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Strategic Policy Impact and Research Unit

Diasporas: Doing Development or Part of Development

A study of two Sierra Leonean diaspora organisations in London

Charlotte Heath

SPIRU Working Paper 24

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Acronyms

AFFORD	African Foundation for Development
APC	All People's Congress
AU	African Union
CAPPS	Centre for African Policy and Peace Strategy
CBO	Community Based Organisation
DFID	UK Department for International Development
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
HTA	Hometown Association
KDDA	Kono District Development Association
KDU	Kono Development Union
KONDU	Kono District Development Union
KSU	Kono Students Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PMDC	People's movement for Democratic Change
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SEEDA	Supporting Entrepreneurs and Enterprise Development in Africa
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
UN	United Nations

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Since finishing the research in June 2007 free and fair elections took place in August 2007 and a new government, the All Peoples Congress Party (with President Koroma), installed.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The assumption being tested in this study is that diaspora organisations can be positive drivers of social, political and economic development in their countries of origin. This paper presents a case study of two Sierra Leone diaspora organisations based in London; the District Development Association (KDDA) and the Kono Development Union (KDU).

Migration research has tended to focus on the role that individual migrants play in generating vast flows of remittances to and within developing countries, the economic benefits of remittances, and the problems of the ‘brain-drain’. Less attention has been paid to the role of diasporas in development. This is now being addressed in a context where migration as a social process and development issue has gained legitimacy Remittances can reduce poverty at a household level, but there are other ways in which diasporas influence development.

Although, there is a growing literature on diasporas in the social sciences and humanities, only recently has an interest in policies that address diasporas in the context of migration and development started to emerge (DFID published a new policy paper, a global first, on migration and development in 2007). In the past research has focused more on the social processes around the act of moving from one country to another and how this impacts on countries and individuals (Mohan, 2003: 612). More recently research has turned its attention towards understanding diasporas as politically important (Vertovec, 2005) and migrants as people engaged in transnational ways of being, as well as belonging (Levitt, 2004). This is less about the migration terminology of integration, return, remittances and brain drain, and more about the concept of circulation, in which migrants, as part of diasporic communities, move between countries rather than belonging in one place or the other.

On the other hand the dual political loyalties, and multiple identities suggested by diasporas can also fuel fears of terrorism, money laundering and other invisible ‘dangers’. However, it is important to recognise that in reality loyalty to both new country and homeland need not be incompatible. The challenge to governments and development agencies is to use the resources and skills that migrants acquire in different contexts to address issues in both countries, in a way that has a positive influence on development.

International flows of remittances and remittance mechanisms have always occupied economists and policy makers but now developing country governments are also paying attention to them. Remittance flows into countries like Ghana now contribute at least 13% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP); this coupled to the dual citizenship rights granted to the diaspora by the Government of Ghana in 2002, means that migrants can now be significant stakeholders in their country. Rather than referring to the diaspora as ‘unpatriotic’, the state is now busy building up forms of association in order to capture the energies and resources of ‘their’ migrants for national development (Mohan, 2006: 880). In his inaugural speech in 2002, the Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki appealed to all Kenyans outside Kenya ‘to join us in nation-building’, and the new Tanzanian president, Kikwete, is also starting to move in this direction (Page, pers. Comm., 2007). In 2002 the Government of India released a report on the role of diasporas in development which recommended:

> ‘a new policy framework for creating a more conducive environment in India to leverage these invaluable human resources’.

The Eritrean government has sought ways to intensify its relationship with the Diaspora including levying a voluntary tax equivalent to 2% of annual income and extending voting rights for overseas citizens. And a recent World Bank Report '*International Migration, Remittances and the Brain Drain*' (October 2005) also suggests that understanding the nature of transnational diaspora communities is one of the single most urgent needs for development agencies and governments.

The complex networks of circular connections between diasporas and countries of origin are largely created by individuals and groups acting on their own initiative, or through a sense of obligation (Mohan, 2006). One type of group engagement, particularly in West Africa, is through Hometown Associations (HTAs) that support the regions or cities that migrants come from as well as providing a sense of community amongst migrants from a similar background. This collective approach offers significant potential for making a positive contribution to development in home countries beyond remittances. This paper aims to contribute to the growing understanding of how diasporas organise themselves for collective action, and the impacts this has on development in their country of origin.

Development analysts and policy makers are starting to acknowledge that transnational diasporas can be important development actors in their countries of origin (Newland, 2003: 3). At the same time leading development agencies such as DFID who are aware of the development potential of diasporas, can be wary of their heterogeneity, the informal messiness of their groupings, their perceived lack of legitimacy, for instance whom and what do they represent, and doubts about their political affiliations (Chikezie and Thakrar, 2005). Transnational diaspora groups are not the same as international NGOs (non governmental organisations). They are made up of volunteers and have a distinctive approach: they are ordinary people, many working as care workers, social workers, nurses, lecturers, or joiners, plumbers and so on, and they do not have specialist knowledge of development, but are motivated by their concerns for development and poverty in their countries of origin. Although their activities have been described as somewhat ad hoc, they nevertheless find all sorts of 'every day' ways to send money home, share ideas, support projects, and campaign for changes (Chikezie and Thakar, 2005). This same report also suggests that many diaspora groups feel that the contribution they make to international development goes unrecognised. At the same time there seems to be a mismatch between what official donors are doing and what diaspora groups think is needed. Many believe that money provided via official channels is too often lost to corruption, and this criticism is particularly sharp from the politically active diasporas who are challenging their current governments.

This paper argues that diaspora organisations and their activities are part and parcel of the development process and that their role has been obscured by the predominance of an approach to development that has tended to focus on the state and official mechanisms for delivering development at the expense of informal social networks and mechanisms. The paper discusses the definition of 'diasporas' and 'transnationalism' and explains what a Hometown Association (HTA) is. It then looks briefly at diasporas in the African context, with some history and background to Sierra Leone where this case study is situated. The case study of the two diaspora organisations with roots in Sierra Leone follows: the Kono District Development Association (KDDA) and Kono District Union (KDU). The final section draws out the conclusions and implications for policy makers.

Chapter 2: Diasporas, transnationalism, hometown associations (HTAs), citizenship and identities

Diasporas are distinguished from other transnational movements by the fact that members hold shared cultural values, and maintain a consciousness of, or an emotional attachment to common origins and the collective memory and dream of their homeland. At the same time it is important to remember that not all those living outside their country of origin see themselves as being part of a diaspora – so in order to have any real meaning membership needs to be self-ascribed (Vertovec, in MPI, 2005: 2). All the Sierra Leoneans living in London who contributed to this paper identified themselves as members of the diaspora.

The concept of transnationalism combined with diaspora is a useful way of understanding the role of diasporas and a transnational diaspora organisation such as the one in this case study. To be transnational means to belong to two or more societies at the same time. So not everyone in the diaspora is part of a transnational community in the sense of being actively interested or engaged in, the politics or development of their country of origin, but transnational communities arise within diasporas. Transnationalism and identity are inherently connected. This is because many migrants choose to become part of transnational networks based on a perception of common values and identity that are often linked to place of origin and language. The identities therefore of many of those individuals and groups involved are negotiated within social worlds that span more than one country (Vertovec, 2001: 573). Levitt (2004: 2) puts the challenge very clearly:

> 'a transnational lens, then, is both a perspective and a variable. It departs from a different set of assumptions about social organisation than those usually employed by social scientists and policy makers. It locates migrants within social fields that combine several national territories rather than expecting them to move back and forth between two impermeable nation-states, and exchange one national identity for another'.

Many of the London-based Sierra Leonean migrants who contributed to this paper identified themselves as having lives that are transnational. Through being a member of a HTA some are engaged in political and development activities between and in two countries at the same time, and some are not. Others were part of these HTAs as well as belonging to the UK branches of the various Sierra Leonean political parties. In Sierra Leone, as in other places such as Eritrea, some of these activities may have negative impacts on political stability as individuals use their relative security as a cover to rebuild their own political projects (Page, pers. comm. April 2007). In many cases it would appear that individuals as well as groups are part of political and social communities that are being constructed across national boundaries.

Beyond the individual and family ties there is a range of organisations to which migrants can belong. They can be focused on place or ethnic origin, or as affiliates of political parties, faith groups, professional associations, alumni associations, charitable foundations, development NGOs, schools and clubs. Even though many of these organisations do not have developmental or poverty reduction objectives they may still have a developmental impact.

A common kind of organisation in West Africa (also South America) is the HTA. These are organisations that link migrants from the same city or region in their home country and enable them to maintain ties and support development back home. HTAs generally have an

elected Chair and board, and are entirely voluntary. The motivations of members to contribute will vary but may include self-interest economically or politically, altruistic concerns for poverty reduction, social pressures, a desire to return at some point, and access to networks in both countries. In addition to socialising and supporting each other during crises, their main activity is fund-raising to support development of their home area often through the promotion of health and education activities, or in response to crises and natural disasters such as the war in Sierra Leone and the earthquake in Pakistan. At the same time these activities generate a sense of community amongst different generations of migrants in their new country, and 'represent a transnational identity rooted as much in the migrant's country of origin as in the migrant's adopted home' (Orozco and Rouse, 2007).

Status and citizenship is important to the Sierra Leoneans who were involved in this research in different ways, in London and in Sierra Leone. As a relational concept between the state and its citizens, it is worth pausing to reflect on what being a citizen might mean for those living transnational lives. 'The state-centric study of citizen engagements is increasingly outdated as the power and authority once held exclusively by the state is fragmented among global, transnational and local actors' (Gaventa and Tandon, 2006: 1). This fragmentation of power and authority opens up new opportunities and challenges in a transnational social field, for citizens to engage politically. Migrant access to voting rights in their country of origin or dual citizenship enables them to influence politics back home as genuine stakeholders – although this legitimacy is questioned by those Sierra Leoneans who stayed in the country, it is highly valued by those living in London. On a more practical note citizenship status may increase the likelihood of migrants investing back in their home country, and as the Ghana case illustrates, it increases the interest of governments in 'their' diaspora' as a political constituency.

The Sierra Leoneans who stayed 'at home' feel that those in the UK need to legitimise their right to return as citizens of Sierra Leone – and that this should be 'earned' through demonstrating support, and building up credibility and trust. One woman youth worker in Sierra Leone said that 'when our people have dual citizenship they come back more frequently, and they take more interest in what is going on here'. Others in local NGOs feel that 'citizens of our country, wherever they are, need to challenge – to hold our government accountable for service provision and use of the budget', and that 'the diaspora has a role in putting pressure on stakeholders in both Koidu and Kono District – they should develop the sort of communication channels that will enable them to do that – and exert pressure, particularly as they can now vote as citizens'. Several Sierra Leoneans in London said that immigration rules were an issue and that without legal status as UK citizens it is very difficult for migrants to join any formal organisation such as a HTA, or to feel secure enough to maintain and develop the links with their home country which would enable them, as individuals to feel they 'belong' to two places.

Diasporas are fragile, transnational communities whose members are often balancing multiple identities. Sierra Leonean migrants and their children have a number of options open to them; some may choose to belong to a transnational diaspora, some may not; they can return to their 'homeland'; or they can move elsewhere in the UK or internationally. Depending on how they identify themselves at any one time, they may constantly need to reassess their relationship with the diaspora, the original homeland, and their new home. The question of identity is an important part of understanding both the positive and negative experiences of diaspora involvement in development. It is important to understand the motivations behind the developmental factors that have generated the diaspora – in the case of Sierra Leone many left to find a good education during the 1950s; poor governance drove others out during the 1970s and 1980s; others left in the early 1990s at the start of the

war; and more left during the war having witnessed appalling atrocities. Diasporas form for different reasons and the motivations of those involved have implications for their social composition, and on the type of developmental activity they engage in (Turton, Mohan et al, 2002).

For many Sierra Leoneans primary political identification does not lie with the ethnic group or the chiefdom, but with social networks tied to particular settlements and neighbourhoods (*DFID Drivers of Change Report*, 2006). In the case of the Kono tribe, the tribal boundary coincides with the physical boundary of Kono District. This identification with place and tribe is one of the strengths of the KDDA and KDU, but also leaves them vulnerable to Sierra Leone style patronage networks that have developed in London amongst the less powerful tribal groups by those seeking power within the diaspora. On an individual level one woman respondent was a Resettlement Case Administrator in the London probation service, Chair of a Sierra Leonean political party in London, a Kono tribe member, a UK citizen, a Londoner, and a voting Sierra Leonean – she is also the mother of two boys who do not know Sierra Leone, the wife of a London Labour Councillor (originally from Sierra Leone), and she has a father who lives in Freetown. This is a good example of living with multiple identities and belongings.

Chapter 3: Diasporas and development: Perspectives from Africa

It is important to locate this case study within the international and African Union's (AU) approach to the emerging role of African diasporas, and the current debate on diasporas and development being led primarily by a number of London-based pan-African think tanks.

The International Organization for Migration estimates that there are a least 3.6 million Africans living in the 'new' diaspora. At the African Diaspora Forum in 2006, the United Nations (UN) Special Adviser on Africa defined the 'old' diaspora as those whose forebears left Africa over 250 years ago, and the 'new' diaspora as those who left after the Second World War for political, cultural or economic reasons. The latter group is the group who maintain the closest ties with countries of origin, but both have a common interest in development in Africa.

There is growing recognition internationally of the diaspora's contribution and its role as key stakeholder in Africa's development. A number of national governments such as those of South Africa (www.homecomingrevolution.co.za), Ghana and Nigeria have already convened annual 'homecoming' events with their diaspora and many have established institutional mechanisms within their governments for increased interaction with it. The AU defines the African diaspora as 'consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the AU. It acknowledges the Diaspora as an important stakeholder in Africa's development by referring to it as the 'Sixth Region' of Africa. In addition to two seats within the AU parliament there are 20 seats reserved for diaspora organisations on the AU's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).

One of the recurrent outcomes of the 2005 *Agenda for Africa* following the G8 (Group of Eight) meeting in Gleneagles, was the exclusion of the voice and views of the African diaspora from the policy discourse on the continent's development (Centre for African Policy and Peace Strategy (CAPPS), 2006). Those in the diaspora say they are often excluded not by choice but because they need to be better organised, more visible, more strategic and more focused on articulating their views in a way that enables those views to feed substantially into the policy discourse. The CAPPS report (2006) suggests that many feel their influence is limited by a weak funding base and organisational capacity. At a pan-African level, diaspora groups based in the UK such as AFFORD (African Foundation for Development), AfricaRecruit, ADVAD (African Diaspora Voices for Africa's Development), and CAPPS are trying to change this. They are attempting to be more effective advocates for the better use of skilled Africans in supporting development within Africa through building up best practice in exchanges, volunteering, training and mentoring programmes, and advocacy on these issues within the UK in key departments such as the Department of Health and DFID. However there seems to be a gap between these increasingly effective pan-African groups and the smaller transnational diaspora groups such as HTAs. Many of these HTAs, including the Sierra Leonean ones featured in this paper, are not aware of, or linked in to, the pan-African groups, or necessarily to each other. Indeed they may choose not to be. And there are other 'gaps', for instance organisations like DFID find it easier to engage with pan-African organisations that are perceived to be politically neutral, than with national or sub-national diaspora organisations because these have a much more political agenda or are linked to a particular political party.

But this is not the whole story. Other changes need to take place – a paradigm shift is required in north-south power relations and in global and local structures of governance and accountability. One of the challenges for diaspora groups has been identified (Oyewale, Mniki, CAPPS 2006).

> 'changing the donor approach to recognise and support African diaspora organisations as stakeholders and valuable contributors to Africa's development'.

The challenge for policy makers is to find ways of enabling the resources and skills that migrants acquire in different contexts to address development in both country of settlement and origin, in a way that has a positive influence. Policy makers must also look for means of engaging with national and sub-national diaspora without accusations of having a party political agenda.

Chapter 4: Methodology

It was initially decided to focus this research on a Sierra Leonean diaspora group known as the Kono Development Union (KDU). However, then it was discovered that there were two organisations rather than one, and that the KDU was in fact a smaller, more recently formed and more progressive splinter group of the Kono District Development Association (KDDA). Both are based in London and the Kono District in Eastern Sierra Leone.

The aim was to produce a qualitative study that increases understanding about whether, how, and in what way HTAs contribute to social and political development in their country of origin. As discussed in the previous sections development can take place through a number of channels – social, political, institutional and economic. This paper will focus on the first three as this is where research is scant.

How social and political structures, ethnicity and gender influence the way in which these HTAs are formed, how they operate, and what they are able to do was explored. The intent was to increase the understanding of the role that transnational diaspora communities have in development, particularly in a context in where development agencies and governments are thinking about how or whether to engage more with them. In order to address these issues the field research focused on four questions:

> What sort of processes and institutions are involved?
> Who is involved in HTAs and why?
> What form do their activities take?
> Who benefits?

Semi-structured interview material for individual and/or focus group discussions in Sierra Leone and the UK was prepared. Three weeks was spent in Sierra Leone in Koidu and Kono District and 25 semi-structured interviews and a number of focus group discussions were held with a range of representatives in local government, traditional authorities, church groups, as well as community based and district wide organisations, and with those who had been involved with KDDA and KDU activities. This was followed by 15 interviews and several focus group discussions in London with members of the KDDA, the KDU, Southwark Council, and pan-African NGOs. Key contacts in London provided a list of individuals to contact in Koidu, Kono District, and London. This process 'snowballed' as the contacts given led to further contacts in both London and Koidu

In making sense of the analysis I found it helpful to bear in mind Mohan's (2002:104) threefold classification for exploring the positive links between diasporas and development:

> Development 'in' diaspora – how people in diasporic communities use their localised diasporic connections within the host country to secure economic and social well being – and as a by-product, contribute to the development of their locality, (in place).
> Development 'through' the diaspora – how diasporic communities use their diffuse global connections beyond the locality to facilitate economic and social well being, (through space).
> Development 'by' the diaspora – how diasporic flows and continued connections 'back home' facilitate the development – and, sometimes, creation – of these 'homelands', (across space).

The focus of this paper will primarily be on the third category.

Chapter 5: Sierra Leone case study

5.1 The context: Sierra Leone and its diaspora

Sierra Leone is a small country with a population of just over five million. In 2006 it was ranked 176 out of 177 countries in the UN Human Development Index (HDI). 70% of the population live below the poverty line and 26% of the population live in extreme poverty. Life expectancy is 41 years (the eighth lowest in the world) and the maternal mortality ratio and child mortality rates are the worst in the world.

Sierra Leone was chosen as the case study country because it is a fragile state and has a significant diaspora both living and working abroad. The total numbers are difficult to pin down but according to UN figures, it is estimated that during the war approximately 30% of the educated nationals left for other countries, mainly the US, the UK and mainland Europe. This is in addition to those that left throughout the difficulties of the 1970s and 80s. It is believed that the UK holds the biggest number of Sierra Leoneans, with an estimated figure of 100, 000 people (2002). Most of these are concentrated in London's Borough of Southwark.

This level of migration has brought a significant increase in remittances to Sierra Leone, especially from nationals living in the West. Arguably, remittances have become the main source of aid in Sierra Leone.

The conflict between 1991 and 2002 has shaped the country's current social and economic situation – the war paralysed the economy, caused the collapse of public services, destroyed the country's infrastructure, and incapacitated government institutions. Up to two million people, around half the country's population, were displaced. UN figures from 2002, show that there are over 83,000 Sierra Leoneans refugees in Guinea, over 37, 000 in Liberia, 7,000 in the Gambia and 2,000 each in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria. Most of these have now returned. The causes of the conflict are well documented, complex and contested (Richards, 1996, 2006 and Keen, 2005).

Although the war exacerbated the problems in the country, there had been many signs that the economy was close to, or even at a point of collapse long before the war started. The roots of the conflict are to be found in poor governance – centralised power, the absence of accountability in a co-opted civil service and endemic corruption – which together with strong patronage networks that supported political power, led to an increasingly marginalised and alienated citizenship, particularly among young people. Although there have been some improvements including decentralisation and a growing recognition of the need to reform the chieftaincy system, many of the root causes of the conflict remain.

In terms of post war reconstruction and recovery it is significant that a large proportion of the best educated (the country had a good reputation for education by Christian and Muslim missions during the 1960's) people left the country during the difficulties of the 1970s, 1980s and more recently during the early years of the war. Many of these can be termed the missing 'middle' class.

Sierra Leone is a small post-conflict and fragile state, and this section provides a very brief background to developments which have informed and shaped the two diaspora organisations of interest in this paper.

5.2 Sierra Leone diaspora

Significant percentages of national populations live outside their country of origin and this is particularly the case in low income, post-conflict and fragile states, such as Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone diaspora is a large one and has been growing since the mid 1950s – although the reasons for leaving have changed. In the 1950s and 60s it was for quality of education, during the 1970s poor governance was the reason coupled in the 1980s with a down turn in the economy. Many professional and skilled people left the country in the early 1990s as a result of the conflict, and few have returned. The joint European Commission/DFID Strategy paper for Sierra Leone refers to this as 'post-conflict brain drain' – also known as Sierra Leone's 'missing middle' (class).

The make-up of the Sierra Leonean diaspora is a repository of a lot of the country's political history, since becoming a member of the diaspora can reflect careful investment of social capital in networks by political elites (Richards, pers. comm., 2007). For example, many of those who left during the first Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) period of government (1961–7) and the All Peoples Congress (APC) period in government (1969–91) are in London, but many of the more recent migrants can be found in the US (in particular the state of Maryland, where many National Provisional Ruling Congress dependents and loyalists can also be found). The Netherlands and Belgium are particularly strong in diamond-linked diaspora groupings such as the Konos and 'Sierra Leoneans' of Guinean or Senegambian origin (Richards, pers. comm., 2007). This suggests that any generalisations about what the diaspora can or will do for development will be shaped by their reasons for leaving in the first place, and their motivations or feeling of obligation about belonging or returning.

However there are some unifying factors – those in the diaspora have a generally higher level of education than those back home, and they are a relatively prosperous group. Large numbers return home on an annual basis mainly during at Christmas and Easter, and significant numbers regularly send home remittances. Every school has an alumni association abroad, and most provinces, major towns and villages have descendents' associations abroad, and in addition most mosques and churches in the major cities and the capital have associations dedicated to ensuring their upkeep. There are many diaspora organisations in the UK, but it seems that they seldom work together on achieving change in Sierra Leone (Chikezie and Daramy, 2006). There are however a couple of interesting examples of shared advocacy campaigns that have been effective. The first is a high profile campaign that successfully brought pressure to bear on Members of Parliament in Sierra Leone to get the law amended to allow dual citizenship. The second was a campaign called '*Jus Gi We De Light*' that focused on the lack of attention being given to power supplies in the capital (Chikezie and Daramy, 2006).

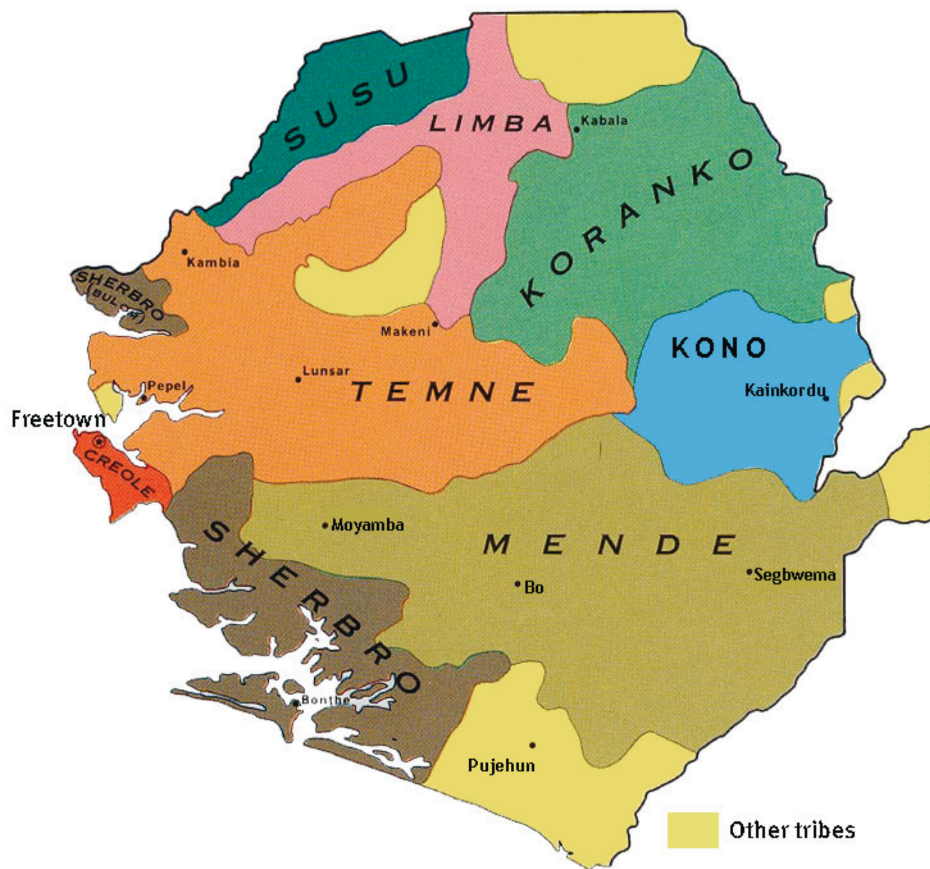
5.3 The Case Study: KDDA and KDU

Figure 1: The Case Study: Kono Development Union and the Kono District Development Association

The Kono District is situated in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone, with Koidu as its capital. The population of Kono is around 454,000 people (2004 census). The district is the largest diamond producer in Sierra Leone, and other primary economic activities include gold mining and agriculture, particularly rice, coffee and cacao production. Over 94% of the infrastructure in the district was destroyed during the ten year war which was centered on this area. Koidu, the fourth largest city in Sierra Leone, was devastated by the war and continuously looted. War-torn buildings are still very evident and the roads remain dusty tracks. Koidu is about six hours drive from Freetown on a good tarmac road as far as Makeni – thereafter it is potholed. There are around 112,000 residents (2005 census) in Koidu which is the centre of the diamond mining. During the peace process the town has become little more than a huge diamond mine, but locally there are efforts to rebuild farming-based livelihoods, and take advantage of profitable sales of foodstuff to miners. Seasonal mining combined with farming is still carried out but there are concerns that farm labour has been reduced with youths leaving agriculture in the belief that they will find more lucrative work as full time miners (Maconachie and Binns, 2007). Local government and people have yet to reap the benefits of the diamond trade in what has been until recently a largely unregulated and exploitative industry.

There are sixteen tribal groups in Sierra Leone. The Eastern Province, Kono District, where this research was carried out is primarily populated by Kono people alongside Mende, Temne, Madingo and Kissis.

Figure 2: Tribal groups in the Eastern Province, Kono District



The Kono District Development Association (KDDA) grew out of the humanitarian efforts of the Kono people in the UK and US diasporas during the decade of conflict, in which the violence was concentrated in the South and East, notably in Kono District. This was partly because of the presence of diamonds but also owing to the proximity of the Liberian border where incursions began in 1991. By 1994 hundreds were fleeing or being expelled from Kono District and particularly Koidu (central to the diamond trade), which by then was more or less controlled by rebel forces, known as the Revoluntionary United Front (RUF). The RUF was a force made of up armed men who originally moved into Sierra Leone from Liberia – it included some Liberian rebels (National Patriotic Front of Liberia), mercenaries from Burkino Faso, and some Sierra Leonean dissidents. Although Sierra Leoneans were not a majority in the RUF at the beginning, by 1992 this had changed – Liberians and those from Burkino Faso had withdrawn – leaving the majority Sierra Leoneans. Despite their ideological claims, RUF attacks and atrocities against civilians continued – and many people, including those from Kono ended up as internally displaced persons in camps to the west and in Freetown, or managed as best they could on their own, or crossed into Guinea as refugees (Keen , 2005).

The Kono diaspora in London is made up of a complex web of inter-related individuals most of whom belong to the KDDA and the KDU. These two organisations are open to all who are Kono people (by tribe) or those from other tribal groups who live in the Kono District (by place).

It has not been easy to understand the complexities of the relationships and layers of political and individual ambitions that exist within the Sierra Leone diaspora in such a short space of time, but what follows is an account of how the KDDA and the KDU splinter

group have emerged and evolved over the last 15 years, and what this has meant for the shape of the organisations and their development aspirations.

The KDDA, was set up in the UK in 1992 by a number of committed individuals who left Sierra Leone in the early 1990s. The KDDA evolved from the Kono Students Union (KSU) that had been in existence since the 1950s. The KSU was set up as a network to help Kono students in the UK keep in touch with each other – at the time many students in the UK were on scholarships provided by the National Diamond Mining Company in Kono. The KSU was not particularly active but it helped bring Kono people in London together. In 1992 there was an influx of migrants coming to study in the UK which coincided with the worsening conflict in Sierra Leone. Many of these students decided not to return as the situation in Kono District deteriorated.

In 1992 the war was the catalyst for the establishment of the Kono District Development Association (KDDA). Kono people in the UK (and US) wanted to provide humanitarian help and respond to the suffering of the Kono people during the decade of conflict. The violence was concentrated in the south and east, particularly in the Kono District. The urgent need to provide support to the Kono people and for reconstruction in the region during and following the conflict, focused the minds of Kono people living in the UK. They were further spurred into action by the influx of Kono people to the UK during the early 1990s having direct experience of the horrors of the conflict.

In 1992 the name of the KSU was changed to the Kono District Development Association (KDDA) with a constitution, an elected executive committee and a Chair. Their first task was to put together (with the help of all associations and organisations) and publish a Directory of the names and addresses of all Kono people living in the UK and Ireland (and Europe and the US). There are currently around 800 entries.

During the 1990s, back in Sierra Leone, an organisation known as KONDU (the Kono District Development Union) was started in Freetown in response to the deteriorating situation in Kono District. Its constitution, dated 1994, included Kono people and other people living in the Kono District, and Kono people and those interested in the Kono District living outside Sierra Leone. It is worth mentioning at this point that many of the people involved in KONDU are currently involved politically or as social activists or Council members in Koidu and have links to the KDDA in London. During the conflict KONDU acted as a conduit for much of the help coming in from the global Kono diaspora – which included the KDDA in the UK and the US Kono Group. As people fled their homes and villages in the Kono District, the Kono diaspora focused on trying to keep track of their relatives and getting assistance to them. By 1999 the situation had further deteriorated and an ad hoc committee, the Kono District Emergency Task Force, was established in Freetown to deal with the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Kono District – Kono's Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the refugees in Guinea. The Emergency Task Force worked in the interests of the displaced, particularly orphans and for those still in Kono, particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly who could not leave. Some of the $3,000 sent from the US Kono diaspora was used to buy food and to employ the Sierra Leonean broadcasting service to make a video of the destruction in Koidu. It was called '*Koidu After the Return of the AFRC*' (Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and was played on Sierra Leone TV (and seen by people in Freetown, the UK, and elsewhere including Libya. This was how some people learned that their houses had been destroyed. In London a representative of the KDDA accompanied a container load of goods to Freetown, and oversaw the distribution of the items to people (often youths) to carry over the Guinea border to the refugees. The lives of many were saved by those in the diaspora

who sent money (on an individual to individual basis) to help pay for rented accommodation in Freetown, buy food, and to cover school fees to ensure their children's education could continue. Some in the diaspora even paid for their relatives to get out by helicopter.

Soon after the current SLPP government was elected in 2000, Aiah Abu Koroma was brought in from the Democratic Change Party (DCP) and made Minister for Political and Parliamentary Affairs. Abu Koroma was a Kono Statesman and the DCP was widely regarded as a 'Kono' party. Shortly after this the government accused the Kono District Emergency Task Force of having a political agenda and supporting Koroma, and the government decided to act against it. At this point eight of the original KONDU members decided to leave and re-establish themselves again as KONDU with their own political agenda. By all accounts Abu Koroma had been very inspirational in keeping the Kono people together during the war and had played a catalytic role in getting the original KONDU established. By 2002 sufficient funds had come in from the US to establish a KONDU office in Freetown, and members of the KDDA (in London) came over to support the opening event. At the same time a youth wing called the Movement of Concerned Kono Youths (MOCKY) was established to help distribute assistance to the IDPs. At the time MOCKY, currently active in Koidu and now part of the Youth Alliance, was the only group advocating on behalf of youth. When the war ended in 2002 people started returning to Kono, so the new KONDU office was never put into use, and KONDU died a natural death.

KONDU: Kono District Development Union – established in Freetown during the early days of the war to help Kono people.

KSU: Kono Student Union – has existed in the UK since the 1950's and was established to support Kono students in the UK.

KDDA: Kono District Development Association – was the renamed KSU and was established in 1992 in London at the start of the war to help Kono people wherever they were.

KDU: Kono Development Union – started to break away from the KDDA in 2003 and established itself formally as a splinter group in 2007.

After the conflict ended in 2002 KDDA members in London refocused their attention from humanitarian work to development projects aimed at helping reconstruction across the Kono District. Various groups within the KDDA were sending donations of text books and individuals were sponsoring whole families to resettle and the rebuilding of schools. Some of this was done collectively through the KDDA in the form of scholarships that targeted a small number of the most disadvantaged children including girls, who were selected with the help of the local Chiefs and Education Department.

In 2002 the KDDA in London invited the Mayor (a woman) of Koidu and head of the town Management Committee (it became a City Council later that year) to talk to Kono people in London about health priorities in Kono District. The Mayor was aware of Sierra Leone's high rate of maternal and child mortality, and she used this opportunity to highlight the urgent need for a training school for health workers in the Kono District Government Hospital. The KDDA agreed to support this project and succeeded in raising funds totalling £5,000. Various events were held by the KDDA to raise these funds including the viewing in London of a video of conditions in the hospital made by a KDDA member (also a UK Labour Councillor) and his wife (a Resettlement Case Administrator in the Probation

Service, former Chair of KDU and currently Chair of the UK People's movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) opposition party).

By 2002/3 it was clear that differences on governance issues within the KDDA were coming to a head. By the end of 2003 the organisation had split and a break away group of 28 people set up the KDU, and made history by appointing their first woman Chair – a North Londoner who was an active, dynamic and committed member that supported social and economic development in the region. KDU members were deeply concerned about lack of accountability and transparency within the KDDA, and possible misappropriation of funds. This led to a decision in 2003, by the KDU, to take the £5,000 donation out of the KDDA bank account and entrust it to the Mayor of Koidu to ensure that it was used for the intended purpose. The Mayor changed the money into Euros and set up an account to which she and the Chair of the Paramount Chiefs (in Sierra Leone, Paramount Chiefs are nonpartisan MPs – there are between 10 and 15 of them) are signatories.

This decision was made by the KDU before the split with the KDDA was formalised – it led to a lot of confusion on all sides as to who 'owned' the donation and who should control it. This remains unresolved. In Koidu there were arguments between the Paramount Chiefs and the Local Councils, and between the Local Councils – complicated by the fact that the donation was for the district hospital which is the responsibility of the District Council but is situated in the town. In London it was a major point of disagreement between the KDDA and the KDU along with accusations of corruption. As a result the donation remains unspent (in 2007) because no-one can decide who has the right to spend it. The KDU's decision to hand the donation to the Mayor of Koidu and effectively empower her to control how it was spent upset a number of local male officials. This was partly because Kono men hold strong views on the position of women and whether they should be involved in decision making at all, and partly because some thought the responsibility should have gone to the new head of the District Council. As a result the life of the Mayor, a highly respected and powerful woman leader, has been made very difficult, and almost cost her job. But as she says herself she achieved her aim which was to ensure accountability to the donors/KDDA and KDU members for the donation.

Many of the 28 members of the Kono Development Union (KDU) feel that the parent group or KDDA has become too politicised over the last couple of years, and that the purpose of the Association is being abused by those seeking power for themselves. The KDDA is the largest global Kono organisation so the position of Chair for instance is potentially quite influential. Respondents were aware that some of those holding positions have sought to buy off weaker groups within the KDDA in order to gain or retain positions of power. Some feel that these issues are diverting the KDDA from its development objectives and holding it back from addressing real issues in Kono District. The head of the KDDA, an SLPP supporter with political ambitions, has refused to address issues of missing funds and patronage networks. Bi-annual elections to elect a new Chair have not been carried out regularly, and in an effort to get things back on track the current incumbent who has been there seven years has now been asked to step down by the board.

Although the KDDA would like to be considered politically neutral this does not necessarily mean that members (most of whom are SLPP) take an inclusive approach to those who support other parties. The KDU is more inclusive but is predominantly made up of PMDC supporters. The fact that the head of KDU was also the Chair of the PMDC party in London for nine months led to the KDU being perceived by those in Koidu as synonymous with the PMDC. This situation mirrors the lack of tolerance to any opposition

in Sierra Leone, an intolerance that was particularly acute in Koidu in the run up to elections.

There are currently eight registered parties for the upcoming elections in August 2007. The three main ones are the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), the APC, and the People's movement for Democratic Change (PMDC).

Currently neither the District nor the Town Councils have any formal relationship with the KDDA or KDU, but the head of the District Council (an SLPP supporter) said he would welcome it. He noted that it would make things easier for the councils if the KDDA and KDU could come together as one organisation. The KDU have since decided to step back from their work with the Mayor, their key partner, and the City Council for two reasons. The first is because of the £5,000 donation debacle and the perception of the Mayor's involvement in it and support for the PMDC – the Mayor is actually an SLPP supporter, but as leaders of SLPP installed Councils, the heads of both Councils are expected to support the government. The second reason is that the head of the KDU realised that her additional role as Chair of the PMDC party was untenable and unhelpful. She accepted that if she remained head of the KDU, any further involvement of the KDU in development activities in Kono District this side of the elections in August (2007) would lead to confusion and misinterpretations. This led to her decision to resign in early June and to commit herself fully to the PMDC party in London. Several respondents referred to the instrumental role played by these two women – the Mayor of Koidu and the head of the KDU – in keeping development firmly on the agenda of the KDDA and KDU by bringing the needs of the people in Kono to what they referred to as 'the boys' meetings in London and Koidu. At the time of this research, just before elections, politics and development were inseparable and dominated the operations of both organisations.

Another interesting strand of activity is between Koidu Town Council and the KDU in London. The UK's first African born Mayor of Southwark in 2003/04 was originally from Sierra Leone. His parents were from the Mende tribe but lived in Kono District. His political sympathies in Sierra Leone lie with the PMDC opposition party. Southwark Council has a policy on international development and is committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In this context the Mayor saw an opportunity to make links with a developing country such as Sierra Leone, and developed a Southwark-Koidu business and entrepreneurial partnership through the UK Local Government initiative. As well as delivering benefits for Koidu, he recognised that it would also offer benefits to people in the Borough which has the highest concentration of Sierra Leoneans and other Africans in the UK. In 2004 he invited the Mayor of Koidu to Southwark and they signed a 'partnership' agreement to work together on governance, youth participation, student exchanges, and business development. The engagement of the diaspora was part of this and the KDU head, who had been working with the Koidu Town Council and was well known to the Mayor of Southwark, also attended this meeting.

In 2005 the pan-African development organisation AFFORD first learned of the Mayor of Koidu's work as an exemplary leader from a USAID (United States Agency for International Development) profile on the internet. Further research revealed the connection with Southwark Council, and AFFORD made contact with Southwark's Councillor (the previous Mayor) who put them in touch with the Mayor of Koidu and with the KDU and KDDA in London. AFFORD see themselves as part of a pan-African diaspora with a role as change agents within Africa. Their focus is on economic empowerment, job creation, markets and enterprise development. In early 2006 AFFORD invited the Mayor of Koidu and a young entrepreneur/activist from Koidu to attend their annual African Diaspora and

Development event (AD3) as special guests. This was to establish links in the Koidu region in the context of AFFORDs ongoing Supporting Entrepreneurs and Enterprise Development in Africa (SEEDA) programme which sought to involve the African diaspora as pro bono resource persons providing hands on business support to micro, small and medium sized enterprises in different parts of Sierra Leone.

Although the Koidu guests accepted the invitation, delays in their visas meant they arrived too late to participate in the AD3 event – but they did go on to participate in a full two weeks of activities organised by AFFORD and Southwark Council. However KDU members did attend AD3 in strength. During meetings between AFFORD and KDDA/KDU the split was discussed and the two groups agreed that they would collaborate seamlessly in the context of their interaction with AFFORD. Nonetheless, both the common ground of concern for Kono's development and the tensions between the two groups, especially around the role of women as leaders, was apparent. At the same time AFFORD became aware of tensions within the KDDA. Communications within KDDA were being blocked and as a result not all KDDA members learned of AFFORD's work, and AFFORD was advised by other KDDA members to communicate with more that one executive officer to ensure transparency.

The head of KDU was unable to participate in the SEEDA programme in Sierra Leone in 2006, but another KDU member did. Although the visit was a success it was marred by ugly events in Kono when some members of the local community became suspicious about the motivations behind the AFFORD-SEEDA visit – and rumours began spreading that this was actually an attempt by the opposition PMDC to secure a pre-election foothold in Kono District. Even though these tensions and rumours did not go further than intimidation and threats, Southwark Council was concerned enough to postpone a related but independent visit to Koidu planned to coincide with the second week of the SEEDA visit. Subsequently it became apparent that quite possibly it was someone in London with ambitions to establish a good ranking within the ruling SLPP, that had spread the rumours.

In spite of the embarrassment caused to the Mayor of Koidu and the disappointment to Southwark Council and AFFORD, there is no doubt that Southwark Council retains a strong commitment to its friendship agreement with Koidu, and AFFORD will continue its strong commitment to working in Kono District. In fact AFFORD's most recent plans (2007) in Koidu include establishing a business development support service centre for local entrepreneurs (Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie Director of AFFORD, pers. comm.)

The KDU has now been formalised as a separate organisation, but remains committed to common development objectives with the KDDA. In addition to enabling the release of the £5,000 as a contribution to Phase Two (equipping) of establishing the Maternal and Child Health training school, the KDU is rethinking the way in which it organises itself. In particular it is planning to set up a partner organisation in Koidu to help oversee the implementation of projects, and it intends to work in a way that supports the District Council's development plan (based on the national Poverty Reduction Strategy). In the meantime, individuals are continuing to support the education of a number of girls from poor households.

Chapter 6: Analysis: Who belongs to the KDDA and KDU and why? What processes have shaped the two HTAs and their activities?

The HTAs in this study are both place-based and ethnically orientated organisations and are an interesting example of

> 'a potentially progressive site for civic engagement and citizenship formation at different levels reflecting the multiple identities held by individuals' (Evans, 2006:2).

Despite the long history of Sierra Leonean civil society it remains very Freetown-centric and relatively weak but with considerable efforts now going on in the country to organise effectively, especially at local level. This means that unlike Ghana (Crook, 2006 and Mohan, 2006) most towns in Sierra Leone do not have locally based HTAs – the Kono District HTAs were set up in London and now extend back to the Kono District, rather than the other way around. Both HTAs in this study, the Kono District Development Association (KDDA) and its splinter group the Kono Development Union (KDU), are formal and informal networks of shifting alliances and interest groups, based in the UK and Ireland. The two organisations are quite formalised in that they have a management structure, regular meetings, files, accounts and a directory of all Kono people in the UK, Europe and the US. Getting people to pay a regular subscription is difficult, so most of the money is raised for specific purposes, through fund raising events such as seaside trips and dances at Christmas and Easter. Although respondents of the KDDA and KDU do not describe themselves as 'elite' (in Sierra Leonean terms this might mean being landowners or descendents of chiefly families), many have been to university either in Sierra Leone or the UK, some own land, some own alluvial diamond mining licenses, and some are related, if remotely to chiefly families, and many are related to each other. Other connections are through faith groups or business, and certainly many members were at school together and kept in touch whilst students, either in Sierra Leone or the UK. Many were taught by the Mayor of Koidu who was a teacher before she became head of the Koidu Town Council. There are a few lawyers, doctors, accountants and teachers among them, but at least 70% of the UK members are health or social workers, or clerical staff in the civil service. Most of the respondents described themselves as middle class in UK terms – but could also be described as part of Sierra Leone's missing middle – the educated middle class whose absence continues to hamper the country's economic and political development. It is worth bearing in mind here that the Sierra Leonean diaspora in general is as much about what can be called a 'mercantilist investment strategy' as it is a product of being driven out of the country by war, politics and corruption (Richards, pers. comm. June 2007). This means there is a strong likelihood that these people would continue to support a political system that has served their class well for over 150 years, and will be naturally conservative.

The two organisations offer a form of community (at meetings the dominant languages are English and Krio) to Kono people or those from the Kono tribe – as well as to other tribal groups living in Kono District (such as Mendes, Temnes and Madingos). Many of these came as migrants to the UK during the 1970s and 80s, with another wave in the early 1990s. Their reasons for leaving Sierra Leone are expressed both positively and negatively. They saw themselves primarily as economic migrants, who were fortunate enough to have been able to leave to seek higher education and a better life in the UK. On the negative side, which is less talked about, they also felt compelled to leave due to deteriorating

governance, corruption, lack of employment opportunities, and increasing personal insecurity. These three issues: the focus on the Kono tribe, the district focus, and the reasons they gave for leaving Sierra Leone, have important impacts on how the organisations developed.

Tribal orientation is a binding factor but also likely to be a constraint. On the positive side it has enabled the KDDA to evolve, from being a network of students (the Kono Students Union) in the 1950s, to a humanitarian and relief organisation from 1991 to 2002 when it was renamed the KDDA, to its current orientation towards district-wide development. The membership remains the same, but was expanded and reinvigorated by the influx of migrants escaping the conflict during the early 1990s. In the war years, between 1991–2002, the efforts of KDDA members were focused on individual as well as collective relief activities to support displaced Kono people and the vulnerable who were unable to move from their homes in Kono District either because they were elderly, disabled, or had nowhere else to go. The KDDA's contribution to the relief and humanitarian effort in Kono District was highly appreciated and certainly provided a life-line for many families and individuals.

Each of these changes has meant a reorientation by members of these Kono diaspora organisations, of their relationship with the homeland, with others from Sierra Leone in the UK and at home, and with each other in the organisation. As a student organisation from the 1950s to the early 1990s the KSU acted as social network for Kono students, many of whom had scholarships from the diamond companies. In the early 1990s the war started and the scholarships came to an end. At this time the KSU was revitalised by incoming migrants and became a mutual support network helping Kono people affected by the war. Since the end of the war, the KDDA has been dogged by corruption (misappropriation of funds), power struggles, and the re-emergence of patronage networks within the organisation. The Association's large membership of over 800 Kono people, which enabled it to save the lives of Kono people during the war and is a potentially powerful international tribal network has attracted those seeking self-agrandissement and who are prepared to replicate the sort of pervasive behaviour practised in Sierra Leone's electoral processes. As one respondent put it 'the power structures within the Kono District are being reflected back within the organisation'.

By 2003, frustrated by this lack of transparency, accountability, and the re-emergence of patronage networks which they felt was impairing their ability to achieve wider development objectives, the core group of 28 members broke away from the KDDA and set up the KDU. So although HTAs generally are unlikely to challenge the status quo (Crook, 2006 and Mohan 2003, 2006 on Ghanaian HTAs) in this case these people led by a woman did break away and challenge existing power structures. As one member of the KDU splinter group described it 'the KDDA was a good social forum in which to articulate what was missing from back home – but some of us are passionate about the homeland and it's development and the current levels of deprivation there'.

The debacle over the transfer of the £5,000 was a crisis of trust and accountability, but the fact that the money did not get misappropriated was because of the actions of two women – the Mayor of Koidu and the head of the KDU. However, what it indicates is that although members want to work collectively, as evidenced by their ability to raise over £8,000 in funds between 2002 and 2003, the KDDA as an organisation has been unable so far to establish accountability structures that can protect these voluntary contributions and reassure 'donors' that their money is being used for what it was intended. It seems that whilst some in the diaspora are content to reproduce the patronage networks they consider

their greatest source of strength despite shortcomings, there are others that are prepared to challenge the perpetuation of a corrupt system. These patronage networks are traditionally male, so it notable in this case that it was the leadership of two women, the Mayor of Koidu and the head of the KDU, that challenged the status quo and kept the KDU focused on development in Kono District rather than on the power struggles that were going on within the KDDA.

It is interesting to reflect here on the circumstances in which a diaspora organisation becomes a progressive social force that challenges the status quo, and on the circumstances in which it might just reinforce existing (male dominated) hierarchies? In this case the head or Chair of the KDU left Sierra Leone in 1974 returning there in 1981 after completing her education in the UK. Finding it difficult to settle, she went to work in Brussels for 18 years, and finally returned to the UK in 2000. She now works as a Resettlement Case Administrator at the Probation Service. Her understanding of politics comes from her involvement in community work – and has led to her belief that in post war Sierra Leone 'you can't deprive people of everything and leave them with nothing'. She is one of the few respondents who has started to make connections with the UK's pan-African diaspora networks, she has strong views on the quality of international aid to Sierra Leone, and she is familiar with the development language of the MDGs including gender equality and women's empowerment – a combination perhaps of individual leadership qualities and an understanding of wider development objectives that resonates with progressive thinking within Sierra Leone.

Gender, ideology and identities have all shaped the form of the KDDA and the KDU. All the UK respondents talked about their need to identify with their people through joining the KDDA. And whilst there seems to be a strong attachment to kin and family, as strong an attachment seems to be to tribe and place of birth i.e. the Kono District. As someone in Kono District said 'fifty years in the river will never convert you into a fish, once a Kono always a Kono'. Since transnationalism posits we can be fish and human simultaneously, the interesting question is whether this is more about ideology than fact, and one way that Kono people have of deliberately retaining the link in order to keep the obligation over those who migrate? (Page, pers. comm. June 2007). Although the KDDA and KDU are dominated by Kono people, they go out of their way to stress their inclusion of the Mendes, Temnes and Madingos who have been born or are living in the Kono District. In reality the status quo takes precedence and the leadership or Chair of both can only be held by a Kono person, and preferably a man. Other positions such as Treasurer, Social Secretary and so on can be held by those other than Kono.

Several women respondents in the UK and Sierra Leone mentioned that although attitudes to women were changing partly because the conflict has re-shaped gender relations, many Kono men still think women should be excluded from the decision making process. During recent moves to elect a new Chair of the KDDA a woman's name was put forward, but the incumbent Chair blocked it and she was not able to stand. This contributed to the growing division within the KDDA, and was one of the reasons why the KDU split away. This woman herself noted that 'traditional views of women from Sierra Leone are brought here and are deeply embedded'. It was this woman who led the establishment of the KDU and headed it for 18 months, and decided to step down ahead of the August 2007 elections in order to take up the position of Chair of the UK Branch of the PMDC Party. As one Kono woman in the UK put it 'ideas of power and gender are fundamental to understanding why the split took place'. The KDU see themselves as a more progressive group of both Kono women and men that expressly support women's rights, human rights, gender equality and the rule of law.

Politics has also shaped the group. Both the KDDA and KDU want to be seen as politically neutral and inclusive. Yet, in the run up to the August elections this year (2007) there were clearly divisions along political lines within both organisations. Funds are raised from members for political purposes and sent to central party offices in Freetown, but these are in addition to and separate from funds raised for development purposes. Although both organisations include people who support different political parties, the majority of KDU members support the opposition party, the PMDC, and the majority of the KDDA support the party of the current government, the SLPP. The lines became very blurred in the KDU when, towards the middle of 2007 the KDU Chair also acted as the Chair of the UK Branch of the PMDC party in London.

There is intense frustration, both in the district and in London, at the lack of progress in Sierra Leone and in Kono district in particular since the end of the war. This is blamed on the failures of the current government. The PMDC party, emerged last year from within the SLPP, as one of the main opposition parties with good governance and poverty reduction at the core of its agenda. As a couple of respondents observed the situation in London mirrored the political realities in Sierra Leone and in Kono District in particular, as one person put it ‘KDU members had been the backbone of the KDDA, in the same way as those in the new PMDC party had been the backbone of the SLPP’.

The PMDC is seen as the more progressive party and its frustration with the SLPP mirrors that which the KDU members have felt with the KDDA. Like many HTAs, both have tried to deny any political connections for fear of the divisive consequences (Crook, 2006:8) and focused instead on their commitment to development. Both the KDDA and KDU are at pains to demonstrate that they will continue to support the same Kono wide development objectives. But the difference now is that potentially the KDU has freed itself from some of the more traditional hierarchies and norms that have been operating within the KDDA, and has repositioned itself to challenge the status quo, including gender bias and the power of the Chiefdoms.

The political process in Sierra Leone and the upcoming August 2007 elections has coincided with and polarised the split between these organisations. In the run up to the elections politically active individuals in both the KDU and the KDDA were deeply involved in party politics in the UK. Interestingly several respondents observed that social and political power structures within the Kono District are being reflected back within the KDDA, and have contributed to some of the difficulties the KDDA has had in organising itself and working to support poverty-focused development in Kono. For example some members have wanted to use KDDA activities to build up their power base and rather than offer scholarships to Kono students on the basis of merit, tried to derail such initiatives in favour of offering scholarships to students from their own villages.

Family and kin networks have also certainly shaped the KDDA and KDU, and affected the form the groups have taken and the outcomes. It has not been possible in this short space of time to explore this in any depth, but certainly within the hierarchy of the KDDA and KDU many are related to each other, and to those, such as the Mayor of Koidu and others who are key actors in Kono District.

In terms of partner civil society organisations based back in Sierra Leone there are no HTAs actually based in Kono District. As a result communications between contacts in the district and the KDDA and KDU are not institutionalised and tend to be via trusted individuals, family and other trusted networks. Within Kono District there was considerable

confusion amongst most of the respondents over whether the UK diaspora organisation was called KDDA or KDU or KONDU – and most were unaware of the split between KDDA and KDU. However, almost all respondents were aware that the £5,000 donation had not been effectively spent on healthcare infrastructure as had been intended. Several respondents saw the diaspora as an important source of support and advocacy, with an expectation that it could help by doing things differently, for instance setting up accountable structures for the management of funds and activities. Several respondents were taken aback by the split – as one put it 'those in the diaspora are living in an enlightened world and they are supposed to be telling us how to do things in a better way'. One respondent, the head of the District Council, said it was difficult knowing how to relate to two groups, and as a result he was not been able to establish any formal relationship with the KDDA or the KDU. But he recognised that 'there is potential here for considerable impact but they need to continue to come up with more effective ways of organising their assistance'. Others strongly believed that the diaspora could and should do more to challenge the system and reinforce good governance, but that to have legitimacy and weight members needed to visit regularly and make their own assessment of the situation in Sierra Leone rather than 'imagine' it.

People within Kono District have various expectations of what the diaspora can or should be doing for them, some which may or may not match the reality. What this tells us is that tribal allegiances and structures, politics and power have had both positive and negative effects on these two HTAs and their capacity to achieve their poverty and development objectives. If they are not able to establish accountability mechanisms that members trust then they will be unable to raise the funds needed – or build the sort of relationships required to contribute effectively to development. On the positive side both these organisations have a large and loyal membership that has the power and energy to make a real impact on development in Kono District. The fact that everyone in Koidu knows about the £5,000 is in itself a form of accountability, even if this is all many know about the KDDA. It also shows that if properly acknowledged by local government and development partners, the diaspora contribution to development in Kono District could make a significant impact.

6.2 Identity and belonging

What motivates those who are involved in the KDDA and KDU? What are the expectations of the diaspora from those who stayed in Kono District?

> 'Once upon a time a big cockerel decided to leave the farm and take his family and go and look for food elsewhere. He travelled far and wide and found lots of food. Then, one day he decided he should go back. He piled his goods high on his head, and with his coxcomb waving he strutted back into his old farm. The trouble was the farmer didn't recognise him and grabbed him and killed him, and ate him for supper that evening'.

This story told by a man heading a social justice NGO in Koidu is a recurrent theme with respondents in the Kono District. It demonstrates the strength of moral and social obligation to connect with and support 'home' that migrants are under (Mohan, 2006: 867).

Migrants are expected to visit the homeland regularly and contribute, as part of the Kono tribe to development in Kono District as well as to the well being of their own families in Kono and in the UK. As long as this connection is seen to be active those in the diaspora are legitimised as Kono people or individuals. This enables their potential return to the community as people who have fulfilled their moral obligation, and not, as one woman

youth worker in Koidu described it, as ‘cargo – to be treated with contempt and shunned’. ‘Outsiders’ returning to Sierra Leone can encounter resistance from ‘insiders’ and they may find themselves ‘locked out of important networks and relationships’ (Chikezie and Daramy, 2007: 16)

A number of respondents in Kono District commented that those who leave do not feel free to return, because when they do, they get asked about what they have been doing to help in the district. In fact, one UK respondent went further and said that unless she does something to help she feels she cannot go back at all. In one poor Kono village, a number of farmers confirmed that ‘some of those working away from the village even keep their telephone numbers secret – they let their friends have it rather than give it to us, their families’. He complained that when they do come back they prefer to stay in hotels in the nearest town rather than come back to the poor conditions in the village and are too embarrassed to allow their friends to see where they have come from. The feeling of being rejected and abandoned by those that have left was another recurring theme. But this tension between those that stayed behind and those that left (the sinking ship) is not unique to Sierra Leone. In Tanzania and Cameroon in the early 1900s there was a history of both returning and staying away, and migrants could still claim tribal allegiance even if they were too poor to return home from plantations and mines (Page, pers. comm. June 2007). Similar tensions are the norm in South Africa between those that remained (often through lack of choice) to fight apartheid, and those that got out and gained a better education, then returned to fill jobs that those left behind were not in a position to compete for (Chikezie and Daramy, 2007: 16).

But this swings in roundabouts. One respondent, a Kono UK social worker, had just come back from visiting Sierra Leone after ten years. He described how he was treated as someone who had gained status for his success abroad. He was treated as a ‘big man’, shown respect and ushered into meetings – but the way his old colleagues looked up to him made him feel uncomfortable. He was acutely aware of how much he had achieved during the time he had been away in comparison to his old colleagues, and how much confidence they had lost. At the same time he felt that their expectations of the diaspora were too high – as if somehow it would be the ‘the saviour’. There are complex feelings on all sides. Those who stayed at ‘home’ feel that those in the UK need to legitimise their right to return as citizens of Sierra Leone. This strong sense of obligation and burden of family expectation must in some way be reinforced by a society in which poverty and political exclusion has generated a ruthlessness among the poor (as well as the rich) leading to continuously seeking a potentially productive patron to help them survive (*Sierra Leone Drivers of Change*, DFID report, 2005: 15).

The high levels of commitment amongst UK respondents to development in Kono District, is also driven by a mix of anger, frustration and hope that one day the situation in Sierra Leone will enable them to return to ‘the homeland’. Many of the UK Kono people have been in the UK for two or three decades – and are balancing multiple identities. Around 70% of KDDA and KDU members, men and women, are social workers, nurses or care workers. An area for further research would be investigating the links between these people’s professional identity and their motivations for supporting development back home and in the UK. For instance, one woman respondent in the UK, whose husband is also a local Councillor in the UK said that it was her work in community development in the UK that made her realise the role politics played within local development. This was the woman who joined the PMDC when it emerged in 2002, led the establishment of the KDU, and is now Chair of the UK Branch of the PMDC in London. Interestingly, both male and female respondents have referred to the voluntary work they do in the UK as UK citizens,

such as visiting the elderly and voluntary hospital work, as a way of 'empathising' with their folk back home. However, many UK respondents pointed out, they had had very little choice in terms of what profession they pursued in the UK – at that time, the 1990s, the caring professions were all that was available to them.

Several respondents in Sierra Leone noted that the UK's immigration rules are a constraint. Those who have legal migration status in the UK are more likely to join a formal diaspora organisation, and be able to better manage 'belonging' in Sierra Leone as well as the UK – managing multiple identities and a transnational life style is easier if an individual can belong legitimately in both places. In other words without legal status as a citizen in the UK it is very difficult for a person to join any formal organisations such as the KDDA or KDU, or to feel secure enough to maintain and develop their links with their home country. There is an important link therefore between the status of migrants and the extent to which an individual can feel they 'belong' in two places.

Recently the Sierra Leonean diaspora brought pressure to bear on the Government of Sierra Leone to amend its laws to enable dual citizenship. In order to vote, Sierra Leonean citizens living overseas still need to return to Sierra Leone to register. Alternatively UK citizens from Sierra Leone can register their support by joining the diaspora branch of one of the Sierra Leonean political parties in the UK, each of which has two votes by the Chair and Secretary General. However, most respondents feel that this does not give them the political voice they feel they have the right to as citizens and that it discriminates against those who cannot afford the cost of the flight. How respondents in Sierra Leone felt about being a citizen of Sierra Leone is very individual. As one man put it:

> 'It's been at least 30 years of bad governance as a result of which many left – so why should they (in the diaspora) feel attached, other than to their families?'

Another woman said:

'There has been thirty years of insecurity here, people are not sure what their vision of their country is or what sort of society they want, over and above their own well-being.'

Many of the respondents in Kono District referred to Sierra Leoneans as being 'very individualistic… caring primarily about their own ends and self…. and taking personal advantage at all times', and that 'the concept of charity is rare here, it's not in the tradition'. This seems at odds with the development objectives of these two diaspora organisations that had the capacity to raise at least £5,000 towards development in Kono District, including contributing to the establishment of a training centre for mother and child health-workers. However, in Sierra Leone we are not necessary talking about 'charity' as an even handed or altruistic way of helping people. Here there is a tight community system to which individuals belong in which family, kinship and patterns of social patronage are of primary importance. Respondents in the UK observed how hard it can be for families in the diaspora. One man said:

> 'You remember the system and treasure it and want to help, you feel morally obliged to help, to contribute to the aunts and uncles and to births, funerals and weddings – it is expected of you – and yet you are struggling with your own family in London on a low income.'

Another respondent in Kono District said he felt for those in the diaspora:

> ‘Their problem is that they want to stay in the family network, and in order to do that they have to provide family stipends. This is a pressure on them particularly when they have their own families.’

As one man in Kono District put it ‘those in the diaspora fear that they may not be able to go back’ if they cannot fulfil their obligations within the family.

It seems that this fear coupled with the hope of return one day to a future ‘paradise’ as one woman put it, is the driving force behind the complex relationships that active members of the KDDA and KDU have with Sierra Leone, and in particularly with their place of birth and tribe in Kono District. Several respondents were able to articulate their fears of the reality that Sierra Leone may never achieve the levels of development that will enable them to go back within their life time. And many talked of having to accept with a mixture of sadness the reality that their children do not really fit back home any longer and are now used to a different life style. At the same time it is a source of great pride to them that their children are doing well and are able to attend university in the UK. As people who feel they had no option but to leave, and now have almost no choice in going back (‘to what?’ they say), ambivalence is ever present. Unlike Ghanaian migrants very few Kono people in London are building houses ‘back home’ (Mohan, 2006: 874) in a state that remains fragile and at the bottom of the Human Development Index. Issues of belonging and identity for those outside their country of origin are important and influence the sort of activities that are undertaken. Is the pursuit of a ‘dream’ of the homeland resulting in activities that reduce progress and reinforce divisions? Not altogether. There is evidence that the KDU and the KDDA are struggling not to reproduce corrupt patronage networks or reinforce women’s marginalisation within the organisation – and in terms of their focus, they recognise the importance of youth inclusion, women’s reproductive health, and education for girls in Kono District.

If obligation is based on sustaining those networks that are trusted, then it is evident within the KDDA and KDU that the shared discipline, traditions and initiation rituals that bind cohorts of students together as youths, continue to be a source of trust and solidarity later in life. These are men who were in the same school and class in Koidu, who were at university together in Sierra Leone, and got scholarships and studied together in the UK during the 1970s and 1980s. As a former teacher, the Mayor of Koidu taught many of those now in senior positions in the Councils and other official positions, as well as in the UK. Her ex-pupils are clearly very fond of her and she is in great demand when she comes to the UK. This may well have played a part in the KDU’s confidence that her leadership would uphold the principles of accountability and transparency that they value.

Although the handling of the £5,000 donation to the hospital was awkward and the twinning between the Borough of Southwark and Koidu town was unsuccessful, the initiatives demonstrate the importance of leadership – in this case that of the Mayor of Koidu. What motivates her and others is a vision of development which neither about personal gain nor is politically motivated. The Mayor has been able to provide real leadership for change in Koidu within a system of male patronage and continuous challenges to both her work and her position. Her achievements are unusual in Sierra Leone where political opposition is barely tolerated and where people are ‘kicked out of their jobs or suppressed’ if they are identified with the wrong party, or consort with the opposition. The Mayor’s leadership has been extremely important in Sierra Leone as well as in London for the KDU and to its attempt to challenge traditional power structures and discrimination against women in Sierra Leone and London.

Many respondents in the UK said that their need to identify with ‘their’ people led them to join the KDDA. Whilst there is a strong attachment to kin and family, people will often choose to invest in clients as much as their own children, but this always involves picking and choosing, and it was those not picked (who could gain no support from patrons) who opted for (or were drawn into) the war (Richards, pers. Comm., 2007). The Kono District is unusual in Sierra Leone in that the tribal and physical boundaries coincide, so in theory any groups living within the Kono District are included in both organisations. In reality patronage networks operated within the KDDA to secure the votes of weaker groups. Language seemed less important and is either Kono or Krio – and these as well as English are used within meetings. Both the KDDA and the KDU see themselves as inclusive of all those who come from the Kono District or who are committed to the Kono people. In reality however, the leadership of both i.e. the post of Chair can only be held by a Kono person, and in the case of the KDDA, this should be a man. An in-depth study would reveal a far more complex pattern of exclusion and inclusion (in London and Sierra Leone), than it has been possible to examine in the paper.

Ways of identifying the diaspora amongst people in Kono District varied. One respondent likened the diaspora to the part played by those outside Sierra Leone in the run up to and during the early days (1992) of the conflict, and remarked that those in the diaspora need to ‘market’ themselves better so that they are not viewed as trouble makers – as some clearly were during the conflict. The Chair of the Paramount Chiefs felt strongly that:

> ‘These people (in the diaspora) belong here – but over there they have a better life. They will probably find themselves staying there until they get old and tired, but one day they will come back.’

The respondent felt that the main reason for belonging to an HTA, if you lived away from Sierra Leone, was to maintain links and your identity – ‘they care about what happens here and many want to be buried here’.

6.3 How developmental are the KDDA and KDU?

What form do their activities take, who benefits from them?

The 1991–2002 war was the catalyst for the KDDA’s active involvement in development in Sierra Leone. At this time their support was primarily humanitarian and focused on helping their families survive in Kono District, as IDPs in Freetown and elsewhere in the country, and as refugees in Guinea. The KDDA provided a network of mutual support for Kono people in Ireland and the UK, with links to the US Kono network. Their collective efforts involved sending second hand clothing, medical supplies and tinned food to Sierra Leone. Much of this assistance was channelled through KONDU in Freetown and organised by Kono people. In 2001 the KDDA organised the hire of trucks to help those who wanted to move back to Kono District or be repatriated from Guinea.

Since the end of the war the KDDA have re-directed their efforts towards supporting development within Kono District. In 2002 in discussions with the Town Management Committee (before District and Town Councils had been established) they identified the need for health worker training facilities for maternal and child healthcare in the Kono District Hospital. A visiting KDDA member (currently a local councillor in London) made a video of the conditions in the hospital which was shown to people back in London, and by 2003 KDDA members had raised around £8,000 through fund raising events. This was a considerable achievement, and £5,000 was set aside to support the hospital. At around the

same time the KDDA began struggling with internal power struggles, bound up with issues of transparency, accountability and suspected misappropriation of funds. As a result they have not been able to get the £5,000 to the hospital, and it remains unspent, but safe, in a bank account in Koidu.

Although the KDDA and KDU are able to raise funds, their capacity to implement is weak. Unlike the Ghanaian HTAs they have no partner organisations or HTAs in Kono District. A number of respondents, including the Chair of the Council of Paramount Chiefs were also critical of the level of diaspora engagement in Kono District 'they can't imagine what to do – they need to come and see it for themselves and hear it from the people'. The result is that the KDDA and KDU have had to rely on individual contacts in the town and district councils and with the Mayor – although since the debacle over the twinning and the £5,000, the KDU have distanced themselves from her until after the August 2007 elections to protect her from further harassment and the possibility of losing her job.

At the same time active members of the KDDA and KDU are very dismissive and distrustful of the numerous community based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs that are beginning to establish themselves in Koidu. The Director of the Kono District Women's Multi-Purpose Cooperative first heard about the KDDA when she was a displaced person in Kenema in 2000. She was aware that the KDDA had sent money for buying medicines, and the last she heard of it was in 2003 when some members visited her organisation and promised sewing machines. Many of the longer standing CBOs that are rights- and justice-based organisations, are headed by those (mainly men) who had been actively involved in setting up the relief organisations KONDU and the Movement of Concerned Kono Youths (MOCKY) during the war in Freetown. The link between these organisations is complex, but it is odd that the KDDA have not until now, thought of establishing a partner CBO in Koidu to help implement its projects.

Since the Councils in Koidu are partisan, it makes it particularly difficult for the KDU, who are perceived as being affiliated to the PMDC opposition party, to develop a working relationship with them. Within the Councils there is likely to be resistance to diaspora activities that could in anyway be linked, rightly or wrongly, to the opposition because they feel it could expose any inadequacies and reflect poorly on the current government. The cancelling of Southwark Council's visit as part of the 'friendship' agreement is seen locally as 'proof' of the power of the District Council to block diaspora development activities. These constraints are recognised by the KDU, who are now thinking about ways of reorganising themselves through setting up some sort of district wide 'NGO' or partner organisation in Koidu to implement activities and coordinate with other CBO's and the Councils.

People in both the District and Town Councils and the KDDA and KDU have a vision of cooperation on development. Respondents in Sierra Leone and in London talked of a 'diaspora development fund that would target poorer communities and the disadvantaged'. This fund would 'support micro level community led initiatives in excluded and marginalised off road villages in the poorest districts rather than the capital investments that Councils would no doubt prefer'. This was seen as a 'good way of spreading diaspora resources more equitably'. One respondent already involved in development sees this as 'a way of supporting inclusion and social cohesion and reducing poverty, as well as a way of reinforcing accountability of local government to people – in a way that would also build village level capacity'. Both Councils and KDDA and KDU would like a partnership in which the district development plans are shared, the projects that the diaspora agree to fund are identified, and where there is an agreed role for the KDDA/KDU in monitoring

implementation along with CBOs, to reinforce the accountability of the organisation to its funders in the diaspora, and of local councils to the people. There is big gap between aspirations and the reality on the ground, however, there are more similarities than differences and there is a possible basis upon which to build a more effective diaspora development strategy – after the general elections in August 2007.

The international aid effort, particularly that of the UK, was heavily criticised by respondents in Kono District and London for being weak on accountability. Within Kono District the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is seen as a political tool of the current SLPP government. It is not trusted, and seen to be strong on process and weak on outcomes. Its usefulness was likened to 'throwing a mug of salt into the sea'. The Director General of the District Council and PRSP focal point agreed that any KDDA/KDU interventions should be included in the monthly round up meetings with civil society groups on progress in implementation of the district development plan.

Despite the fact that many people were sustained and lives saved by remittances from the diaspora during the war, many respondents in Sierra Leone and London remarked that remittances can also reinforce inequality amongst families and provoke local 'envy' and acrimony. Respondents are aware that families who receive remittances from members overseas have a considerable advantage over those that do not. It can mean the difference between being able to move to a larger town or having to stay put in a remote village; being able to afford medical care; or being able to contribute to community led initiatives. The KDDA and the KDU both aspire to a more collective approach that would distribute funds more equitably to those that need help, and as one person put it 'we should exist for all those poor families and individuals in the Kono District who do not benefit from having relatives living overseas'. At the London end, all respondents feel the enormous pressure of having to respond to demands from their families back home as well as care for their families in London. This is difficult as many of these London-based Sierra Leoneans are on low wages.

There is no reliable data on numbers of Sierra Leoneans outside Sierra Leone, or in the UK, and therefore remittances. Recent figures from an Africa Recruit Survey suggest that out of the 338 Sierra Leoneans who completed the survey over 50% send remittances home, and that about half of these send back at least £100 a month. For a London based care worker with extended family responsibilities, this is a considerable outgoing.

In terms of advocacy there are three engagements worth mentioning at national, international levels and within the UK. At a local-national level the KDDA is considered an important source of support and advocacy. As one young woman commented 'When there are critical decisions to be made we do seek the opinion of those in the diaspora – it worked when they all stood with us against government efforts (after the war) to forcibly resettle us further south. As a result this didn't happen'. At an international level the KDU attended a joint donor conference in 2002 on aid to Sierra Leone and demonstrated against giving higher levels of international and particularly British aid to a government that was not meeting the needs of its people – their slogan was 'No Aid Without Accountability'. Hilary Benn (UK Secretary of State for International Development, 2003–7) met the then head of the KDU and encouraged her to keep making the organisation heard. In the UK, the KDU do not claim to have directly influenced the partnership agreement between Southwark Council and Koidu Town Council, but the Mayor of Southwark at the time a member of the KDDA but now with the KDU, was aware of the high levels of commitment to development amongst the Kono people in the diaspora and this may well have influenced

his decision to go ahead with the partnership. At the time of writing this paper neither the KDDA nor the KDU had a political voice at a pan-African level.

Although most of the UK respondents were aware of the MDGs they did not generally talk about development in these terms. But there was widespread awareness of the inequalities that remittances can reinforce, of gender inequality and the need for girls' education, and there was deep concern about the lack of employment opportunities for young people, and of course acute awareness of the poor health care services in the country. In terms of health care, respondents in the District Council and District Hospital were well aware that Sierra Leone's low ranking in the Human Development Report is largely due to high rates of maternal and child mortality.

Amongst respondents in the Kono District and in Koidu there was no appreciation of the ad hoc diaspora initiatives that duplicate each other or provide useless albeit well intentioned donations of old vehicles or out of date hospital equipment. Those who knew about the split between the KDDA and KDU said it has been disruptive for them too. They do not know who to relate to, and had to work out which organisation their relatives in the diaspora had decided to support. What really interests them though are not the funds the diaspora could provide, but what they could offer in terms of knowledge and ways of doing things, which respondent in Koidu thought could help them increase the effectiveness of their institutions and ways of working. Several respondents in Koidu feel that the diaspora's current role in development is neither acknowledged nor understood, and that it needs to be more transparent and accountable in what it does with its resources.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

At this point it might help to be reminded of Mohan's (2002: 104) threefold classification for exploring the positive links between diasporas and development (explained in the Methodology). Mohan refers to 'development "in" diaspora (in place)' and although this was not the focus of this study, it was clear that for the Sierra Leoneans interviewed in London, their mutual support networks, fund raising events and so on were very important to their sense of well-being and sense of belonging in the UK. At the same time through their jobs as local councillors, probation officers, mental health workers, or the voluntary work some do with the elderly or youth groups they are making a significant contribution to development in their locality.

The way in which these particular diaspora communities were doing 'development "through" the diaspora (through space)' (Mohan, 2002) by making use of global connections was less obvious in this short piece of research (but an interesting topic for further research). Many respondents have family members in the US, or have worked in Europe, and it is significant that one of the first tasks the KDDA did in London in 1995 was to compile a Directory of the names and addresses of all (those who contributed their names) the Kono diaspora in the US and Europe.

The focus of this paper was primarily on Mohan's third category: 'development "by" the diaspora', and how diasporic flows and continued connections 'back home' facilitate the development and, sometimes, creation of these 'homelands (across space)'.

What did the research show? We talk about diasporas as 'doing' development in terms of fundraising and projects or even remittances – but what really stood out was that these two diaspora organisations are very much part of 'development' despite being outside the mainstream aid 'business' or talking the international aid 'language'. Most of the Kono people spoken to in London were (although not always open about it) highly engaged politically (in the run up to elections in August 2007) and here are very much a part Sierra Leone's missing middle' class so are potentially influential. Some are also active local government councillors in London. The fact of being a citizen in two places at once, with multiple and shifting identities and belonging, are issues with which they live. It was apparent that the more progressive elements within this particular part of the Sierra Leonean diaspora are fighting discrimination against women and the patronage networks that operate within the organisation – both of which are recognised as a constraint to achieving their development objectives.

However, for those committed to development objectives particularly accountability, transparency, women's rights, poverty reduction and equality, the going has been difficult. Power structures in the Kono District are reflected back within the organisation and include the marginalisation of women and the re-emergence of pervasive patronage networks supported by power seekers with the collusion of minority tribal groups within the organisation. It is paradoxical that the KDDA's large UK membership of over 800 Kono people makes it a powerful tribal network but is also its weakness since it makes the organisation vulnerable to members who seek to exploit it for their own power. These male patronage networks, which stretch between London and Koidu, are being challenged by three women, one of whom is in Koidu. The leadership these women are demonstrating is challenging the status quo and is a good example of how a good governance agenda can be pursued both in Koidu and London, to help keep the focus of the organisation on its development objectives.

The only way those committed to development could take this agenda forward was to split from the KDDA and set up their own organisation, the KDU. In this way they have potentially freed themselves from some of the more traditional hierarchies and norms. This has enable them to challenge the status quo within the KDDA in London and within Kono District and more broadly within Sierra Leone, including accountability, the rule of law, human rights and women's rights, and the power of the Chiefdoms.

Transnational diaspora organisations like the KDDA and KDU are clearly trying to contribute to poverty focused development in their countries of origin. Yet they are working in parallel with the world of international aid and are not necessarily linked to or part of any pan-African organisations and their development or advocacy efforts. This may be a good thing – and we need to understand more about how some diaspora groups (this study demonstrates each should be evaluated on their own merits) are trying 'to do development' in a way that is not part of the aid business, but as ordinary people who either do not know about or do not want to be part of the aid business, or who do know about it and are indeed very critical of it. Many of the Sierra Leoneans that I spoke to felt that what they are doing as citizens living outside their country is not recognised as being part of the development effort – as opposed to the work of international NGOs which is recognised. As well as disconnects between HTAs and pan-African groups there are also disconnects between pan-African groups and international NGOs. A 'complex and messy chaos' (AFFORD, pers. com., 2007) is one way of describing it – and some of it may be out of choice. However, it does raise the issue of voice and who speaks for whom and whether pan-African organisations can legitimately speak on behalf of – either implicitly or explicitly – the 'African' diaspora engaged in development (many Africans in the diaspora will challenge this seemingly 'homogenised' definition preferring instead Nigerian, Ghanaian etc.).

Diasporas, like migration, are a social process that is part of the development landscape, and are by their nature political. Yet donors still think of 'development' as a process largely taking place in a political vacuum – but many of the diasporas' interests such as citizenship issues, are fundamentally about politics, identity and development. Often diasporas oppose national governments (frequently part of their reason for leaving the country) – and given Sierra Leone's recent history it is not surprising that these two Sierra Leonean HTAs are politicised – with the more progressive KDU predominantly supporting the opposition party. This is a challenge in terms of engagement for development purposes, but does reflect the reality that the 'social contract' particularly in fragile states is very delicate, and the state-citizen relationship is not necessarily one of shared mutual objectives. On the other hand where societies are in a state of flux and transition there may be more 'room to manoeuvre' that allows new policy spaces to open up – and this may make it easier for diaspora involvement in politics and development initiatives. The implication seems to be that if development agencies engage with HTAs, they are engaging in a political process which is in itself a driver of change. If this is the case then development agencies will need to have a clear idea of where they want to drive the political change to.

Thus it becomes important that more is understood about how these trans- national (and 'beyond aid') social and political processes (and political/ personal energy) are working and in what ways they are drivers of positive change. There is a danger that because organisations like the KDDA and KDU do small 'project' type activities and because of their ad hoc way of operating they can be overlooked as part of the development process – or even state-building processes, particularly in fragile states. Maybe there are challenges

here to the rather state centric paradigm of development as being tidily 'contained' within state boundaries – but as yet it is not clear what development agencies should do about it.

The development context seems to be changing in a way that is difficult to grasp at the moment. It will be necessary to adjust to these new social and political processes and people's increasing mobility (made possible by cheaper travel and better access to communications technology). This raises issues around citizenship as a relational concept between a state and its citizens, accountability (that crosses borders), voice, and new approaches to global social justice.

7.1 Policy challenges/further research

What are the circumstances in which an HTA becomes a progressive social force that will challenge the status quo; and what are the circumstances which just reinforce existing (male dominated) hierarchies? Are diaspora organisations that challenge the status quo and are therefore more political better for development? If so what are the implications for DFID and other aid organisations who wish to be politically neutral? No one group is automatically more or less legitimate and each has to be evaluated on its merits (Mohan, pers. comm., 2007). There is a need for more specific studies like this one to give donors a better understanding of who they are dealing with.

If diaspora organisations are essentially conservative forces what can or should development agencies do to influence this? Development awareness work/development education?

DFID does a lot of work on social exclusion, social cohesion, rights and accountability at a country level – but it needs to do more research into the implications for its work as new forms of exclusion and discrimination may be generated by transnational processes. It is important to look ahead at processes that go beyond national boundaries are worked with and at managing multiple identities and different forms of inclusion and global social justice.

'The emergence of non-state actors in non-state spheres need not always be seen as undermining the effective state or as contributing to insecurity – indeed it could open up new opportunities for re/negotiating new public space' (Gaventa, 2005).

This raises the issue of access to this new public space, who is included and who is excluded? Do the patterns of exclusion at a transnational level mirror those in countries of origin or settlement? And what opportunities does this offer for challenging the status quo on issues such as women's rights and empowerment from the relative 'safety' of another country?

What can be done to reduce the impact on migrants of feeling doubly marginalised (i.e. from their country of origin and within their country of settlement)? Is there a role for more joined-up thinking on UK policy on migration and the impact of this on migrant status? Data from respondents confirmed what many studies say, that the more formal a migrants' citizenship status the more likely and able he/she is to become involved in formal organisations and become actively engaged in development in both country of origin and settlement, and that the option of dual citizenship strengthens migrants sense of belonging to two countries and their identity as a citizen of both countries.

More thought is needed around what sort of social policies would support transnational livelihoods. How does this link into current thinking on ‘circulation’ of health workers for instance and the rights of migrant workers globally?

How, from a development point of view, can policy makers effectively engage with and support diaspora groups as emerging forces for development in a way that does not undermine their legitimacy and at the same time helps them focus more effectively on the MDGs and so become more successful and effective in what they are trying to do? DFID has been carrying out some work on this and has published a Guidance Note on Engaging with the Diaspora that includes information on how to go about improving access to funds, inclusion of diaspora groups more systematically in country strategy consultations, and more regular exchanges of information.

Since diaspora groups are operating in these new transnational or de-territorialised spaces (Mohan, 2003) they will, as transnational actors and stakeholders, also be informing the shape of the new forms of political mobilisation and social organisation that are emerging. If this means they have the potential to shape development in countries of settlement/transition and of origin, policy makers need to find a way of bridging this gap and effectively engaging with and supporting these emerging forces for development. Does this mean that the development business should be less state centric?

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