



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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BOUTELLIS: Today is the 5th of May 2008, and I am now with Mrs. Kadi Fakondo, Assistant Inspector-General for Training at the Sierra Leone Police headquarters in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Thank you for your time. Before we start the interview please confirm that you have given your consent.

FAKONDO: *Yes, Arthur, I have given my consent for this interview.*

BOUTELLIS: Thank you. I'd like to start the interview by asking you a little bit more about your personal background, if you'd give us an overview of your career and how did you get involved into working with the Sierra Leone Police?

FAKONDO: *I've always wanted to be a police officer. The job of a police officer really is to help people, work with community members. I joined the Sierra Leone Police in 1984 as a cadet officer. I worked in all the various departments. Just recently I was the Assistant Inspector-General in Charge of Crime Services. That covers the CID (Criminal Investigation Division), the intelligence wing and of course a unit that is very close to my heart which is the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police. Presently I am the Assistant Inspector-General of Police responsible for training.*

BOUTELLIS: Before we get into a few technical areas of police reform, I'll ask you broadly what are the main challenges today in terms of public order and crime and maybe other broader challenges in terms of police reform in Sierra Leone.

FAKONDO: *The bigger challenges that we have in actually policing the country is working with or looking at offense being committed by youth. You talk about lawlessness, you talk about not adhering to rules and regulations. Just two weeks ago we were challenged with a task that was given to us by no less a person than the President himself. That is to look at the issue of lawlessness amongst the youths. Of course, you have been to Sierra Leone, you're currently here and you see us being challenged with policing the streets in terms of street trading. This is an issue that we have been battling with over years but it is now becoming a big concern to everybody. The roads are not so traversable in certain areas. Again, when you look at the role of the city council we are working closely with them now in terms of providing training for them so they can police these areas and we concentrate on the crimes that we are supposed to be actually looking at.*

BOUTELLIS: Your main area of responsibility in your current role is the training as Assistant Inspector-General (AIG).

FAKONDO: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Can you describe for us maybe some of the training that is currently taking place? What is the standard training for police officers and maybe what other trainings have been integrated also?

FAKONDO: *Well, the trainings that we are currently taking in the Sierra Leone Police is looking at the general investigative skills of police officers. Just recently, about two weeks ago, we concluded training for the crime services department which covers the CID, the special branch, the CIS people. This was a three-week residential training that was provided. This was funded by the Justice Sector Development Program, JSDP. We work very closely with them, of course with other security sector institutions. One of the areas that was identified was to look at training for the intelligence and the CID people.*

We are also, we have just concluded I must say, training for the local unit commanders, the LUCs, a very, very important training. We at the management level and of course JSDP we identified that training. That is mostly provided for our managers, our senior managers, heads of divisions, referred to as local unit commanders. We looked at the issue of command and control, human rights and policing the elections. We just came out of the presidential and parliamentary elections. We are now looking at preparing our people for the local council elections. This is an area where we also put emphasis. Quite a lot of training has also been provided in the area of human rights.

I am just coming from the training school Hastings this morning. We are providing training for future peace keepers from the Sierra Leone Police, UN peacekeeping training is what we are providing for our people. We had quite a lot of applications for this. We short-listed 88. Those 88 have participated in the training this morning. Training is being provided at all levels, junior, senior and middle managers. Even at our level, the executive management level.

Three weeks ago we were in Botswana. The AIG in charge of operations, the Director of Corporate Services, Chief Superintendent (Thomas) Lahai and myself were in Botswana. We were provided this opportunity to go and prioritize training that can be provided for the Sierra Leone Police. Now we are proud to say that we have joined the family of ILEA, ILEA is the International Law Enforcement Agency [International Law Enforcement Academies] that is providing training in collaboration with the Botswana police. There is a wonderful academy there.

We were not a part of the ILEA family before, but when we went and did our presentation with our priority, even though we were not projected as a country to attend the training this year, we just recently received news that we are now officially part of the ILEA family and that we will be participating in the 2008 training.

BOUTELLIS: So some of the SLP officers will be sent to Botswana?

FAKONDO: *Yes, about seven or eight. This has really made us proud. A total of six countries were invited to that three day training assessment conference, Burundi, Rwanda, Guiana, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Ghana. We are proud that we have been given, or we have been promised about six slots for 2008. We gave our training priorities and I want to believe that come next year we will be sending more officers to Botswana.*

BOUTELLIS: You describe a number of different trainings. The trainings that are happening in Sierra Leone, the specialized ones that you described as well as the general trainings, who are the trainers?

FAKONDO: *We have a pool of trainers, trained SLP trainers and we also have support from other areas where we have external trainers who come and provide this training. We also have had some CCU, the Crowd Control training for the operational support division (OSD). This has also been extended to the general duty personnel of the SLP. So in the event there is a public disorder, it is not just the red berets that go there. Before they can be called in, the general duty personnel are in a position to take care of such situations.*

BOUTELLIS: So before the red berets, the OSD?

FAKONDO: *You have the officers at the station, quite a lot of crowd control training has been provided for them. You know there are stages to which you can call for*

assistance. So we believe that before we allow the situation to get out of hand, we must train all our personnel within the division to handle situations. When it gets to a situation where we cannot actually control then we call in now for the OSD. I refer to them as red berets.

BOUTELLIS: They are armed, the only ones carrying weapons.

FAKONDO: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: So now the crowd control training is also for regular police officers.

FAKONDO: *Yes. To cover minor public demonstrations.*

BOUTELLIS: So this is on-the-job training.

FAKONDO: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: These are officers that are brought back to the training school.

FAKONDO: *Yes. This is not just limited to the west end area. It is ongoing in the regions as well. We are also getting support from UNPOL, the UN Police officers that are working with us. Funding has been provided by UNPOL, JSDP and UNDP of course.*

BOUTELLIS: When you said that training is also provided in the provinces, the big training school is in Hastings?

FAKONDO: *Yes we have training centers in the regions.*

BOUTELLIS: All three regions?

FAKONDO: *Yes. One per region. We have the big training school at Hastings, the regional training centers in the regions.*

BOUTELLIS: In terms of the general training provided to new recruits, there are a number of new recruits always coming in because the Sierra Leone Police force has not yet reached the 9500 expected.

FAKONDO: Yes.

BOUTELLIS: Can you describe the training for us?

FAKONDO: *The basic recruit training entails quite a lot. We try to cover so many areas, so that you can have what is referred to as the basic training. The basic core courses that must be taught at the training school, the routine duties, traffic rules, human rights. That is one area we put so much emphasis on. Of course the family support investigation of sexual exploitation and abuse.*

BOUTELLIS: Is there specific training for the family support unit or is this a training that is dispensed to all new officers?

FAKONDO: *For the recruits there is just that basic training. But for training for family support there is specific training. As a matter of fact, a training manual is now being developed by all stakeholders. You have JSDP, you have UNIOSIL (United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone), you have SLP, IRC (International Rescue Committee), all coming together to work as a team for the production of*

that training manual. Of course we work very closely with the Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, and they too are a part of that. So we are at this time putting together a proper training manual even though we had one before but it is reviewed.

BOUTELLIS: One that is specifically for the Family Support Unit?

FAKONDO: *Yes, specifically for the unit.*

BOUTELLIS: How much additional training does it require to become part of the Family Support Unit?

FAKONDO: *It is quite a lot of training because as we all know this is the kind of training that has to be provided for this kind of special investigation in the handling of matters that are reported. It is not like someone coming in for assault. We have rape cases coming in. We have unlawful carnal knowledge cases coming in, and you have to have been trained to actually know how to handle the victims, handle the suspects and at the same time know how to investigate so you do not miss the appropriate offenses that must be lined up against the report that is brought so that when they are charged to court, we do not miss, the offenses are quite clear.*

BOUTELLIS: How are the officers who will then become specialized in one or the other units, for instance the family support unit selected from the SLP or from the training school?

FAKONDO: *What we have as the management have agreed to do is to advertise. Now when you advertise people apply. We go through a process. Interviews are conducted which include the Director of crime services, the director of the CID and somebody from the Human Resources Department so that we select the best. When we do select these people, then they undergo training. After the training it doesn't mean that because you have been trained you necessarily need to [Indecipherable]. Maybe during the process you can be identified as somebody who cannot really handle victims. It's not just the investigation but it is the handling of victims that we put emphasis on. So all this comes into play. At the end of the day we do this. Because when we established the Family Support Unit because of the convictions in the court, people were now aware that they can go somewhere and seek redress. A lot of demands were being put on the SLP to have more Family Support Unit built within stations. We realized this, we accepted this. We went to JSDP and buildings have been provided. At the same time we in the SLP are providing training to build capacity so that they can handle all these cases that are coming to the police.*

BOUTELLIS: So only major police stations have FSU units?

FAKONDO: *Yes. If you go to Lumley, I don't if you know the way around. There is a small building sitting by. One of the things we advocated for and I really put emphasis on is the stigmatization. When people went to the police station to report a case of rape, you are exposing that person to more problems. So we thought for privacy, confidentiality were some of the things we put emphasis on. So we have this small building sitting side-by-side with the major police buildings and then when they come they know where to make their reports. There they are treated with respect of course and there is confidentiality maintained. The officers working within those units are trained, but we need to do more and be focused, trained and at the same time provide them with the resources that are required.*

BOUTELLIS: So the Family Support Unit is one of the success stories.

FAKONDO: *Yes, I must say yes, a success story.*

BOUTELLIS: Can you give us a little bit of the history of how that came about and how it was developed and maybe some of the challenges you faced.

FAKONDO: *Actually the Family Support Unit, immediately after the conflict in 1999 I was working as the Chief Police Officer, now referred to as the LUC at the Kissy division. This was a division that was infested with ex-combatants. We were having a lot of reports coming in and I thought it wise that we had to establish a unit that was looking just at the specific cases that were being reported to the police. Then I established, it was then referred to as the Domestic Violence Unit. We were very successful in trying to address the issue of domestic violence or sexual exploitation and abuse with all the ex-combatants coming in for their bush wives going into communities and trying to grab them. Structures were put in place and we were addressing that.*

BOUTELLIS: That was an experiment only in the Kissy division?

FAKONDO: *Yes, because it was my idea and I thought it had to be addressed. With me being a woman, the most senior officer in that division, responsible for that division, at least it was something that was very, very close to my heart. So I decided that I should set it up. Then a few months later seeing the work being done there in his wisdom the then Inspector-General Mr. Keith Biddle thought it was wise for us to bring in a consultant from the UK to look at—it was still referred to as the Domestic Violence Unit. Then the consultant who came was Mr. Bill Roberts. He came and he worked with us in the SLP. He decided—we came up with the name the Family Support Unit. We were having the cooperation and collaboration of a lot of stake holders. It was becoming very successful. A lot of support was coming from outside. We were now charging matters to courts, convictions were coming out. People heard about this.*

We held meetings with Bill and we thought it was not wise to just keep it in Freetown, it has to go nationwide. Freetown is not Sierra Leone and the ex-combatants were all over the place. So we started going into the regions. Up to now I think we have about 22 FSUs nationwide.

BOUTELLIS: How do you evaluate for instance the success of the FSUs in terms of the access, the reporting?

FAKONDO: *People now know where to go. I've always said because of them knowing where to go and accessing does not mean that these crimes were not committed before now. They just did not know where to go and awareness has been raised. They know where to seek redress. The good thing about it is the courts—one of the courts was being supported by the UNDP and we had a magistrate there. This magistrate was a no-nonsense magistrate and convictions were coming out. We were talking about it constantly on the radio. That is all stakeholders. Even though we were not too satisfied with some of it, we needed to have more convictions. But because of our situation in Sierra Leone, there is a lot of family pressure, there is a lot of outside influence, people go to court, they don't want to be stigmatized. They settle out of court. They give money to victims and for this reason we thought it was wise to actually talk more about it. So quite a lot has been done. The thing that made the SLP proud was the fact that people in the South region knew about the work of the Family Support Unit, the FSU. They were now coming to talk to us.*

In 2004-2005, UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) Liberia contracted my services together with another officer to go and train and establish a prototype of the Family Support Unit in Liberia. We trained the first 25. It was so successful—we thought it was a one-off thing, it was so successful, we established a prototype of this Family Support Unit in Liberia with the police officers that we trained, Liberian National Police. They asked us to go a second time. Their section is called the Women and Children's Protection Section of the Liberian National Police. We established that and they thought we should go back for a third time.

We then trained and recommended that we do a training of trainers. We trained trainers and since then they have been doing their own training and they have established more. So the thing that makes me happy about it, we are a post conflict country. We've been through this experience and we relate better in the African context and can actually pass on our experience. The cultural and traditional practices are all the same, we're all the same people really. Who is even more better than us to pass on this experience?. So we feel proud when we talk about the Women and Children Protection Section in Liberia and how far they've come and what they're doing now.

BOUTELLIS: How long did the training of trainers take in Liberia? How long did you train these recruits?

FAKONDO: *We trained for about a month.*

BOUTELLIS: Then they are themselves able to train their own?

FAKONDO: *Yes, they've been carrying on with their own training. I am in touch with them and the feedback I get is that the demand, like we had, is to have more police stations established in the regions which they are doing. They are still doing that.*

BOUTELLIS: The FSU in Sierra Leone, it is primarily staffed with female officers?

FAKONDO: *No, well, my bet on this is to have 70% female and 30% male. Victims relate better to women. Women, children relate better to women. But we have some competent men working in the Family Support Unit and they're doing a fantastic job. I'm all for gender issues. Gender is not just women. The women too are doing well and we hope that we continue this trend and allow all those who are qualified and competent to work in the units, come and work there.*

BOUTELLIS: Related to the whole of the SLP, what proportion is there of female officers?

FAKONDO: *We have a total of 9200 personnel. As of a week ago the strength of the female personnel in the SLP is 1445 or 46. I would say that we have come a long way. I must say we are out of these menial jobs in the police being orderlies to senior police officers which we don't have any more. We have competent capable women now being stations sergeants, station officers, officers commanding, local unit commanders and directors, and look at me, an AIG in charge of training. There is another lady Mrs. Elizabeth Turay, she is the AIG in charge of the Eastern Region. We are holding up, we are doing our best and we are doing good. It is just for us to continue, to encourage those coming in. The recruitment drive is something else we need to talk about. That is, we are attracting quite a lot of young, female graduates in the SLP and this is a big plus for us.*

BOUTELLIS: You think the success of the FSU for instance is responsible for the increase of female applicants?

- FAKONDO: *I cannot say it was the success of the FSU per se, the success of the female officers within the SLPS role model has attracted quite a lot of young female officers to be recruited into the SLP.*
- BOUTELLIS: So that in terms of recruitment and training, what are some of the challenges that remain for the next period? What are the priorities that you have identified?
- FAKONDO: *The priorities really are to continue to look at building capacity in the area of investigation and look at human rights training, look at junior, middle, and senior management training for our people, training at all levels. This is for us now. Also the training priority that we need to look at and we're currently looking at but it is a difficult area to go into and that is forensic training. We are talking to partners, we are getting support gradually. We hope that within the new few years we will be able to have a place that we can call our own SLP Forensic Lab where we can do our work and have all the materials.*
- BOUTELLIS: It is difficult because of—?
- FAKONDO: *It is a very, very expensive venture.*
- BOUTELLIS: That will require also trainers coming from the outside for the forensics?
- FAKONDO: *Right.*
- BOUTELLIS: It is often said that this kind of training, particularly technical and requiring outside assistance are quite expensive. Do you have from your experience some of the trainings that have been implemented here maybe that were at lower cost, not so expensive, but particularly successful? Are there some particular examples?
- FAKONDO: *We've had quite a lot of training done here that were of sometimes, I cannot say no cost, because I like to put low cost to no cost. When you go for low cost, then you head for no cost because the resources are so meager. But quite a lot of training, say the CID training. We used to believe that only if you go to Yorkshire in the UK or go somewhere where you can be provided training, then you think it is the best but we've had people go to places like Botswana police. Every year we have 20 officers going to the Botswana police. This is being funded by the Commonwealth and they go and they benefit from such training.*
- In house here we try, government has been providing budgetary support for training and out of that we now at the top level begin to play around to see what our priorities for a particular year are. Most of the training that we do here we believe are of high quality.*
- BOUTELLIS: Maybe one last question. Now you mentioned earlier in our conversation that 88 members of the SLP have been selected for future deployment. This has been done in collaboration with the United Nations.
- FAKONDO: *Yes.*
- BOUTELLIS: This is sort of a benchmark for achievement. What are some of the other major achievements that you're particularly proud of aside from the FSU that we talked about.
- FAKONDO: *Going back to the peacekeeping aspect. Some three or four years ago we had our first seven officers go to a peacekeeping mission in Haiti. Seven of them*

went including a lady. They did extremely well. They came back and we thought, we should set up a peacekeeping documentation center. Just the basic. Because of our efforts, the Pearson Peacekeeping Center of Canada is now providing support to us. In January we sent away 20 officers, three women included, to Sudan. They are doing fine. This is the first step of that thousand mile journey. Coming out of a conflict with our experience and taking it outside and marketing it. Now we have these 88. I am sure by the end of the day we might have just 40 or less, but we are building up from 7 to 20 and I'm sure it is going to go up.

I am someone who believes in doing things right. We had quite a lot of applications coming for this particular training. I had to cut it down to 88. We cannot be seen as an organization, the Sierra Leone Police, that is doing so well and we don't deplete our resources just to satisfy the needs of those who want to go to peacekeeping missions. I said to them this morning, we have to build on what we have in the SLP. At the same time we want to work with the international community. You go out there, you work with them, you share your experience, you give it to them. Quite a few are not so pleased because I took them off the list and that was in line with what I explained to the IGP. At the same time, we would want somebody to have a larger force to go to a peacekeeping mission, while at the same time maintaining a very, very good working force in the Sierra Leone Police. We need to serve our people first.

BOUTELLIS: Now you mentioned that the current effective is 9200. There were a number advanced a couple of years ago like 9500 as the optimum.

FAKONDO: *It was 9500. We seem to get close to it but I'll tell you Arthur the problem is the attrition rates in the SLP. People live in squalor. People will die to live in that squalor because of accommodation. They don't have somewhere to live. They need to live in that squalor. They need to have a roof over their head. People are dismissed because we have the CDIID, the Complaints, Discipline, Internal Investigation Department that was set up to look at disciplinary issues. People are discharge from the force. People go out to greener pastures, they leave the SLP. So it has been difficult to actually get up to that 9500 that we had set up before. Still the number 9500 has been reviewed by the top management team and we now say we need to go up to 12,000. But look at how hard we've been struggling to get to the 9500. So these are some of the issues, these are some of the problems we as an organization try to address but it hasn't been easy.*

BOUTELLIS: So the low salaries of the SLP is one—.

FAKONDO: *And the conditions of service, it needs to be reviewed.*

BOUTELLIS: The housing situation.

FAKONDO: *Right.*

BOUTELLIS: When you say greener pastures. There's very high unemployment in Sierra Leone, where are some of the jobs for instance that SLP could take?

FAKONDO: *You have people leaving the SLP probably to go for further studies. You have people in the SLP who leave the SLP to work in a bank. These are all issues that have been coming up. We try to motivate our people by providing training, by building capacity, by providing them with uniforms, shoes, a budget for that. You cannot compare the looks of the present police officers to that of those we had some time back before the restructuring who were a disgrace. When I talk about the past I always include myself because I was part of the system then and I'm*

still part of the system. You have to look back and review and know where to start from so you can move the organization and people forward.

BOUTELLIS: The very last question. One of the innovations that was originally an experiment is the FSU that you mentioned, a success story. Are there any other, whether they be innovations or just achievements that you'd like to mention before we complete the interview?

FAKONDO: *We've actually achieved quite a lot. When you talk about a department like the media department, we used to have tight lips, not to talk because you are not given permission to talk, we were not a democratic police. You had to have permission from the senior boss. Whatever you had to say it has to be censored. But today we have a media department. Even a constable on the street, if you stop and ask that constable to say anything about the SLP, they are more than willing because they know that the SLP now has this policy, just say the right thing and be very professional. That's one area, the media.*

We also look at the Corporate Services Department, the Corporate Services Department now looks at all the strategic issues, looks at change management. This is where we're building up, looking at the plan for the next five years, how we can move the organization forward, a strategic development plan, we will have a document. We as accountable officers, the AIG, the Assistant Inspector-General, they have their projects within their departments. As a matter of fact, with my department's training I have been looking at the curriculum of the SLP, looking also at having a police staff college rather than a police training school. It has been an uphill battle because the resources are just not there.

You talk about the man in charge of personnel and welfare, he is looking at welfare issues. So we have all these projects and these are all being looked after by the Corporate Services Department under the direction of the Deputy Inspector-General who is in charge of Change Management. We are all working hard and being kept very busy. It is not just saying that I am the accountable officer in charge of training, I have this project. We have our monthly extended change board meetings where we have all the regional commanders come in and give reports on what they are doing in their respective areas. We have the Inspector-General who is the head reporting to the Minister of Internal Affairs, about the wellbeing of the force, about what is happening, keeping the abreast as to how the organization is going. We have actually changed over the years.

When we look back, we actually were lucky to have somebody like Keith Biddle to have come out and without having any ties to anybody do the right thing by changing systems, by changing structures and by making it right. There are some areas where we are now reviewing to say now we can go back to this or how can we do it and do it right. Adrian Horn was good in his own way. He actually helped with the Commonwealth Safety and Security Project [Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project] with his team of consultants working for him.

That has actually changed the mindset of the police officers that are in the SLP. So everybody is doing his or her own bit. If I can read the SLP, I'd say we're one of the best in the South Region.

BOUTELLIS: Mrs. Kadi Fakondo, thank you very much.

FAKONDO: *Thank you very much Arthur.*