



## **BASELINE SURVEY REPORT**

**ON**

**ENCOURAGING BLACKSMITHS TO SEEK FURTHER TRAINING IN  
ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD SKILLS TO ILLICIT WEAPONS**

**IMPLEMENTED BY:**

**SIERRA LEONE ACTION NETWORK (SLANSA)**

**AND LOCAL PARTNERS.**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>TITLE PAGE</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF GRAPHS/TABLES</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>GLOSSARY/ACRONYMS</b>	<b>v-vi</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>vii-</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1- 3</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>VIEWS ON BLACKSMITHERY</b>	<b>4 - 6</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>SURVEY METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>SURVEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>8- 13</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>14 -16</b>
 <b><u>APPENDICES</u></b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>DATABASE OF BLACKSMITH INTERVIEW</b>

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Surveys are technical and scientific exercises that normally require the collective inputs from all key players if it could gain the expected goals. This survey wouldn't have been completed without the valuable contributions of some key persons.

The effort of SLANSA Network members, enumerators and Field supervisors and all those involved in the survey and production of report is highly appreciated.

## LIST OF GRAPH AND FIGURES

	<b>PAGE</b>	
Fig. 1	Gender Distribution among respondents	8
Fig. 2	A bar graph showing Blacksmiths who currently active in production.	9
Fig. 3	A pie chart showing Blacksmiths who were or are manufacturing Guns.	10
Fig.4	A linear graph showing Respondents who are willing to stop producing Guns and seek further training in alternative livelihood skills.	11
Fig. 5	Gunsmiths who intend to register with the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms to become licensed gunsmiths.	12
Fig. 6	Histogram showing /Blacksmiths who said they have ready market to sell their products.	13

## **GLOSSARY**

<b>ANVIL</b>	Broad Cast iron on which hot metal is laid to be hit by hammer
<b>AOAV</b>	Action on Armed Violence
<b>BELLON</b>	An Air Pressure Device used for blowing air into the forge for heating iron
<b>BENDING</b>	Act of hitting a hot iron into shape with a sledge hammer over an anvil
<b>CAST IRON</b>	A metal with 2% or more carbon content
<b>CHISEL</b>	A flat iron used to lengthen a metal and reducing its depth
<b>CLOCKSMITH</b>	A person who makes a clock out of iron
<b>DRAWING</b>	To lengthen metal by reducing its dimension
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>FORGE</b>	To process smith is to heat and shape metal by hammering
<b>FOSDA</b>	Foundation for Security and Democracy in Africa
<b>HAMMER</b>	A round iron head fixed to a short handle used to hit hot iron to shape – sledge hammer and trip hammer
<b>IANSA</b>	International Action Network on Small Arms
<b>METAL SMITH</b>	A person who hits objects from wrought iron – Blacksmith/Goldsmith etc.
<b>PPJ</b>	Promotion of Peace and Justice Sierra Leone
<b>PUNCHING</b>	This is done to create a hole in the metal or make to create a hole in the metal or make a decoration pattern using a hammer and the end of an anvil
<b>RYDO</b>	Rural Youth Development Organisation
<b>SLANSA</b>	Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms
<b>SLeNCSA</b>	Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms
<b>SMELTING</b>	The process of heating wrought iron to a degree that it becomes like a soft metal
<b>STEEL</b>	Is an iron mixture between 0.3-1.7% carbon by weight
<b>UNSCAR</b>	United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation
<b>WELDING</b>	The process of joining of the same or similar kind of metal together

<b>UNoDA</b>	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
<b>WANSA</b>	West Africa Action Network on Small Arms
<b>ONS</b>	Office of National Security
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>CASCA</b>	Coordinating Action on Small Arms

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Sierra Leone Action Network on Small arms (SLANSA) has under taken major strides in Human Security and Development in Sierra Leone since its inception in 2001.

The campaign against the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapon (SMLW) in the West African Sub-region and at global levels, is SLANSA's cardinal goal scored among other human security and developmental issues. In 2012, SLANSA partnered with Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) to conduct a national baseline survey on armed violence. The outcome of this survey clearly showed that weapons (guns) are primary sources of instruments or tools used to commit armed violence. The survey identified blacksmiths as an entity which produce local guns that are used to commit armed violence in Sierra Leone.

AOAV and SLANSA undertook a Blacksmith identification project and reported that, over four thousand Blacksmiths were identified nationwide. Out of the above two hundred gunsmiths (gun producers) were identified also. Of this total, twenty four agreed to stop producing local guns and underwent further training on alternative livelihood skills. The outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in 2014 and 2015 rudely interrupted the project.

In 2017, SLANSA through funds from the United Nations Trust Facility Cooperation on Arms Regulations (UNSCAR) under took another survey encouraging blacksmiths training in livelihood skills in order to stop manufacturing illicit weapons.

**Objectives:** Main objective of the survey was to encourage blacksmiths to undergo alternative livelihood skills training in order to stop producing illicit fire arms.

The other sub objectives were: a) identifying gunsmiths who do not want to stop producing fire arms and encouraging them to register with the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms (SLenCSA) to become licensed gunsmith;

b) It was also aimed at finding out whether the blacksmiths have markets, workshops, materials and adequate tools to do their work effectively.

A special instructional workshop was conducted with the consultants, wherein SLANSA local implementing partners were involved in the planning of this project survey activity. Eight (8) districts including; Kailahun, Kenema, Moyamba, Bo, Kono, Western rural and the Western Urban were selected as sample enumeration areas.

One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were selected using the random sampling method. Enumerators were selected from the network members who were involved in the instructional training and were allocated to districts of their origin to discharge the questionnaire in two weeks.

Enumerators were assigned to interview fifteen respondents out of which, three were previous blacksmiths interviewed and trained in alternative livelihood skills. Thus a follow-up interview was blended with the general questionnaire instrument in the survey.

The survey findings showed the following:

- There is a significant gender disparity in the number of respondents interviewed. Out of 120, blacksmiths interviewed, only 1 (1%) is a female, found in the Western Area.
- 116 blacksmiths (respondents) represented by 97%, said they are active in the production while 3% said they are less active.
- Out of the 116 respondents, who said they are active in blacksmithing 87 (75%) admitted that they were and are still producing guns, while 29 (25%) said they do not produce guns.
- As to the reasons behind their making of guns 60 (69%) said it is for commercial purposes, citing the farmers as their main customers. 13 (16%) said they produce for their personal security, while 14 did not specify reason.
- 52 (60%) gunsmiths expressed willingness to stop producing guns and undergo further training in “alternative” livelihood skills. 35 (40%) said they are not willing to stop.
- 21 gunsmiths out of 35 represented by 60% showed willingness to register with the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms (SLeNCSA) and become licensed gunsmiths. 7 (20%) said ‘NO’ to registration while 7 (20%) were undecided.
- A controversial amount of 54 (62%) respondents said they do not have market, while 45 (48%) said they have markets. When further interrogated, the latter said they take their finished blacksmith products to the periodic markets (Lumas) to sell.
- It was also a diversity of choices between those who wanted what, in terms of further support to enhance their blacksmith work. Main options chosen were further trainings, tools, materials, workshops and funds (micro-finance loans).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The survey incorporated two activities which informed one report i.e.

- i. Evaluating formerly registered gunsmiths who opted for alternative livelihood skills and were trained and supplied tools to enhance their work, and
- ii. To find out more blacksmiths, who are involved in making local guns.

The following recommendations were proffered:

### **1. Provision of improved tools, materials and workshops**

The impact reportedly created by the previous blacksmiths in the follow-up survey was very significant. They have modern but manually operated tools which they were supplied but face the acute problems of materials to work and a less friendly workshop environment. Notwithstanding, they have advanced remarkably in producing local blacksmith items like agricultural tools, kitchen utensils including coal pots, iron spoons, buckets, etc.



In addition, they have started producing welded items including steel windows, doors and gates. One respondent informed our investigator:

“We produce our own bellows, chisels, and steel bending tools.”

.According to data collected, over 45% of the respondents said that they have no conducive workshops. It was only in Kailahun, Kenema, Makeni, and Bo (Urban communities) where average workshops were found.

For most interior towns and villages, they operate from thatch huts that are dilapidated and need frequent repairs. They complained about poverty as being the main stumbling block that prevents them from having an up to date or modernized workshop.

2. **To provide opportunities for further skill training in alternative livelihood.** Eighty-seven respondents admitted being involved in manufacturing local guns before the interviews. Of the above total, 52 gun smiths agreed to stop producing guns for alternative livelihood skill training. They indicated various trades like blacksmithery, tailoring, masoning and others said agricultural activities. In the above light, some asked for funds/loans to buy new tools and material for their trade or workmanship.

3. **To create a link with the National Commission of Small Arms (SLANSA)** for gunsmiths who still wish to continue producing guns to be registered and obtain license. It is very important that the project constantly follows upon the activities of these gunsmiths to ensure safer practices

4. **To place a ban on the importation of scrap metals :**Wrought iron is the main material that the blacksmiths need for their work but trade in scrap metals has greatly disadvantaged the blacksmiths from getting wrought iron and other metals. There is therefore need for regulations to band the sale of some scrap metals that blacksmiths require to do their work. Also creating business centres for the blacksmiths for buying their required materials and sales of their products are eminent.

5. **Formation of a National Blacksmiths Organization.** It is recommended that a national blacksmiths organization/association should be established. Experience from the Industrial Revolution in England has taught a lesson that in an event when technology over takes local production institutions, it renders the later valueless and obsolete. Thereby rendering those in the craft jobless and less important. With the formation of an organization of blacksmiths, their welfare will be addressed, their activities effectively monitored and regulated by a functioning legal instrument. This will eventually help in the control of their gun/other weapon producing activities in the country and the sub-region. In short, it will be easier to relate to their interests.

## CONCLUSION

The relevance of this survey can be only derived if its recommendations are critically adopted and considered by its users. Secondly, it will inform Government and other agencies in developing policies on the monitoring and control on the advise and regulation of blacksmith activities vis a vis small arms and its related issues in the Sierra Leonean, the sub region and global.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:**

The baseline survey on ‘Encouraging blacksmiths to seek alternative livelihood skills training instead of producing illicit firearms’ was carried out in eight districts of Sierra Leone and it revealed that locally manufactured guns that are produced by unlicensed and untrained blacksmiths were a significant source of violence in Sierra Leone.

The main focus of the foregone UNSCAR/SLANSA survey was geared towards identifying these gun smiths among the blacksmiths and encourage the former (by way of persuasion) to give up producing arms or other weapons of violence in return for an offer to training for alternative livelihood in order to reduce or eradicate the production, illegal possession and proliferation of illicit guns in the country and the West Africa sub-region. It also tried to provide assistance for those who wished to continue with the trade to obtain license from the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms (SLeNCSA).

Since the number of gun smiths were alarming, this project would seek to engage these gun smiths and to continue to work with them to reduce their number further and assist those unwilling to give up production to register with the small arms Commission in Sierra Leone.

The project did an evaluation on the first set of gun smiths trainees for alternative livelihood to see what progress they have made so far and lead those still interested in producing guns to register their trade. The project sought to assess the availability and accessibility to market where they will purchase materials to do their work and to sell their blacksmith products. It also found out the state of environment(workshops) not too conducive where they do their works.

### **1.2SIERRA LEONE ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS (SLANSA) MAIN IMPLEMENTING AGENCY**

The Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA) is a non political and non-profit making coalition of youth based and civil society organizations that campaigns to promote human rights and human security in Sierra Leone. It strongly promotes community safety, security and development. SLANSA was established in October 2001.

Its mission is to tackle the root causes of conflict in post conflict Sierra Leone through advocacy, public education and awareness raising. SLANSA takes high sense of responsibility in pushing for policy frame works gearing towards the enhancement of citizen’s right to life, security and Regulation and Domestication of the policies on Small Arms and Light Weapons control.

SLANSA espouses the campaign on the values of human rights, human security and good governance in addressing issues of armed violence, human rights violation/abuse, poverty, peace building and national development using the Rights and Responsibilities Based Approach (RRBA).

SLANSA has played and still continues to play leading roles in the drive to reducing the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SMLW) through promoting the UN programme of Action; the UNDP Arms for Development project in 2000 and the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and its components in 2003.

SLANSA was instrumental in establishing the small arms desk at the office of National Security in Sierra Leone which led to the creation of The Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms (SLeNCSA).

SLANSA has track records of championing campaigns and lobbying governments for the timely adoption, domestication, ratification and enactment of laws and international instruments to ensure the control and reduction of the proliferation of small arms in the sub-region and the world.

SLANSA operates through her local community based partners in the six geographical districts in Sierra Leone.

### **1.3 SIERRA LEONEAN CONTEXT**

Sierra Leone is a small country lying along the West African coast about 28,000 kilometers in size. It has a population density of seven million five hundred thousand inhabitants (National Population/Housing Census 2015) Sierra Leone is a multilingual state with Krio as the main lingua franca. Mende and Temne are the largest indigenous tribes among the others including Limbas, Susu, KonoFulaandSherbro. English is the official language spoken. Sierra Leone is a Muslim dominated state with a significant Christian population, whose contingency is interpolated with spiritual and orthodox Churches.

Sierra Leoneans are mainly agrarian people and they practice subsistent farming. However, there are other cultural heritages of great value to them which includes Blacksmithing, carving and weaving. The Blacksmith industry is very pivotal in the agricultural practices of the people because it produces the tools used by the farmer in their agricultural activities.

Sierra Leone has a vast expanse of mineral deposits including diamonds, gold, rutile, iron ore, bauxite and of late crude oil exploration is going on. However, the lack of advanced technology has made these minerals less profitable to the indigenes. The bulk of the urban dwellers do small scale commercial businesses for a living.

Sierra Leone is a multi-party republican democracy with the President as the Supreme head of authority with executive powers. The other two branches are the Legislative and Judiciary.

The project is located in the Kailahun, Kenema, Kono,(East), Bombali (North), Bo, and Moyamba (South) Western rural and Western urban.

Proliferation of illicit weapons and its transfers are highly susceptible in some of these districts according to previous surveys conducted accompanied by the increased rise in armed violence.

#### 1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The overarching objective of the blacksmith project is to identify and encourage blacksmiths who manufacture local guns to seek for alternative livelihood skills training in place of manufacturing of illicit weapons.

##### **Specific Objectives**

1. To find out if there is an increase in the number of blacksmiths/gunsmiths in the areas of survey and to ascertain representation/percentage of them.
2. To find out if these gunsmiths are willing to stop producing guns and seek for opportunities in further training and tools for alternative livelihood skills.
3. To work with those who wish to continue to produce guns so as to encourage and lead them to register with the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms (SLeNCSA)
4. To work with those blacksmiths, who opt for training in alternative livelihood to identify regular markets for the sales of their products – ie through creating linkages with allied institutions like schools, Ministry of Agriculture, agricultural groups, businesses etc.
5. To proffer recommendations to responsible state functionaries on the needs of these unlicensed blacksmiths and how these needs can be addressed as a means of reducing the proliferation of illicit weapons in Sierra Leone.



*Blacksmith forging iron at his workshop in Dama road, Kenema, Kenema District.*

## CHAPTER TWO.

### 2:0 VIEWS ON BLACKSMITHERY AS A CONDUIT TO WEAPON MANUFACTURING

This chapter seeks to explain the progressive development of the culture of blacksmithery and how various contributions on its production works have enhanced positively or negatively on society.

A blacksmith is a metal smith who creates objects from wrought iron or sheet by forging the metal using tools to hammer, bend and cut the iron into shape. (ef White Smith, 2000).

A blacksmith produces objects such as gates, cooking utensils, agricultural implements, grills, railways, light fixtures, sculptures, tools, decorative and religious items and weapons.

Blacksmiths have general knowledge on how to make and repair many things from the most complex of weapons and armours to the simplest of things like nails or length of chains. It is a very old tradition and dates as far back as 1500 BC, when Anatolia first discovered or developed the smelting of iron ore.

The term blacksmith comes from two concepts. “Black” refers to the black fire scales which is a layer of oxide that forms on the surface of the metal during heating. “Smith” comes from the English word “SMYTHE” meaning to strike or Proto German “smithaz” meaning skilled worker (Wikipedia.)

All basic operations of blacksmithing came into use with the beginning of the iron age. Bronze smithery was the origin of black smithery but the iron age over took the usefulness of bronze in blacksmithery.

In the medieval period, blacksmithery was considered as part of the set of seven mechanical noble arts. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, a village smithery was the staple (security) of the town. However the advent of factories and mass production due to the Industrial revolution diminished the importance of blacksmiths in Europe.

Blacksmithery however did not phase out because it had another very notable function it performed which made in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the American (US) government included in their treaties with the native American tribes that the United States would employ blacksmiths and strikers with the expressed purpose of providing native American with iron tools to do repair services.

Both the European and federal American armies employed blacksmiths to shoe horse and repair equipments such as wagons, horse tacks and artillery equipments. The smiths worked at a travelling forge in wagons specifically designed and constructed as blacksmiths’ shops on wheels to carry and supply necessary equipments during war.

It is interesting to note the level of advancement in the blacksmith industry over the years. The original techniques of smithery including forging (sometimes called sculpturing), welding, heat treating and finishing were discovered as the trade progressed. The hammer, anvil and chisel are the principal tools used in the process of producing items by the blacksmiths. Heating of metal generally takes place in a forge with charcoal as its local source of fuel (power).

Nowadays, advanced blacksmithery uses propane, natural gas, coal, coke or oil – which are more efficient sources of power. Modern blacksmith also use oxyacetylene or blow torch for more localized heating. With electrical energy, induction heating is gradually spreading to other areas of blacksmithery in the world.

## **2.1BLACKSMITHERY IN SIERRA LEONE**

According to the blacksmith identification survey under taken by Action on Armed Violence through her partner SLANSA, there are approximately four thousand local blacksmiths in Sierra Leone. Among these there were two hundred local gunsmiths identified.

Blacksmithery in Sierra Leone is a sacred institution. It was connected with the native secret poro society hence blacksmiths were considered as extra ordinary people whose death and funerals were celebrated through rituals. Some blacksmiths claim their skill and proficiency to be hereditary.

However, with the arrival of foreign nationals, like Guineans, the sacredness of the blacksmithery culture has taken a purely commercial dimension. Besides, with the upsurge of vocational and technical skill training institutions flooding the country, more and more blacksmiths have emerged with refined methods of work to match the present day demands.

Blacksmithery in Sierra Leone is basically not advanced as research shows that seventy percent of blacksmiths use crude tools/instruments and don't have appropriate workshops to enhance their work. (AOAV armed violence survey 2011 report)

The focus of our study however is the positive or negative effect caused by their work. The survey seeks to evaluate the progress made by the twenty-four (24) previously identified gun smiths in their alternative livelihood skills work and to engage those yet to renege on the production of local guns and their components to join with the previous ones in stopping the manufacture of local guns and seek further livelihood skills.

## **2.3SLANSA S PERCEPTION SURVEYON BLACKSMITHS**

According to the previous baseline survey on armed violence in Sierra Leone, done by AOAN and SLANSA in 2011, it states thus:

“The Sierra Leone civil war where small arms and light weapons were the engines of violence saw some 27,000 people killed as a direct result of arms violence, 460,000 people killed as a result of conflict (Geneva Declaration 2011):

‘Additional 4,000 people had their limbs deliberately amputated (TRC 2004), 215,000-257,000 women may have been victims of sexual violence – (Physicians for Human Rights 2002) – AOAV Baseline Survey Report 2013 ‘

The gruesome account of armed violence were committed due to the uncontrollable use of fire arms and other illicit weapons of violence. It is therefore incumbent that there must be a constant mechanism to put under check the production, rampant flow, indiscriminate proliferation and use of these weapons. Checking the production includes identifying the sources of manufacture, reasons for manufacturing and trying to influence the total eradication, reduce interests in the trade and provide alternative skills to ensure the economic sustenance of the blacksmiths engaged in the trade and link those who have not accepted relinquishing the trade with the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms (SLeNCSA).

As a way of government's effort to ensure that human security and safety are ensured or guaranteed, national arms legislation have been enacted and a specialized agency SLeNCSA has been established and mandated to regulate all arms issues in the country. The Arms and Ammunition Act of 2012, which replaces the out dated Weapons Regulation of 1955 is a pointer to the fact that Government with her partners have taken robust steps to reduce, control, monitor, regulate the flow, manufacturing , uncontrolled use of fire arms and other weapons of violence in Sierra Leone and the Sub-region.

The main objective of the 2012 Act is to control the transfer of small arms and light weapons and other related materials from or throughout Sierra Leone.

(AOAV Baseline Survey Report 2013)

Until and unless one of the main proponents of this arm saga, who are the blacksmith (Gunsmiths) are kept in the spotlight and are constantly surveillance, the above object cited by Arms and Ammunitions Act will not be met.

The survey is therefore designed to evaluate the previously identified blacksmiths in the AOAV blacksmith perception survey and to measure the level of progress made by them in the application of the previous skills learnt and the extent to which they are benefitting from the use of tools they were supplied.

The survey also ventured to investigate if there has been an increase in the number of blacksmiths as against the previous in the last survey. To that end, the survey further strived to find out if more blacksmiths are willing to give up in gunsmithing to follow their counterparts who are now earning their living through alternative livelihood skills.



Some finished blacksmith local products manufactured by disables at the opportunity

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The survey on encouraging blacksmiths alternatives to producing illicit fire arms is funded by the United Nations Trust facility supporting cooperation on Arms Regulations (UNSCAR).

The survey comprised of focused surveys on blacksmiths in order to identify gunsmiths who are active in production, those who are willing to stop making local guns for further training in alternative livelihood skills, encourage those not willing to stop to register with the national commission on Small Arms(SLeNCSA) and to ascertain available market for tools, materials and sale of the blacksmith products.

A special planning SLANSA Secretariat together with the identified consultants wherein SLANSA local implementing partners were involved in the planning of this project survey activities. Eight (8) districts including; Kailahun, Kenema, Moyamba, Bo, Kono ,Western rural and the Western Urban were selected as sample enumeration areas.

One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were selected using the random sampling method. Consultants identified some enumerators who were from the network members. They were allocated to their districts of origin to discharge the questionnaire in two weeks.

Each enumerator was assigned to one district and registered fifteen respondents out of which, three were previous blacksmiths interviewed and trained in alternative livelihood skills. Thus a follow-up interview was blended with the general questionnaire instrument in the survey.

The present follow up survey therefore sought to evaluate progress made by the twenty-four blacksmiths and the use they have made of the tools they were supplied.

#### **2.3 LIMITATIONS.**

1. No survey can claim to collect objectively hundred percent true data. It can only reflect what the respondents report of their experiences and perceptions.
2. Readiness on the part of the respondents to readily agree to take interviews due to their busy schedules.
3. Reluctance on the part of respondents to answer sensitive question items especially on production or manufacturing of local blacksmith guns.

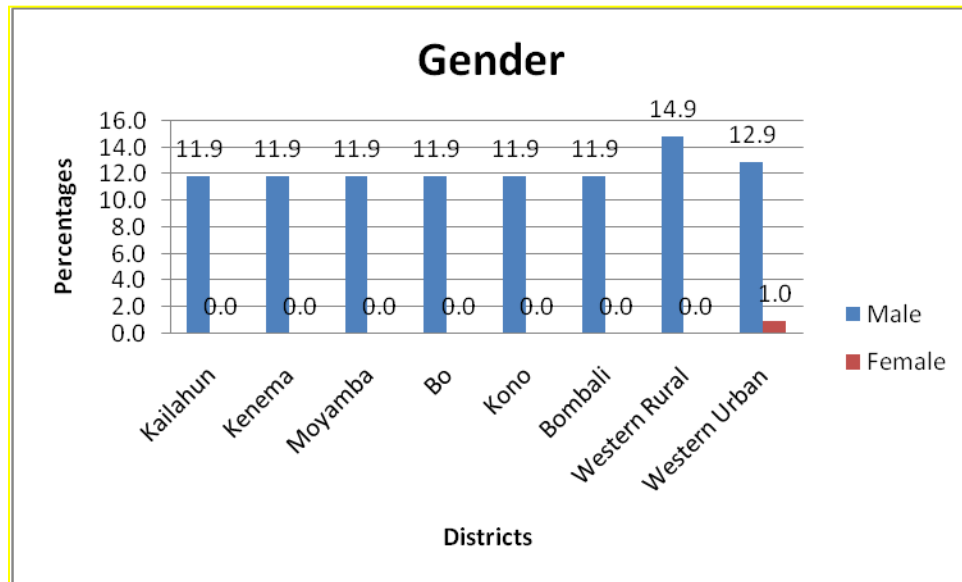


## CHAPTER 4

### SURVEY FINDINGS

This section analyses the findings in the data collected during the survey through questionnaires administered to 120 respondents. It deals specifically with the outlined objectives and vividly presents results in statistical figures including graphs and charts.

**FIGURE 1. GENDER DISTRIBUTION AMONG RESPONDENT**

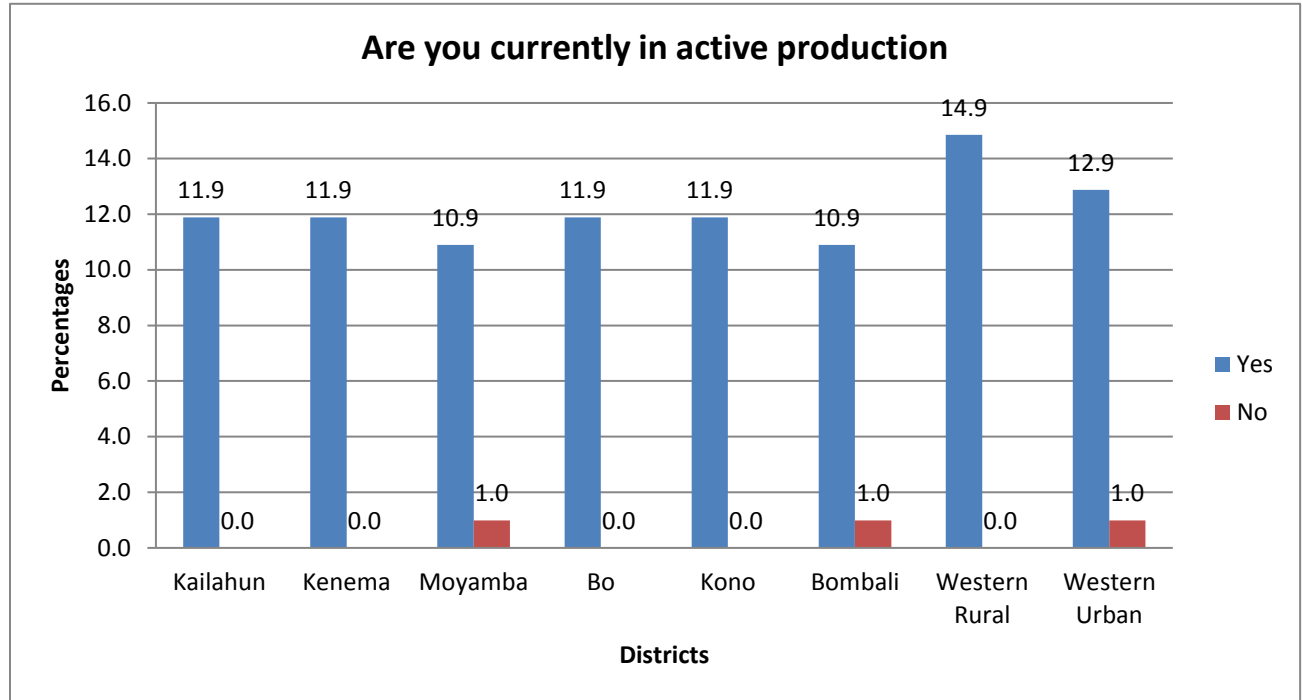


The above graph shows a remarkable gender disparity between the male and female brackets in the blacksmithery trade. Out of the number of respondents interviewed, 119 representing 99.0% were males; only a minimum of one blacksmith was a female representing 1%. When interviewed, this lonely female respondent stated this:

“We the women see blacksmithery as a man’s job because of its tediousness and strains involved.”

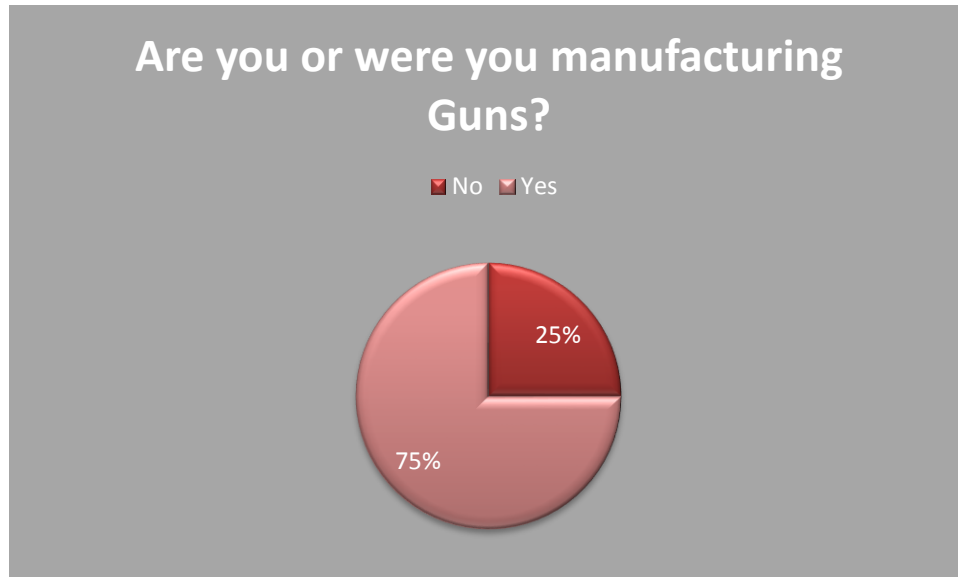
She however said she personally has a passion in blacksmithery because she inherited it from her parents. Women generally would prefer a less strenuous job than blacksmithery.

**FIGURE 2A BAR GRAPH SHOWING BLACKSMITHS WHO ARE CURRENTLY IN ACTIVE PRODUCTION?**



The above chart shows that 97% which is the total of 116 blacksmiths said they are active in blacksmith operation. Only 3% showing four blacksmiths said they are not active in production. According to the chart, district figures show that there are more active blacksmiths in the Western Urban rural with 14% but the other districts including Kailahun, Kenema, Bo, Kono also show reasonably high density of blacksmiths (11.9 %) each except for Bombali Moyamba and Western Rural show less, 1% respondent in active production.

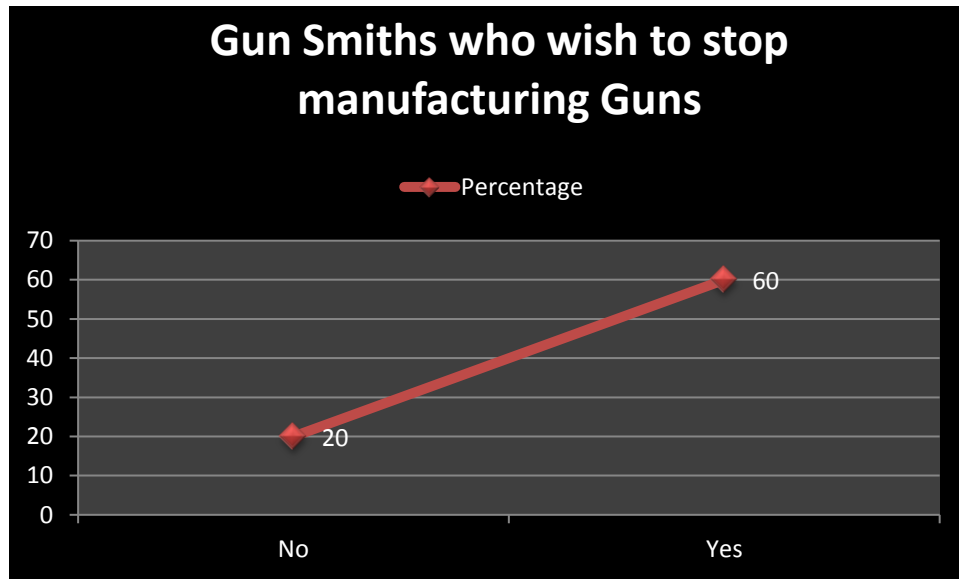
**FIGURE3. A PIE CHART SHOWING BLACKSMITHS WHO WERE OR ARE MANUFACTURING GUNS.**



In the pie chart above, out of the 116 blacksmiths, who said that they are active in production, 75% showing 87 blacksmiths said they were or are still producing guns. 29 respondents said they are not producing guns represented by 25%.

When interviewed as to the purpose for which the blacksmiths (gunsmiths) produced guns, 69% representing 60 blacksmiths, said they produced guns for commercial purposes and that the farmers were their main source of customers. Out of the 31% representing 27 gunsmiths 13 gunsmiths said they produce guns for personal security while 14 said they produce for other purposes.

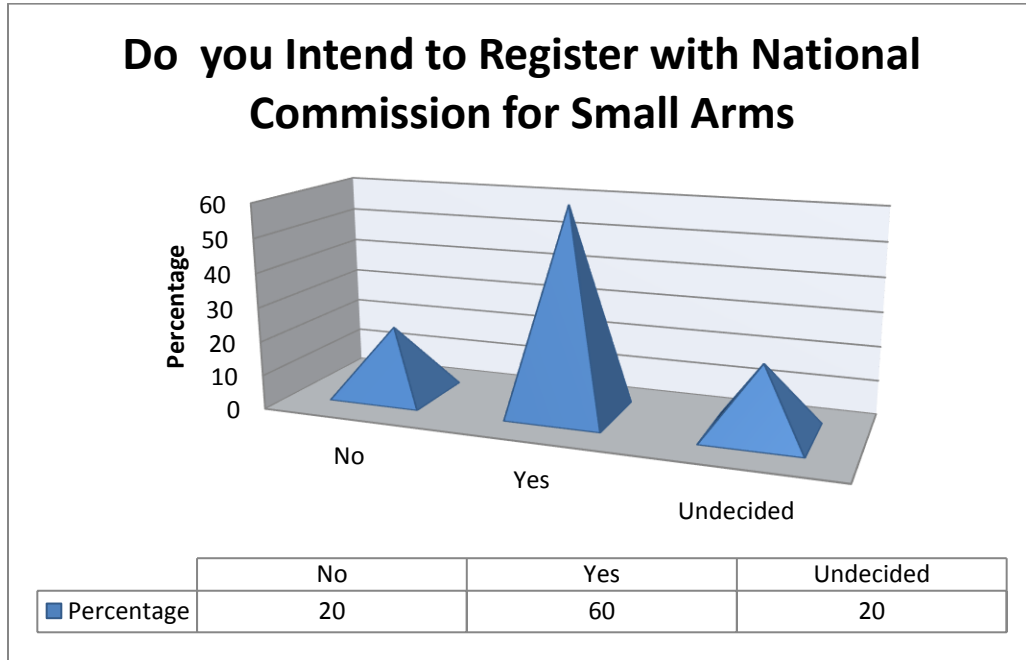
**FIGURE 4: SHOWING RESPONDENTS WHO ARE WILLING TO STOP PRODUCING GUNS AND SEEK FURTHER TRAINING IN ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD SKILLS.**



In the above graph, 60% of respondents showing 52 respondents showed willingness to stop producing guns and seek for the training in alternative livelihood skills

40% showing 35 respondents said they are not willing to stop the trade to seek for alternative livelihood skills. Out of the 52 respondents, who showed willingness to stop producing guns and seek alternative livelihood, 50 opted for improved working tools, workshops and materials to enhance their work. 2 respondents said they were satisfied with their level of training and skills and said they want funds (micro finance) to promote their work.

**FIGURE:5 GUNSMITHS WHO INTEND TO REGISTER WITH THE SIERRA LEONE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SMALL ARMS TO BECOME LICENCED GUNSMITHS.**

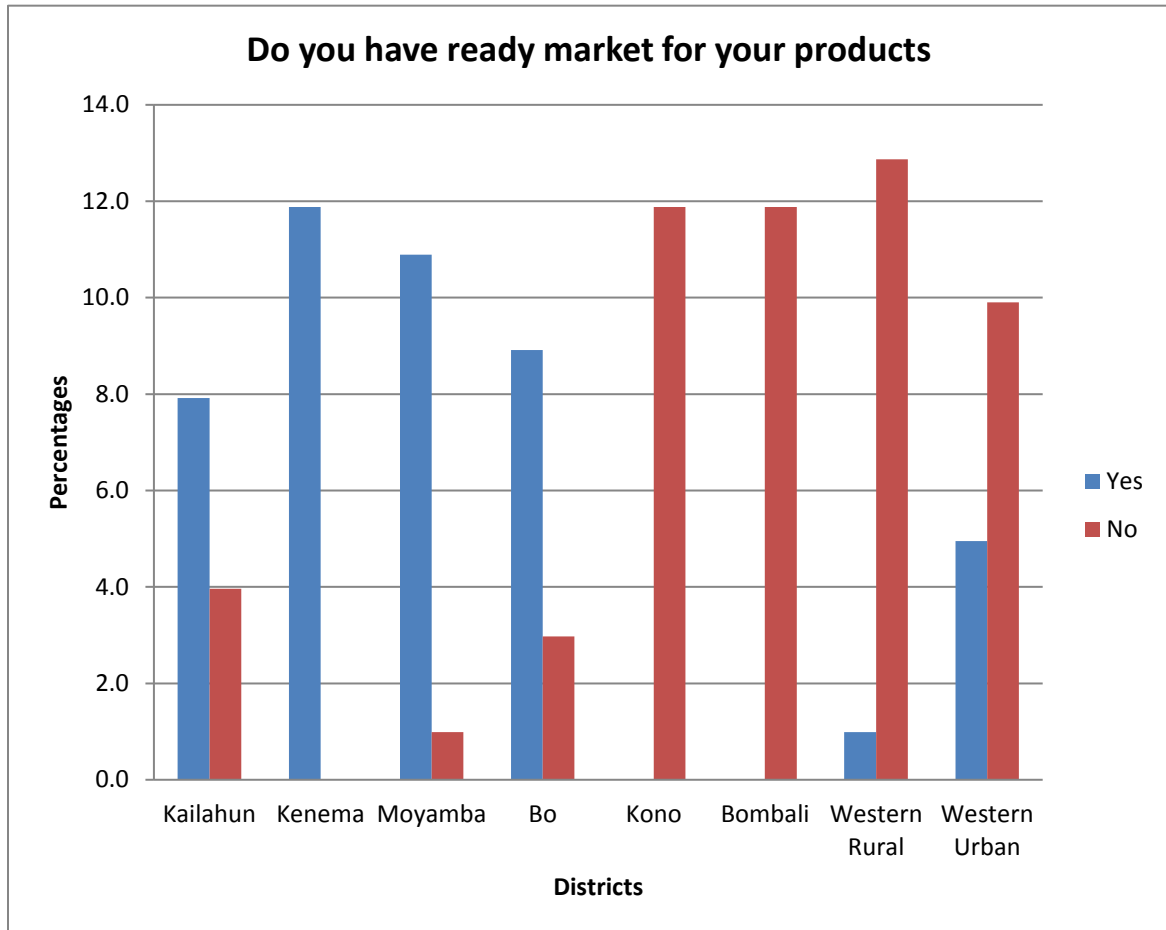


In the above chart, out of the 35 respondents who said they are not willing to stop producing guns, 60% representing 21 gunsmiths showed willingness to be registered with the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms to become licensed gunsmiths.

20% showing 7 respondents said they are not willing to register. While 7 blacksmith representing 20% were undecided as to register or not.

The above chart shows that there is need for constant follow up and monitoring exercises needed for the blacksmiths who don't want to register with the Commission.

**FIGURE 6: HISTOGRAPH SHOWING BLACKSMITHS WHO SAID THEY HAVE READY MARKET TO SELL THEIR PRODUCTS.**



In the histogram above, 54.3 % represented by 65 blacksmiths said that they do not have ready market to sell their blacksmith products. 49.7% showing 55 respondents said they have ready market to sell their products.

When further interviewed as to the type of market, majority replied that they attend periodic markets (LUMAS) to sell their products.

There is a controversy here in that districts like Kenema, Moyamba, Bo and Kailahun said they have markets yet some significant number in the same districts according to the graph said they do not have. In Kailahun for instance, 24 respondents showing 8% said that they have a market but 12 respondents represented by 4% said that they do not have. The same applies to the Western Urban. Districts who entirely stated that they do not have markets are Kono and Bombali.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The blacksmith survey project on Encouraging blacksmiths to seek alternative livelihood skill training in place of illicit weapon manufacturing is intended to identify potential local gun producers among the blacksmiths and to encourage them to stop as a means of controlling the unregulated flow of illicit weapons in Sierra Leone and the sub region. The survey is designed to achieve among others the objectives below.

1. To show the level of mastery of the use of tools they were supplied and how profitable is their trade (production of local blacksmith items ) after their training.
2. To identify more blacksmiths who wish to stop producing local guns for alternative Skills training in producing new blacksmith items
3. To find out and encourage those who do not wish to stop the producing of local guns to register with the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms to become licensed manufacturers
4. To ascertain the availability of markets/workshops and materials to enhance the purchase, production and sales of their blacksmith products
5. To proffer some valid recommendations on how to improve on their skills, motivate them to relinquish the art of producing harmful weapons/local guns in return for a more lucrative livelihood skill or trade.

The survey incorporated two activities which informed one report i.e.

- iii. Evaluating formerly registered gunsmiths who opted for alternative livelihood skills and were trained and supplied tools to enhance their work, and
- iv. To find out more blacksmiths, who are involved in making local guns.

The following recommendations were proffered:

#### **1. Provision of improved tools, materials and workshops**

The impact reportedly created by the previous blacksmiths in the follow-up survey was very significant. They have modernbut manually operated tools which they were supplied and face the acute problems of materials to work and a less friendly workshop environment, yet they have advanced remarkably in producing local blacksmith items like agricultural tools, kitchen utensils including coal pots, iron spoons, buckets, etc.

In addition, they have started producing welded items including steel windows, doors and gates. One respondent informed our investigator:

“We produce our own bellows, chisels, and steel bending tools.”

.According to data collected, over 45% of the respondents said that they have no conducive workshops. Only in Kailahun, Kenema, Makeni, Bo (Urban communities) where average workshops were found. For most interior towns and villages, they operate from thatch huts that are dilapidated and needs frequent repairs. They complained about poverty as being the main stumbling block that prevents them from having an up to date or modernized workshop.

2. **To provide opportunities for further skill training in alternative livelihood.** Eighty-seven respondents admitted being involved in manufacturing local guns before the interviews. Of the above total, 52 gun smiths agreed to stop producing guns for alternative livelihood skill training. They indicated various trades like blacksmithery, tailoring, masonry and others said agricultural activities. In the above light, some asked for funds/loans to buy new tools and material for their trade or workmanship.
3. **To create a link with the National Commission of Small Arms (SLANSA)** for gunsmiths who still wish to continue producing guns to be registered and obtain licence. It is very important that the project constantly follows upon the activities of these gunsmiths to ensure safer practices
4. **To put a ban on the exportation of scrap metals :** Wrought iron is the main material that the blacksmiths need for their work but trade in scrap metals has greatly disadvantaged the blacksmiths from getting wrought iron and other metals. There is therefore need for regulations to band the sale of some scrap metals that blacksmiths require to do their work. Also creating business centres for the blacksmiths for buying their required materials and sales of their products are eminent.
5. **Formation of a National Blacksmiths Organization.** It is recommended that a national blacksmiths organization/association should be established. Experience from the Industrial Revolution in England has taught a lesson that in an event when technology over takes local production institutions, it renders the later valueless and obsolete. Thereby rendering those in the craft jobless and less important. With the formation of an organization of blacksmiths, their welfare will be addressed, their activities effectively monitored and regulated by a functioning legal instrument. This will eventually help in the control of their gun/other weapon producing activities in the country and the sub-region. In short, it will be easier to relate to their interests.

## CONCLUSION

The relevance of this survey can be only derived if its recommendations are critically grounded and considered by its users. Secondly, it will inform Government and other agencies in developing policies on the monitoring and control the advise and regulation of blacksmith activities vis a vis small arms and its related issues in the Sierra Leonean, regional and global context.





**Pa. Momoh Kamara with his apprentices in their self-made forge in Blama, Small Bo Chiefdom, Kenema district.**

## Appendix A

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