

Fambul Tok

Community Healing in Sierra Leone

OUR FIRST YEAR

“With Fambul Tok,
we hope to address
reconciliation at the
community level,
to create space for victims
and offenders to sit together,
to have a dialogue on what went wrong,
why they turned against each other—
to start the long journey
to reconciliation.”

—John Caulker, Executive Director, Forum of Conscience,
and Fambul Tok Program Director

Cover photo: Sahr James and Nyumah Bockarie, the day after their participation
in a Fambul Tok Reconciliation Ceremony (see pg. 20)



Our Vision

Fostering sustainable peace in Sierra Leone
through reviving our communities' traditions and values
of confession, forgiveness and reconciliation.

A program of Forum of Conscience
and Catalyst for Peace

the program

an overview

Fambul Tok (Krio for “Family Talk”) is a face-to-face community owned program that brings together perpetrators and victims of the violence in Sierra Leone’s eleven-year civil war through ceremonies rooted in the local traditions of the villages that were affected. It provides Sierra Leonean citizens with an opportunity to come to terms with what happened during the war, to dialogue, to experience healing, and to chart a new path forward, together.

Fambul Tok is built upon Sierra Leone’s “family talk” tradition of discussing and resolving issues within the security of a family circle. The program works at the village level to help communities organize ceremonies that include truth-telling bonfires and traditional cleansing ceremonies—practices that many communities have not employed since before the war. Through drawing on age-old traditions and practices of confession, apology and forgiveness, Fambul Tok has revived Sierra Leoneans’ rightful pride in their culture.

Developed and implemented by the Sierra Leonean human rights organization, Forum of Conscience, and the U.S.-based operating founda-

tion, Catalyst for Peace, Fambul Tok embodies the most leading-edge processes of consultative program design and “accompaniment” models of partnership—between in-country and outside organizations, as well as between implementing organizations and the communities of implementation. The program is structuring community ownership at every level. In so doing, it exemplifies a new path for the international community in post-conflict reconstruction.

Fambul Tok is rooted in the understanding that reconciliation is a process and not a one-time event, and thus the program works with communities on a long-term basis. It ensures full community engagement, initially through consultations to determine whether people are ready to reconcile,

and subsequently through community-led preparations and outreach for Fambul Tok ceremonies.

Following the ceremonies, Fambul Tok works with the communities to organize activities to support and sustain the reconciliation process. These have included radio-listening clubs, football games, and even village-initiated community farms, projects through which newly reconciled individuals are able to come together for the good of the community.

Originally conceived as a chiefdom-level program that would involve 161 ceremonies around the country, Fambul Tok has evolved to meet the needs of fellow Sierra Leoneans who have asked for ceremonies to be held at the much smaller level of

“[European philosophy] says, ‘I think, therefore I am.’ Here, it’s ‘I’m related, therefore I am.’ If you are not in relation with anybody, you are alone. You die. That’s why for everybody the family is so important, the larger the better. You fall back on that in case of difficulties. It is the force that keeps them together. You don’t exist if you don’t belong, if you are not related to somebody. This is the centripetal force in the culture that brings people into unity. They find strength in being together. They also find the courage to open up in the group, because somehow they know the group is there for healing.”

—Bishop George Biguzzi, the Bishop of Makeni

“You are left with a lot of people with scars on their minds. The healing process is a slow one, but the healing of the mind is what’s important. The only way the mind can heal is bringing all the parties together, the perpetrators and the victims. My God, if we do not reconcile within the next 2, 3, 4 years—I am afraid we are sitting on a time bomb. It’s an emotional time bomb, a volcano. It’s steaming down there. It just needs one thing to spark it off. I wouldn’t like to see my country go back to war, for nothing. I want my country to be free, for us to live together as one. I think Fambul Tok can help to a large extent.”

—Reginald Strasser King, Journalist, Freetown

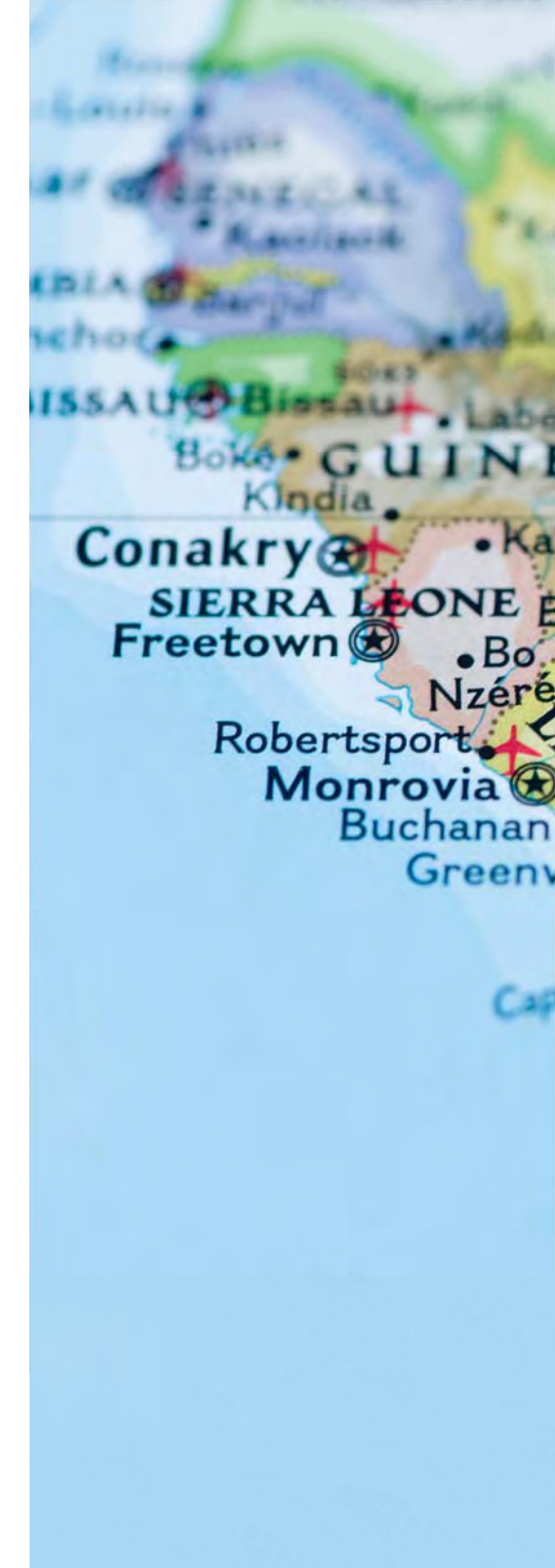
village groupings—known as “sections”—that will involve thousands of ceremonies to be held over the next several years.

This community-healing process of reconciliation and forgiveness is designed to address the roots of conflict at the local level, and to restore dignity to the lives of those who suffered most directly from violence. The work helps war-affected individuals reflect on the past and move forward in ways that avert the renewal of aggressions. By grounding reconciliation in traditional practices, it also helps create healthy communities capable of building new foundations of peace.

Fambul Tok is a distinctly Sierra Leonean initiative. It is not rooted

in Western concepts of blame and retribution, but rather in African communal sensibilities that emphasize the need for communities to be whole, with each member playing a role, if peace and development are to be achieved for the nation at large.

Sierra Leone is entering a new era now with the final phases of internationally driven institutions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court coming to a close. Fambul Tok is helping meet the demands of this new phase in the country’s post-conflict history by broadening its campaign to all regions of Sierra Leone, with the belief that the time for peace has come.





Community members discuss what they want reconciliation to look like during the district consultation in Bo, January 2008

our approach

“For now, I can’t say the place is peaceful. [The Special Court] is targeting those who bear greatest responsibility, but what about somebody who has done wrong to somebody in a village, and both of them are living in that community. Dealing with Charles Taylor—will that solve the problem? No. That will not solve the problem. It is good for people living in the community to reconcile first within themselves. You as a perpetrator ask the victim for forgiveness so that will permit a reconciliation process.” —Satie Banyah, youth leader in Kailahun district

Fambul Tok is rooted in consultative processes to foster local ownership of the program at every level, to create maximum impact in the community healing process in Sierra Leone.

Fambul Tok is inspired by the conviction that each person has the power, goodness and capacity to contribute to society in helpful and healthy ways. But when people experience violence and hurt, those innate capacities can become suppressed, often causing individuals to act in ways contrary to their nature. Fambul Tok thus works to support individual and community healing through traditional practices which have proved effective in the past, and with the aid of local leaders who provide guidance and moral support

in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation.

As these activities take root at the community level, local networks within and among villages are created to gather wisdom and share lessons learned. These networks help provide opportunities for on-going learning, and will continue to build on local resources and capacities to help foster an environment of healing.



the partnership

The relationship between Forum of Conscience (FOC) and Catalyst for Peace (CFP) is one of the hallmarks of this program, embracing a distinctly different approach to Western-based engagement with African issues, as well as a break from standard funder-recipient relationships. CFP, a U.S.-based operational foundation, works from the perspective of recognizing and supporting African-based answers and initiatives, rather than trying to dictate the design or implementation of programs from the outside. In joining together to create and develop Fambul Tok, FOC and CFP have developed a partnership based on mutual respect, close consultation and creative dialogue.

Photo: FOC Executive Director John Caulker and CFP President Libby Hoffman discuss Fambul Tok program design in Bo, January 2009



Our First Year

It all began with consultations ...

Drawn by Sierra Leonean artist Haroun Rashid Mansaray, the Fambul Tok logo represents the various stakeholders in community dialogue— women, children, victims of the war, offenders, the elderly, and religious people, both Muslim and Christian— all coming together to dialogue under the tree, as one Fambul.



Preparations for the Kailahun district consultation, January 2008.

consultations

“Fambul Tok is truly from the ground up. There’s nobody coming in from the outside, saying Let me show you how to do these things. Fambul Tok gives people the opportunity to say what they want in their experience, to look at the resources they already have, to decide what they want to do.”

—Libby Hoffman, President, Catalyst for Peace

A hallmark of the Fambul Tok approach, each new program phase begins with consultations with the impacted communities. Rather than enter communities with a pre-designed program to be replicated, Fambul Tok follows a process of “emergent design,” drawing on local perspectives and ongoing assessment and reflection to allow the program design to emerge directly from the affected communities, and to adapt to the changing circumstances of real-world events and social change processes.

The program was officially launched in December, 2007 with regional pre-consultations held in the cities of Kenema, Bo and Makeni (in the eastern, southern and northern regions of the country, respectively). With representation of Sierra Leonean civil society organizations and national stakeholders, this initial testing of the waters to assess community needs and interest related to

reconciliation verified the need for extensive, district-level consultations in each of the country’s 14 districts.

Next, a round of district consultations held across the nation from January to March 2008, engaged a wide spectrum of participants—traditional leaders, women’s groups, youth groups, community stakeholders and local government officials, among others—to discuss the process of facilitating reconciliation in their respective communities.

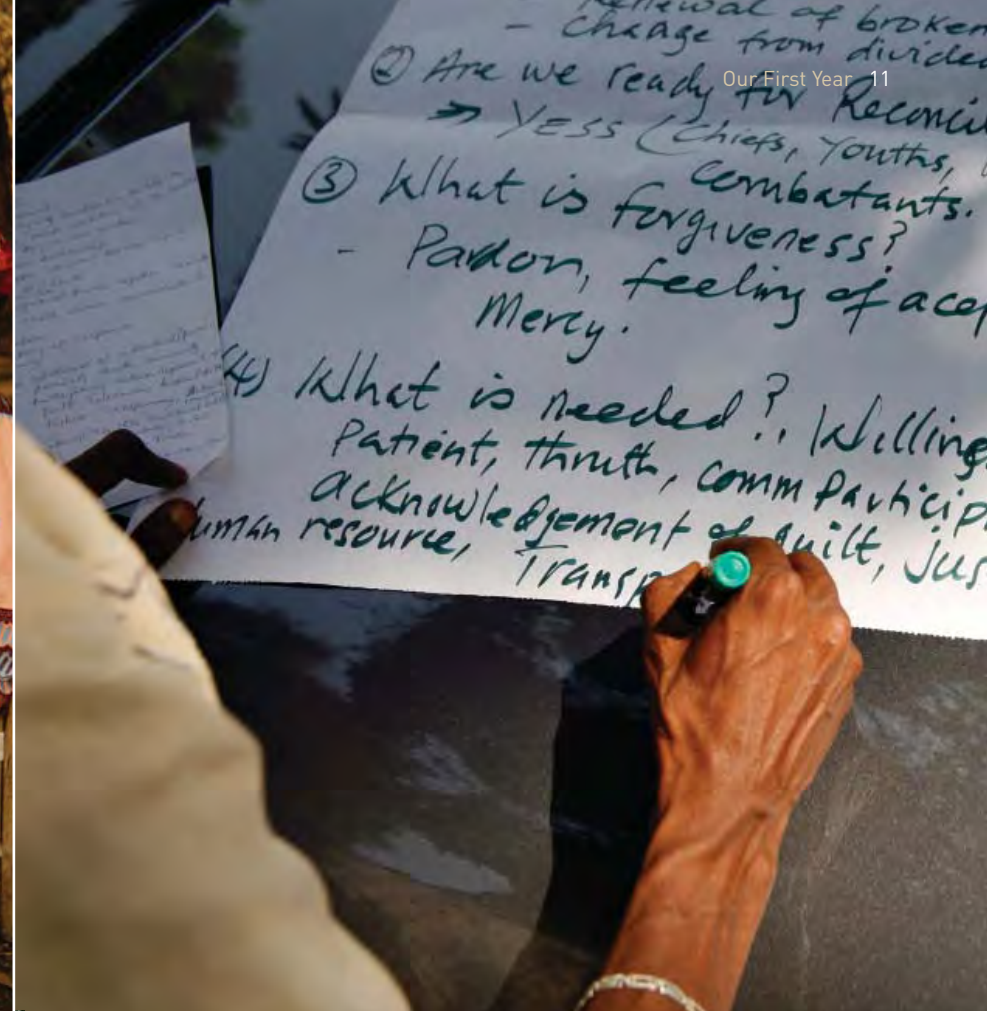
“The approach Fambul Tok brought into these communities—they didn’t say ‘It’s my program, an NGO program. We’ll do this for you, we’ll do that for you.’ They come to people, they say ‘We’re not going to tell you what to do. We’re the same as you. We’re all Sierra Leoneans. This program is your program. Whatever way you want to organize, it’s yours, your tradition.’ Fambul Tok has given the people the right to own the program. For the fact that they are doing it their own way, that’s why Fambul Tok is succeeding.”

—James Fallah, Journalist, Kailahun

To ensure total participation during the consultations—a key Fambul Tok value—participants were divided into groups to discuss questions such as:

- What is Reconciliation?
- What is Forgiveness?
- Are we willing to reconcile?
- Suggest possible/preferred methods of reconciliation
- What do your communities need for reconciliation?
- What is already available in the communities?
- How can Fambul Tok support community initiatives?

The need for genuine reconciliation was overwhelmingly articulated, and the stakeholders in every district suggested that the process focus on traditional methods of reconciliation.





Kailahun district consultation: January 2008

"I personally, as a paramount chief, very much welcome the idea of Fambul Tok. After the war, there was another war that was waged on us, and that war was how to reconcile ourselves. After the war, there were ex-combatants, kamarjos, soldiers and the like. We needed to disarm them and reintegrate them into society. Today we are back and we are gradually resettling into our communities. The government initiated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. But that commission was in Freetown, it never came into the rural villages. I am not in any way discrediting them. I want to say they did very well. But I think they should have gone beyond Freetown, because the bulk of the population that felt the brunt of the war are people living in the provinces. It was the people in the provinces who actually suffered the most. [Most] of the ex-combatants come from the rural villages, and now they come back and reintegrate into the various communities in the provinces. We are yearning for a structure to be put in place so that these ex-combatants in our communities can confess and we can wholeheartedly accept them. I think if that is done, then the mission of the TRC will be completed.

I want to say, on behalf of my people, thanks to the people who are the architects of Fambul Tok, who initiated this idea of not only coming in Freetown, but coming to the grassroots people, who actually suffered, who felt the pinch of this war."

—Paramount Chief Cyril Gondor, Upper Bambara Chiefdom, Kailahun District

Some consultations recommended what could be termed mass reparations, such as memorials, re-burial of mass graves, and symbolic monuments, as helpful first steps for reconciliation in their communities. The consultations culminated in nation-wide approval for Fambul Tok and the formation of the initial district structures to help design and facilitate the process.

One of the most common themes from the consultations was the need to make the Fambul Tok process accessible to all. A common complaint about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings was that they were all held in the district headquarter towns, and for a maximum of five days, thereby limiting participation to those who could afford to travel. Although it was initially

envisioned that Fambul Tok ceremonies be held at the chiefdom level, even this was seen as potentially limiting people's access and ability to participate. As a result of the consultations, the decision was made to hold reconciliation ceremonies at the sectional level (sections are composed of between three and nine villages) to ensure universal access.



Piloting the Implementation

Kailahun District

piloting the implementation

“From the beginning [of the work in a district] to the first day of a bonfire—would be roughly three months. We go in and have another consultation, go on to recruitment of district staff, get training for the contact persons, we set them to work, they go into those communities, meet their own people, identify hot spots, engage them encourage them to come together. That is the space, and a lot of work.”

-- Sheku Ahmed Koroma, Fambul Tok Research and Documentation Coordinator

Kailahun District

Kailahun District—the district where the war began and ended, and one of the most impacted by the war—was chosen for the pilot phase of program implementation. National and district staff began immediately working with the people of the district to choose representatives from every chiefdom, one male and one female, to be the main contact people for the Fambul Tok process, and to ensure full geographical representation. This group, which formed the initial District Executive body, received extensive training in Fambul Tok values, reconciliation, trauma healing, mediation, and restorative justice.

The district appointed Contact People, with input from community elders and

other sectional stakeholders, chose representatives at the sectional level to form a Reconciliation Committee, which helped sensitize their communities to the goals and values of Fambul Tok and to worked with them to design their ceremonies and prepare the communities. To ensure full representation, these Reconciliation Committees included a youth leader, a mommy queen, the section chief, an imam and a priest. They mediated ongoing conflicts between victims and perpetrators (or their families), and worked to ensure the sustainability of the project after the ceremonies.

Youth Outreach Teams, comprised of five youths from different villages within each section, were also mobilized to spread the word and educate communities. They played a vital role in

Kailahun in allaying fear of prosecution from the Special Court.

The Reconciliation Committees and Outreach Teams also received training to better engage with their communities. These sectional level structures helped to ensure community ownership of the process and to ground the reconciliation work at the most localized levels.

“With the RUF [Revolutionary United Front] members who have stayed amongst us, we want peace and we want reconciliation at the grass roots. And Fambul Tok is with us down to the grass roots.”

—Isata Ndoleh, Mommy Queen,
Kailahun District





Moyamba district contact people during their initial Fambul Tok training, October, 2008



training

The Fambul Tok training program, like all other aspects of Fambul Tok, follows a process of emergent design. The training program has evolved in response to on-the-ground needs and realities identified by staff as they work in the communities.

While training national staff to take over the program, the initial training in Kailahun was designed and facilitated by leading international experts from the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) at Eastern Mennonite University (USA). CJP-trained staff continues to help design and implement the program.

Fambul Tok currently has three full-time trainers. In addition to the core training given to the volunteers charged with implementing Fambul Tok in their communities, a key component of the training program is training representatives in the districts to conduct the training themselves. Ongoing mentoring through regular interaction with national and district staff supports them and serves to expand and deepen the knowledge base in the communities, while also supporting community ownership of the process.





preparing for the reconciliation ceremony in the village of Kongonanie, Kailahun

ceremonies

“We shed a lot of blood in our community, so after the bonfire, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to go and pour libations to our ancestors, so that we can have peace in our community. And after that libation, there is peace on our community. Even our children obey us again.”

—Musu Swarray, Bunumbu, Kailahun District

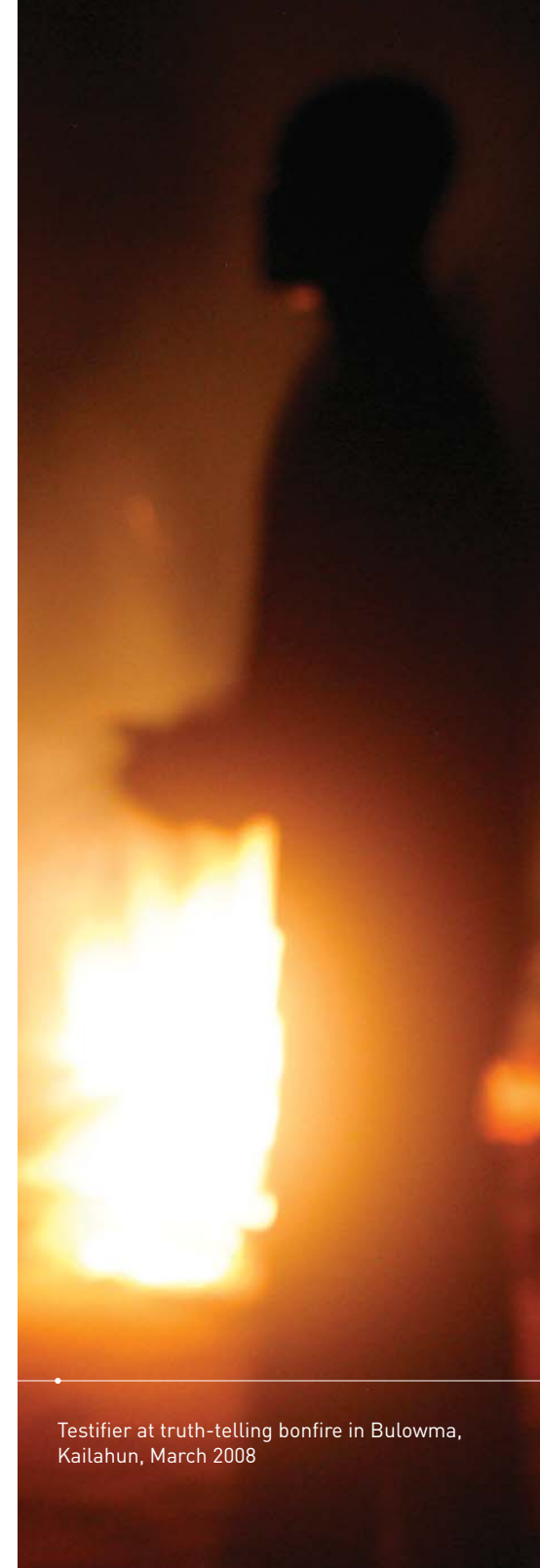
“I see it as necessary to tell my stories, so that the tension will come down. The trauma will reduce. The stress will reduce. That’s why I decided last night to tell my story,” said the son of the former town chief of Kongonanie (in Kailahun district), who had been brutally tortured and killed by rebels during the war. Speaking of his testimony at the bonfire the evening before, he reiterated: *“I am talking on behalf of our family. I am saying from the bottom of my heart that we have forgiven those that did the act, even though we will not forget it. I decided we should forgive [because] the act has been done, and if we say we are going to revenge, then there will be no peace in our community, there will be no development. So we have decided to forgive them, because when we forgive we will live together as brothers in our communities.”*

The initial focus of Fambul Tok in the districts is preparing communities for village-level reconciliation ceremo-

nies. The ceremonies are unique to each community, but the general outline is the same. Drawing on the tradition of truth telling around a bonfire, communities host a bonfire in the evening, where victims and perpetrators have an opportunity to come forward for the first time to tell their stories and to apologize and ask for forgiveness or to offer forgiveness. The communities then sing and dance in celebration of this open acknowledgement of and resolution to what happened in the war.

The next day, the communities hold cleansing ceremonies, drawing on a variety of traditional cleansing practices as well as traditions of communicating with the ancestors and pouring libations, and culminating in a community feast.

28 communities in Kailahun held reconciliation ceremonies in 2008.



Testifier at truth-telling bonfire in Bulowma, Kailahun, March 2008

Sahr and Nyumah

“Since Fambul Tok has come and my friend has said he has forgiven me, the guilt is still with me, but with time I will get over it. As long as my friend has forgiven me, I will get over it gradually.”

—Nyumah Bockarie, perpetrator, Kpekedu village, Kailahun district

On a warm late-March evening, the sky still swirling with the afterclouds of an unexpected storm, two young Sierra Leonean men stood before a bonfire, surrounded by their families, elders, and neighbors from surrounding villages. Once the closest of friends, Sahr and Nyumah had been brutally torn apart by the war while still in their early teens—one boy forced by rebel soldiers to beat his friend and kill his friend’s father.

The two came face to face that night, with each other and with their pasts. They stood to testify before the village bonfire in Gbekedu as a part of one of the first community ceremonies in the Fambul Tok process. Boyhood friends, the two were barely teenagers when the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) invaded their villages, which are located near the

Liberian border. Sahr and his father fled into the bush, only to be captured by RUF soldiers. At the bonfire that night, Sahr spoke of how the rebels ordered him to kill his father and of his repeated refusal. His close friend, Nyumah, had also been taken by the rebels and was there in the bush, Sahr testified. The rebels ordered Nyumah to beat his friend, under threat of death, for defying their orders to kill his father. Nyumah complied, beating his friend so severely that even today Sahr’s body remains misshapen, and he is able to walk only with great difficulty, supported by a cane. The rebels then forced Nyumah to take the knife and slit the throat of Sahr’s father.

Living since the end of the war in villages just a mile or so apart, the former friends had not spoken about

these events until this evening. Acknowledging what he had done, bowing in a deep gesture of deference and apology, Nyumah asked his friend for forgiveness—which Sahr immediately gave. As was the case with each pair of testifiers that evening, villagers broke into song as the young men embraced and danced around the bonfire.

The next day, the men had the opportunity to participate in a cleansing ceremony, along with the others who had testified the previous evening. They have since rekindled their friendship, frequently visit with each other, and Nyumah regularly helps Sahr with farming and meeting other basic needs.

“Before, we had no peace with each other. There was no friendship. It is only because of Fambul Tok that we have been able to come together. If this had stayed in our minds, it would have been bad. It would still be in my mind. I have forgiven him for whatever bad he has done to me. It’s not easy, but it comes deeply from my heart. I want this forgiveness to last forever and ever.”

—Sahr James, victim, Kpekeledu, Kailahun district, following the bonfire and cleansing

Nyumah apologizes to Sahr at the bonfire in Gbekedu, March 2008



Sahr James and Nyumah Bockarie at the cleansing ceremony the day following their bonfire testimony (see previous page)

“Most of our brothers and sisters played an active role during the war. Some of them amputated hands, some of them slaughtered women, some split women open to see what baby was in their stomach, but at the ceremony most of them came forward and confessed and asked for forgiveness and we have forgiven them. We have encouraged them, embraced them, we do things together. Even myself, my elder sister was killed during this war. Those that killed her, I knew who they were, but when they confessed, I forgave them.”

—Hawah Wurie, Bunumbu, Kailahun District



A 'bush devil' in a traditional welcome dance at Bulowma's reconciliation ceremony



“We have a tradition that forgiveness comes from the whole truth. You don't forgive someone if the person does not confess to what he or she did. In some cases, there is forgiveness in abstentia. Where the person is alive and can be identified, for that person to benefit from the forgiveness process, that person would come forward and own up to what he or she did. That is the acknowledgement and that's the basis for reconciliation at the community level.” —John Caulker, Executive Director of Forum of Conscience and Fambul Tok Program Director



The village of Bulowma in Kailahun celebrates the Fambul Tok ceremony

“We don't believe in punishing somebody. Because if we say we're going to punish, there were so many, we would end up punishing everybody.”
— Musu Swarray, Bunumbu, Kailahun District



Preparing the celebratory feast and sacrifice to the ancestors, Kpeingbakordu

“Any wrongdoing you do to anybody, come out plain—‘Madam, I have wronged you. Forgive me.’ That will make me feel happy. Without a cent, I will accept it. But when you have wronged me, you roam around, I see you, I know what you have done to me, it pains me. But when you voice it, reconciliation will go and I will be very peaceful. This is what we need here.”

—Isata Ndoleh, Mommy Queen, Kailahun District

“This fire; eating together; eating from the same place—this brings us together, according to our culture. What happened here has actually brought us together.”
—Sahr Wunde Follah, Village Chief, Kpeingbakordu



Women performing a traditional dance prior to their bonfire ceremony in the village of Kongonanie, Kailahun

“I have seen that Fambul Tok has brought peace and reconciliation and love. What Fambul Tok has done for us, even money cannot do for us. People come dance, play football, dance with happiness ... What I’m happy over, this Fambul Tok has brought us together.” —MK Mustapha, Paramount Chief, Peje West Chiefdom, Kailahun



Preparing the celebratory feast

“Fambul Tok has revived our culture and traditions. We have not had any ceremony for the past ten years and now the project is here we are determined to appease our ancestors.”

—Samuel Caulker, Rotifunk, Moyamba District

“We have to settle our own disputes rather than depend on others. This can be done through Fambul Tok.”
— Ismail Momo, Deputy Chairman, Moyamba District Council





Celebrating the community farm harvest in Madina, Kailahun, January 2009

Follow-Up Initiatives

“Gradually, gradually development is coming on. You see victims and perpetrators coming together, forming groups, going into communities, making farms—Oh, it’s really wonderful. You see them coming together, doing joint labor—which is actually a sign that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Because these people were far apart, they were pointing fingers, it’s you who did this, it’s you who did that—you burned my house, you killed my father. But now they are coming together, they’re coming together to rebuild communities again. They are not talking about ‘We want you to incriminate these guys,’ they’re talking about coming together and rebuilding their communities and the district as a whole.” —James Falloh, journalist, Kailahun

Rooted in the understanding the reconciliation is a process and not a one-time event, Fambul Tok staff works with communities on a long term basis, supporting reconciliation activities and continuing to support local reconciliation structures until they are strong enough to support themselves. The ceremonies are only the beginning of the reconciliation process.

Following the ceremonies in Kailahun, the communities and Fambul Tok staff worked together to identify activities to further the reconciliation process, and to build on the social capital created within the community.

Peace trees

Fambul Tok communities select a peace tree and construct benches

around it for the community. The location functions as an ongoing meeting spot, a place to settle community or individual disputes, or simply for leisurely gatherings.

Radio listening clubs

To popularize the Fambul Tok concept nationwide and to address communal issues in an ongoing way, Fambul Tok has facilitated the formation of radio listening clubs in each section in Kailahun where a ceremony has been held. The clubs are open to all members of the community, but managed by youths. The community selects one day a week to discuss issues pertaining to reconciliation or development and records the discussions. The cassettes are collected regularly, and selections





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are broadcast by the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service or other radio networks. In this way, the clubs provide an ongoing mechanism for public reconciliation with fellow Sierra Leoneans nationwide.

Football for Reconciliation

To encourage all members of the community, especially youths, to be part of the reconciliation process, Fambul Tok teamed up with Play31, a US-based partner who provided the equipment and uniforms, to facilitate football matches between communities within a section that have undergone the healing ceremonies. Communities organize all the games and ensure collective participation. There are male and female games, food, and a late night disco afterwards. The footballs and jerseys are donated to the town via the chief and are accessible to all the youths in the community on an ongoing basis. In the spirit of Fambul Tok, communi-

ties work out conflicts that arise during the matches without quarreling or fighting.

Community Farms

To provide an ongoing opportunity for all community members, especially victims and offenders, to work together, many villages in Kailahun have established community farms—an old tradition, but one that has been dormant since before the war.

Whether they grow cassava, or rice, the farms have become rich resources for the communities. Several villages that cultivated rice agreed that some of the harvest would be used as food for subsequent ceremonies,

while the remaining seeds would be given to needy community members on loan, payable after the next season's harvest. Other communities that planted cassava planned to process it into garri (a popular tapioca like food) to be sold at the local market, the proceeds from which would be used to open a community account.

Several of the communities in Kailahun are reporting record harvests from their community farms, often crediting the cleansing of the land that came out of the reconciliation ceremonies. Many report that for the first time since before the war, they do not have to import rice.

"[The] crime rate in Kailahun has reduced drastically. Fambul Tok project continues to complement the efforts of the Sierra Leone Police."

—Karefa Keita, former Local Unit Commander, Kailahun town

Fambul Tok



Expanding to Moyamba and Kono

After a successful pilot phase in Kailahun, Fambul Tok expanded into two new districts later in 2008—Moyamba in September, and Kono in December.

The cycle has been replicated in both of the new districts as follows:

consultations > staff and volunteer selection > sensitization/training > design > ceremonies > follow-up

Moyamba held its first ceremonies in December, with great success. Kono—a strategic location for warring factions during the war due to its diamond mines, and site of many mass atrocities—has eagerly embraced the Fambul Tok process, beginning ceremonies in early 2009.

Here is what people from Moyamba and Kono are saying about Fambul Tok:

“The youth owe an apology to this nation. Fambul Tok is the only project that will bring peace.” —Y.J.C. Vanjah, Youth Chairman, Moyamba District

“Women suffered a lot during the war and now with Fambul Tok in Moyamba, all of us will work together for sustainable peace in our communities.” —Sarah Gbanie, Women's Leader, Moyamba

“After the war, plenty of people are afraid to return to their homes for fear of revenge. Now that Fambul Tok is creating the platform for victims, witnesses and perpetrators to mediate reconciliation for peaceful co-existence, we have no alternative but to welcome Fambul Tok. I am sure community reconciliation will help us fight poverty.” —Sahr Ngaoja, Lei chiefdom, Kono district

“For the fact that Fambul Tok is talking about community dialogue, the project is highly welcomed in Kono. We witnessed a lot of atrocities in Kono district during the war. Our people have agreed to embrace Fambul Tok as it is the only way we would enjoy our peace. Thanks very much to the management of the project for thinking about reconciling the victims and perpetrators in our communities.” —Aiah Raymond Komba, chiefdom speaker, Kamaa chiefdom, Kono district

“Paramount Chiefs are grand peacemakers and without them Fambul Tok cannot succeed. Youth are also pillars of Fambul Tok. Therefore if the project should succeed it depends on all of us.” —Paramount Chief Alie Kongomoh, Fakunya chiefdom, Moyamba District



“We are very happy because for the past twenty years, we have not had the opportunity to appease our ancestors. Had it not been for the intervention of the Fambul Tok project, it would not have been possible.” —Charles Williams, Yondu Town, Kongbora chiefdom

Our Values

Fambul Tok is committed to:

- Being non political and non partisan
- Meeting people in their communities to listen and learn
- Walking with communities to find their own answers
- Respect for and revival of traditions and culture
- Total community participation and ownership
- Transparency and accountability in relationship and activities
- Honesty and respect for all people
- Sharing experiences, stories and lessons learned
- Restoration of dignity and the right to truth



Our Values in Action

This is what it takes to [meet with people in their communities to listen and learn](#) and [walk with communities to find their own answers](#).

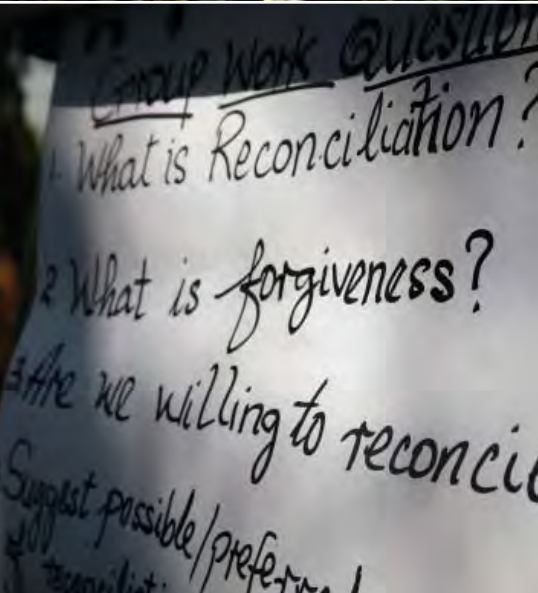




National Staff of Forum of Conscience and Catalyst for Peace



Back row: Rosamond Williams, FOC Office Manager; Maseray Mansaray, FOC Secretary; Robert Roche, CFP Field Program Officer, seconded to FOC as Technical Advisor on Training; John Caulker, FOC Executive Director, Fambul Tok Director; Hassan Bangura, FOC Finance and Logistics Manager; and Solomon Yarjoh, Fambul Tok Communications Coordinator.
Front row: Libby Hoffman, CFP President; Sheku Koroma, Fambul Tok Research and Documentation Coordinator and Amy Potter, CFP Fambul Tok Program Officer/ Associate Director of The Practice Institute at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University



Forum of Conscience (FOC) is a nation-wide non-governmental, non-political Human Rights organization advocating, promoting and defending human rights within the context of Sierra Leone. FOC is the on-the-ground implementer of Fambul Tok.



Catalyst for Peace (CFP) is a Portland, Maine (USA) based foundation that identifies and supports community based peacebuilding work around the world. CFP's current work focuses on post-conflict Africa, and also on the ways moderate religious voices are mobilizing for peace. CFP is committed to finding the stories that aren't being told, learning from the lessons of local cultures and supporting their role in peacemaking, and disseminating these lessons to a global audience. CFP has funded Fambul Tok to date.



Dexcription of photo goes here

Looking Ahead

“I find it very difficult to digest why people are embracing this concept so readily. I was thinking, Why did we as a nation not turn to these options earlier? We allowed things to prolong. And my second thought is, What will happen if we all turn to Fambul Tok as a nation, realizing that we are all one big family, the Sierra Leone family—make room for each child, make room for the elders, make room for women, make room for youths, for us all to be on board the process, the healing process of Sierra Leone. Where we won’t say, That’s not my business. We’ll see everyone’s concern as your concern. I just really look forward to what Sierra Leone will look like when Fambul Tok goes nation-wide!” — John Caulker, Executive Director, Forum of Conscience, and Fambul Tok Director

Having learned the lessons of the initial implementation in Kailahun, together with the expansion into the new districts of Moyamba and Kono, Fambul Tok is poised to begin the national rollout at the end of 2009. In addition to widespread interest throughout Sierra Leone, Fambul Tok has generated a great deal of international interest elsewhere in Africa and more broadly. Program

goals for 2009 and beyond include sharing the concept and process with others regionally and internationally, in particular exploring its significance for the Mano River countries of Guinea-Conakry and Liberia.

The promise is endless.





Acknowledgements

“Sierra Leone went through a very dark chapter. But we have a bright future.” —John Caulker Executive Director, Forum of Conscience, and Fambul Tok Program Director

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Donations to Fambul Tok may be made at www.fambultok.org.

To discuss a donation, contact Libby Hoffman at libby@catalystforpeace.org.

As a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) in the United States, all donations to Fambul Tok through Catalyst for Peace are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



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