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GROWTH CENTRE PROGRAMME

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SIERRA LEONE

Technical report: Progress during the period November 1987 to October 1989*

Prepared for the Government of Sierra Leone
by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization,
acting as executing agency for the United Nations Development Programme

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Acronymes

AE	=	Associate Expert
CTA	=	Chief Technical Advisor
GC	=	Growth Centre
GCC	=	Growth Centre Committee
GCF	=	Growth Centre Foundation
GCM	=	Growth Centre Manager
GCCO	=	Growth Centre Co-ordinating Office
GTZ	=	German Development Agency
Le	=	Sierra Leone Currency (Leones)
NGO	=	Non Governmental Organization
NIDFO	=	National Industrial Development and Finance Organization
SSI	=	Small Scale Industry
SIL	=	Sierra Leone
sqm	=	Square Metres
TE	=	Trainee Entrepreneur
UNV	=	United Nations Volunteer

1. An introduction to the Growth Centre Programme.

The idea of running self sufficient training centres, so called Growth Centres, is not new. It was brought and introduced in Sierra Leone by a man Mr Rene Lemoine, working at Bunumbu Teachers College 1980 - 82, under a project UNDP/UNESCO SIL/73/009. A rural tools laboratory was established at the Bunumbu College compound, aimed as a place to create suitable tools and equipment. A small pilot production was initiated to demonstrate and train local craftsmen how to produce their own tools. Twenty neighboring villages were encouraged to find place for a community village workshop. A village cooperative should secure the tools and ensure a fair distribution of the services in the village. The services, carpentry, bricklaying, plumbing, weaving, soap production, should be paid for, the revenue plowed into the operation. It will generate means for more tools, larger space and expanded influence.

The programme was spread to the villages through the graduated teachers, who were introduced to the crafts in their teacher training. Land was demarcated and village workshops were built, using a design suggested by the College expert (Annex I). It certainly had a good effect on the primary school students, who received some basic crafts training. Besides the students, the adults villagers were introduced to the crafts by the teachers or directly at the Bunumbu College Laboratory Workshop. The scheme halted when the UNESCO commitment terminated, and the workshops were not strong (determined) enough to generate their own funds.

During 1984 the Growth Centre concept was integrated into a general industrial promotion project UNDP/UNIDO SIL/83/001 Industrial Development Promotion and Planning. This was not a happy marriage since the project was too general and the GC programme required special attention. The idea converted from being a village craft training of artisans to be industrial training of entrepreneurs. The new project design demanded higher technicality and specialization but the competence was not there.

As a consequence of this, a new project was formed 1987. UNDP/UNIDO SIL/86/002 Growth Centre Programme. The aim was to start self generating training centres on village level, to train people in different skills. They should satisfy the basic needs of products for the surrounding villagers, increase the standard of living and create job opportunities and entrepreneuring.

Crafts and productions of priority are:

1. Cloth and clothes production (Weaving, Dying and Tailoring).
2. Making furniture, doors and windows (Carpentry and Joinery).
3. Agricultural tools production (Blacksmithy and Metalwork).
4. Soap making (Extraction of palm oil and processing Soap)

In small training cum production centres, "Growth Centres", the essential goods of basic nature are made for the rural people. The revenue from the sales is returned into production, training and extension services. The training, containing skill in the special craft, knowledge in book keeping and marketing should lead to self employment and entrepreneurship.

A Growth Centre is governed by a board, Growth Centre Committee. It consists of prominent members of the society, such as Paramount Chief, Village Chief, Head Master, Traders and Producers or anyone who can contribute professional competence to the board. In the building up stage, international UNV managers (previously called Stimulators) were engaged by the UNDP/UNIDO Project. Local Managers would be employed, first as counterparts and later replace the foreign manager on his departure.

The GC Manager has the total responsibility towards the GC Committee regarding all GC activities. The Manager requires also support, production and administrative staff, all appointed by the GC Committee. The trainees/workers should receive training under realistic industrial like conditions for a limited time, and there after be resettled in his/hers new small workshop, often in their home backyard. A GC Extension Officer should continue nursing the new entrepreneur in his/hers limited capacity to solve problems in economy, personnel, production and marketing matters, until he/she is strong enough to master the business.

A Material Bank and a Revolving Fund will support with the initial needs, tools, materials and other facilities, to make an easy start for the new entrepreneur. The GCs can also use the new entrepreneurs as subcontractors for mutual benefits and to maintain ties to prevent immediate failures.

This brief introduction will give the reader an idea about the GC concept, to better understand and evaluate the GC Programme. Further explanations will follow to show the great difference between ideology and reality and under what conditions we are operating.

2. Summary and Conclusions.

- * The Growth Centre Programme started at Bunumbu Teachers College 1980, 100 miles east of Kenema, as an Industrial Arts subject under a UNDP/UNESCO project, transferred 1984 in a second phase to UNIDO SIL/83/001, and in 1987 a third phase to UNIDO SIL/86/002.
- * The Growth Centre is a Training cum Production Centre with the aim to train Entrepreneurs in appropriate skills in a Technically and Economically Self-sustainable operation.
- * UNDP and the executing agency UNIDO has established a Growth Centre Administration called the Growth Centre Co-ordinating Office to supervise, monitor and control the Growth Centre Programme.
- * The three Growth Centres are located in Binkolo, Kpandebu and Pujehun with about 75 Trainees in Trades such as Tailoring, Weaving, Blacksmithy, Carpentry and Soap Making.
- * The GC Programme has provided the GSs with Administrative training, Supply of Raw Materials and Tools, Maintenance of Vehicles and general Technical/Economical advice.
- * The GC Foundations are governed by a Board comprised of prominent members of the society (Paramount Chief, Section Chiefs, Head Masters, Business men/women, Master Craftsmen, etc.) called the GC Committee.

- * The GC Foundation has a legal independent entity with non- physical shares, to protect the property and activities from taxation or external disturbance.
- * The GC Manager is hired by the GC Committee to run the operation. He/She is responsible towards the GC Committee for the quality of the Training and Self Sustainability (technically, economically and management wise) of the system.
- * Before the GCs were properly established, UNIDO employed UNV Technicians-Stimulators to organize the GC Training- Production and Maintenance of Equipment, until National Managers were recruited.
- * New GC Productions-Trades are recommended to be introduced in in suitable areas, where the Skills and/or Raw Materials (fiber, clay, leather<hides>, wood and metal<scrap>) are available.
- * Contributors to the GC Programme are UNDP/UNIDO, UNV Organisation, the Government, the GC Committees and the GC Customers in form of Capital, Hardware, Facilities and Personnel.
- * The Entrepreneurial Training is not very successful due to the practice of recruiting Trainees. The GC Committees are not capable to judge the candidate's Entrepreneurial aptitude and the selection of people in the GC locations is very limited. Perspective Entrepreneurial Trainees should be hand- picked by technically qualified staff. They should prove their suitability through their previous/ongoing activities.
- * The training should be made more Mobile; on-the-job training in/near their own premises/home through Extension Services. This requires a considerable change in the GC Organization.
- * Entrepreneurial Training should be provided through Sub- Contracting. The GC orders products (very simple in the beginning), provides him/ner with Raw Materials (working capital), Tools (fixed capital) and Training (extension services). The trainee pays back to the GCs through his/hers Produce.
- * Recruitment of GC Staff at all levels is by far the most difficult problem, due to lack of Technical-Entrepreneurial experience/competence. Entrepreneurial Spirit can not be trained in class rooms, but released out of Potential People in an Innovative Environment.
- * The GC Committee should be composed by the Employees of the GCs and not by prominent people from the society. The GC Staff is more competent than any outsider to understand and manage their own affairs. It is directly beneficial and in their interest that their GC is successful.
- * The three criteria; Raw Materials, Skill and Markets were not considered when the three GCs were located and the cost of production becomes unnecessarily high. Rural Development must be rightly understood. Some areas can be "too rural" for industrial and entrepreneurial development. A location must be "linked" with the right trade.

- * The GC idea is a good one, but must be seen in the right perspective with its advantages and limitations. The GC Programme has been successful in training people in various trades to increase their technical consciousness. It has provided technical skill, employment, increased standard of living for a good number of people, and in a few cases; Self Employment.

3. The Growth Centre Programme SIL/86/002. Present status.

During the previous UNDP/UNIDO project SIL/83/001 1983 - 1987, some fatal decisions were taken regarding the locating of the three independent GCs; Binkolo, Kpandebu and Pujehun. We wish to elaborate further on this issue under chapter 5.E. The first building phase was nearly completed, and some production was going on in all the three centres on the 1 July 1987 when the SIL/86/002 project started.

Kpandebu and Pujehun GCs were managed by UN Volunteers, Mr Isaac Quarshie and Mrs Naomi Robinson respectively. Binkolo had an acting manager, Mr John Conteh. Pujehun GC was performing better than the other two, but none of the GCs were doing well, economically or production wise. As Mr Conteh expressed it, "I try to stop it from dying".

We started to organise a suitable GC structure and recruited local staff to fill the functions. A parallel GC organization was created besides the UNDP/UNIDO project (See Annex II), the GC Coordinating Office.

A. Administration and Structure.

1. The Growth Centre Coordinator, Mr M.A. Tunis was recruited 1 January 1988. He became Counterpart to the UNIDO Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). The Coordinators's role is executive in the Growth Centre Coordinating Office, but advisory to the individual GCs. He coordinates all GC activities to a set standard and he holds a chair in each of the Growth Centre Committees (GCC).
2. For the three GCs, two Growth Centre Managers (GCM) have been recruited, Mr Mustapha Fatoma for Kpandebu GC and Mrs Mary Tholley for Pujehun GC. The GCMs are recruited and appointed by the respective GCC and they are directly responsible towards the GCC for all management matters of the GC. They also hold a seat in the Committee.
3. One Trainer/Instructor is appointed for each trade, by the GCC. Their job is to train the Trainees/Workers in the various skills/crafts. They are responsible for the quantity and quality produced at the centres towards the GC Management.
4. Accountants, Secretaries and Salesmen are usually people from the village, or members of the Committee who have shown honesty and willingness to work at the GCs, often on part time basis.
5. The Trainees/Workers are members of the village, often youngsters and school leavers who have aptitude for practical work and hopefully ability to start their own small workshop business in the future.

B. UNIDO and the Growth Centre Co-ordinating Office.

As previously stated, the ongoing Growth Centre Project phase started 1 July 1987 with the support of UNDP/UNIDO, called the Growth Centre Programme SiL/86/002. The programme was directed to focus only on the three GCs: Binkolo, Kpandebu and Pujehun with a major aim to make them self sufficient, technically, economically and management wise. It was specially important to create an organization that could handle running and future expansion of the programme. In the light of this we created the GC Co-ordinating Office.

The project is funded by UNDP with UNIDO as the executing agency. UNIDO brought in five foreign experts as advisors on technical and economical matters, one Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and four UN Volunteer (UNV) engineers.

One UNV was posted at each GC as Stimulator/Acting Manager and one was stationed in Freetown being in charge of the Tool/Material Store. The GC UNV was also expected to get a local counterpart, a perspective GC Manager (GCM), who should take over management of the GC at the time of the UNV's departure.

Apart from the direct technical and economical support from UNDP/UNIDO, the Co-ordinating Office has been running parallel with UNIDO for about 6 months, and is gradually taking over all executive functions.

The CTA's counterpart, the GC Co-ordinator, was recruited ahead 1 January 1988. The counterpart supports the CTA in planning and organising the project to distribute the tasks, monitoring the work and operating the accounts. The GC Co-ordinator is expected to lead the Co-ordinating Office and the Growth Centre Programme, when the UNIDO assignment terminates. (See S.E). Any bi-multi-lateral contacts to the project regarding economical and personnel support to further develop and expand the GC programme, should be channeled through the Co-ordinating Office. However, such external assistance should be provided with a view to improving self-sustainability of the Growth Centre Programme as a system.

C. The Growth Centre Committees.

Each of the Growth Centres has legal status in form of a Foundation to give sufficient protection against interference from external bodies. It should also prevent from individuals having too much economic or physical influence, that could ruin the whole set-up of grass-roots initiative. This status will also exempt the operation from tax.

Any profit will be reinvested to consolidate or expand the activity. The Growth Centre Foundation (GCF) leases the land for 21 years from the community, practically with no cost, as a community contribution.

Every GCF is governed by a board, called the Growth Centre Committees (GCC), as explained in the Introduction. The members has got a non physical share in the GCF. This means that every member has a vote, but can not claim any compensation in kind or money as a share holder. This arrangement will give maximum protection of property and against external disturbance.

D. Training and Production at the Growth Centres.

The basic aim of the programme is to promote development of entrepreneurship and industrial knowledge, leading to increased industrialization. Emphasis was put on employment of rural people in fundamental productions. Women engagement in production of domestic goods, to improve their status in the society has a humanitarian dimension. Two sacred cows for most donor countries; Rural and Women Development.

With the perspective of utilizing a large labour force, about 80 % un-or under employed in the rural areas, we could expect a boom in the crafts and manufacturing sector. Especially since, with few exceptions, products of basic character are imported to a very high price for the average man.

Sierra Leone is agro-cultural country. Back in history, the country has relied on its export of mineral outputs and cash crop surplus, to pay for the imported goods. This situation did not stimulate any non agricultural produce. Consumer goods were readily available, and little interest was paid to industrial production. Today, the situation is reverse. Food has to be imported and the trade balance is negative.

The basic needs in the rural areas are apparent, production related to food, clothes and housing has the highest priority. In the light of this, we selected subjects suitable for training, socio-economically desirable in the society. These are:

- * **Blacksmithy:** Production of agricultural implements.
- * **Tailoring and Gara (Tie & Dye):** Dying and manufacturing of Garments.
- * **Weaving:** Production of wide fabrics on manual looms.
- * **Carpentry:** Production of Furniture, Doors and Window Frames.
- * **Soap Making:** Extraction of Palm Oil and processing of Natural Soap.

In the previous UNIDO project, all subjects were introduced to each centre. With the GC.s limited resources we quickly realized that the centres could not manage all the trades with sufficient involvement in production and marketing. Consequently we limited the number to two trades at each centre, to provide better production capacity and specialization. Some of the GCC's opposed this idea. It required quite some convincing efforts from the UNIDO Staff, with the present GC size, specializing was necessary, to achieve self sufficiency.

I. Binkolo Growth Centre.

Location: Binkolo town **1. In Sierra Leone the term "town" means the head quarter of a division of the Chiefdom. Such division is formally called Section. A section is comprised of several villages. The head of the section is called Section Chief. A town is a cluster of houses divided by roads, has not necessarily any town facilities like electricity, pipe water, shops, paved roads etc.*** is situated seven miles north of Makeni town (see annex IV). It is well known being the home stead of the President, in an area famous for Tobacco and Oil Palm plantations. An excellent tarred road leads from Makeni, passing a few yards from the GC workshop. In Binkolo, the headquarter of the Safroko Chiefdom in Bombali District, Northern province, there is a secondary school, a Plan International establishment and communal electricity being installed.

Activity: Binkolo GC is the smallest and youngest of the three GCs. The main building with a floor area of about 200 sqm. was completed 1987. Some production started already in 1986 though, with carpentry, weaving, tailoring, blacksmithy and soap production. The production was badly organized and the sale was very weak, about US\$ 100 per month. We recommended the management to cut down the number of subjects to two, to make use of available resources properly for increased sale and production. The selected subjects were tailoring, woodworking and blacksmithy.

Management: UNV Mr S.J. Paramsothy was acting manager for the Binkolo GC from December 1985 to September 1987. The development during his period was very weak, due to that there were not clear guide lines of action, and the programme did not manage to engage the GC Committee. The major part of the building area was completed during this period. A Tailor Mr. John Conteh, who succeeded Mr Paramsothy for four months, barely managed to make the employees remain, since he was not able to pay them their salaries.

The present Acting Manager UNV Mr. Joseph Musoke took up his post in Binkolo Growth Centre in January 1988. With a lot of talent and hard work, he quickly brought up production and sales from Le 5.000/- to Le 30.000/- per month (See Annex III). It is particularly his ability in marketing and supplying the customers, that has brought confidence to the Binkolo Growth Centre. Binkolo GC occupies today 25 people of which 15 are trainees-workers.

We are now facing a Management dilemma at Binkolo GC. It has been extremely difficult to find a locally recruited Manager for the centre. There have been a number of candidates, about five, with less theoretical and practical experience. For some reasons, practical or political, the post has not attracted qualified people. The GCC members have personal rather than professional preferences, and we(UNIDO) are at this moment at stalemate. At the last meeting, consensus was reached on a proposed candidate, a secondary school teacher, with no experience in Marketing, Production or Management. We hope for a solution soon in this matter since the time is running out for the Acting Manager.

A new Manager Mr A. Koroma is at present tried on the initiative from UNIDO to solve the acute situation.

Tailoring: In the end of 1987, Binkolo GC had two major trades, Tailoring and Blacksmithy. Tailoring was before the largest section, with up to 10 trainees. A Tailor Trainer Miss Posseh Gembeh was employed in January 1988. The production consisted mainly of shirts, children clothes and ladies underwear. By the time, competition from other tailors, import of second hand clothes or cheap underwear, forced us to reduce the production in the tailoring section. To reduce costs Ms Gembeh's assignment was terminated in September 1989. We got a "free" Trainer from the Peace Corps, Ms Allison Weiss, who is a professional seamstress. In this writing moment, she is still on probator We hope that she can bring new designs and ideas into the tailoring section.

Blacksmithy: There is a great demand of agricultural tools in the area, and it is generally easy to market and sell tools from our Blacksmithy workshop. Initially we had one handicapped Blacksmith Trainer and some three trainees. Due to the new rule under Mr Musoke's management, the old Blacksmiths were not happy with the new productivity targets. The whole setup of workers was exchanged. We built a new Blacksmith pavilion of 40 sqm, and about five Blacksmiths were employed. The production increased from 50 to 200 tools per month.

A Blacksmith trainer. Mr Tamba Jabba, was employed in July 1989. He had previously worked for many years in the Ministry of Works, Maintenance workshops in the Metal Works section. He has a progressive mind, and he has brought new ideas and products into the Binkolo GC. He is not particularly a blacksmith man, but a generalist, who has been able to influence and upgrade the work force. As from the start of this phase, we mainly produced Matchets, Hoes and Axes, we now produce Rakes, Tobacco Scissors and parts for Rice Mills.

The GC Store workshop developed a Bellow for the Blacksmith Forge, to increase the hearth, which would allow higher production and better economy. Due to higher capacity, it required more energy to operate it, and people tend to prefer the old and smaller model. We are still convinced that there are much improvements to be made on the Forge.

Oil Processing: Binkolo GC has been allotted a Oil Plantation Farm of about 50 acres by the Paramount Chief. Unfortunately the plantation is in a bad state, not been brushed and weeded for many years. The previous aim was to make the plantation productive to ensure raw material supply for soap production. We found however that the cost will be too high for such a brush-up and the time of return too long. Another problem is the security. The farm is located along the tarred main road and about half or more of the harvest is stolen. The yearly harvest is now about two tonnes, (probably only 10% of maximum yield from a well maintained and secured farm) of kernels returning 150 gallons of Palm Oil. Some trial soap making has been carried out but with less success than in Kpandebu GC. Most of the oil is sold without further processing to a value of about Le 15.000 per annum.

Economy: We have always stressed that each section should pay for it's costs, and in conjunction with this, employees must be terminated when the economy can not allow continued employment. Same terms as in the private sector. Binkolo GC has probably reached a plateau in the production and sales of an average of Le.100.000/- per month (about US\$ 1.500). With cost effective management, this level can provide self sufficiency to the GC.

II. Kpandebu Growth Centre.

Location: Kpandebu town is located nine miles south of Kenema town (see annex V). The first five miles from Kenema is a gravel road easily passable at any season. The remaining four miles by mud road to Kpandebu is only accessible by four wheel drive vehicles in the rainy season (from June to November). The centre is surrounded by coffee and cocoa plantations, from which the people earns the major part of their cash income. Kpandebu Section Town belongs to Dama Chiefdom in Kenema District, Eastern Province, has got a primary school, a clinic (not yet completed) and well water, but no electricity, shops or any communal facilities. In the real sense it is a large village with a population of about 10.000 inhabitants. The Kpandebu Establishment is by far the largest Growth Centre in Sierra Leone.



The old main building at Kpandebu GC

Activity: Kpandebu GC is the best established and oldest of the three centres. There are three concrete buildings, office/store and two workshop sheds totalling about 300 sqm of which 150 sqm were recently completed. In addition to that, there are an open pavilion for blacksmithy and a mud block house for the watchmen. The main productions are Weaving, Blacksmithy and Carpentry. Seasonally the centre produces Soap. Initially garments was also produced, but due to low profitability, we closed that production.

Management: The Kpandebu GC was founded 1985 by Mr. Richard Sofka through the Pastoral Centre Catholic Mission in Kenema. The GC was incorporated in the UNIDO project, and due to illness Mr. Sofka did not stay his term. A local businessman Mr Bawoh, has managed the centre through periods without managers. For a short period in 1987 the place was managed by AE Mr. Poul Mikkelsen.

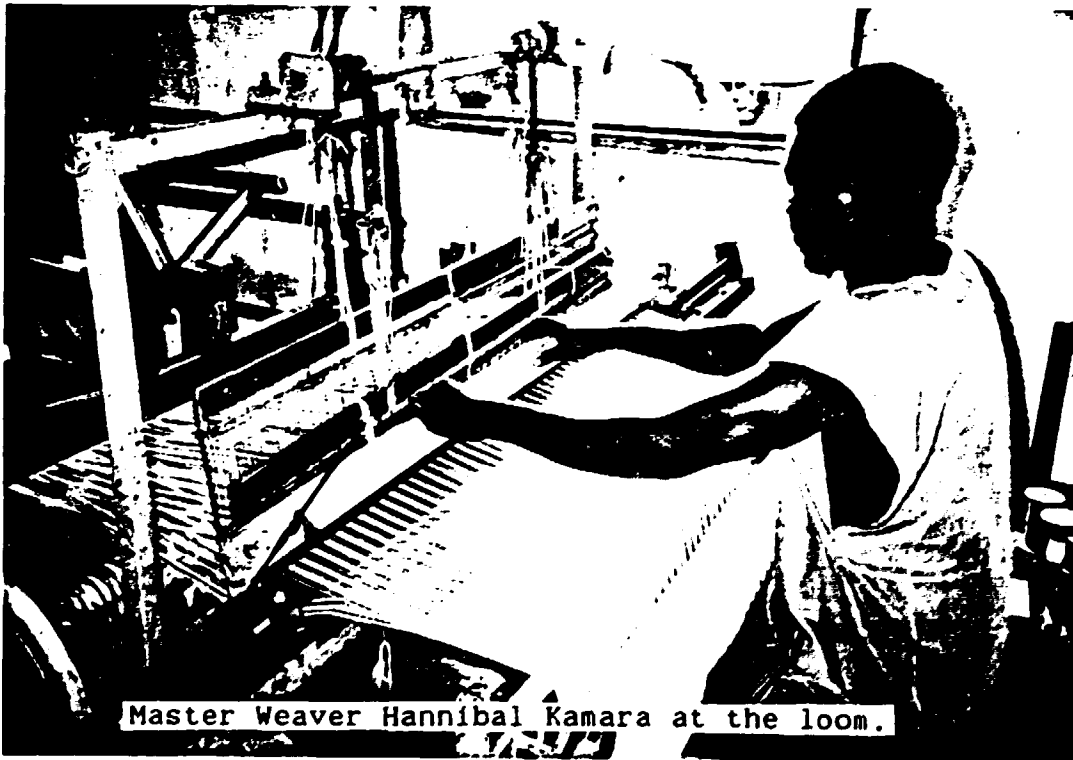
From the start of the present UNIDO project July 1987, we got an excellent UNV, Mr Isaac Quarshie, who stayed his whole term (21 month) at the Kpandebu GC. He was actually assigned to a Cassava Processing Plant at Robinki. Since the sheds were not completed there, we had the opportunity to make use of him in our project. Mr. Quarshie's strength lies particularly in planning and recording, but he is also technically capable to run this kind of operation. He managed to increase the production and sales manifold through his period at the centre (see Annex III).

After two months of overlapping, Mr Mustapha Fatoma succeeded Mr Quarshie in February 1989, as the first employed local manager in the programme. He has a long experience from National Workshops as accountant, foreman and salesman.

In competition with many others, he was selected by the GC Committee, and UNIDO sanctioned the choice. He has managed to increase the production and sales, despite the marketing problems in the very rural area like Kpandebu, and we are quite satisfied with his performance. His weakness lies in product development but with advisory support from the GC Coordinating Office, he could gain a lot.

Marketwise Kpandebu GC has the most difficult location, and it has to rely mainly on sale to the neighbouring villages and Kenema due to bad road conditions and high costs for transport. The seasonal needs and the availability of cash varies greatly over a year. This means that the GC requires more working capital than the other centres, in order to maintain a constant production level. So far the cash available is sufficient, but it can quickly change due to outside factors, such as weather conditions, harvest and pricing of cash crops.

Weaving: The weaving section has gone through a tremendous development since July 1987. At that time we had four looms in function, producing some four yards per day. We engaged the master carpenter and a few helpers, to start making wooden looms. Today we have about twelve looms in production, with a capacity of thirty yards per day. The great increase is very much due to that we managed to get two semi automatic metal looms from another project.



Master Weaver Hannibal Kamara at the loom.

This expansion would not have been possible without the master weaver and trainer Mr. Hannibal Kamara. He is one of the most experienced weavers in Sierra Leone, and he had been specially trained on the semi automatic looms. Since July 1988 when he was engaged in the project, the weaving department has increased the output four times. The new and wider looms (up to 55" from previous 39") made it possible to present new products/uses like bedspreads,

sarongs, curtains and upholstery materials. We still rely on previously imported stock of yarn. That stock will only last for another six months, and there after we must rely on expensive local supply. Small quantities are spun locally, and it would be suitable to encourage growing of cotton and home spun yarn. There is also an old tradition of natural dying in the country, which could be stimulated by an increased demand of home produced yarn.

Blacksmithy: Kpandebu GC is surrounded by plantations of various kinds, growing Cassava, Coffee, Cocoa, Oil palms and Rice. There is a continuous demand throughout the year of different agricultural tools, but the purchasing power is very weak. In most of the villages in the area, there are well established Blacksmiths, competing with the GC about the consumers.



They use mainly scrap steel as raw material, whilst the GC uses imported water hardening steel. The customers has learnt that the village produced tool is cheaper but generally with lower quality than the GC tool. We have also the upper hand in rational production, neater finish and the required tool is often in stock. The GC Coordinating Office can provide tool steel for about two more years with the present rate of production. The price is subsidized to one US\$ per kilo, which is about the same price as for scrap. The basic idea of this is to allow the GC workshops to be well established before they can survive without support. The major tools produced are Cutlasses, Axes, Hoes, Knives and special tools for harvesting Oil Kernels and Cocoa.

A Workshop Foreman, Mr Festus Williams was employed 1 July as Blacksmith Trainer. He did not perform to a standard that we expected and some of the older Blacksmith workers showed more competence. We decided to terminate his assignment 31 of May 1989. In fact the manager Mr Fatoma has a fairly good understanding of metal work, and Mr Williams did not contribute enough to keep him. There are usually three to four forges operating, producing about twenty tools daily to a value of approximately Le 2.000 (US\$ 30).

Carpentry: This section was almost closed in 1987 and the first half of 1988, and limited to construction works. As UNIDO ordered more looms to be produced, it gained new life. Today the section engages about eight employees, trainees and helpers, producing looms, school and office furniture. Orders are often large, and income irregular, but through 1989 nine first months the sale has been averaging Le 30.000 per month (US\$ 400). The quality produced is well above village standard, and there are good hopes for future expansion.

Soap Making: The production of soap is very seasonal due to that the pricing of oil is only favorable a few months after harvest. The oil is available off season as edible oil commanding a too high price for soap production. Kpandebu Soap is a well known trade mark for inexpensive good quality soap. The Soap Mistress Mrs. Balkisa, runs the production for a few months a year, and the production gives an extra appreciated income to the centre. To make any sense in this business, it is merely a matter of having the eye to buy and sell at the right moment. Mr. Bawoh directs the soap economy a great deal, knowing well the local markets.

Economy: Kpandebu GC has a strong economy, with an available working capital averaging Le 100.000/- and with a yearly turn over of Le 1.000.000/-. It experienced the greatest expansion in 1988 when the production was doubled. It slowed down considerably in 1989, and by the end of the year we forecast an production increase of 25% from last year. The financial management is good but we still expect a tougher line to cut down costs, specially regarding transport. The four wheel drive pick up van is very expensive to maintain and fuel, Le 20.000/- per month, but there is no other transport solution due to bad road and out-back GC location. Co-ordination with the Bo office should reduce the costs.

III. Pujehun Growth Centre.

Location: Forty miles south of Bo Town along the planned Trans West African Highway (still far from reality). Pujehun Town is situated by the Wangei River. The river was the trade link between Pujehun and Bonthe, for further distribution of farm produce to Freetown and Over Seas. Today this trade is dormant due to withdrawal of the large commercial farms from the area. The most important crops grown at that time were Palm Kernels, Piassava, Cocoa and Coffee. During the Diamond Rush in the seventies to other areas, the population of Pujehun was declining, but is now rising again, estimated to 8.000 inhabitants. The commercial activities further decreased due to political unrest in the area in recent years (1986 until now). The Pujehun Township is the headquarter of the Chiefdom and the Pujehun District, located in the Southern Province. Despite its formal high status, the economical importance is insignificant. The few infra-structural facilities like electricity, pipe water (out of order since 10 years) is only accessible to a limited extent. Bank, Telegraph, Post Office, and Petrol Station give irregular and insufficient service to the public. There are many schools but very few commercial undertakings. The German Agency, GTZ, runs a very extensive rural development programme. The Bo-Pujehun Project, selected this area much due to its neglected status.

Going to Pujehun south of Bo, the first 25 miles are excellent tarred highway, recently built by a German contractor. The remaining 15 miles gravel road is easily travelable throughout the year, but with low speed and care. The greatest obstacle, a cable ferry has newly been replaced by a modern bridge, capable of heavy trucks. An important improvement for Pujehun.

The Pujehun GC was started as a small Tailoring Workshop by Mrs. Naomi Robinson. The GC was incorporated in the previous UNIDO Project 1986, and Mrs. Robinson was employed as a UNV.

Activity: Land was allocated and the main GC building of about 100 sqm was quickly built and brought into function early 1987. UNV Mrs. Robinson who is a professional Seamstress and Marketeer, specialized the production to ladies underwear and Tie & Dye (Gara). Some other practices like Carpentry, Weaving and Soap Making was tried, but with less success.

Management: Since Mrs. Robinson had operated that previous small Tailor Workshop as her private enterprise, as a UNV Acting Manager for the GC, she continued the same way. Despite her tremendous competence in running the GC and make profits, she failed to transfer her knowledge to the trainees and to show loyalty to the Project and ran a one man business. Her records were not always accurate. She resigned in April 1988. Unfortunately we did not manage to get Hand Over Notes from her, which gives some incomplete records.

UNV Mr. Gilbert Akorly succeeded Mrs. Robinson May 1, 1988 as Acting Manager for Pujehun GC, after going parallel with her for one month. Mr. Akorly who is an industrial engineer, had no previous experience in Tailoring, but were the only person available in the Project for this post. With his general industrial experience, supported by a local professional Tailor, we believed that the set up would be strong enough.

Maybe Mrs Robinson took the sympathy from the GC Committee and the Trainees with her when she left the post. There was a lack of co-operation from the beginning of Mr Akorly's term. As a result of this he alienated himself from the people and tried to rule the GC staff. Consequently the Trainees and Employees became increasingly absent and the production rate fell.

We searched tirelessly for local candidates to the manager post. After many names and interviews we finally recommended a Mrs. Mary Tholley to the GC Committee. She has a long international experience in Tailoring and Gara Dying as a Trainer, but not so strong in Management. She was accepted by the Committee and took up her assignment February 1, 1989. To avoid any further trouble, we did not allow any overlapping period between Mr Akorly and Mrs. Tholley. The Hand Over Notes were made and agreed by the GC Coordinator.

It was not easy for Mrs Tholley to take over the operation, economically run down with lack of enthusiasm. The project gave her a lot of support and training, particularly to manage the Economy and Marketing. We have met every second week in Pujehun or Freetown. The first six months getting into her new role, there was very little progress. Since August there is a significant improvement, increasing from a sale of Le 30.000/- to Le 60.000/- per month.

Tailoring: Garment Production is the major trade at Pujehun GC, with works like Sewing, Embroidery and Gara Dying. In 1986 when the operation was brought into the GC Programme, it was led by Mrs. Naomi Robinson. She conducted the training in machine sewing of commercial products. There is a great in flow of second hand clothes from the developed world, and to compete in price and quality with these "junk clothes" dealers is impossible, specially since much of the clothes are as good as new. UNV Robinson quickly found that under wears seldom come as second hand and since she found flexible materials and elastic bands in the market, she started and extensive production of ladies under wears, producing hundreds of units per week. The Growth Centre had a good economy.



the tailoring workshop at Pujehun GC

The trainees, about fifteen, were young girls averaging an age of twenty years, many of them school leavers often with one or two children. They were selected by the UNV and the GC Committee, often related to the Committee members. Mrs Robinson trained them in the sewing operations required for the underwear production, and they functioned well as workers- producers. But as Trainees to become self-employed Tailors or Entrepreneurs, they were far from sufficient.

We found it very difficult at this point to increase our demands on the Trainee's competence. The workshop was well staffed and we had to take care of those Trainees already recruited. The Committee was not willing to dismiss any of the girls due to incompetence, and we had a very difficult task to upgrade the staff to Entrepreneurial Tailoring Trainees.

Mrs Naomi Robinson was the Manager, Tailor & Gara Trainer, Marketeer and every other function at the Centre. When she left her assignment in April 1988, we needed urgently people to fill all the functions. UNV Mr Gilbert Akorly became Acting Manager. We got a Tailor Trainer, Mrs Ola O'Dell from the Peace Corps, recommended by Mrs Robinson. She had a reasonably good sense for Tailoring but she could not handle the trainees. They had lost their leader "mother", and the production declined. A local Home Economics Teacher, Mrs Amy Kamara was called in as Trainer Assistant and mediator. The atmosphere improved slightly.



Tailor Trainees producing Ladies Underwear

In November 1988, a professional Tailor Mr Solomon Massaquoi was employed as Trainer, and in February 1989 a Textile Specialist Mrs Mary Tholley was employed as Manager but also as Trainer in Gara Dying. By this arrangement, Pujehun GC was transferred to National hands. Mrs Ola O'Dell stayed with the GC until May 1989, but she did not perform very well with Mr. Massaquoi. Slowly the Tailoring Section has picked up production rate and has a monthly turnover at this writing moment of about Le.25,000/-, mainly consisting of school and company uniforms. Many other products have been tried with little success.

Carpentry: Being dormant for almost a year, a small carpentry production was restarted as Mrs Tholley became Manager. The most important customer so far is the GC Coordinating Office. Pujehun GC has produced furniture for a value of about Le. 50,000/- for the Office, and as the quality is improving, we hope that other customers will follow.



Planing White Wood at the Carpentry Workshop

Economy: During Mrs Robinson's period the GC economy was healthy with a monthly sale of US\$ 1,500/- per month. Due to the constraints previously mentioned during 1988 under Mr Akorly's leadership, the sale went down to a low US\$ 300/-. With a lot of inputs in form of advisory and material support the low trend has turned, and the monthly sale is now at a level of US\$ 900/- or 60% of self sufficiency level.

IV. Possible future GC activities and locations.

Apart from the five crafts currently run by the GCs, there are a number of traditional crafts we believe could be successfully introduced into the GC Programme. These proposed crafts can be further improved and refined for

increased value and expanded market. Skills and techniques are often well known in the areas where the raw material is available. For different reasons products have not been commercially viable. Usually due to crudeness in production, unreliable supply and inability to adjust to consumer needs. With quite simple means these problems could be solved.

a. Production.

The products can be divided into five major groups: Fiber-, Clay-, Leather-, Wood- and Metal.

FIBER: Cotton, Reeds, Raffia, Rattan, Bamboo, Piassava and Urena Lobata.

* Cotton was widely grown in Sierra Leone, used as raw material for the traditional robes (Lapas), bead spreads and gowns. The Ginning, Carding, Spinning and Weaving is not rewarding due to ineffective production methods and crude tools. It is recommended to start training and production of more efficient tools to promote home weaving of traditional cloth.

Dyeing of imported cloth is widely performed, known as Gara Dying. We would wish to encourage manual textile printing (screen or stamp) as a complement.

* There are a number of reeds used for basket- mat and hat weaving, mostly non commercially, for use in the villages by the producers. Many people are skilled and could be organised for commercial production.

* Raffia is best known for its silky smooth surface, thin, light and durable fiber layers, ideal for handbags. These handbags are widely sold for good prices. Very suitable for export if patterns and styles are improved. The whole Raffia bar, or splitted, is also used as structure in inexpensive furniture. "Shuku" baskets and "Leffa" plate mats.

* Rattan Cane found in West Africa is not of the East Asian quality, but good enough for terrace or garden furniture. Production here today is marginal due to lack of knowledge how to design models and treat the cane. Production can easily be developed and only hand tools are required.



Sub-Contracted Cane Furniture at Pujehun GC

* Bamboo is extensively grown through out Sierra Leone. but only a fraction of the harvested volume is commercially used. There is a range of products made of bamboo in house construction and domestic products. Most typical usage of splitted bamboo is for wall and ceiling mats. Bamboo is processed (cut, planed, splitted, sliced) at any technical level from pure hand tools to fully automatic machines in the Far East. The bamboo fiber is regarded as the most versatile of natural fibers.

* Piassava fiber is exported all over the world, used as brush materials in coarse brooms (for workshop floors and streets). Simple hand technique is required to produce Piassava Brooms. The Piassava Fiber is sewn to the broom cross wood. An excellent product for export.



Wild Piassava Palm grows in abundance

* Urena Lobata is a Bark Fiber growing wild in Sierra Leone. It can easily be cultivated by planting seeds. It is a fine and extremely strong fiber suitable for weaving mats, bags, rope and twine. Experiments have shown that wearing apparels can be produced from it in form of woven cloth.

CLAY: Clay and Earthen Materials.

Clay and Earth is traditionally used for Pottery and Bricks. The quality is very poor. The materials are not analyzed and the properties like water- and fireproof, force resistance qualities are not tested or known. The basic equipment for production of quality clay- and earthen ware can be produced locally, such as Sedimentation Basins (for cleaning the clay), Hammer Mills (For crushing the solids), Potters Wheels, Tile and Brick Presses and Kilns for burning the products. Today clay products are unevenly burned over open fire at a far too low temperature, and public appreciation of the local produce is low.

LEATHER: From Hides of Cows, Goats and Sheep.

Vegetable- or Natural Tanning is an ancient craft and many recipes are commercially used. Most common is lime bath for dehairing and defleshing (hides soaked in lime bath for one to four weeks) and bark lye bath for the tanning. Then the raw leather is worked (beaten or rolled) to acquire softness or hardness, and oiled to be water repellent and flexible. The vegetable tanned leather can be used in the same way as chrome tanned, for Bags, Shoes, Belts, etc. The equipment is manual and simple to produce such as Basins (concrete), Dehairing Shears, Mallets and Racks (for hanging). The process is smelly but not pollutive and should be located near a good water source, but not in crowded areas.

WOOD: Soft and Hard Wood products.

Production of wood and wooden products is probably the most important industrial and crafts sector today in Sierra Leone. Most of the carpentry workshops/ craftsmen are engaged in production of furniture and related products. The models carry clear traces from heavy dark colonial design and stimulation of changes is demanded to stand the competition of imports and increase the sales of the home products. Production of local "knock down" or dismountable models is desirable due to high cost of transport. The village produced furniture is usually of low quality, still cheap but low value for the money and sometimes waste of wood. It is of highest priority to upgrade local carpenters and local production of good hand tools to enable any improvement in this sector.

Standardization of building products like Windows, Shutters and Doors is required, to enable rational production and fair competition, for a sound development in building carpentry. Now, parts are not exchangeable and the pricing is wild, hampering local entrepreneurial development and employment.

Other commercial wood productions are peripheral. A lot of soft woods suitable for household gear (ladles, beaters, racks, hangers, etc.) are unutilized and needs support for development. Lack of tools restrains any incentive.

METAL: Making Metal products.

The most important Metal production is Black Smithing of Agricultural Tools. Literally every village in the country has a blacksmith. The trade is mostly transferred from father to son and limited to the family. The technique is ancient and the tools produced are clumsy and ineffective. The materials used are mainly scrap. It is of greatest importance to improve the production techniques and the tool designs, to make inexpensive quality tools available for the public to furthermore increase agricultural production. The Blacksmiths lacks basic hand tools, anvils, forger and good raw materials. Through good vocational training the trade should be made available to anyone who have the will and aptitude. Tinsmithy products made of tin scrap is commonly found throughout the country. The common tools used are the Hammer and Chisel, and the quality of workmanship and product is very low. Most important products are Buckets, Funnels, Cans and Water Containers. To enable the producers to substitute imported products, Training, Fresh Raw Materials and proper Hard Tools must be made available to enable development of the sector.

Iron Casting is only made in the National Workshops, former railway workshops. A lot of useful scrap is available but the equipment needs reconditioning and the present production is next to nothing. Typical domestic products are Charcoal irons and Pots. There is a small production of Aluminium Casting of Pots. But the quality is inferior, mainly due to lack of knowledge about aluminium alloys and sand casting properties. With simple and inexpensive techniques the production can be greatly improved.

b. Location of possible GC/Industrial future activities.

In certain areas crafts have traditionally been preformed, where skills, raw materials and interest are found. It is in these areas we have the best potential for a successful development. If the GC Programme will be expanded, the right location of the respective GC is of highest priority, and cannot be over emphasized. We will not elaborate further, but the following Locations hold traditional knowledge or are specially suited for some specific Trades:

- Bo: Pottery, Basket Weaving, Textile Printing, Carpentry, Blacksmithy and Tool Making.
- Bunumbu: Pottery, Basket Making and Blacksmithy.
- Bwedu: Weaving and Pottery.
- Daru: Weaving.
- Kabala: Leather Tanning.
- Kenema: Furniture Production, Wood Carving and production of other Wooden Products.
- Lunsar: Pottery, Brick and Tile Production. Metal Work. Tools Making.
- Hagburaka: Basket Weaving.
- Makeni: Advanced Gara Dying, Batik, Textile Print, Leather Tanning.
- Mambolo: Fiber Works for Sack and Rug Weaving. Kope and Twine making. General Weaving.
- Matru: Weaving, Basket Making, Cane and Fiber Work, Fiber Mat Weaving, Wood Carving and Tinsmithy.
- Moyamba: Blacksmithy and Tool Making.
- Shenge: Carpentry, Black Smithy, Tool Making, Fishing Gear Production, Brick Making and Fiber Mat Weaving.

4. Growth Centre Contributors.

To make the Growth Centre Programme possible, various inputs in form of capital, material, facilities and personnel have been made available from several contributors such as UNDP/UNIDO, The UNV Organization, The Government, The Growth Centre Committees and the GC Customers. A certain accumulated asset was handed over from the previous UNIDO Project SIL/83/001 in form of Stationary, Office Equipment, Vehicles, Tools, Machineries and Raw Materials. These resources gave the project a far greater impact than what is reflected in the budget.

A. UNDP and UNIDO.

UNDP funded the Project, leveled when started in July 1987 at US\$ 399.000 and after revisions, ending the first phase at US\$ 509.000 in October 1989. The major part of the budget goes to personnel support, 76% in August 1989. It reflects also rightly the problems in the project; from top to bottom a personnel matter. From Project Management to GC Managers down to Trainers and GC Staff and Committees, it is the transfer from international to local hands that has been most demanding and exhausting. We started immediately as the CTA arrived to the station, and we feel it is really a never ending issue.

Logistic and material support to the Head Office and the GCs is 23% of the total capital input, includes Transport (fuel and maintenance). Credits of Tools, Raw Materials and Stationaries, cost of Training and Premises for Offices and Workshops.

Since the GCs were very weak at the start of this phase SIL/86/002, UNIDO hired National Organizational and Management Personnel for the GC Project. To co-ordinate and manage all common GC matters, we employed a Senior SSI Advisor, Mr M.A. Tunis as Co- Ordinator for the GC Project. In interaction with the GC Committees, we engaged Managers for the GC production units at Kpandebu and Pujehun. We have still not managed to get a qualified Manager for Binkolo. Four professional Trainers were paid from five up to sixteen months salary by UNIDO since GC earnings were not sufficient to take a risk of examining suitability of the professional on test hiring.

Through the GC Budget a Car Mechanic Mr. Saidu Kamara was employed to care for the GC Vehicles, which saved about US\$ 1.000 per month to the project. This section became self sufficient after a month. An excellent solution that could show the way for other projects in Sierra Leone and for the United Nations as a whole, who suffers from bad and expensive vehicle services with many stranded cars as a result. A Messenger Mr. Bassie Tarawallie was also hired from the same budget, for all these tedious tasks running for cash, necessities and messages, giving more time for the senior staff to focus on their duties. The project would have been much less successful without these two men and they deserve mentioning. We note with satisfaction that they will both follow when the Office moves to Bo.

The UNV Organization has provided the GC Project with four UN Volunteers, Messrs Musoke, Quarshie, Akorly and Paramsothy as Acting Managers for the respective GCs, Binkolo, Kpandebu, Pujehun and for the GC Garage.

In the case of Messrs Musoke and Quarshie, they have handled their tasks put forward to them in a praiseworthy manner. Mr Musokes strength lies on the manufacturing and trading side. He has managed to bring up the Binkolo GC from idleness to promising prosperity. Mr Quarshie is the precise economist, with neat book keeping and record taking, and with no coin left unturned, he is a pattern for others. Mr Quarshie left the project in February 1989 for another appointment in Sierra Leone as Technical Advisor for a Cassava processing plant. Mr Musoke leaves his assignment and is expected to get a renewed contract with the Bo Co-ordinating Office as Technical Advisor and Assisting Manager.

Mr Akorly was less successful. He could not match with situations unfamiliar to him. Unfortunately it took us quite some time to localize the problems. Particularly his inflexibility led to a one year set back for the Pujehun GC, now slowly recovering. We would like to emphasize practical experience as very important rather than formal merits.

Mr Paramsothy was Acting Manager for the Tool Store and the Garage from January 1988 until October 1989. The property is now signed for by UNV Mr Musoke and the GC Management. Mr Paramsothy is a very diligent recorder, and had a reasonably good order in the store. His technical engineering ability was less impressive. Mr Paramsothy's friendliness and willingness must be praised in his favour.

B. The Government.

From the previous project SIL/83/001, some assets remained with the Ministry of Industry. UNIDO GC Programme was offered facilities like Office, Secretaries, and to use the common space in the Ministry. Due to the recession in the public sector the conditions were difficult in that building, with poor supply of water and electricity, hot and dark rooms and unhealthy sanitary conditions. Then, NIDFO (National Industrial Development and Finance Organization) gave us temporary permission to occupy two of their rooms for a year. From there we moved to the UN Building where we stayed until October 1989 when the project office was moved to Bo.

The Acting Director of Industries in the Ministry of Industry and State Enterprises, Mr A.T. Morgan supported our programme. We always held a spare seat for any concerned Government Official who wanted to accompany us.

Our appointed Government GC Counterpart, The Deputy Director of Small Industries, Mr F.O.B. Wan was interested in the project and we have exchanged information regularly. He has also joined us on visits to the GCs. Mr Wan has a potential to contribute to the development of small industrialists and craftsmen.

C. The Growth Centre Committees.

The major contribution from the Growth Centre Committees to the GCs is manpower in form of knowledge and labour. As already explained, the GC Committee consists of Elders and Prominent Members of the society. Usually the Paramount Chief or the Speaker is the Chairman of the Committee. Other Members can be Headmasters, Businessmen, Master Craftsmen, Teachers, etc. The Committee Members forms the Boards of the GC Foundations. They are Share Holders without physical shares, which means that they do not invest any capital, or can not retrieve any capital or property from the Foundation.

The Committees decide personnel matters such as Recruitment of GC Staff and Trainees, Rules and Conduct of Staff, Employment and Organizing of Community Workers (self help activities). The Members are also expected to support the daily running of the GCs, such as Auditing, Record Taking and Marketing. The big problem is that the Committee Members do not understand industrial matters and can not be of support to the Manager in Marketing, Production and Economy. (A typical case was when one of the GC Committees decided to recruit a person as Manager, with no industrial experience whatsoever. Despite the recommendation of project management to withdraw the candidate, they persisted that he was the best candidate.) A gap of confidence or mistrust develops when issues beyond their scope appear. This misconception will be difficult to solve in the present set up. The Members also suggest that they should receive cash incentive for the work they spend at the GCs. An idea totally in collision with the Community Development spirit. The Project Document suggests training of the Committee Members, but to provide any meaningful training we require more receptive people. We will however make recommendations in this matter for new establishments (see I.D.).

D. The Growth Centre Customers.

By far the most important contributors to the GC Programme are the customers. They provide about 70% of the total inputs, ranging about US\$ 5,000/- per month. Roughly 80 % of the sales goes to Foreign Organizations.

This reflects also the poor economical state prevailing in the country and of course it is easier to establish confidence between Organizations. "We are in the same boat".

Among individual national Customers there is a believe that Projects give equipment and services for free, demanding quite some convincing argumentation to explain that GC Project is commercial and must pay for its costs. We increase steadily the sales to the public, though, despite the hardships. The products we make, like hoes, furniture, soap and clothes, are meant for lower and middle class people, who can not afford to buy imported goods.

5. Growth Centre Problems and Solutions.

To be realistic we must admit that we have not been totally successful. We might reach the target of economic autonomy, probably not technical(know-how) autonomy and certainly not the set target for training. Still it must be noted the tremendous positive impact the GCs have in the villages where they are established. It has brought employment, skill, capital and inexpensive good products to the respective locations. In these sites the GC operation is by far the largest economic and industrial establishment.

A. The Entrepreneurial Training.

The GC Training is an on-the-job most realistic training for industrial production. The training is taken out of the class room to a natural environment less costly than any other method. We have found a formula for Industrial Training, not for Entrepreneurial Training. Some Entrepreneurs will be washed out of our exercise as a logical result of achieved skill, but it must be more consciously directed to the right type of people, with the right trade at the right location.

Entrepreneurial Training can be run by the GC Programme, but some elements must be added to make the training more effective.

* Entrepreneurial Trainee Candidates must be hand picked by technical qualified staff, not by the GC Committees. The candidates should prove that they have Entrepreneurial Skill or Aptitude. The best way is to choose people who are already performing some skill or trade. This requires a thorough physical search in the towns and villages for candidates and convince them to join the training.

* Most of the progressive people are not willing to leave their business so the training should be conducted as a mobile workshop, located to areas where there are a sufficient number of candidates (five to ten at each location could be handled).

* In collaboration with the Paramount Chief or the Town Chief, the Central Barre could be a suitable location for the training. The courses should last for one to four weeks repeated three times with three months between the courses (e.g. for craftsmen it would be 1. Practical Skill, 2. Book Keeping and 3. Marketing and Personnel Management). It is not necessary to learn how to produce a range of products. To start with, one or two items are enough as long as they are saleable. Training in Design and Product development comes through the Extension Services that must follow.

* The cost for this kind of training will be less than for conventional workshop training. Lodging and food will be cared for by the participants since they will have walking distance to their homes. As an incentive the Trainees will be given the Products, Tools etc. they have produced during the course.

* The pay back for the training will be in kind, e.g. products. The Trainees will be provided raw materials and maybe some tools, and they will produce for the Training Project, Growth Centre or alike. This system will also provide the Project with a wider range of products and increased sale.

* There is a tremendous need for various hand tools among the local craftsmen. Many hand tools can be produced locally with available raw materials and training. It would give the greatest impact in the society, to train Entrepreneurs in Hand Tool Production to boost the production as a whole.

* Extension Technicians should visit the Entrepreneurs regularly to give Technical/Managerial advice, provide orders, pick up the products and settle payments.

* The GC Co-ordinating Office and the GCs could still form the back bone of the project. With the additions mentioned above, Field Training of Entrepreneurs, the Project will reach both targets: Training and Self Sufficiency. It is not costly but it requires more and Better Trainers. Recruitment of Specialist staff is today our greatest problem (see 5.C.).

B. The Growth Centre Economy.

The income acquired is basically through cash sale of products. We hope to sell services. Due to high inflation rate, we prefer to turn over the capital quickly into raw materials and tools rather than to accumulate funds in the bank, to secure the value.

All purchases and sales have to be certified by receipts and entered into a ledger. We have adopted a simple single entry system that any literate person can learn. The books can be audited regularly by the GCCO.

A problem beyond our control that every businessman faces at present is the shortage of bank notes. Even a small amount (like L 100) is transferred by cheque, with wasted time in long bank queues as a result.

Due to an decreasing state of the economy and falling purchasing power among the low and middle class people, the expansion of the GC economy has slowed down. At the same time we have become better producers and marketeers and are still optimistic that we will eventually reach economic sustainability soon for the three GCs. Improvement of the GC Management is a condition and the training will continue from the GCCO.

C. Recruitment of GC Staff.

Recruitment of personnel at all levels is by far the most difficult problem. To make an easy transaction of the GC functions, we started immediately after the CTA's arrival to search for suitable candidates. The dilemma is reflected in the number of rejected people that was put on trial: three Managers, five Trainers and a large amount of Trainees/Producers. Why is it so? It is important to elaborate around this issue, to better understand and analyze how to improve recruitment.

There is much less of Traditional Crafts in Sierra Leone than in many of the neighbouring countries. Two simplified distinctions can be made about Crafts, Functional Crafts and Decorative or Religious Craft of which the latter is more performed throughout Africa.

There have been small demand for functional crafts products like agricultural tools, fishing gears and general tools in Sierra Leone. Living conditions here was uncomplicated with fertile land, demanding little cultivation. The Population was small and food was abundant. The Colonial Power wanted Cash Crops for export and imported the required Tools. Trade balance was even and much goods were available in the shops. There was not much incentive for local produce and the industrialization bypassed Sierra Leone to greater extent than in many other African Countries. It is from this point we try to find people with Industrial-Entrepreneurial experience. Since the Industrial Sector is so small that the graduates with any Vocational-Technical training tend to end up in unrelated jobs in the Service, Trade Commerce or Public Sectors. The Training also suffers from being too theoretical, often due to lack of funds for Materials and Tools.

From the Decorative Craft's Sector, we find more people like Weavers, Carvers and Potters. They are mostly illiterate village Artists, not geared into Commerce, with a function to serve the Town/Village Chiefdom or Bundu Society establishments, providing the ceremonial accessories.

Entrepreneurial Spirit can not be trained in class rooms. It can be released out of Potential People and developed in an Innovative Environment. This happens often under harsh conditions for survival. The old proverb "Necessity is the mother of invention" might have high actuality in India. It does not necessary imply to the African situation. Other factors such as Attitudes, Traditional Roles/Beliefs and Conservatism might dominate and have usually a negative effect on the Entrepreneurial Spirit and the Development in general.

There is a contradiction in the Developing Agencies popular expression "Rural Industrial Development", if we by Rural mean Agricultural Area or Country Side without Infrastructure. In such area, Entrepreneurial Spirit is scarce and the Innovative Environment does not exist. We are back to the key issues; filtering out Potential Entrepreneurs and select good Location(see 5.E) for Industrial Development. We cannot stress enough a poor location's direct effect on Recruitment.

D. Function of the Growth Centre Committee.

The G C Committees do not function the way it was intended; To engage the members in the daily work and to take Economical and Technical Decisions. There are many reasons for this. Let us look at the Democratic Process in the three Committees. Surprisingly they are all different. They have one thing in common though; They are not able to take the over all leading role of the Growth Centres and the GC Management.

Pujehun GC Committee is probably the most Democratic. They talk enthusiastically but few problems are solved and few decisions are taken. Pujehun GC has more competent members as a whole than the other two.

Kpandebu GC has hierarchistic set up, and the Members acts as advisors to the Chairman. Thanks to a very wise Chairman, Paramount Chief Vandí Dassama of the Dama Chiefdom, the Kpandebu GC Committee is the most powerful, taking clear and firm decisions. The project team has a reliable relation with the GC Committee. Due to insufficient competence in business management for the sake of the growth centre's success, we can not rely on them for direct professional inputs to run the centre.

Binkolo GC Committee is the one with little direct representation from the Paramount Chief. The Town Chief is the Chairman and mandated to represent the Paramount Chief. The authority include mainly the Chairman and the Headmaster and they are not familiar with advisory function for Business Operations. As an effect of this, other irrelevant considerations concerning personal relations and status in the society, however important, overshadows the actual Function of the Growth Centre.

For all the three GCs, the Committees are not sufficiently taking their Role as Boards. The Members lack competence and commitment. There is no Communal Spirit to pull towards the same goal for the benefit of the Growth Centre. Reference of his own development is too strong. A clear indication is that they often claim compensation for the time they spend in the Committee Meetings, and it is often visible that the Members wish to benefit personally through their Membership. This is a very destructive element, but on the other hand easily understood, due to the apparent poverty in the GC Locations. Kpandebu is an exception due to that the Members are ordered to participate by the Paramount Chief. Luckily the PC is a wise man who takes conscientious decisions, but the Members have a very weak position and can not play their role.

It is not easy to change the system of the existing three Committees since the set up is statuted in the Certificates of the GC Foundations. Of course some Board Members will be replaced. The Manager for the Co-Ordinating Office can influence the Chairmen and the Members to select more qualified and dedicated Members for the future.

For coming GC establishments, improvements of the Committee composition is required to create a better functioning Board. Apart from the necessary sanction of the Committee composition by the PC, the Committee should be basically selected from the GC staff; Managers (as now), Trainers, Master Craftsmen and Trainees.

It is the major concern for the GC employees, and in their highest interest, that the GCs are successful. It is consequently logical that the employees should form the Committee. The Members, about ten, will be selected by and from the entire Staff for a limited time. Some people might state that we are back to the old Co-operative system, with many Economical and Political failures in the past. The GC activities are different with a limited number of people working with few and similar Trades. They are the most Professional people in the respective areas to run their own affairs. The GCCO Manager should still have a Share in each Committee, preferably as Chairman and one Share should be held by the Ministry of Industry and State Enterprises. Out of our previous experience, what choice do we have? This is the best possible solution.

E. Location of Existing and Future Growth Centres.

The GC programme has been reasonably prosperous due to our efforts to prove that the GCs can be self sufficient, despite the badly selected Locations of the three existing GCs. Normal conditions for locating industrial

operations such as access to; Raw Materials, Skill and Markets were not taken into account, when deciding the location of the GCs. Apparently the only criteria considered was Rural and Women Development. Even less "Rural" areas are rural enough for this kind of establishments and will receive hardships. Women can be found in all communities. Many of the problems we face today are directly or indirectly related to poor location such as:

- * Difficulty to recruit qualified personnel at any level.
- * Loss of Productive Time. (travel time)
- * High Transport Costs (long distances and/or bad roads).
- * No access to Electricity or Water.
- * Less contact with Markets, Dealers and Customers.
- * Less Influenced in Product Development.
- * Less contact with other Training Institutions.
- * Difficulty to repatriate Trained Entrepreneurs.
- * Less access to Raw Materials, Tools and Service.

The list can be made longer, but we stop here, just to give the reader an idea of the frustrations we face often unnecessarily due to unsuitable location of the GCs. If you want to make an economical sustainable unit, you must forget about ideology, and use economical criteria for location. It is yet hard enough in a country with weak economy to build successful units. It is difficult to make an estimation of avoidable economical losses since the start up of the GC Programme four years ago, but it can be counted in hundreds of thousands of US\$. The previous Project Management have to be held responsible for the poor choice of locations.

The earlier decisions can not be changed but repeated mistakes can be avoided. Of the three conditions mentioned before; Raw Materials (can also mean fuel/energy in energy consuming operations), Skill and Markets, one is a minimum, two are very favorable and three are excellent but rare.

In 3.D.IV.b we suggest thirteen sites that fulfills at least one of the three conditions. Yet a thorough study of the area's suitability must be carried out before any investments are made.

- To conclude the basic preferences for the choice of good industrial sites.
- * Not necessarily in a town but a good turn over of Potential Customers.
 - * Short Distance to Sellers, Buyers and Service.
 - * Nearby Educational Institutions, Vocational/Trading schools or Technical Institutes.
 - * Resident Craftsmen and Traders (shops).
 - * Good road net to Major Towns/Cities.
 - * Access to Good Communal Infrastructure and Logistics.
 - * Access to other Entrepreneurs and Sub Contractors.

Considering the mentioned conditions can not solve the problems of low purchasing power, expensive transports and lack of entrepreneurial skill, but with careful judgments, the effects of these problems can be minimized.

6. Future Functions of the Growth Centre Co-Ordinating Office.

General Functions:

- * To Guide and Monitor all present and future GC Activities.
- * To Attract, Advice and Channel any present or future Contributor to the GC Programme for mutual benefit of both parties.

- * To provide Technical, Economical and Managerial Service to the GCs on competitive basis to create Self-Sustainable conditions for the GCs as well as for the GCCO.
- * To contribute to the Growth Centre Committees required Guidance, Advice and Training, and as Share Holder of the Committee, participate and reinforce the ruling of the GCs.

Specifically the GCCO is expected to:

At any occurring need, give Managerial Assistance by the Manager, Deputy Manager or Technical Advisor.

- * Give Administrative Service to the GCs at cost rate (typing, copying, secretarial help).
- * Supply the GCs with tools, materials, stationary and service at cost rate. Give loan of tools and raw materials to potential GC Entrepreneurs.
- * Provide Maintenance, Repairs and Service to the GC Vehicles, Machines and Equipment at cost rate.
- * Sell GC Produce to the public in order to support GC Development. Provide Sub-Contracts to potential GC Entrepreneurs.
- * Organize and Establish new Growth Centres/Productions.
- * Run suitable Pilot Productions/Demonstration Activities at suitable Locations, to stimulate GC Development.
- * Encourage Bi/Multi-lateral Organizations, NGOs to invest in GC Projects.
- * Outline improved Organizational Structures/Parameters for future GC Activities.

Present Situation:

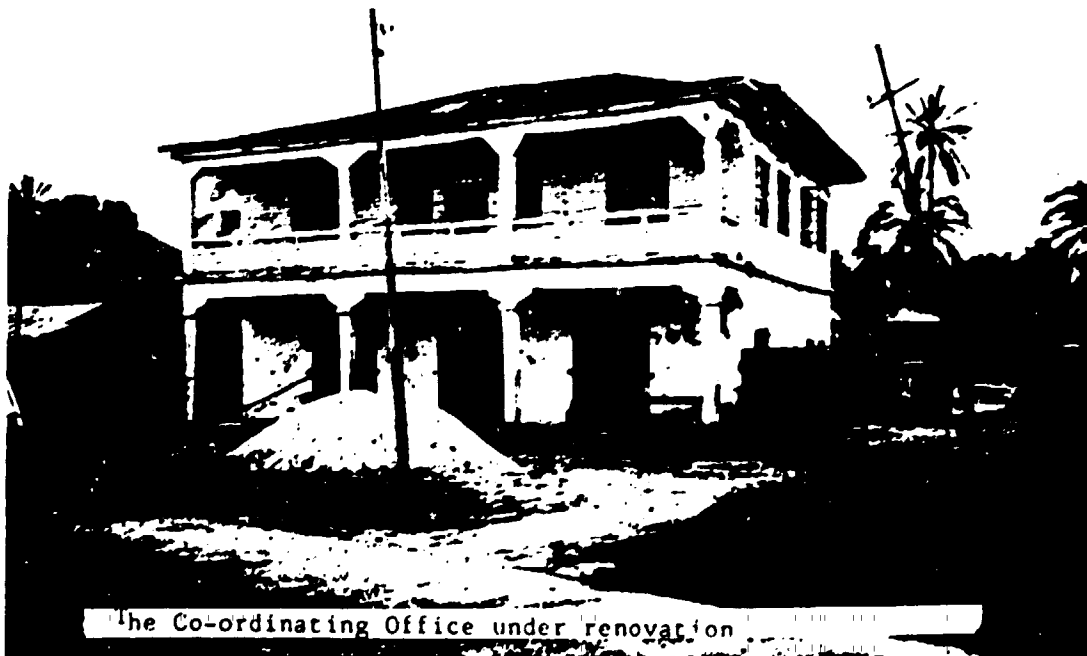
The GCCO is located at 25 Dambara Road in Bo Town. The premises are leased for three years from August 1, 1989. The two store building is situated 300 metres from the central Market, with a lot of commercial activities in the neighborhood. It is a typical Tradesman House, with stores, workshops, garage and offices on the ground floor and dwelling quarters on the first floor (see Annex V). The house is now renovated and in final state will contain:

Ground Floor: Three Offices (manager, secretary/shop, technical advisor), One stationary store, Two tools/materials store, one general workshop (demonstration), one mechanic workshop and one garage (space for three cars).

First Floor: One Meeting/Sitting room, Two Living rooms (technical advisor), One Guest Room, Kitchen, two separate rest rooms (shower-wc) and two spacious balconies.

Furthermore, a water well will be drilled on the compound to ensure all seasonal water.

Electricity supply in the area is at present good, basically 24 hours daily.



The Co-ordinating Office under renovation

The renovation started in July and is expected to be fully completed in December, except for the water drilling that will take place in March-April in the dry season.

The Bo Growth Centre Co-ordinating Office Personnel.

- * General Manager Mr M.A. Tunis, the previous GC Co-ordinator.
- * Counterpart Manager, not yet recruited, will replace the GM after one year overlap duty.
- * Technical Advisor/ Assisting Manager UNV Mr. J. Musoke, the previous Acting Manager at Binkolo GC.
- * Technician/ Mechanic/ Driver Mr Saidu Kamara, the previous Car Mechanic/ Driver at the GC Store Garage.
- * Driver Mr Mohamed Kamara, the previous Driver at Binkolo GC.
- * Purchase-Salesman/ Accountant Mr. Bassie Tarawalli, the previous GC Purchase/ Bank Messenger.
- * Secretary Mrs Kariatu Filli, is a new employee already resident in Bo, at present trained in Electric Typing and Copying in Freetown.
- * Caretaker Mr. Bayoh Dumbuya, previous employee of Brookfields Hotel.
- * Watchmen (three), Mr Amadu Rah, Mr Antony Massallay and Mr Saidu.

We believe the present set up of staff is strong and can cater for the existing and future needs. As more obligations arise and when the economy allows, more staff can be employed for specific jobs. The basic organization is sufficient and versatile and will satisfy general requirements.

7. The Growth Centre Concept: Idealism and Reality.

The concept has a contradiction. Training is a cost, production is an income. Every operation has costs and income. The contradiction lies in the incentive. Any industry runs Training, but only to Satisfy the Internal need to Produce. Other training is unproductive and avoided. The intended training in the Growth Centre Programme should be all-round to satisfy the need of an Entrepreneur. What training is conducted in the GCs? Only the training they need for the production. They can not afford to provide unproductive training as long as they are not self sustainable. Even then, they would not give all-round training. There is no incentive to do so, except for the ideology. The foreigners from Wealthy Countries, invading the Developing Countries they can afford to bring ideologies or charity attitudes. They have the incentive in their salaries or some may be satisfied by leaving a little monument behind over themselves.

So is this GC idea wrong? Not at all, but it must be seen for what it is. An excellent opportunity for to local people to familiarize themselves with new tools, to get professional skill, to get employment, increased standard of life and in some cases it will without any doubt lead to self employment. We need also, Artisans, Craftsmen and professional Workers for a successful Industrialization. An economical and natural way of learning under realistic conditions gives far better spinoff effect than any other method. There is no better school than the industry itself. But it is not a directed entrepreneurial training.

How do we train Entrepreneurs? Maybe release their aptitude is a better word than training. Problem number one is to find them. Specially in countries where everyone craves for training, no matter what. Best, as earlier said, to choose people who can prove their competence through their occupation. There are thousands of Craftsmen, Artisans, Businessmen in Sierra Leone who have already started something. At least they have shown that they are willing and imaginative to try. That is a good start. But they are constrained by their own and outside limitations. What constraints do they have that prevent their progress?

- * Lack of Working Capital (raw materials, salaries etc.).
- * Lack of Fixed Capital (tools, facilities, shed, assets).
- * Lack of Infrastructure and Logistics (roads, electricity, water, telephone, postal services, transport etc.)
- * Lack of Know-How (management, production, marketing).

They have to pass thresholds to be commercially life worthy. Many of them are illiterate and we cannot start literacy training for Entrepreneurs. Who ever they are, the training must be practical and adapted to their needs and to what they can receive. The most effective Training is on-the-job in their own environment. But it is also the most demanding.

We recommend Training through Sub-Contracting as the most economical and effective approach for Training of Entrepreneurs.

What does this mean in reality? The GCCO or the GCs find suitable Trainee Entrepreneurs (TE) through observation (hand-picked at their operation place). After judging their perspective development potential, a suitable kind or range of Products have to be selected for Sub-Contracting (ordering). Products that the GCs/GCCO can easily sell and provide a margin for the Project. Raw Materials can be provided by the GCs/GCCO as advance payment for the order, and Tools and Equipment as Hire Purchase paid through the TE's production. The GCs/GCCO provide Extension Services to the TE's through the regular visits to the TE's workshops, monitoring the progress of the ongoing Sub-Contracts.

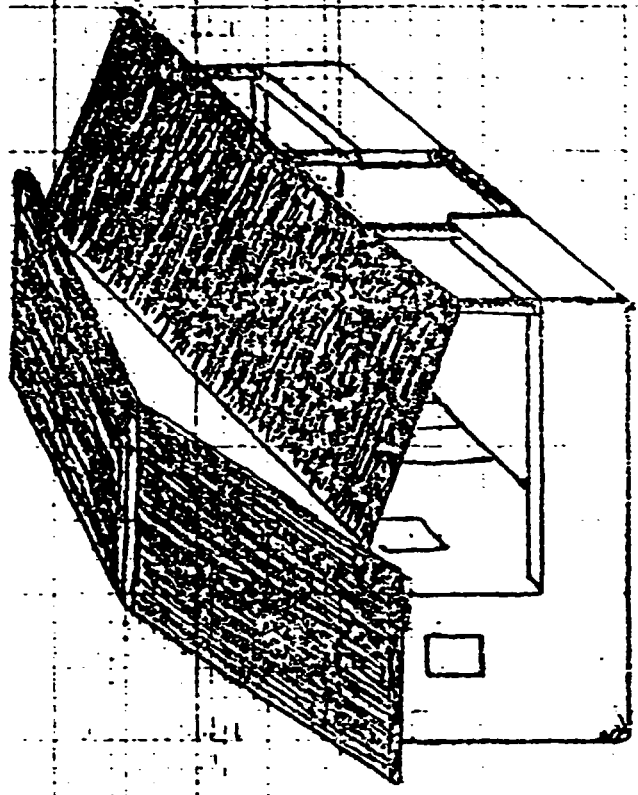
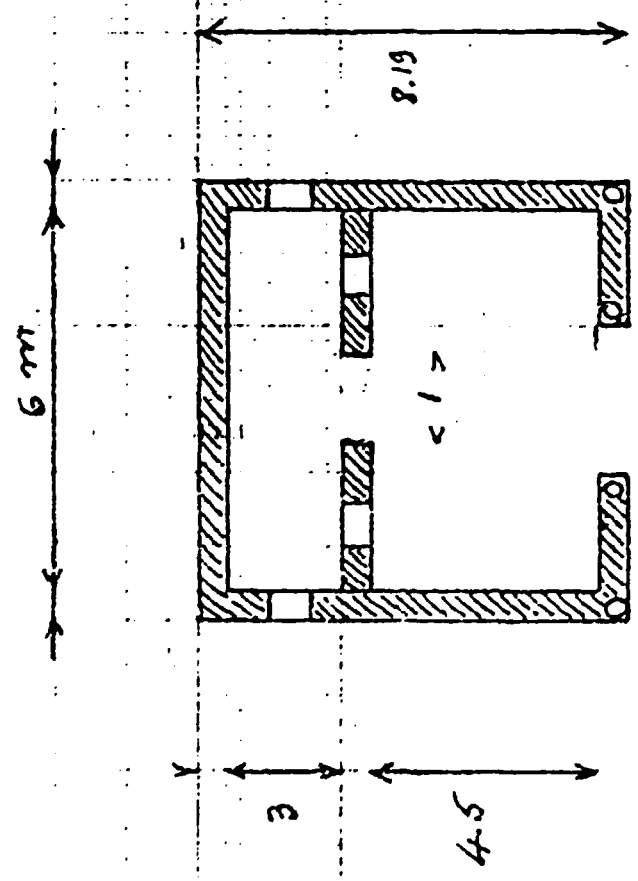
The proposal provides economical incentive for both parties, GC and the TE. Out of the four mentioned constraints, Working- and Fixed Capital, Infrastructure and Know-How, the GC can help the TE to solve the major problems through Sub-Contracting.

This activity does not divert much from the regular work of the Growth Centre Programme. It is rather an expansion of GCCO's advisory inputs to the three GCs. As long as the GCs are not self-sustainable, GCCO will allocate their major inputs to the GCs. Our greatest dilemma is the lack of competent manpower for this type of training, rather than the cost. The Training of Entrepreneurs can be successful and economically viable for both parties, through Sub-Contracting, but it requires a lot of will, skill and energy. It does not leave much of monuments behind like Buildings, Training workshops and Hardware, but it will show a far larger number of Trained Entrepreneurs and a greater Industrial Development in the Society than any other method.

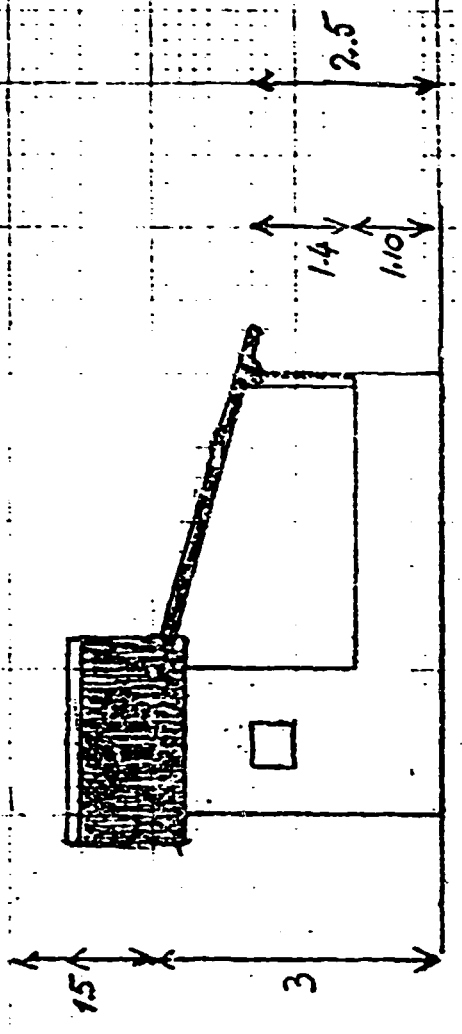
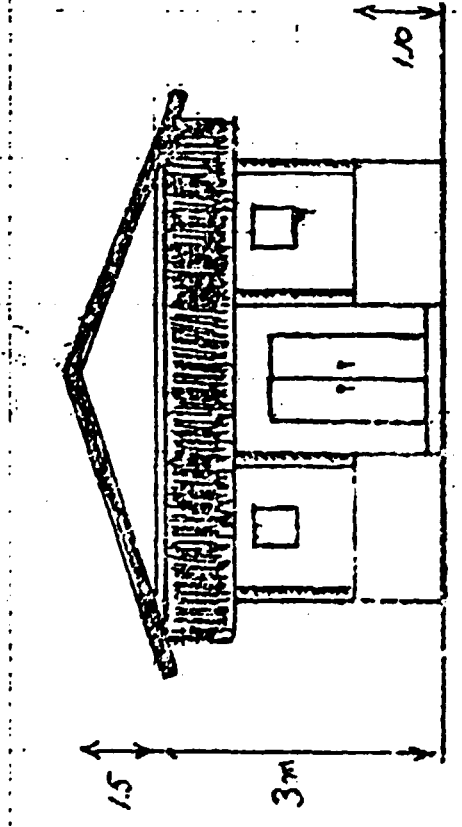
It is not an Aim, it is a Task.

ANNEX I

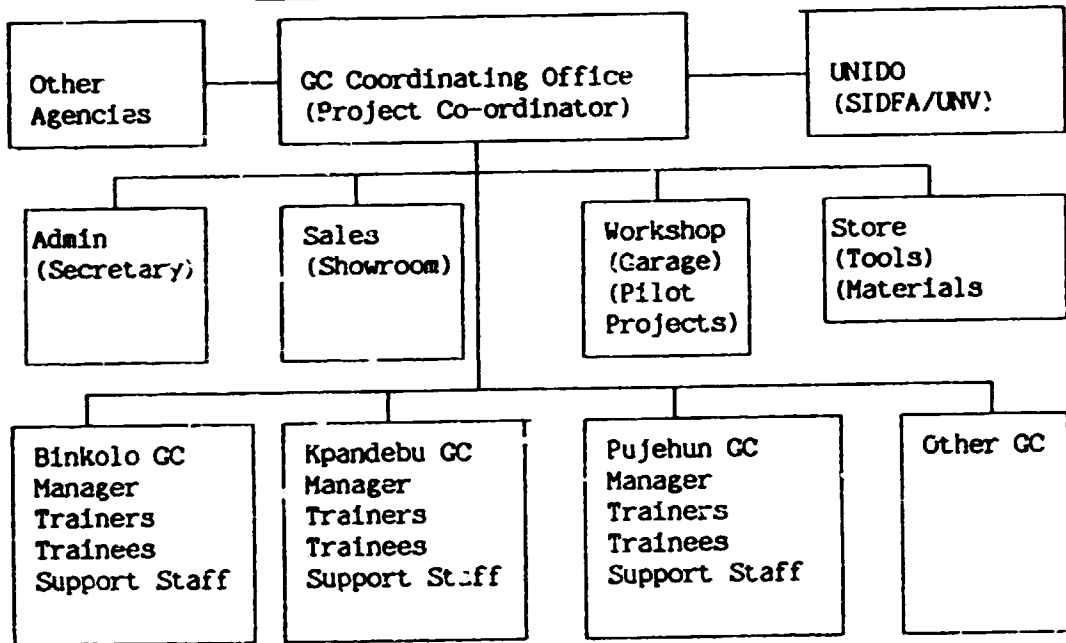
PROTOTYPE OF A VILLAGE WORKSHOP



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Growth Centre Programme Sierra Leone



Cost, Sale and Sufficiency Rate for three Growth Centres in Sierra Leone

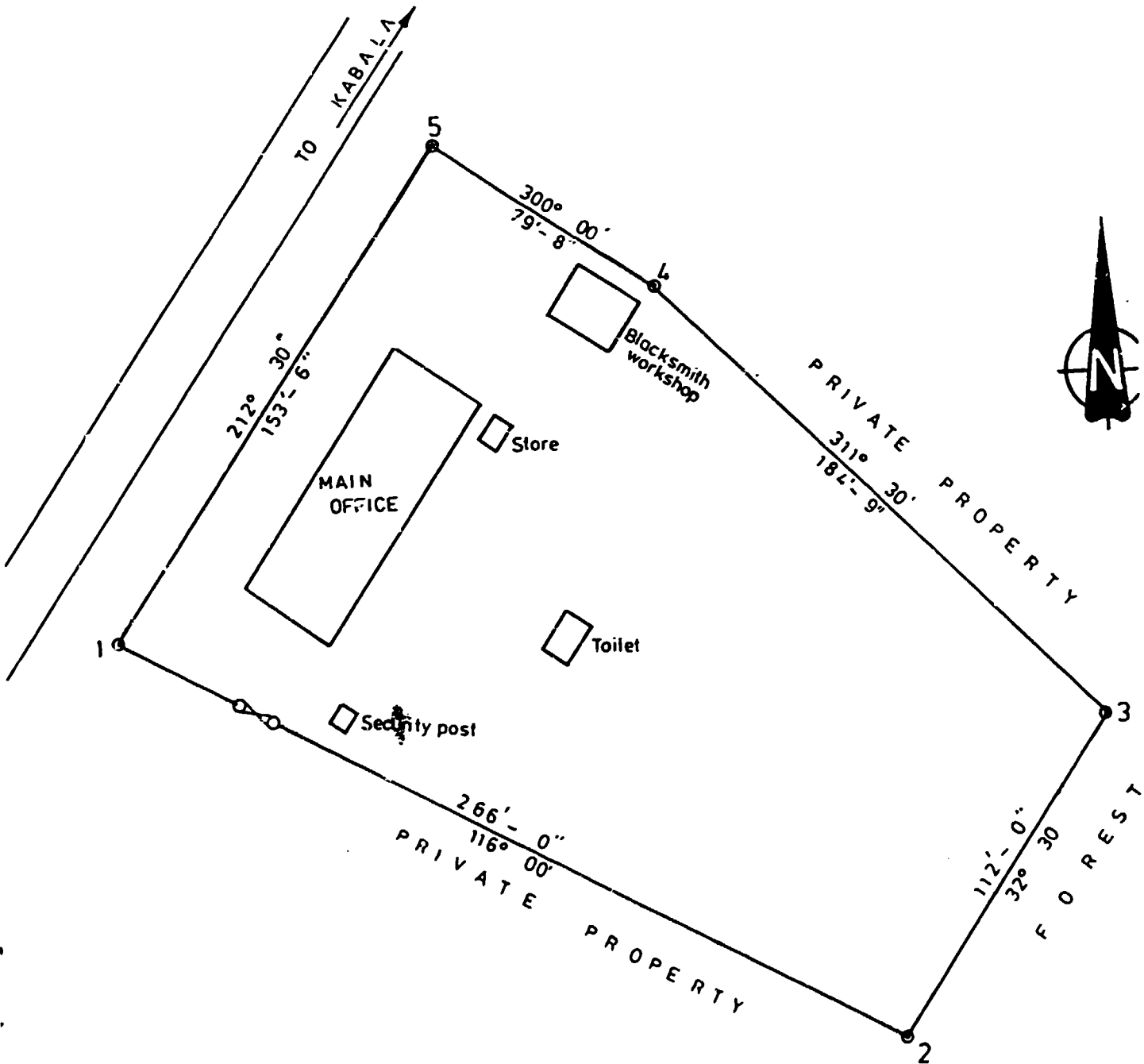
	Binkolo			Kpandebu			Pujehun		
	Cost Le	Sale Le	Rate %	Cost Le	Sale Le	Rate %	Cost Le	Sale Le	Rate %
1988									
January	17.363	2.624	15	48.879	19.036	39	-	-	-
February	35.325	5.517	16	41.218	30.758	75	-	-	-
March	41.714	11.190	27	43.089	24.891	58	-	-	-
April	36.836	14.234	39	42.398	21.260	50	-	-	-
May	47.564	49.072	103	37.083	23.189	63	33.515	10.285	31
June	38.624	16.806	44	29.079	11.586	40	30.679	21.511	70
July	51.914	15.469	30	50.371	21.019	42	30.998	18.091	58
August	61.084	7.572	12	51.183	23.252	45	41.347	11.830	29
September	76.364	24.805	32	47.030	27.869	59	68.563	13.967	20
October	58.356	33.402	57	58.435	21.998	38	33.095	5.982	18
November	64.652	45.316	70	52.090	33.942	65	45.577	21.523	47
December	65.203	37.345	57	62.170	70.145	113	41.256	24.197	59
Average Monthly	49.578	21.196	41	46.918	27.412	61	40.629	15.923	39
Total 1988	594.941	254.352	-	563.025	328.945	-	-	-	-
1989									
January	74.126	39.135	53	74.136	37.001	50	50.675	18.521	36
February	93.499	43.245	46	99.488	40.179	40	58.040	13.355	23
March	176.557	70.035	40	86.446	53.151	61	64.114	20.032	31
April	115.227	62.836	55	185.982	48.472	26	57.826	36.450	63
May	176.096	73.122	42	98.740	60.913	62	34.676	34.499	99
June	154.896	84.185	54	67.423	42.121	62	43.610	14.812	34
July	141.476	184.692	131	94.563	152.432	161	38.433	14.910	39
August	131.923	81.440	62%	116.712	35.152	30%	85.715	43.833	51% pto
September	139.823	85.430	61%	155.643	40.482	26%	66.086	18.875	29%
Average Monthly	133.744	80.457	60%	108.794	56.655	52%	54.4631	23.920	44%

Note: The rainy season August to October has less sales potential due to bad roads and empty food stock.

ANNEX IV PROPERTY OF GROWTH CENTRE PROGRAMME
SITUATED AT BINKOLO SAFROKO LIMBA CHIEFDOM
BOMBALI DISTRICT.

BOUNDARY SHOWN RED

AREA - 0.91 Acres



SCALE 1:500



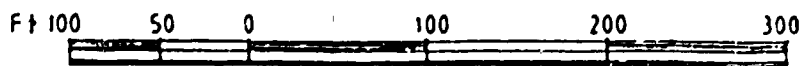
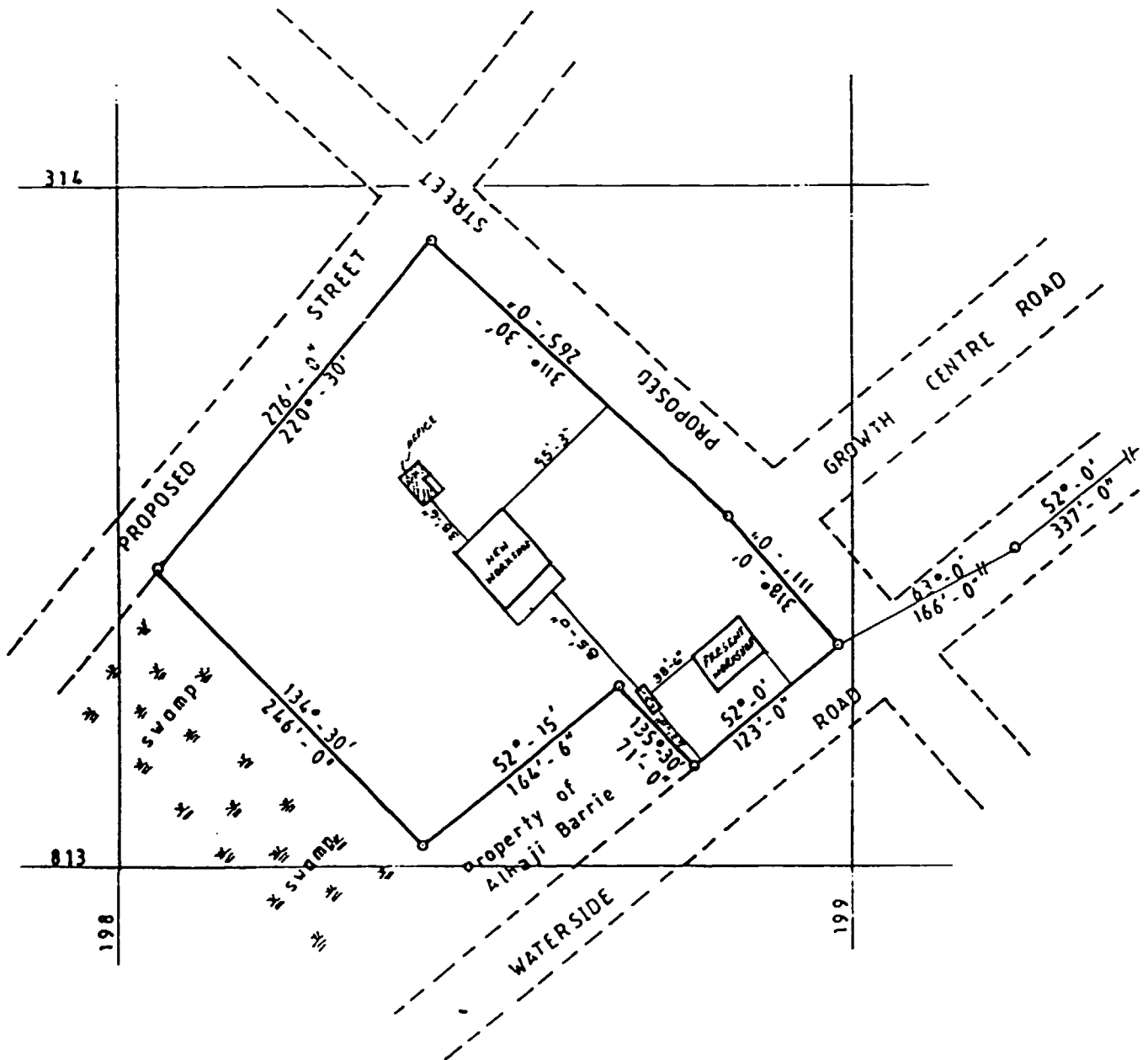
PRISMATIC HAND COMPASS AND STEEL BAND TAPE SURVEY

Chief	Land Owner	Sign	Witness
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ANNEX VI PROPERTY OF GROWTH CENTRE SITUATED AT
WATER - SIDE ROAD PUJEHUN, PUJEHUN
DISTRICT.

Boundary Shown Red

Area, 1978 Acre.



SCALE: 1" = 120'