4                   |
| g. Radio Liberia International | 26.0           | 23.4  | 14.2      | 19.6       | 42.7                   |
| h. BBC                         | 40.5           | 70.0  | 13.3      | 4.2        | 12.4                   |
| i. VOA                         | 25.8           | 54.7  | 13.5      | 9.3        | 22.5                   |
| j. ELWA                        | 19.0           | <b>NA</b>   | <b>NA</b> | <b>NA</b>  | <b>NA</b>              |

The results above show that STAR and KISS FM were the two stations listened to most frequently. STAR and BBC received the highest scores on trusting their news. The demographic comparisons showed that listening to each of these stations was significantly different according to one demographic variable or the other. The following table includes the demographic variables that were significantly different regarding frequency of listening to each of the stations:

*Table 4.4. Demographic groups who listen to each radio station more frequently.*

|                                | Education | Age               | Gender | Location              |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| a. KISS FM                     |           | 26-40 and older   |        | Kakata                |
| b. Veritas                     |           | 26-40 and younger |        | Monrovia and Buchanan |
| c. Star                        |           |                   |        |                       |
| d. ELBC                        |           |                   |        | Monrovia              |
| e. Radio Monrovia              |           |                   |        | Monrovia              |
| f. DC-101                      |           |                   |        | Monrovia              |
| g. Radio Liberia International |           |                   |        | Buchanan              |
| h. BBC                         | Higher    |                   | Males  |                       |

|         |                  |  |       |          |
|---------|------------------|--|-------|----------|
|         | education        |  |       |          |
| i. VOA  | Higher education |  | Males |          |
| j. ELWA | Higher education |  |       | Monrovia |

These significant differences suggest that the geographic location was more likely to affect frequency of listening on more stations. This confirms that the frequency of listening was more affected by air time and if people could receive the station wave. This finding echoes what interviewees mentioned earlier regarding the need for TDS to expand its air time and use short waves to reach more of the population. More educated males listened more frequently to the two foreign stations- BBC and VOA.

As for the question regarding how respondents trusted the news on each of these stations, the following table includes the demographic groups who significantly reported higher levels of trust of the news by each of the stations.

*Table 4.5. Demographic groups who reported higher levels of trust of news on each radio station.*

|                                | Education        | Age               | Gender | Location            |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------|---------------------|
| a. KISS FM                     |                  | 26-40 and older   |        | Kakata and Buchanan |
| b. Veritas                     | Higher education | 26-40 and younger |        | Monrovia and Kakata |
| c. Star                        | Higher education |                   |        | Monrovia and Kakata |
| d. ELBC                        |                  |                   |        | Monrovia            |
| e. Radio Monrovia              |                  | 25 or younger     |        | Monrovia and Kakata |
| f. DC-101                      |                  |                   |        | Monrovia            |
| g. Radio Liberia International |                  |                   |        | Buchanan            |
| h. BBC                         | Higher education | 26-40 and younger | Males  |                     |
| i. VOA                         | Higher education |                   | Males  |                     |
| j. ELWA                        | Higher education |                   |        | Monrovia            |

These comparisons suggest that trusting the news varied according to geographic location, education and age, and to a lesser extent gender. There was no clear pattern for the differences based on location. Higher education always corresponded to increased trust of the news. Younger respondents were more likely to trust news than older ones; and, only in the case of the two foreign stations (BBC and VOA ) that males trusted news more than females.

#### 4-c-2-1. TDS Listenership and Credibility

The survey included two questions regarding whether respondents had ever heard TDS programs, and if TDS programs tell the truth. On the first question, 86.8% of all respondents reported that they had heard TDS programs. This figure was higher among those with middle or lower education, and those living in Monrovia and Kakata. The table below shows the percentages of listeners among education groups and cities:

*Table 4.6. Listening to TDS by Education Level and Location.*

|                              |                         |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| No or Low Education<br>82.5% | Some Education<br>89.4% | High Education<br>76.8% |
| Monrovia<br>89.5%            | Buchanan<br>80.7%       | Kakata<br>87.9%         |

In comparison to the survey that was conducted in 1998, the percentage of listeners in Monrovia remained the same. Listening to TDS in Buchanan, which is further from the capital than Kakata, was lower. The fact that fewer of TDS listeners are of high education is worth further investigation. However, it is possible that TDS's emphasis on providing programs in languages, and language levels, that are suitable to the average Liberian man and woman (a fact that was appreciated by several interviewees) does not render such programs appealing to highly educated individuals.

In response to the second question, "Does TDS tell the truth?", none of the respondents reported that TDS never tells the truth; the table below shows that the vast majority of respondents either reported that TDS tells the truth very often, or sometimes. No significant differences existed within any of the four demographic groups regarding TDS's telling the truth- a fact that supports that TDS's high credibility is consistent across different groups in the Liberia, and is not viewed favorably or unfavorably by one group or the other.

*Table 4.7. Does TDS tell the Truth?*

|            |           |       |                           |
|------------|-----------|-------|---------------------------|
| Very Often | Sometimes | Never | Don't Know –<br>Undecided |
| 39.9       | 54.5      | 0.0   | 5.6                       |

#### 4-c-3. TDS's focal issues

The audience survey included two types of methods for collecting respondents' views on TDS programming. One method was to ask respondents in an open-ended format about what issues and problems they thought TDS programs covered. The second was to list the different issues that are covered by TDS programs, and ask respondents to rate their effectiveness. The first method aimed at soliciting undirected impressions about what TDS covered. Such

information would allow for assessing whether Liberians are getting the types of messages that were intended by TDS producers. The second type of question was intended as an evaluation of TDS effectiveness in treating issues of certain significance to peacebuilding.

The open-ended question, “What kinds of problems and issues do these programs talk about?”, was asked of every respondent who had stated they ever listened to TDS programs. The question was not designed to lead respondents in any direction; survey administrators were instructed not to influence respondents’ opinions, but only to prompt them for responses. The responses to this question, along with all other open-ended questions in the survey, were categorized and coded during a group workshop with the survey administrators. The coding of this question generated approximately 40 categories of issues and problems. The following were the categories most mentioned by respondents as issues and problems covered by TDS programs:

*Illustration 4.2. Most Mentioned Issues and Problems:*

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Social problems/conflicts | 2. Community unity      |
| 3. Education                 | 4. Reconciliation       |
| 5. Children                  | 6. Family issues        |
| 7. Peace                     | 8. Health               |
| 9. Reintegration             | 10. Conflict resolution |

Obviously, this list shows that the issues that TDS was mainly focused on (peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict resolution) were all well communicated to the audience. In addition, going back to the section on Conflict Issues, respondents acknowledged that TDS programs addressed several of these issues, namely Children, Community Unity, and Family Issues.

The next set of questions included specific issues, asking respondents to indicate if TDS covers each of them and, if so, how effectively. The table below includes all these issues, the percentages of those who indicated that TDS does cover them, and their rating of the effectiveness of these programs.

*Table 4.8. percentages of those who indicated that TDS does cover them, and their rating of the effectiveness of these programs.*

| Do Talking Drum programs talk about issues of concern like:<br><br>(Percent who responded Yes) |       | If Yes, how effective are the programs? |                    |               |
|--|-------|---|--------------------|---------------|
|  |       | Very Effective                          | Somewhat Effective | Not Effective |
| a. Governance and leadership   | 71.5% | 57.1%                                   | 38.1%              | 4.8           |
| b. Tribalism   | 64.3  | 57.9                                    | 35.5               | 6.6           |

|   |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| c. Trauma from the war                      | 73.8 | 62.3 | 33.9 | 3.8  |
| d. Education and Schools                    | 87.5 | 79.9 | 17.2 | 2.9  |
| e. Congo and Native Liberians               | 40.8 | 45.7 | 36.0 | 18.3 |
| f. Children                                 | 90.1 | 75.7 | 22.0 | 2.3  |
| g. Poverty                                  | 71.5 | 56.0 | 32.6 | 11.4 |
| h. Health                                   | 88.1 | 75.5 | 20.9 | 3.5  |
| i. Refugees, Resettlement and Reintegration | 92.0 | 74.7 | 20.2 | 5.1  |

The results in the table above showed that the vast majority of respondents reported that TDS covered most of the issues. Relatively, two issues received lower recognition than all other issues: Congo and Native Liberians, and Tribalism. These two issues are related conceptually; and they both reflect the ethnic/tribal aspect of the conflict, which seemed to “trouble” most interviewees in the key informant interviews. In those interviews, several respondents did not think that ethnic and tribal differences were the cause of the conflict and war, but that they were used to advance the interests of individuals and groups who were engaged in their power struggle. Yet, almost all interviewees agreed that due to the war and the several incidents when ethnic and tribal divisions were used violently, ethnic and tribal divisions have become one of the significant conflict issues. The relatively lower recognition of TDS programming of these issues, perhaps, reflects a true low occurrence of these issues on TDS programs, or it may be a reaction to ethnic and tribal issues on the part of the respondents that is similar to the key informant responses.

The results of the rating of TDS programs’ coverage of certain issues were divided into three categories: those that received a very high rating for coverage (85% or above), those that received a medium rating for coverage (70% to 84%), and those that received low rating for coverage (below 70%). Using those criteria, we found that more respondents reported that TDS addressed four issues: 1) Refugees, Resettlement and Reintegration, 2) Children, 3) Health, and 4) Education. Three issues received a medium rating: 1) Trauma, 2) Poverty and 3) Governance. The third category included the two items discussed above: 1) Congo and Native Liberians and 2) Tribalism. Interestingly, if the four issues in the first category are compared to the top ten issues listed in Illustration 4.2 above, we find that all four issues are also among the top ten issues that respondents, in an open-ended response, had stated that TDS programs did cover. The significance of such a comparison is that it provides validation to the results of both types of questions. That is, when respondents were asked in two different ways about what issues were covered by TDS programs, their responses were consistent. From a methodological standpoint, this consistency speaks for the reliability and validity of the survey design, while confirming information about audience’s perception of TDS programs.

The effectiveness of TDS in addressing these issues was rated on a scale of Very Effective, Somewhat Effective, and Not Effective. The question on the effectiveness in addressing each issue was directed only to those who had acknowledged that TDS covered that issue. A review of the results on effectiveness revealed that the issues that received a high rating on whether they were covered or not also received a higher rating on their effectiveness. Specifically, the four “category one” issues received the most “very effective” ratings (74% or higher), while the issues in categories 2 and 3 received lower effectiveness ratings (63% or lower), with the issue of Congo and Native Liberians receiving the lowest effectiveness rating of (45.7).

The demographic analysis revealed that only few differences existed within each demographic comparison. Table 4.9 includes the demographic groups who reported more that TDS covered certain issues, and who significantly rated effectiveness of addressing each issue higher than other groups.

*Table 4.9. Demographic groups who reported significantly more TDS covering of certain issues, and who significantly rated effectiveness of addressing each issue higher than other groups.*

| Issue Covered?<br>Effectiveness                | Education               | Age               | Gender         | Location   |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| a. Governance and leadership<br>Effectiveness  | _____                   | _____             | _____          | _____  |
| b. Tribalism<br>Effectiveness                  | _____                   | 26-40 or<br>older | _____          | _____  |
| c. Trauma from the war<br>Effectiveness        | _____                   | _____             | _____          | _____  |
| d. Education and Schools<br>Effectiveness      | _____                   | _____             | _____          | Monrovia and<br>Kakata<br>Kakata and<br>Buchanan |
| e. Congo and Native Liberians<br>Effectiveness | _____                   | _____             | Males          | _____  |
| f. Children<br>Effectiveness                   | _____                   | _____             | _____          | Buchanan and<br>Kakata                           |
| g. Poverty<br>Effectiveness                    | Some Education<br>_____ | _____             | Males<br>Males | _____  |
| h. Health<br>Effectiveness                     | _____                   | 26-40 or<br>older | _____          | Buchanan and<br>Kakata                           |
| i. Refugees, Resettlement....<br>Effectiveness | _____                   | _____             | Males          | Monrovia   |

The table above showed that there was not much difference between category groups on most of the issues and the effectiveness of addressing them. In the cases of gender and age, whenever differences existed they pertained to the same groups: Males and Those Age 26-40 or Older. Male respondents were more likely to report higher effectiveness of addressing Poverty and Congo and Native Liberians- the two issues that received the lowest overall effectiveness

ratings as shown in table 4.8. This indicates that, inversely, women were less satisfied with the effectiveness of covering these two issues, and that they, the women, were more representative of the overall population in this regard. The differences among the three locations showed that respondents from Buchanan and Kakata appreciated the effectiveness of three of the “category one” issues: Children, Education and Health, while Monrovia reported higher effectiveness on the fourth issue of Refugees, Settlement and Reintegration. The findings from this set of questions and comparisons may require further investigation in order to understand the underlying causes for such patterns.

#### 4-c-3-1. Children’s Issues

Because of the significant information that was received in the key informant interviews regarding the impact of the war on children, the co-evaluators included two questions in the audience survey that were specific to children’s programming. The two questions were:

*Do Talking Drum programs carry positive messages to children?*

*Do Talking Drum programs help children heal from trauma caused by the war?*

The responses to the two questions showed that the vast majority of respondents reported that TDS programs did carry positive messages to children and did help them heal from trauma caused by the war. This, again, was consistent with the high coverage and effectiveness ratings of that issue as explained in the previous section. Table 4.10 below shows the response frequencies to these questions.

*Table 4.10. Responses to Questions about Children Programming.*

|  | Very much | Somewh at | Not at all | Don’t know |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Do Talking Drum programs carry positive messages to children?              | 58.8%     | 30.4%     | 1.5%       | 9.2%       |
| Do Talking Drum programs help children heal from trauma caused by the war? | 53.4%     | 34.1%     | .5%        | 12.0%      |

Demographic comparisons on these two questions showed that more males answered “very much” compared to female respondents on both questions. This, too, was consistent with results from the previous section where men seemed to report higher scores of effectiveness than women.

#### *4-c-4. Evaluation of five selected TDS programs*

The initial Rapid Survey of 1998, and its Burundian replication, included questions about certain programs, and audience reactions to their messages and effectiveness. The purpose of including questions about certain programs is multi-fold. One objective is to assess audience’s recognition of the program by

playing a recognizable segment such as the introductory theme. This technique is important because TDS is not a radio station, but it delivers its programs via other radio stations. Therefore, several people may not recognize TDS when asked about its name, but it is possible that the same people would recognize TDS programs if they were given an audio-prompt. The data shows that several respondents responded negatively to the question about ever hearing TDS programs. But when an audio segment was played, they recognized the program.

Another objective is to assess the frequency of listening to these programs. The method of asking about the frequency of listening changed from the previous RSMs. Previously, respondents were asked to report the number of times they listened to a program in the past month. That type of questioning resulted in inconsistent responses which were sometimes unrealistic (such as when a respondent reports that s/he listened to a program 20 times in the past month when the program was on the air only twice a week), or invalid (responses such as “sometimes”, “a lot”). Therefore, the co-evaluators decided to alter the response method to these questions by asking respondents to report “how often”, instead of how many times, they listened to a certain program over the past month. A respondent was given the choices of “very often,” “sometimes,” “never,” and “Don’t Know.” This method eliminated most of the problems that were encountered previously.

A third objective is to collect specific information related to each program. Each TDS program has a unique mission, goals, audience and method of delivery. In order to assess the effectiveness of each program, it was necessary to “tailor” questions to the specific elements of each program. The co-evaluators utilized facilitated discussion with TDS staff in which each of them reported on the various elements of their programs. These elements were then formatted into survey questions.

The selection of five out of TDS’s nine programs was intended only to keep the survey administration within reasonable time limits. The selection of the five programs was based on their covering multiple issues, and using various formats. The five programs that were selected for inclusion in the survey were: Women, Talking Drum Up-Country, One Step Beyond, Common Ground Drama, and Common Ground News. The following is a brief summary of each program’s objectives and format. A description of these programs is included in the appendices.

#### *Illustration 4.3. Objectives and Format for the Women Program*

Objectives: Acknowledge the efforts and roles of women in Liberian society.  
Support women’s contribution to peace.  
Provide information on resources for women.  
Empower women.  
Report on issues about and that affect women.

Format: Interviews and discussions.  
Features, magazine format.

Standard English.

*Illustration 4.4. Objectives and Format for Talking Drum Up-Country*

Objectives: Provide information and education about counties and culture.  
Bridge the communication gap between Monrovia and up-country.  
Serve as voice of people outside Monrovia.  
Target decision-makers in Monrovia and folks up-country.  
Develop problem-solving options.  
Provide counterbalance to government news reporting on counties.

Format: Interviews and feature reports.  
“Melting pot of all TDS programs.”  
News component reproduced and distributed for print media outlets that reach up-country audiences.  
Includes news summary in Liberian English.

*Illustration 4.5. Objectives and Format for One Step Beyond*

Objectives: Present discussion of differences on current issues and events in Liberia.  
Generate solutions for current issues and problems.  
Ensure that all voices are heard.

Format: True conflict resolution approach – facilitate resolution.  
Standard English.  
Recordings of actual round-table discussions and interviews – the actual parties to the conflict are brought together whenever possible.  
Present series if necessary to present the whole process of resolution.

*Illustration 4.6. Objectives and Format for Common Ground Drama*

Objectives: Peacebuilding.  
Reveal issues that underlie everyday activities in society.  
Stimulate dialogue.  
Provide information and education.  
Model cooperation and peacebuilding approaches.  
Reach all ages and sectors of population.

Format: Drama – “investigative drama.”  
Present true-life scenarios.  
Engage audience through entertainment.  
Offer solutions but leave judgements for audience to make.  
Provide educational messages and information.  
Liberian English to cut across all boundaries.

*Illustration 4.7. Objectives and Format for Common Ground News*

**Objectives:** Provide news and information analysis and in-depth reporting on current events and a broad range of social issues.  
 Targets a more educated audience.  
 Peacebuilding: Information reduces tension and promotes dialogue  
 Nationwide presence gives voice to all, creates larger perspective and broadens sphere of interest

**Format:** News reporting.  
 Actual stories.  
 Real voices of people (interviews).  
 Urban and up-country news.  
 Follow-up reporting/closure when possible.  
 Standard English.

4-c-4-1. Recognition and Frequency of Listening to TDS Programs

Table 4.11 includes the percentages of those who recognized each program after listening to the audio segment, and the frequency of listening to each program.

*Table 4.11. Recognition and Frequency of Listening to TDS Programs*

| Program                 | Program Recognized | How often have you listened to this program in the last month? | Very Often | Sometimes | Never | Don't Know |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--|------------|-----------|-------|------------|
| Women                   | 65.95              |  | 25.0       | 69.7      | 2.7   | 2.7        |
| Talking Drum Up-Country | 62.8               |  | 34.3       | 61.8      | 2.4   | 1.6        |
| One Step Beyond         | 62.9               |  | 30.6       | 64.1      | 2.4   | 2.8        |
| Common Ground Drama     | 86.8               |  | 46.5       | 51.4      | .9    | 1.2        |
| Common Ground News      | 73.0               |  | 36.2       | 58.7      | 3.8   | 1.4        |

These results show that each program was recognized by at least 60% of the respondents. Common Ground Drama and News were the two most recognized programs. They were also the two most often listened to. However, the Drama obviously stood out with almost 14% more than the News and, of course, any other program on the recognition score, and 12% more on frequency of listening. Recognizing and listening more frequently to the Drama echoes the positive comments made about TDS drama during the key informant interviews.

The demographic comparisons in table 4.12 below suggest that the effect of various demographic variables is not widespread. This means that people from all segments of the society listen to TDS programs. Gender, especially, played no role in program recognition or listening frequency.

*Table 4.12. Demographic groups who reported significantly more Program Recognition and Listening Frequency.*

| Program Recognized?<br>Listening Frequency     | Education      | Age              | Gender | Location                           |
|--|----------------|------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| Women<br>Listening Frequency                   | _____          | _____            | _____  | Monrovia                           |
| Talking Drum Up-Country<br>Listening Frequency | _____          | 41 or Older      | _____  | _____                              |
| One Step Beyond<br>Listening Frequency         | Some and High  | 26-40 or Younger | _____  | _____                              |
| Common Ground Drama<br>Listening Frequency     | High Education | 26-40 or Younger | _____  | Monrovia<br>Monrovia and<br>Kakata |
| Common Ground News<br>Listening Frequency      | _____          | _____            | _____  | _____                              |

#### 4-c-4-2. Evaluation of Program Elements

As mentioned earlier, and as it appears in each program description above, each program has unique objectives and format. Therefore, the audience survey included different questions to assess the effectiveness of each program in reaching its audience. Tables 4.13 and 4.14 include the frequency of responses to questions on each program and the results of the demographic comparison.

The results in table 4.13 reveal that the majority of respondents rated almost every program element very highly (Very much/often). A rating of “Not at All,” or “Don’t Know” never exceeded 10% of the respondents on any given program element. As a matter of fact, in most instances, the combination of “Not at All” and “Don’t Know” did not exceed 10% of the population.

A closer look at the results in table 4.13 shows that only three elements across the five programs did not have a majority of respondents reporting a “Very Much/often” rating. These three elements contained the same type of questions: *Do people like you discuss the issues raised in this program after listening to it?* This question was asked in relation to three programs: Women, Common Ground Drama, and Common Ground News. This type of question was the only one to receive a “Very Much/Often” rating of less than 40% of the responses. Such a relatively lower rating did not exist with any other program elements.

Therefore, it could be inferred that program subjects and format are highly regarded by the audience in general. No matter what the subject or the format was, or the type of audience the program targets, respondents always rated

program elements very highly. The one element that seemed to receive lower rating was the one related to generating discussion among the audience about program subjects. It is difficult to even attempt to explore the causes for the relatively lower rating on that matter. Such a matter would require further in-depth research to identify its causes.

The demographic comparisons were combined in table 4.14 in order to allow for a global review of any demographic trends across all programs. One obvious and consistent demographic effect is gender. Earlier, we detected a trend where male respondents were more likely to rate issues covered by TDS programs higher than female respondents. This trend was solidified in this section. Whenever a significant difference existed between male and female respondents it was the former who assigned higher ratings to program elements. Not once did female respondents rate any item on this survey higher than men.

The significant differences between male and female respondents were more prevalent within three programs: Talking Drum Up-Country, One Step Beyond, and Common Ground News. No significant differences existed on the Common Ground Drama, and only one difference existed on the Woman program. Given the fact that males and females hardly differed significantly on their recognition of TDS programs or their frequency of listening to them (see table 4.12), it is likely that the differences on their evaluation of program elements reflected actual gender based attitude variations. This could be a result of the “news-like” nature of the three programs they differed on the most, or it could be that the topic selections or format are more appealing to men. Such a difference requires, definitely, a further assessment of men’s and women’s views on these programs, and TDS staff’s input on the suitability of these programs’ contents and format to the female audience.

Other demographic differences that existed were not as prevalent or consistent across programs. Hardly any difference existed based on geographic location. It is a rather positive sign that, despite differences in the ability of distant locations to receive TDS transmissions, the content and format of programs are highly appraised regardless of where respondents live.

Finally, age differences were consistent in relation to one program: Talking Drum Up-Country. More respondents Age 41 or Older rated higher the elements of that program. This result is consistent with the similar result from table 4.12, where the older population reported more frequent listening to Talking Drum Up-Country.

Table 4.13. Frequency of Responses to Program elements.

|  | Very Much/Often | Sometimes/Somewhat | Not at All | Don't Know |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|------------|------------|
| Women  |                 |                    |            |            |
| Has this program caused you to think in new ways about the role that women can play in rebuilding Liberia? | 59.9%           | 34.7%              | .8 %       | 4.6 %      |
| Does this program provide information on resources and services that are useful to women?                  | 51.3            | 46.4               |            | 2.3        |
| Do people like you discuss the issues raised in this program after listening to it?                        | 27.9            | 60.8               | 7.2        | 4.2        |
| Talking Drum Up-County   |                 |                    |            |            |
| Does this program make officials in Monrovia aware of up-country issues?                                   | 52.8            | 37.8               | 3.5        | 5.9        |
| Does this program make you personally more aware of up-country issues?                                     | 59.8            | 34.6               | 2.0        | 3.5        |
| One Step Beyond  |                 |                    |            |            |
| Did this program bring the right people together to discuss the Mandingo-Lorma problem in Lofa County?     | 44.0            | 43.2               | 4.1        | 8.7        |
| Did this program allow every party to that conflict to speak their mind?                                   | 50.0            | 32.5               | 7.7        | 9.8        |
| Did this program help generate solutions to the conflict in Lofa?  | 53.1            | 37.6               | 3.3        | 6.1        |
| Does this program give good examples of how to solve conflicts?  | 61.9            | 32.0               | 1.6        | 4.5        |
| Common Ground Drama  |                 |                    |            |            |
| Does this program show people better ways to live?   | 58.4            | 39.3               |            | 2.3        |

|   |      |      |     |     |
|---|------|------|-----|-----|
| Do people like you discuss the issues raised in this program after listening to it? | 37.2 | 53.9 | 6.1 | 2.9 |
| Does this program give people hope for the future?                                  | 61.8 | 33.3 |     | 4.7 |
| Does this program show real-life situations and problems in Liberia today?          | 63.5 | 31.3 | 2.9 | 2.0 |

Common Ground News

|   |      |      |     |     |
|---|------|------|-----|-----|
| Does this program provide truthful information about Liberia today?                 | 53.4 | 42.5 | 1.4 | 2.4 |
| Does this program help you understand important issues affecting Liberians?         | 62.5 | 34.5 | .7  | 2.4 |
| Do people like you discuss the issues raised in this program after listening to it? | 31.0 | 56.5 | 8.5 | 4.1 |

Table 4.14. Demographic Groups who Significantly Gave Higher Ratings to Program Elements.

|  | Education           | Age                           | Gender | Location |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------|----------|
| <b>Women</b>   |                     |                               |        |          |
| Has this program caused you to think in new ways about the role that women can play in rebuilding Liberia? |                     |                               | Males  |          |
| Does this program provide information on resources and services that are useful to women?                  |                     |                               |        |          |
| Do people like you discuss the issues raised in this program after listening to it?                        |                     |                               |        |          |
| <b>Talking Drum Up-County</b>  |                     |                               |        |          |
| Does this program make officials in Monrovia aware of up-country issues?                                   |                     | 41 or Older                   | Males  |          |
| Does this program make you personally more aware of up-country issues?                                     |                     | 41 or Older                   | Males  |          |
| <b>One Step Beyond</b>   |                     |                               |        |          |
| Did this program bring the right people together to discuss the Mandingo-Lorma problem in Lofa County?     |                     |                               | Males  | Buchanan |
| Did this program allow every party to that conflict to speak their mind?                                   | High Education      |                               | Males  |          |
| Did this program help generate solutions to the conflict in Lofa?  |                     |                               | Males  |          |
| Does this program give good examples of how to solve conflicts?  |                     |                               | Males  |          |
| <b>Common Ground Drama</b>   |                     |                               |        |          |
| Does this program show people better ways to live?   |                     |                               |        |          |
| Do people like you discuss the issues raised in this program after listening to it?                        |                     |                               |        |          |
| Does this program give people hope for the future?   | No or Low Education |                               |        |          |
| Does this program show real-life situations and problems in Liberia today?                                 |                     |                               |        |          |
| <b>Common Ground News</b>  |                     |                               |        |          |
| Does this program provide truthful information about Liberia today?  |                     | 24 or Younger and 41 or Older |        |          |
| Does this program help you understand important issues affecting Liberians?                                |                     |                               | Males  |          |
| Do people like you discuss the issues raised in this program after listening to it?                        |                     | 41 or Older                   | Males  |          |

#### 4-c-5. TDS's Impact on Liberian Life

Having assessed respondents' and interviewees' views on TDS programs, the co-evaluators solicited the survey audience's impressions regarding how TDS programs impacted their life. The results from that audience survey question provided an overview of how TDS affected average Liberians' lives on a personal level. Another method we used to collect information on TDS's impact on Liberian life was through two case studies. The case studies, unlike the audience survey, had a macro, societal focus, not a personal focus. They aimed at exploring documented instances in which TDS efforts and programming contributed directly to peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

##### 4-c-5-1. TDS's Impact on Personal Life

The audience survey included an open-ended question on: *How do Talking Drum programs affect your life?* As with other open-ended questions in the survey, a workshop was conducted with the survey administrators to develop coding schemes for the responses to this question. Survey administrators then embarked upon the task of coding each response. Each respondent was allowed to report as many effects as s/he felt. Respondents reported a total of 432 effects on them as a result of TDS programs. Table 4.15 below includes the ten most frequently mentioned effects of TDS programs on personal life.

*Table 4.15. Effects of TDS Programs on Personal Life*

|                                | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Help improve personal life     | 55        | 12.7    |
| Help forget the past           | 49        | 11.3    |
| Give courage                   | 29        | 6.7     |
| Console/comfort                | 27        | 6.3     |
| No effect                      | 26        | 6.0     |
| Improve personal relationships | 26        | 6.0     |
| How to forgive                 | 25        | 5.8     |
| Improving my life              | 22        | 5.1     |
| Make me think of new things    | 19        | 4.4     |
| Give hope                      | 18        | 4.2     |

These responses show that the major effects of listening to TDS programs were related to personal life improvement: consoling, comforting, giving hope, helping to forgive and giving courage. All these responses reflect the direct impact TDS programs have on Liberians' very personal growth and healing. Liberia was devastated by a civil war that affected almost every person on a personal level by the loss of loved ones or by incurring severe personal loss. Among the major issues facing Liberia today, as explained in the section on Conflict Issues, are the disruption of family life, and war trauma. Based on the results in table 4.15, it is obvious that TDS programs are having a positive effect on the individual's

motivation, sense of peace and forward outlook. The following are examples of respondents' responses to this question:

*"It teaches me about love and unity."*

*"It makes me to feel very good."*

*"Well it make me to have hope in life. It encourage me."*

*"It can make you to understand something that can happen in your life."*

*"It is making so many change in my life for example during the war our towns were burnt but because of the dramas it encourage us to go back and forget."*

*"It make me to change my way of living, things are actually changing."*

*"I love their drama because the problem make us to forget about the pass. The make us to be self feeding instead of beggar."*

*"It make me to do things the right way, every day when I listen to the programs my life improve."*

*"It make me to think on my feature plan now to look forward and forget about the past."*

*"Well at least my life is changing the way I used to think on all that things I don't think again."*

*"At lease, there is hope in the future."*

*"It help me to know the ills in society."*

*"Make me to behave well."*

*"It improve my life."*

*"It brought improvement to my life."*

*"It gave me great hope for the future."*

*"When I listen to T.D. programs I learn new things."*

*"T.D. programs affect my life by bringing changes in to my life."*

*"It helps me to improve on my life."*

*"It can erase all the hatred from my mind and can sometimes entertain me."*

*“It produces more drama on forgiveness and this make me do know about it.”*

A complete listing of all the effects that were reported is included in the appendices.

#### 4-c-5-2. TDS’s Impact on Society

TDS is trying out new approaches to journalism with the intended outcome of *furthering conflict resolution*. Rather than adopting the stance that journalists are neutral spectators to events and developments, TDS believes that simply telling the news is not enough. Using media as a tool for positive change means that journalists at TDS and other CGP studios actively pursue ways to improve the social and political context in which the conflict exists. They act on the same premise stated by Hannes Siebert that the response of media in a conflict can change “as the anatomy of the conflict changes.”<sup>2</sup> These include:

- being a medium of communication between conflicting parties;
- generating options to violent conflict;
- reflecting the ordinary person’s desire and need for peace
- communicating the process of negotiations to the constituencies involved;
- securing a free flow of accurate and constructive information;
- playing a watchdog role to help ensure long-term accountability from leaders to the people; and
- providing a forum for on-going dialogue.

The co-evaluators conducted two case studies to evaluate the impact of TDS programs on peacebuilding in Liberia that illustrate the effectiveness of the TDS approach. Both cases use a mix of the strategies that were identified above. Both demonstrate successful interventions in a conflict situation. The general principles that the producers emphasized either consciously or unconsciously in their role as conflict resolution journalists varied according to each situation. Their decisions on how and when to intervene were guided by maximizing the benefit to society as a whole.

The first study focused on events that occurred in Lofa County in northeastern Liberia where TDS employs a news correspondent. When the correspondent reported to the producers in Monrovia on a breaking incident of inter-ethnic violence, TDS could have been the first media outlet to report the incident on the airwaves. But the executive producers realized that being conflict resolution communicators required that they forego the desire to be first in order to achieve other goals. Among them in this case were:

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• Siebert, Hannes. “Debunking the ‘Big O’” in *Track Two: Constructive Approaches to Community and Political Conflict*. Vol. 7 No. 4 1998. Page 3.

To protect the country from possible upheaval if the news were publicized immediately;

- To establish credibility and trust with government;
- To allow for further fact finding.

By pursuing these three goals, TDS was able to establish a long-awaited trust and credibility with the government as a reliable conflict resolution media agency. This was confirmed by the subsequent invitation from the government to TDS journalists to join the official conflict resolution delegation that traveled to Lofa County, the scene of the conflict. Secondly they were able to help avert the very real possibility of violent outbursts among other Liberians in other areas of the country. This was accomplished by “letting” the government make the first announcement of the incident and assuring the citizenry that serious actions were being taken to resolve the problem. Thirdly, the interaction and cooperation with the government led to a more effective fact-finding mission overall.

In the second case, an on-going dialogue on regional economic issues broadcast by the TDS program *One Step Beyond* led to the exposure of the issue of high fees for work permits in Liberia for immigrants who come from other West African countries. The issue of work permit fees had become divisive for West African governments and labor rights organizations. TDS selected a mediation model that was different than the Lofa County conflict and more appropriate for this case. Well-defined issues and parties were brought to the table for dialogue as part of the programming for *One Step Beyond*. In that context, TDS staff provided a safe environment for parties representing the government and the ECOWAS Citizens Union (ECU) to discuss the issue of worker fees. They first created a forum to allow all parties to the conflict to express their needs, perceptions, and opinions. Secondly, TDS assisted them in generating solutions. This approach eventually led to an adjustment of policies on this issue by the government.

The discussions were recorded and broadcast throughout the negotiating process that occurred over several weeks' time. The public was allowed to monitor the process and their feedback to officials and studio staff contributed to reaching a resolution. *One Step Beyond* brought the involvement of the public into the discussion.

Interviews that we conducted during the case studies validated the success of the approach to peacebuilding that TDS followed. Excerpts from this case study data illustrate this success:

*Illustration 4.8. Excerpts from Case Studies Interviews*

*How does this solution affect peace in the region?*

*“This solution makes people feel that they are treated fairly, and regard Liberia in a positive manner. Given the tensions in this region, it is important to build trust among people from neighboring countries.”*

*What role did TDS producers play to resolve these issues?*

*“First, TDS contacted government officials to talk on the air with us. Immigration officials contacted and met with us to discuss these issues. TDS facilitated our meeting with government officials because they (the government) take TDS seriously; they listen to what is said on TDS. TDS acted like a bridge between us and the government.”*

*Do you think that TDS’s role contributed to reaching a resolution?*

*“TDS’s intervention directly led to the resolution. This is the first radio in the region that breaks barriers of all kinds, linguistic and ethnic. TDS educates people across the borders, especially about peace and stability. This is why we continue to work with TDS on other issues; we know that they can have an impact.”*

*How did TDS’s role help peacebuilding in the region?*

*“By contributing to reducing fees, and uncovering harassment of ECOWAS workers, people in the region get to interact more freely, which leads to building trust and confidence. Second, if citizens of neighboring countries are not treated well, there will be negative consequences and reactions. Third, if fees are high, the ECOWAS nationals may be jailed or deported because of not paying the fees. This could worsen relationships between those countries. Finally, when fees are affordable, people engage in economic activities which by nature promote the welfare of individuals and countries.”*

A complete file on the two case studies is included in the appendices.

## 4-c-6. Expectations of TDS

The key informant interviews and the audience survey included questions about what respondents would like to see TDS do in the future. In both cases the questions were open-ended. The survey questions were coded and numerically keyed onto the database. In this section the results from the interviews will be discussed, followed by the audience survey.

### 4-c-6-1. Key Informant Interview Results

The key informants discussed a variety of issues that they thought TDS could incorporate into its programming. These issues may be categorized as follows:

#### 4.c.6.1.a Improve Air Time and Wave

Several interviewees, especially those who work in rural areas, expressed the need for TDS programs to reach a wider population. Short wave is needed especially in rural areas. The responses included:

*“It would be useful to broadcast more programs on short wave frequencies to reach the really rural folks.”*

*“It would be good to build up the short-wave capability for up-country broadcasting.”*

#### 4.c.6.2 Develop Different Format Styles

Several interviewees expressed the need to deliver messages in innovative ways, or in ways that are more appealing to more people. These format styles included on-air call-ins, more drama, and more discussions than interviews. Among the responses were:

*“Include more discussion than interviews and to include men in these discussions.”*

*“TDS might try on-air support groups for trauma counseling”*

*“Drama could help to reduce and narrow the gap of the lean season.”*

*“It would be ideal for TDS to train local people to act out the dramas in the Southeast. The TDS mobile unit doesn’t get that far usually.”*

*“Would like to hear more health messages integrated into the dramas in the form of “curriculum infusion”. For example, dramatic characters could always be sure to model healthy behaviors when its appropriate.”*

#### 4.c.6.3 Use the Assistance of Subject Experts

Several interviewees indicated that some of TDS programs carry messages that relate to health and other specialized areas of expertise. They recommended conducting more in-depth research and using content experts on a regular basis to insure the accuracy of information. Among the comments:

*“Some suggestions for TDS are to include more in-depth research on issues as background for their programs.”*

*“TDS drama programs address some health issues but could use more research to provide more accurate information. A health expert should be consulted in addition to the creative producers and journalists.”*

#### 4.c.6.1.d Emphasize Certain Subject Areas

Interviewees discussed the significance of certain issues to the Liberian society today. They expressed the need to emphasize these issues on TDS programming. All the issues that they mentioned, such as children’s and women’s issues, trauma, health, and food were among the major Conflict Issues that were discussed earlier. Their comments included:

*“Would like TDS to promote children’s programming or perhaps conceptualize other ways of collaboration.”*

*“TDS could help publicize the manifestations and symptoms of trauma and refer victims to sources of help.”*

*“They would like to see more communication regarding new laws and policies and data on the status of women and children.”*

*“There are some food security issues that TDS could approach by radio: Villagers need to learn to measure their supply and distribute it more evenly throughout the year to help lessen the impact of the ‘lean season.’ Food waste – example is that during harvest celebrations, villagers throw a lot of food (mainly rice) on the ground to welcome guests, etc – and waste it. Food storage is also another topic that could be addressed through drama and education.”*

*“Would like for TDS to integrate Interfaith themes into its programs.”*

#### 4-c-6-2. Audience Survey Results

The results from the audience survey were similar to those from the key informant interviews. Respondents reported a total of 542 expectations. Several respondents expressed the need to expand air time, waves, and even for TDS to have its own radio station. Others wanted TDS to continue with the emphasis on peacebuilding, reconciliation and conflict resolution. Table 4.16 includes the top ten most mentioned expectations:

Table 4.16. top ten most mentioned expectations

|                                  | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| More air time and programs       | 56        | 10.3    |
| Continue talk about peace        | 38        | 7.0     |
| Keep doing what you are doing    | 37        | 6.8     |
| Improve Outreach/Coverage        | 37        | 6.8     |
| Preach reconciliation            | 36        | 6.6     |
| Talk about making society better | 29        | 5.4     |
| Air on all radio stations        | 29        | 5.4     |
| Continue with Drama format       | 28        | 5.2     |
| More on education for children   | 26        | 4.8     |
| Talk about development issues    | 21        | 3.9     |

The following are excerpts of what respondents said in response to this question:

*"I like for them to continue to do more, so we can forget the past."*

*"I will like to see it being in all the counties and not only Monrovia."*

*"Let TDS try to improve some of their program so that we can hear them on this side at the country."*

*"T.D.S should improve on their programs."*

*"I want for T.D.S to improve on their program so that we in Bassa County can have more time to listen to it."*

*"To keep on talking peace."*

*"To talk more on forgiveness."*

*"To give us good ideals so that we can improve our life."*

*"They should talk about development."*

*"To carry out program that will make us to understand our problem."*

*"They should make us to listen to the problem, they should play it every day."*

*"T.D.S. should try to say more good thing like going back to school."*

*"I will like to see them enhancing their drama for the native to understand."*

*"To come in Grand Bassa in every school to perform."*

*"I will like to see their programs that are been conducted carry out in every in our country."*

*"To produce more dramas and make us to understand what to do for the future."*

*"I will like to see them going into the rural area and tell people that war is not good."*

The complete listing of responses is included in the appendices.

## 5. THE USE OF RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

This research mission, as explained earlier, included two components: Research and Evaluation. One evaluation objective in this mission was to aid TDS staff in developing assessment and evaluation tools that could be locally utilized.

Therefore, throughout the mission, the co-evaluators consistently discussed and researched, based on the data collected, the most effective evaluation tools that might be “left behind” for the staff to utilize on ongoing basis. By the end of the mission, the co-evaluators had developed a new evaluation tool, “The Responsive Programming Model”. The main objectives for this tool were to connect media programming to conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies, to allow for programming flexibility, and to make it user friendly for TDS staff.

The Responsive Programming tool was introduced to the TDS staff along with the research mission’s preliminary results in a group presentation at the end of the mission. This section provides a rationale and description of the Responsive Programming evaluation tool.

Despite the apparent effectiveness of the TDS responsive, multi-channel approach to designing conflict resolution media and interventions, the co-evaluators uncovered a need for more systematic documentation of TDS' progress. A facilitated discussion with TDS staff revealed that the producers are not formally documenting audience responses and other forms of feedback regarding their programs and other activities. As evaluators, we believe that TDS should be collecting this feedback for several purposes that include among others:

1. Collection of information to feed forward into future programs and interventions
2. Documentation of their progress towards building a sustainable peace
3. Documentation of activities for program funders and sponsors
4. Documentation of methodology and processes that can be applied, tested, and strengthened in other settings
5. Collection of success stories to share with other organizations with similar goals
6. Development of a professional resume for the studio and for individual producers

The need for creative and on-going assessment and documentation of their work is the primary aspect of TDS operations that needs strengthening. With that in mind, we were able to design a model for programming that incorporates assessment into their current approach.

*5-a. Responsive Programming: A New Model for Conflict Resolution Communicators:*

The new model for conflict resolution communicators that we developed in conjunction with the staff at TDS draws upon development communication and behavior change communication practices. In fact, an executive producer at TDS emphasized the importance of the training and experience that TDS staffers have in these two disciplines. It has a strong formative research component that is wrapped in a framework of conflict resolution strategies.

Primary to this approach is the consideration that must be given to audience participation in the conflict resolution process. Additionally, conflict mapping and analysis must always be at the forefront of the producers' work. The research that determines the choice of curriculum or responsive programming, specific media channels, format, and content always starts with an examination of the current status of the conflict, the needs of the audience for information and education, and the media resources available to reach the audience. This work is to a great extent context and culture specific. The methodology is applicable cross-culturally, but the specific conflict resolution approach that results from the research will vary from place to place and be applicable and appropriate only in the local context.

1. The most salient features of this model are that:
2. It can be used for development of curriculum-based program series or for stand alone/single broadcast programs;
3. It is responsive to current events, "the changing anatomy of the conflict";
4. It is flexible in both substance (issues, content) and mode (activity, and media channel) so it is able to engage more parties with a range of activities as needed;
5. Assessment is conducted continuously for feedback and feed forward (formative evaluation mechanisms are in place to monitor progress, changing needs and context).
6. Conflict resolution strategies and principles are the basis for all programs and activities.

There is a constant balancing of focus between the two primary elements of TDS programming: the long- and short-term conflict resolution goals, and the specific subjects and issues that are addressed in the programs. In other words, each program must be developed in accordance with TDS' mission of peacebuilding in Liberia. Its themes must be developed according to the needs of the audience for exposure to specific information and education as well as according to guidelines dictated by principles of conflict resolution. Both of these elements of programming are essential to conflict resolution communication.

# The Responsive Programming Model

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

# culture of Dialogue and Good Will



| △<br><b>Conflict Analysis</b> |                  |             | △<br><b>Conflict Prevention</b> |                      |           |                      | △<br><b>Conflict Intervention</b> |                        |                      |                            |                |             |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Fact Finding                  | Conflict Mapping | Other _____ | Addressing Basic Needs          | Modeling Cooperation | Education | Stimulating Dialogue | Other _____                       | Facilitation/Mediation | Generating Solutions | Giving Voice to All Groups | Building Trust | Other _____ |

**Goals and/or Mission:**

**Issue(s)** (eg., girls schooling, trauma, unemployment, disarmament, etc.):

**Target Audience** (eg., women, children, warring factions, etc.):

**Objectives** (eg., awareness of trauma counseling services; teach symptoms of malaria; change in work permit policy):

**Format and Channel(s):** (eg., drama, interviews, news, features):

**What program(s):**

**Supporting Activities** (eg., print materials, direct mediation, etc.):

**Sources of Information and Content Expertise** (eg., NGOs, doctors, gov't officials, etc.):

**Assessment/Feedback Mechanisms** (eg., audience comments, observation, producer follow-up, use of services, etc.):

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**Feedforward to Future Programs** (eg., changes in format, reformulation of objectives, etc. based on Feedback):

## ***5-b. Using the Model***

A "Culture of Dialogue and Good Will" crowns this model for conflict resolution communicators. This refers to the relationship of the media organization with its audience and with the key actors and all other parties to the conflict in question. The media organization must be open to listening to and communicating with everyone who wishes involvement in the conflict, and to a responsible, positive expansion of the ensuing dialogue. TDS has engendered a great deal of trust at all levels of the political and social environment in Liberia. This is due to their diligent efforts to monitor current events and the responses of the government, other organizations, and the public. TDS always tries to educate itself well about the events, people, and topics that it covers, and to present its stories with respect for each player and opinion involved. They have established a norm for communication that has made it easier for them to gain the proper entry to a conflict and credibility with all parties. This "culture" is inspired by the long-term goals of conflict resolution.

Beneath the umbrella of culture, the short-term conflict resolution strategies that TDS applies fall into the three general categories of conflict analysis, prevention, and intervention. These strategies are the touchstones that TDS producers return to time and again in their responsive programming approach to media. A facilitated discussion with producers at TDS revealed that they consciously apply these strategies as they develop radio programs and complementary activities.

These first two levels of the model are not the first two chronological considerations for programming. In fact, the culture is cultivated in on-going process that the studio embraces on a constant basis. The short-term strategies of conflict resolution are integral to the more overt processes of formative research that follow.

### *5-b-1. Goals*

Each program or conflict resolution activity is stimulated by the definition of a goal. Sometimes these goals are generated by an outside organization that wants access to media channels. The producers select a goal or goals that fit with the mission and standards of the conflict resolution organization. In the case of TDS, they would not produce a program that promotes the work of a single organization, but might rather feature the work of that same organization within a broader context and in a manner consistent with conflict resolution strategies.

### *5-b-2. Issues and Audiences*

The next step in the model would be to break the goal down in to issues and audiences. Producers usually engage in some form of research at this point. They investigate the topics and issues at hand and the potentially relevant target audience(s). This research can take many forms including interviews, and investigative research. The recent evaluation of TDS revealed a need for TDS to

strengthen its background research for some of its longer, in-depth features for thematic programs. This could be addressed through the use of regular content experts or other specialists for subjects that TDS regularly reports. The research results should lead at this point to the definition and selection of audiences and issues.

### *5-b-3. Objectives*

Producers must then decide the specific objectives that they want to achieve for each audience group. This is another time to reflect upon conflict resolution strategies and for producers to draw upon their training in behavior change and development communication. Each objective will fall into one of three general categories: knowledge, attitudes, and practices and may or may not be amenable to treatment by radio or other intervention strategies. Communication practitioners understand the strengths and limitations of different communication channels in effecting change. They must define objectives that they feel are realistic and then identify the best format and media channel(s) for each. They should include in those objectives the conflict resolution strategies that they will incorporate into the program or related intervention as well.

### *5-b-4. Format and Media Channel(s)*

There are several types of decisions that need to be made at this stage of the program development process. In order to reach the chosen audiences and corresponding objectives, program producers must decide whether a campaign or a single program/series will work best. Then, based on that decision, the choice of curriculum-based versus responsive programming should be made along with a choice of format such as drama, interviews, features, etc. Determination of the media channel(s) and supporting activities (if any) will follow.

The sources of information and content expertise should be identified and contacted throughout the process of program/activity development. Documentation of these resources is important for follow-up and/or future reference.

### *5-b-5. Assessment Mechanisms*

This is the last step of program development although no less important than the others. It allows the organization to determine whether their programs are furthering the cause of peace. Assessing the impact of programs can be as simple as documenting informal audience feedback following the radio broadcast or other activity. It can involve structured interviews or discussions with members of the target audience, or creative measures of listener feedback such as a call for opinions delivered to a TDS mobile unit at the central marketplace on a set afternoon. Mini-surveys, or other forms of data collection such as counting the number of requests for assistance at a mental health clinic after a show

identifying the specific resource are also viable forms of assessment. The point is to identify ways to measure achievement of objectives and to actually conduct the measurements. The benefit of predetermining a methodology for assessment is that it will contribute to more conscientious program development and to the establishment of a system of documentation.

The information generated by program assessment serves multiple purposes as was described in a previous section. For this model, however, the short term objectives of assessment are to provide feedback on progress towards program/activity objectives and to feed information forward into future program decisions. This latter purpose aids continuity of programs and the progression towards long-term organizational objectives. It might, for example, uncover the need to reformulate program objectives, change a format, or to add a target audience. The documentation of audience feedback should serve as a rich source of ideas for immediate or deferred program development.

The assessment process should also serve as an opportunity to verify whether or not conflict resolution strategies are guiding programming. Producers can ask themselves how their program, for example, reduced stress for the audience, or how it modeled cooperative strategies.

Realistically, organizations do not have the financial or human resources to document every aspect of program development and impact. This model provides a framework for program development that engenders a pattern of careful planning and continuous assessment within the context of short and long-term conflict resolution goals and objectives. It can be applied to every program from time-to-time, or for a few programs all the time, until the producers discover patterns of progress, strengths and needs. It is meant to inform and support the work of media practitioners working for peace in whatever form is most efficient, meaningful, and beneficial to them.

## 6. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research mission succeeded in achieving its three major goals: To build upon and expand the already established Rapid Survey Method, to conduct a triangulated conflict mapping and TDS program assessment, and to develop evaluation tools for TDS staff.

The triangulated method that was used in this research proved effective in several ways. First, information from one method was helpful in the design of other methods. A good example was increasing the housewife quota in the audience survey as a result of the information collected in the interviews regarding the significant effects of the war on them. Second, findings from one method were validated from other methods. This was the case when survey respondents listed issues and problems that they suffer from because of the war; these issues corresponded to the issues that were identified during the interviews and facilitated discussions. Third, the findings from one method led to employing a whole new method to validate the findings from the first one. This was the case when the co-evaluators utilized case study techniques to validate information received in the facilitated discussion.

The findings from the conflict mapping provided insights and depth into various elements of the conflict. TDS staff, and others interested in an analysis of the current conflict situation in Liberia could benefit from such information. The conflict mapping revealed the multiplicity of the conflict sources, and the complexity of the ethnic/tribal issue. It also highlighted several current conflict issues: damage to the socio-economic infrastructure, disruption to family and community life, war trauma, ethnic and tribal tension, lack of basic human needs, and government's credibility and effectiveness. The impact of the war on children and women was highlighted along with some of the negative practices that have developed around the misery of women and children, such as the orphanage sham. No doubt the majority of those we spoke to and surveyed felt and acknowledged the silence of guns, but concerns existed regarding a possible re-eruption of violence, and more concerns existed regarding the massive tasks of rebuilding the Liberian people and society.

On the positive side, this research confirmed that the Liberian people's will is alive and strong. Despite the severe effects of the war, people still believe that they have the will to move ahead after the war and to reestablish their society. However, concerns existed about the ability of the current government to carry on the task of rebuilding the Liberian people and society. As to what peace would look like, almost all responses from the audience survey, the interviews and the facilitated workshops echoed the following themes: *better security; less hardship; good governance; restoration of community and family life; basic needs would be met- food, shelter, clothing, health; ethnic differences would be resolved; human rights would be respected; women's roles would be respected; better roads; more jobs; more freedom and safety of movement; improved education; and, more international investment and better relations, especially with the United States.*

TDS programs received high appraisal from all data sources. The audience survey showed that respondents listened frequently to their programs, trusted that TDS programs tell the truth, enjoyed their format, language, and topics, and more profoundly, acknowledged TDS programs' positive impact on their well-being as individuals, and on helping them heal. The case studies revealed the direct causal effect that TDS staff and programs had on making Liberia a safer better place for its own people and for their neighbors. The roles played by TDS staff deserved the recognition of the State Minister that TDS's work is "not regular journalism", but "constructive journalism." The interviews showed that officials and professionals representing various sectors applauded the role played by TDS for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The one expectation from TDS that most respondents and interviewees wished for was for TDS to expand its programming on short wave, to air programs on all radio stations, or to have its own radio station. The consistency across several data sources on the views of TDS programming proved that the high appraisal of its programming was not a mere coincidence.

The analysis of the multiple data sets, and the discussions with the TDS staff, led to the development of the "Responsive Programming." This tool, designed for use by program producers, has several features:

- It can be used for development of curriculum-based program series or for stand-alone/single broadcast programs;
- It is responsive to current events, "the changing anatomy of the conflict";
- It is flexible in both substance (issues, content) and mode (activity, and media channel) so it is able to engage more parties with a range of activities as needed;
- Assessment is conducted continuously for feedback and feed forward (formative evaluation mechanisms are in place to monitor progress, changing needs and context).
- Conflict resolution strategies and principles are the basis for all programs and activities.

The implementation of this tool in everyday programming could lead to better identification of issues, better targeting of audiences, more effective formats, and measurable impact and effects. The flexibility that the tool provides allows for effectively adjusting program objectives and formats in light of clear conflict resolution strategies.

Finally, the following are the recommendations to TDS, based on results from this research mission:

1. There is a great desire in Liberia for increased TDS programming. Interviewees and survey respondents alike voiced the need to expand TDS programs on different waves, other radio stations, and even to consider establishing a TDS radio station.
2. Program formats and delivery methods may benefit from using more interactive methods. Several interviewees and survey respondents

expressed interest in formats such as on-air call-ins, discussion, and street interviews.

3. Women's responses to TDS program effectiveness were less enthusiastic than men's. This was true whenever a significant difference existed between men and women on the audience survey. Such a matter requires further research and investigation, which could benefit from a series of dialogues with women and TDS staff.
4. Issues of hardship and poverty were among the top problems that most people faced as a result of war. However, there is not sufficient programming addressing these issues. The TDS audience could benefit from programs that would ease their hardship. This could be accomplished in several ways. Addressing these issues via radio programs requires listening to the audience and discussing their needs and the type of programming that could benefit them.
5. The issues of tribalism and ethnicity received the lowest scores in terms of their coverage and their effectiveness. These issues, also, seemed to trouble most interviewees and participants in facilitated discussions. TDS could benefit from a re-evaluation of programming on such issues.
6. Certain programs contain information on health and other specialized matters. These programs could benefit from more consultation with content experts in these fields to insure the accuracy of information, to enable more in-depth coverage, and to stay abreast on current issues that could help the audience.
7. Introduce new program ideas that are important to certain segments of the society. Examples of that are food waste and storage issues, the orphanage sham, and interfaith themes.
8. Utilize the Responsive Programming tool to develop and assess the effectiveness of different programs and to make necessary adjustments to topics and formats within a clear conflict resolution strategy.

# **ATTACHMENT 1: CASE STUDIES**

(See attached documents)

## **ATTACHMENT 2: FACILITATED DISCUSSION WITH TDS STAFF**

(See attached documents)

## **ATTACHMENT 3: FACILITATED DISCUSSION WITH TDS STAFF #2**

(See attached documents)

## **ATTACHMENT 4: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS**

(See attached documents)