



Combatting child trafficking

The issue

Child trafficking remains a reality in Sierra Leone where many children find themselves in exploitative situations as domestic workers, street hawkers, traders or prostitutes. Child trafficking occurs both internally – especially from rural to urban areas – and externally, and is being fuelled by poverty, traditional practices, employment scams and many other non-monitored schemes, amongst others.

While the government of Sierra Leone passed the **Trafficking in Persons Act** in 2005 and set up a **National Taskforce for Trafficking in Persons**, practical results remain scarce. Investigations and prosecution of traffickers have increased but judicial inefficacy continues to keep the conviction rate at an abysmal level and impedes effective access to justice for child survivors. In addition, the identification of trafficked children, as well as the provision of protection, rehabilitation and reintegration services constitute a major cause for concern.

Our approach

We recognize that child trafficking is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that relates to human rights, criminal, migration, labour and health issues and cannot therefore be eliminated through isolated actions. Hence, we take a holistic programmatic approach to identify and address the root causes of trafficking and improve responses at prevention, protection and prosecution levels.

Jenis' Story

When Ms. Aminata* came to Jenis'* house and promised her mother that she will get her into a good school in Conakry, Guinea, both she and her mother were enthusiastic. After being picked up from home, Jenis found herself in her car with five other children that she had never met before. Ms. Aminata drove them all the way from Bo to the Guinean border, but when she failed to present the required identification documents to Sierra Leonean immigration officials, she was promptly arrested. Through effective coordination between Sierra Leonean and Guinean officials – sparked by DCI-SL's earlier interventions – it was discovered that Ms. Aminata had planned to force the children into domestic servitude in Conakry. Security officials promptly referred the case to DCI, who was able to ensure the safe and secure reintegration of the five children into their communities. Today, Jenis is back at school and hopes to become a social worker to help prevent such events to occur.

* Replacement to protect the child's identity

DCI-Sierra Leone is an independent child rights non-governmental organization. We consult with children and youths, communities, and other key stakeholders to design our programmes and bring the most appropriate and sustainable solutions at all levels.



**Defence for
Children International
Sierra Leone**

How do we bring change?

We aim to bring sustainable solutions to the fight against child trafficking. Through strategic engagement with key partners and actors, we aim to put child trafficking higher on their agendas while encouraging collaboration to stimulate innovative and transformative actions both at policy and practice level.

Our strategies

lead

We lead initiatives to strengthen formal and community-based child protection systems and train key actors to improve prevention of and response to cases of trafficking.

engage

We engage in policy advocacy to review and/or adopt relevant laws and policies, and ensure their effective implementation, including through active membership within the National Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons.

stimulate

We stimulate commitment and multi-stakeholder cooperation for the fight against child trafficking, including at sub-regional level within the Mano River Union (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

provide

We provide direct socio-legal services, such as legal aid and family tracing and reunification, to ensure protection, reintegration and access to justice for child survivors of trafficking.

Our most recent achievements

Zoom in on our sub-regional programme in the Mano River Union

In 2013, we launched a joint initiative with DCI-Liberia and Sabou Guinée to spark multi-stakeholder collaboration to fight child trafficking in the Mano River Basin.

Putting words into action at the border areas between Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia

130 frontline security officials, community leaders, CSOs and local stakeholders were trained actors to bolster prevention and response mechanisms.

Training sessions prompted practical actions, including the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures, the establishment of a case management and data recording system, and peer-to-peer training and awareness-raising activities, which eventually led to identification and direct interventions on alleged cases of child trafficking.

Sparking policy change and political commitment

Through **effective engagement** with the Mano River Union secretariat, we drafted a sub-regional policy for the protection of children on the move, which is currently under review. The policy aims to bolster commitment by MRU States and become a blueprint for action.



✉ info@dcisierraleone.org

☎ +23288818089

🌐 dcisierraleone.org

📘 @DefenceForChildrenSierraLeone

🐦 @DCISierraLeone

HEAD OFFICE

No. 4 Old Railway Line, Tengbeh Town, Western Area
Freetown – Sierra Leone, West Africa

DISTRICT OFFICES

Bo City, Kenema City, Makeni City, Moyamba Town



**Defence for
Children International
Sierra Leone**