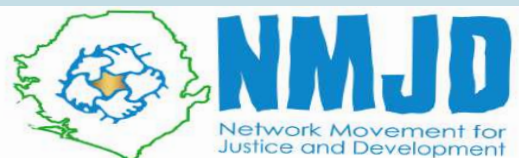




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Annual Narrative Report January-December 2019





NMJD's -Annual Narrative
Report-January- December
2019



Report: Annual Narrative Report January - December 2019

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Introduction and Contextual Analysis

The year started with the continuing struggles by civil society groups to get the Government of Sierra Leone to review the New NGO Policy, which they now referred to as the Development Cooperation Framework (DCF). Civil society and other progressive individuals and organizations in and outside the country have described the DCF as a repressive tool intended to be used by the Government of Sierra Leone and its functionaries to further close down the civic space. It is very restrictive and intrusive and has the potential to compromise the scope of work of NGOs, particularly those organizations that are involved in advocacy and are desirous of addressing important national issues that have not necessarily been identified by the Government of Sierra Leone as “national priorities” such as human rights and fundamental freedoms. The DCF provides that NGOs should align their activities with national priorities and failure to do so will lead to the non-renewal of an organization’s registration to operate. Civil society believes, though, that aligning NGO activities with the Government of Sierra Leone’s development policies greatly restricts the scope of their permissible activities and could place their independence in jeopardy. Also, it is extremely difficult for CSOs to operate as both critiques of the government and as counterweights to its actions and policies at the same time. There are many other clauses in the DCF that will adversely affect the work of civil society and reverse the gains that civil society has made in opening up the civic space in the recent past. Several engagements have been held between civil society and government at different levels, but the government is still insisting on implementing the DCF.

The overall situation in Sierra Leone is still very cagey. This is more so when the Sierra Leone Police have seemingly become notorious for suppressing citizens and preventing them from exercising their fundamental rights to assemble, to associate and to express their views freely. Instances abound of the police using the repressive Public Order Act of 1965 to muzzle and silence dissenting and critical voices. Civil society activists, journalists and opposition politicians have all become victims of this ugly trend in the recent times. Organized citizens groups wanting to protest peacefully and communicate their feelings and positions on national issues are not allowed to do so by the police, unless they seek clearance and approval from them. In a lot of instances, this clearance is not permitted even after these groups have gone through the prescribed procedures.

Further, it is very clear that the country is visibly divided along political party and ethnic lines. Many people see this state of affairs as a 'carry forward' from the 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections, which were highly characterized by hate speech, ethnicity and regionalism. The then opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) emerged victorious and traded the opposition seat with the then ruling All People's Congress (APC) party. Even though, it is now almost two years since the 2018 elections were conducted, the country has seen no let up in the divisive politics that was a hallmark of the 2018 electioneering process. This is clearly evidenced by the outburst of violence in all the bye-elections that have so far been conducted across the country. The political parties, particularly the two major political parties (SLPP and APC) have taken bye-elections as battle grounds for political supremacy.

They used everything at their disposal (legitimate and illegitimate) to outdo and outsmart each other to capture the 'priceless crown' regardless of the consequences on the citizens and the wellbeing of the country. Bye-elections have simply become synonymous with violence, intimidation and terror. Many legitimate voters have been disenfranchised in the process, as they fled to safer havens when bye-elections are conducted in their communities and they will stay away until the process ends. In order to bridge this divide, the Government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Political and Public Affairs organized a national conference on peace and national cohesion as a prelude towards the proposed establishment of the National Peace and Cohesion Commission. The main purpose of the conference was to start the process of healing, reconciling and charting the way forward for a peaceful, cohesive and prosperous nation. Different sectors of society organized pre-conference thematic consultations to discuss and harmonize the issues affecting each of these sectors, which included civil society, women, youth and persons with disability. Even though the conference itself was well attended by people from all walks of life and with representatives from across the country, the main opposition APC was conspicuously absent. Many people consider the absence of the APC, considered to be the main antagonist, as a blur in the entire peace building efforts. Be it as it is, the conference succeeded in setting the machinery in motion for further engagements that could ultimately lead to the establishment of the Peace and National Cohesion Commission.

Like previous years, the year, 2019, was again awashed with several challenges from different fronts, including economic, social, political and technological. Right through the year, the economy remained fragile with no signs of any meaningful growth. The resultant effect is high inflation and its corresponding run-away prices of basic food stuffs and other essential commodities. The costs of living became unbearable and beyond the reach of many citizens. Also, the country continued its heavy reliance on foreign aid to drive economic growth and national development, with exports falling down to its lowest level. This problem was further compounded by the closure of two mining companies by the Government of Sierra Leone, which are: Sierra Leone Mining Company and Shandong Iron and Steel Group.

The closure of these two mining companies caused the government huge financial loss in hard currency, which they used to pay in taxes. Further, it goes without saying that any country that depends heavily on foreign aid may lose its independence in terms of its economic, social and political policies and programmes, as there is the likelihood of the donor country imposing its preferred policies and programmes on the recipient country. This could lead to balance-of-payments difficulties for the recipient country and further deepen its economic dependency. Sierra Leone was deeply entrapped in this quandary during the year under review.

Another important feature of 2019 was the upsurge in incidents of violence against women, particularly incidents of rape and sexual penetration. Children as young as nine months old were sexually-penetrated by men old enough to be their fathers or grand fathers. This repulsive situation was not limited to a particular region or ethnic group alone; it affected every region of the country. The situation became so frightening that the Government of Sierra Leone had to declare a State of Emergency on rape and made wide ranging proposals on punishments for defaulters.

The First Lady of Sierra Leone added more political clout to the fight against gender-based violence when she introduced and led the Hands-Off Our Girls Campaign, whose main purpose is to protect the girl child from all forms of gender violence and to support them to go to school, grow up and realize their full potentials. Several NGOs and institutions, as well as influential individuals, are all working very hard to reverse the present trends.

During the year under review, several bye- and re-run elections were conducted across the country by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to fill vacant positions in local councils and the House of Representatives. All these elections were keenly contested mainly by the two major political parties in the country the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party and the opposition All People's Congress. Even though 18 political parties registered for the 2018 general elections, (out of which only 16 political parties fielded presidential candidates), not more than five political parties including the two major political parties have been fielding candidates for all the post-2018 bye-elections. Some people see this as a clear indication of how weak political parties in Sierra Leone are and the need for the NEC to review the existing laws relating to the registration of political parties. These bye-elections were marred by unbridled violence and several people suffered from injuries and damage to properties. The year just ended also saw ten elected Members of Parliament representing the opposition APC controversially thrown out of parliament and losing their seats to the ruling SLPP through election petitions initiated by losing candidates of the SLPP.

The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), which is the national umbrella body for journalists and other media practitioners in Sierra Leone, continued to provide leadership for the campaign to review the Public Order Act of 1965 with the purpose of repealing the seditious criminal libel provisions. Since the enactment of the Public Order Act in 1965, political parties have made its repeal a key election promise/manifesto, but no sooner they won elections and occupied the highest office of the land, they would start looking for excuses not to fulfill their elections promise. But 2019 appeared to be a different story altogether, as both the Government of President Julius Maada Bio and SLAJ have made tremendous efforts towards the review of the Act. The proposals for the review have successfully gone the crucibles of the cabinet and got its approval and the draft bill has also been tabled in parliament for discussions and further scrutiny. In spite of these great strides, some journalists and public interest activists are still edgy, hoping and praying that nothing adverse derails this process again.

We thank all our partners including the civil society advocacy platforms, international and local communities that we worked with throughout the year, government and its agencies and our donor partners for their invaluable support. We would not have been able to achieve so much without your collaboration and support.

Establishing, supporting and strengthening community structures in NMJD operational areas



Women's empowerment sessions in Jaworhun village

OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

Increased number of pregnant women using community health facilities in Nimikoro chiefdom, Kono district, to deliver. In 2019 using the health facilities by pregnant women has become a normal practice. Before the inception of the project, it was really challenging in getting women in the chiefdom to use the available health facilities and the services they were offering. However, with the establishment and empowerment of the CHMVGs, citizens have become more involved in awareness raising and sensitization of communities on healthcare issues, as well as monitoring healthcare service delivery. In 2018, 46 percent of deliveries in Nimikoro chiefdom were done in the PHUs and 72 percent in the homes, whilst in 2019, 54 percent of deliveries were carried out in PHUs and 28 percent in the

homes. These figures show an increment in PHU deliveries in 2019 of 8 percent.

- Four CHMVGs successfully mobilized their communities to undertake self-help development projects in their PHUs to bolster their performances and outputs. This initiative resulted in the construction of “waiting centres” where pregnant women who come to the clinics can sit and wait for their turns to be attended to. The lack of adequate sitting space for pregnant women who come to the clinic has been a serious challenge in most of the PHUs in the district,

- particularly in the rainy season. It was also considered as one of the reasons why some pregnant women did not go to the PHUs. Also, this engagement has also led to an increased sense of community ownership of public facilities, as well as collaboration. *Before now, most communities considered community health posts as the exclusive property of government and that they should have nothing to do about any problems affecting them. This negative perception has changed as a result of continuous awareness raising, sensitization and education.*
- *Organized and mobilized the marginalized property owners of Tankoro and Gbense chiefdoms in Kono district and supported them to institute court action against the mining company, Octea (formerly Koidu Holdings). The matter, which is now at the superior courts of Sierra Leone seeks to bring to the public domain serious issues of environmental and human rights abuses perpetrated by Koidu Holdings. It is meant to address the issues of systemic abuses and violations of community rights. This is the first time in Sierra Leone an affected community has dared take a multinational company to court.*
- Organized orientation meetings in Panguma, Lowuma, Kpandebu, Sandeyeima and Mavehun in Lower Bambara chiefdom, Kenema district, to help these communities better understand the tenets of the Land for Life Initiative.
- Organized district-level strategic meetings involving local councils, relevant line ministries and CSOs working in the land sector.
- Conducted a country self-evaluation of the Land for Life project to identify what worked, what did not work, what needed improvement, and what could be done differently? The evaluation also looked at what has changed in terms of behaviour, activities, policies and practices, as well as lessons to be drawn.
- Organized project planning and orientation sessions for communities in Lower Bambara chiefdom to identify farm families that would be supported to undertake farming activities within the reporting period. 80 Farm Families (20 females and 60 males) were identified for support and two crops also identified for cultivation; they were cassava and potato. Additionally, 90 (43 males and 47 females) farmers in Missila, Mathru and Tupuwama were orientated on the project. They included farm families, men, women, youths, local authorities and opinion leaders.
- Facilitated the formation of three farmers' cooperatives each in Missila, Mathru and Tupuwama with a total membership of 138 farmers (74 females, and 64 males). All the farmers' cooperatives have elected their executives in an open and participatory process and have also developed clear roles and responsibilities for the executives, as well as bye-laws for the entire memberships. Members of the cooperatives have been trained in Climate Smart Agriculture, improved farming methods, new seed varieties and post-harvest management. The purpose was to increase farmers' knowledge of the impacts of climate change on agriculture, new and improved seed varieties, and new farming methods with the ultimate goal of increasing productivity and community food security.
- Trained and supported 8 SPAG mentors to coach and mentor 120 SPAG members (96 girls and 24 boys) in Bombali district. There are 15 SPAG members in each school. The support to the SPAGs covered the development of training manual and the provision of monthly stipends to augment for refreshments during sessions and also for the training materials. Additionally, once every month, every female SPAG member was provided with sanitary pads, toilet rolls, soap, and hand sanitizers while the male SPAG members were given toilet rolls, soap and hand sanitizers.

Capacity building events for staff, partners and community structures

OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- - Trained CHMVG members in Nimikoro chiefdom on their roles and responsibilities as organized citizens groups and on how to identify and mobilize community assets to improve the living conditions of the people. The trainees used the knowledge they have acquired to take lead in mobilizing communities to clean the PHUs and other health facilities in the chiefdom, as well as to lobby World Vision Sierra Leone to rehabilitate the dilapidated PHU in Tongoma. The rehabilitation process is already at the completion stage.
 - Trained community stakeholders in Kenema district on the Agro Business Investment Approval Process (AIAP). The training was facilitated by FAO, Sierra Leone Investment Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA), Ministry of Lands and Housing, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, Environmental Protection Agency, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, NAMATI, WHH and NMJD. Participants acquired basic knowledge of the AIAP.
 - Organized adult literacy refresher training for 20 adult literacy teachers in Bombali district. The three days training dealt with the general adult literacy training framework and report writing. The trainees were asked to highlight the challenges they faced in conducting adult literacy programmes, which were validated and solutions proffered and incorporated into the action plan.
- Conducted four days district-level refresher training for eight SPAG mentors on coaching and mentoring skills using NMJD Mentoring Handbook. The training covered different topics including: a) Facilitation and mentoring skills b) Mentoring for Girls Success, c) Healthy Choices, e) Reproductive Health and Sexuality, and f) Right and Responsibility of the child.
- Trained 42 Chiefdom Accountability Advocates (17 females and 25 males) in six chiefdoms in Bombali and Karene districts.
- Trained 100 Community Gender Champions (CGC) in Bombali district. The training covered topics such as human rights and laws and practices aimed at preventing VAWG. Upon completion of the training, the trainees were supported with the necessary resources to carry out quarterly community awareness raising campaigns on women's rights, laws, practices and to engage community stakeholders on the importance of gender equality/equity, as well as the need to prevent and/or adequately respond to VAWG.

Strengthening collaboration, coalition building and networking



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Women's empowerment sessions in Kadigidigie village

OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- - Increased food cultivation in cattle-rearing communities in NMJD's operational communities in Kono district. This was due to the existing peace between crop farmers and cattle rearers, which NMJD brokered. One of the key outcomes of this peace process was the development of bye-laws to guide the operations of both cattle rearers and crop farmers. Cattle rearers voluntarily agreed that they would dig trenches and make fences to prevent their cattle from straying into crop fields. This motivated many crop farmers who had hitherto abandoned crop cultivation to go back to the farms.
 - Facilitated a dialogue session with the Koidu New Sembehun (City Council) and Kono District Councils to assess the extent to which citizens' needs in six chiefdoms are reflected in the development plans of both councils and how they were financed. In attendance from both councils, were: the District Council Chairman, Mayor Koidu New Sembehun City council, the Chief Administrators, Development and Planning officers, Finance officers, Human Resource officers and NMJD staff. The session accorded the people the rare opportunity to demand explanations from the leaderships of both councils about their stewardships. It also laid the basis for future engagements of this nature so as to promote collaboration, partnership and information sharing.
 - Facilitated an assessment aimed at identifying communities in Kenema district that were most affected by land-related challenges and how they were impacting these communities. The communities that were identified as most affected by large-scale land acquisition included Panguma, Lowuma, Kpandebu, Sandeyeima and Mavehun, all in Lower Bambara chiefdom where the main vocation of the people is agriculture and diamond mining.

- Organized project inception meetings in six new communities in Karene district. The meetings targeted 30 participants (20 women and 10 men) per community with the number of participants totaling 180 (120 women and 60 men). This number included traditional and religious leaders, poor and marginalized women and students. The purpose of these meetings was to inform community members about Trocaire's integrational approach to development work in these communities, the objective of which was to strengthen synergy, minimize duplication of efforts and increase quality of F service delivery.
- Organized women's empowerment sessions on Power-Within and Power-To for women in Bombali district. Four rounds of women's empowerment sessions were carried out in each of the 20 communities that we are operating and 40 Power-Within sessions were conducted in the six new communities targeting 25 members of the WFG. A total of 150 participants (120 females and 30 males) were trained. Also, 40 Power-To sessions were conducted in 14 old communities for 35 women farmers. A total of 490 participants were trained. (350 females and 140 males). For the year under review, NMJD was able to reach out to a total number of 640 participants from 20 communities on empowerment sessions using the Tamaraneh Manual.
- Facilitated a one day district-level engagement with religious leaders in Bombali district. A total of 80 people (79 males and 1 female) participated in the session. We used this engagement to educate and popularize the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) Policy among the religious leaders and to solicit their support and collaboration in advocating and lobbying parliament and other relevant individuals for the approval of this policy.
- Facilitated Transparency and Accountability sessions as a follow-up to the evidence-based monitoring undertaken by the CAA in 24 schools in Bombali district. The session was organized by the CAA in close collaboration with NMJD at chiefdom level. A total of 55 participants were targeted per chiefdom (330 for 6 chiefdoms) inclusive of parents, students, principals, CTA chairpersons, District Council Education Committee Chairperson, Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education, CSOs, District Council Chief Administrator (CA), Anti-Corruption Commission, Education and paramount chief. The purpose for this session was to present key findings on the FQSE monitoring carried out and to create interface between duty bearers and service providers to enhance improvement.
- Conducted three days training on the Safeguarding Policy for all NMJD staff in Bombali district, volunteers and community facilitators. 45 people (20 adult literacy facilitators, 8 SPAG mentors and 17 staff) participated in the training. The training was facilitated by the L&D Team of NMJD. The purpose of the training was to educate NMJD staff and the communalities they are working with on human rights principles and the absolute need to promote human dignity and respect for every individual irrespective of their sex, wealth, social situation, culture, religion and age. The policy was printed out and shared to participants.

- Trained 36 journalists (18 men and 18 women) drawn from both the print and electronic media, Community Mining Advocacy Platforms and CSOs on Sub-National Transfers (CDA, DACDF and Surface Rent). The journalists and other participants acquired foundational knowledge on the two revenue streams (CDF and DACDF) and they were able to identify advocacy issues and correspondingly developed advocacy goals to enhance their effectiveness in monitoring community projects from extractive resources.
- Facilitated and supported the Task Force/Multi-Stakeholders Group on Public Disclosures Coordination and Planning meetings that were held in Freetown in May, August, October and December 2019. A key outcome of these meetings was the development and approval of Terms of Reference (ToR) to serve as the guiding instrument to control the operations of the group, and to define what was expected of Taskforce members.
- Organized a reflection workshop on the Community Development Agreement (CDA) for the Community Development Committees. This workshop resulted in the development of the CDA Monitoring Framework to ensure the effective monitoring of its implementation and a draft MoU for the holding of periodic local-level public disclosures of CDF by mining companies and CDCs.
- Facilitated the National Civil Society Forum Sierra Leone to undertake a national governance assessment of the SLPP's first year in governance in relation to its Manifesto and elections campaign promises. This exercise was undertaken by civil society across the country covering all the sixteen districts and it was done at district level. Prior to the assessment, a template was developed and shared and it was that template that all the district civil Society platforms used to assess the SLPP's one year in office. The purpose of this exercise was to accord citizens the opportunity to remind the SLPP Government of their manifesto and elections campaign promises and to also assess the extent to which they have gone to fulfill those promises. A report of the exercise was produced. The NCSF members agreed that this report should form the baseline for future governance assessment of the government until the next elections were conducted.
- Facilitated the National Civil Society Forum's National Conveners meeting held in Freetown. The meeting was held at the Solidarity Hall of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress and it brought together all the regional and national Conveners of the National Civil Society Forum Sierra Leone. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a wide range of critical national issues affecting the citizens and the wellbeing of the country such as the stalled constitutional review process, the Development Cooperation Framework/New NGO Policy, among others, as well as issues of institutional building of the NCSF.
- Facilitated the Final National Workshop on Social Media and Security in Africa (SMS Africa) held in Freetown. NMJD and the University of Edinburgh have been implementing the SMS Africa project since 2016 and this final national workshop held in Freetown marked the end of this phase of the project. This workshop brought together civil society activists from across the country, security personnel, communications experts from government MDAs, journalists, school going pupils and staff of both NMJD and the University of Edinburgh. The workshop looked at the progress that had been made by Sierra Leoneans in understanding and appreciating the appropriate use of social media, the role of social media in the 2018 general elections and moving forward, how to mitigate the wrong use of social media. It was very interactive and experiential sharing.


Research and Documentation



Women farmers in Mathuru and Tupuwama preparing land for cultivation

OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- Facilitated the development, printing and formal launch of the Tankoro and Gbense Chiefdoms Development Plans, and followed-up on the Chiefdom Development Plans of Fiama, Gbane, Kamara and Nimikoro Chiefdoms, all in Kono district. These development plans fed into the Kono District Development Plan.
- Successfully launched the research report on government domestic revenue re-distribution with reference to tax and extractive revenues in Kono, and the Monitoring of CDA projects by Mining Advocacy Platforms in Bonthe, Moyamba and Kono districts. The report highlighted critical issues of corruption, community sufferings, human rights abuses, lack of transparency and accountability in the handling of community funds, as well as the low consultations with the affected communities.
- Developed a summarized version of the first five years of our 25 years Strategic Direction to make it accessible and more reader friendly and at the same time not losing sight of its key attributes. It was meant to promote a better understanding of NMJD staff and partners of the five year strategic plan ahead of the launch of the 25-year strategic direction. The 25 years Strategic Direction



will be implemented in tranches of five years each.

- Participated in the process of gathering evidence to bolster the case of MAPO against KH. This was done by a small group comprising journalists, videographers, lawyers and our ICT Officer, who edited the footage/clips. They gathered both video and

audio visual materials to support the case of MAPO in their quest to seek justice through judicial means. The team visited all affected communities in Kono district and held focus group discussions and conducted individual interviews on camera and later edited these materials for presentation in court.

Implementation of the Organization Development and Change (ODC)



OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- Successfully produced and launched NMJD's 25 Years Strategic Direction titled: "Towards Building Social Movements for the Transformation of Society". The launching, which took place in Kenema, eastern Sierra Leone, brought together a legion of people drawn from local communities, youth and women's groups, local councils, local authorities, donor community, government MDAs, CSOs and the media. The purpose for developing this long-term strategic direction is to guide and direct our collective actions, as well as to enable us be very clear of the key drivers of change that will dominate the socio-economic and political landscape in the next 25 years and the potential challenges that will litter the way.
 - Facilitated the training of members of the Network of Ex-Asylum Seekers in Sierra Leone (NEAS-SL). One of our partners, Medico International, contracted NMJD to do this training for NEAS-Sierra Leone who are also partners to Medico International. The capacity building events focused on skills in facilitation, basic computer skills, planning, basic accounting and financing, documentation and record keeping, advocacy and lobbying skills and psychosocial support skills.
- Facilitated meetings of the L&D Team, Resource Mobilization Team and Senior Management Team. Additionally, Area Office Teams also held regular meetings. These meetings provided the platforms for NMJD staff to do critical reflection of the work they have undertaken for a particular period and to develop all-inclusive participatory operational plans.
- Designed organizational branding and visibility materials for the use of our staff and partners. These materials include templates for official PowerPoint presentations, sign boards for NMJD offices, stickers and colour/logo concept to ensure we maintain the same colours for all our official documents (Green-#1fa929, Blue-0f87cc, and Heading Font- Blok Heavy, Century Gothic Regular). This has been shared with the Area Office Teams to ensure compliance.

Collaboration with Government and Development Partners

OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- The CHMVGs successfully lobbied the DHMT for additional medical facilities and a trained nurse for the PHU in Nimikoro chiefdom. The items requested for also included a generator to preserve vaccines and other medicines and a solar system. The provision of these additional facilities helped to improve the quality of healthcare service delivery in the chiefdom.

Key Results and Achievements

As a result of the activities we have highlighted above, we were able to achieve the following key results during the reporting period:

- Because of our awareness raising, education and advocacy programmes on healthcare-related issues in Nimikoro chiefdom in Kono district, incidents of child births (deliveries) in the homes decreased considerably, whilst there was a corresponding surge in incidents of child births in the PHUs during the reporting period. Before the inception of the project, it was challenging for pregnant women to use the facilities and services provided by the
- PHUs and other healthcare centres. They preferred native doctors/herbs and home deliveries. But by 2019 when the project had been in full operation, using healthcare facilities by pregnant women had become a normal practice and a culture to them. This was translated into the increased number of pregnant women visiting the PHUs to access their facilities and services, including deliveries. This turn-around was caused by the establishment and empowerment of CHMVGs to undertake massive healthcare sensitization and awareness raising campaigns in the chiefdom and to monitor the implementation of the free health programme using the Free Healthcare Policy of the Government of Sierra Leone. Delivery data for Nimikoro Chiefdom shows that in 2018 46 percent of deliveries were done in PHUs and 72 percent was done in the homes, whilst in 2019, deliveries in the

PHUs increased to 54 percent and home deliveries dropped to 28 percent

Conclusively, these figures indicate that deliveries in PHUs increased by 8 percent in 2019 and correspondingly home deliveries dropped by 44 percent.

- The PHUs and other healthcare centres in the entire Kono district are suffering from the lack of basic facilities, medical equipment and adequate trained personnel. *For example, the community health centre in Mansundu community has only one trained nurse. Whenever she is unable to come to work for whatever reasons, the health centre is closed down. The health centre also lacks refrigerator to preserve vaccines and other medicines and electricity. The vaccines are sent to another PHU in Samoiquidu, which is five miles away. The healthcare workers sometimes ask the beneficiaries to contribute monies to pay for transportation for moving these vaccines from Samoiquidu. Several other health centres face similar situations.* This is impacting negatively on the quality of services that they deliver to the people. This situation prompted the CHMVGs in Nimikoro chiefdom to engage the DHMT and request them to provide additional facilities and another trained nurse to the PHU in Nimikoro chiefdom. They requested for a refrigerator to preserve vaccines and medicines, solar energy to provide electricity to the PHU and an additional trained nurse to effectively handle the caseload of people visiting the PHU. They lobbied the DHMT and made them to understand the importance of this request to effective healthcare delivery to the people of the chiefdom, particularly women and children. In June 2019, the DHMT granted the CHMVGs their request. The CHMVG members were not only trained in monitoring the free healthcare, but also advocacy and lobbying skills.

- Another tangible result of the empowerment of the CHMVGs worthy of note in the Nimikoro chiefdom is that some of them are now embarking on self-help community healthcare development projects aimed at improving the conditions and environments of their PHUs without waiting for external support to do so. At least, four CHMVGs in the chiefdom have mobilized their communities to undertake activities that will minimize the sufferings of women and children that come to these healthcare centres to seek their services. Such initiatives included the construction of waiting rooms for pregnant women that come to the PHUs to deliver. The lack of waiting rooms has been a very serious problem for the pregnant women and children, particularly during the rainy season. But with the construction of the waiting rooms, the accommodation problems of people visiting the PHUs have been significantly reduced. Other CHMVGs provided water and sanitation facilities in the PHUs, whilst others embarked on rehabilitating latrines, cleaning and maintaining the PHU environments to acceptable levels of hygiene and sanitary conditions. Before the training of CHMVGs on their roles and responsibilities, there was a very serious challenge with the PHUs due to the unwillingness of members of the community to clean the centres. After the training and knowing their roles and responsibilities, CHMVGs straight away started to engage other community people and discuss plans for cleaning the health facilities and to undertake some development initiatives on their own to demonstrate their readiness to take ownership of the healthcare facilities. This practice is now being emulated by other PHUs outside Nimikoro chiefdom. The

CHMVGs in Tongoma lobbied World Vision International to rehabilitate their healthcare centre which was in a state of dilapidation and a death trap. They invited the WVI Director to visit the centre and see for himself and to also tell him the concerns and views of the community people on the state of the clinic. The WVI immediately handed the centre to a contractor to rehabilitate and as at the time of writing this report, the healthcare centre is about 97 percent complete.

- Because of NMJD's intervention, there was a significant decrease in hostilities and conflicts between cattle rearers and crop farmers in our operational communities in Kono district. For many years, this has been the major source of conflicts that sometimes resulted in deaths, as well as the low food productivity. During the period under review, there were no reported cases of animal cruelty or attacks on cattle. *Before our intervention and during the inception of the project, there were lots of complaints against crop farmers for frequently wounding and killing animals that strayed into their farms in revenge for the destruction these animals were causing to their crops. This was a source of heightened tensions between the two groups of farmers.* Crop farmers were often demotivated by the impacts of the rampaging cattle on their farmers. But our intervention has led to bringing all the major stakeholders in the chiefdom together to discuss openly, critically and genuinely with the main purpose of building consensus on the best way to move forward. These engagements saw the development of by-laws, identification of roles and responsibilities and the putting in place of complaints and redress mechanisms. For example, the cattle farmers agreed to work closely with crop farmers to erect fences and

dig trenches to control movements of cattle and to prevent them from straying into farm crops. Below is the table showing the impacts of digging and fencing by cattle farmers:

Name of Section	# of Farms Fenced	# of Trenches dug	Relocation of Cattle
Koaro	0	67	0
Dia	20	20	0
Lei	17	34	1
Tankor	3	0	1
Sandor Kundu	0	0	4
Total	40	121	6

- Additionally, there has been a substantial increase in food production in the cattle rearing areas, which is attributed to the reigning peace between cattle rearers and crop farmers and the assurances that crop farmers derived from the peace process. *During the mid-term review meeting, the affected communities reported an increase in food production in cattle rearing areas.* This was also emphasized during the outcomes harvesting meeting that was held in November 2019. Over the years, crop farmers were not cultivating the land due to the high concentration of cattle ranches in communities in Lei chiefdom.

Section	2018			Section	2019		
	# of farmers	# of bags cultivated	# of bags Harvested		# of farmers	# of bags cultivated	# of bags Harvested
Koaro	20	40	309	Koaro	23	44	630
Tankor	22	77	678	Tankor	29	98	1,044
Dia	16	27	120	Dia	34	44	456
Sangbandah	14	23	200	Sangbandah	14	22	300
Sandor Kundu	22	34	479	Sandor Kundu	23	40	700
Lei	21	35	457	Lei	23	44	630
Total	115	222	2,243	Total	146	292	3,760
%	44%	43%	37%	Total	56%	57%	63%

□ NMJD is implementing a project aimed at empowering women and promoting their collective voice and rights in 20 communities in Bombali and Karene districts. We have been working in 14 of these communities for three years now and for one year in the six communities. The long-term results of our interventions are clearly visible in these communities. As a result of the increased self-knowledge, confidence and assertiveness following our interventions, women in these communities are now able to:

✎ □ Organize themselves into strong groups and facilitate meetings all on their own to discuss critical issues and take collective actions that impact their lives and that of their children, as well as being able to make presentations and submissions to key stakeholders requesting them to respond to their needs and aspirations.

✎ Negotiate issues like neglect, access to land, property inheritance, management and utilization of farm produce, education for their children and a lot more with their husbands, chiefs, siblings, parents, neighbours, and religious and local authorities.

✎ Read and write the alphabets, read simple nursery rhymes and count numbers, which has contributed to the decrease in financial loss when selling farm produce and other petty trading engagements. This is as a result of the adult literacy classes organized for 270 women in the project communities.

✎ Local stakeholders now hold women in high esteem by involving them in decision-making processes on behalf of their communities and in arbitrating GBV cases perpetrated by husbands at household and community levels. Community stakeholders also now support women to report cases of rape and sexual penetration to the appropriate authorities at district or chiefdom level.

✎ The repeated awareness raising activities by Community Women's Action Groups (CWAG) in previous years, coupled with the emphasis on free quality education have made a great difference in the lives of community women in the project area, as they are now more aware of the importance of girl child education and positive parenting in communities. Every household now sends their girl children to school and monitor their activities in the school and in the community.

- Through our *Land for Life-Making Policies Work for Food Security project* that we are implementing in Kandulepiama and Lower Bambara chiefdoms in Kenema district, there has been increased collaboration and alliance building with like-minded individuals and groups in these communities with the purpose of increasing their collective voices in agitating for more respect for human rights and human dignity by mining companies. Before the advent of the project, the culture of silence reigned supreme in these communities where the people preferred to suffer in silence. But with the series of capacity building actions undertaken by the project, the culture of silence has gradually given way to more vibrant and confident communities and people that are ready and willing to agitate and dialogue with stakeholders in the pursuit of their rights and aspirations. This has also led to improved relationships between mining companies operating in these communities and the people, which is due mainly to the regular structured dialogue that both parties are now holding to discuss potentially conflictual issues that would have otherwise resulted in full-blown conflicts. For example, the open cast blasting, which Sierra Diamond Company used to do as and when it suited them regardless of how it would affect the people and their properties, is now carried out only after the company has had consultations with all stakeholders and enough time given to the people to move away from the danger zone.

□

The company is also now not only listening to the complaints of the people, but also they pay compensation for any community or individual people's property they destroy during the open-cast blasting, unlike before when they did not pay compensation regardless of the magnitude of the damage. Likewise, Sierra Diamonds now employs indigenes of Lower Bambara chiefdom including women to work in different capacities of the company. This was one of the concerns of the mining communities the refusal of mining companies to employ their sons and daughters. They had advocated for this for a very long time, but it was never heeded to until now.

- The one day National Conveners meeting held at the Sierra Leone Labour Congress brought together all the regional and national civil society conveners, as well as the accompaniers. The main purpose of the meeting was to reflect on the National Civil Society Forum's (NCSF) journey so far, avail learning from it, and take actionable next-step decisions. The meeting identified key areas that it believed required next steps decisions and they included: reinforcing critical institutional building processes and structures; resurrecting public discussions on the stalled national constitutional review process; how to take forward findings of the governance stocktaking/audit exercise and how to build advocacy actions around them; and preparing for the next national civil society General Assembly Meeting. The meeting agreed that the Governance Stocktaking Report should serve as the baseline assessment of the current government's delivery of campaign promises. Updating the Report would now be a regular task for District Conveners to track what was changing in their localities in respect of government's delivery of campaign promises. Every year, an updated version of the Report would be released, reflecting on what was changing.
- As part of our work to open up the frontiers of participatory democracy and inclusive governance at all levels, as well as to strengthen collaboration and partnerships with local communities, we worked closely with the Chiefdom Development Committees of both Tankoro and Gbense chiefdoms in Kono district and facilitated them to develop Chiefdom Development Plans for 2019-2021. This came on the request of the Paramount Chiefs of both chiefdoms. The process, which involved wide ranging consultations with people in the different communities of the chiefdoms, provided an opportunity to the people to not only contribute to and influence their development plans, but also made them to be more knowledgeable of development issues affecting them. We used our many years of experience working in community development and our knowledge of participatory tools to facilitate the process to make sure that it was participatory, inclusive, open and consultative. The exercise started with needs assessment and their prioritization in order to pinpoint the thematic areas that the people of both chiefdoms would want all development programmes and projects to be focused on in their chiefdoms for the next three years. This involved focus group discussions with different thematic groups such as youth, women, chiefs, community elders, farmers, traders and teachers, as well as the review of different available literature on the two chiefdoms. The development plans will serve as a roadmap to guide all development processes and to ensure that development programmes are within the context of the felt needs that the people have identified and agreed on. The development plans also challenged civil society to take ownership of development in their chiefdoms and to monitor the rolling out phase to ensure the judicious use of resources and that good quality services are delivered to the people. The Paramount Chiefs of both Tankoro and Gbense chiefdoms certified the Chiefdom Development Plans (by signing them) as true representations of their chiefdoms' needs and aspirations and they both committed themselves to fully support the implementation of the plans with everything at their disposals.

The two chiefdoms will use these development plans to feed into the Kono District Development Plan for the same period.

- We mobilized the marginalized people of Tankoro and Gbense chiefdoms in Kono district under the aegis of the Marginalized Affected Property Owners (MAPO) and facilitated an initiative aimed at addressing issues of environmental and human rights abuses perpetrated by the Kimberlite mining company, Koidu Holdings. We collaborated with the legal firm, C and J Partners, to institute legal action against KH for its systemic abuses and violations of community rights. This action is seen as a pilot initiative designed with the aim to look into serious issues of environmental and human right abuses perpetrated by Koidu Holdings Limited (KHL) Mining Company and the Octea Group based in the Municipal City of Koidu, Eastern Sierra Leone. It is meant to address the issues of systemic abuses and violations of community rights. As at the time of writing this report, our legal firm has issued ten writs of summons (legal actions) that included one class action comprising 73 plaintiffs, and nine individual actions. The matter, which is considered by many observers as an epic action by a local civil society group in Sierra Leone, is now before the superior courts of Sierra Leone for determination. Many people in Sierra Leone believe that the period of impunity by mining companies is over, as more affected communities could resort to the courts to seek redress.
- The purpose of the Task Force/Multi-Stakeholders Group on Public Disclosures Coordinating Meetings is to better position the group in its efforts to properly plan the institutionalization of public disclosures by the private sector, local and national governments of annual extractives revenue generation and disbursement of sub-national transfers to mining affected communities in Sierra Leone. When the management of these funds is made public, the communities will be well informed about the administration and utilization of these funds and they will be able to ask appropriate questions and demand relevant explanations from the handlers of these funds. In other words, public disclosures help to promote top-bottom transparency and accountability. The Stakeholders Group meetings were attended by both CSOs and the relevant government MDAs including the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Rights to Access Information Commission (RAIC), National Minerals Agency (NMA), Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRC-SL), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), Ministry of Mines and Minerals Resources (MMMR) and Parliamentary Committee on Mines and Minerals Resources (PCMMR), whilst the CSOs were represented by the Association of Journalists on Mining and Extractives (AJME), Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME), Campaign for Just Mining (CJM), Transparency International-Sierra Leone (TI-SL), Mining and Allied Services Employees Union (MASEU) and NMJD

Challenges and Lessons

Despite the impressive achievements that our interventions contributed to during the reporting year as highlighted above, we equally confronted several challenges in the course of implementing our activities. These challenges included, but not limited to:

A. Challenges

- There is a seeming inability by the Government of Sierra Leone to adequately address the public demands for additional trained health personnel, equipment and essential drugs in the PHUs and other community health centres. A lot of education has been done in local communities on the need and importance of going to established health centres, particularly for pregnant women and children, for medical services and this message is resonating well among the communities. But the poor and inadequate facilities in these health centres and the inability of the government to equip them to an appreciable standard serve as a de-motivator to those for which the services are intended.
 - Low literacy rate among the CHMVG members affects the quality of monitoring and reporting on the free healthcare programme in the PHUs and other community health centres. We have trained the CHMVG members and collectively developed monitoring tools that are deemed to be simple and easy to use. But because there are only a few people that can read and write, the group faces problems in producing their monitoring reports each time those few people that can read and write are absent.
- The frequent transfer of nurses and other healthcare workers who are already knowledgeable of our project. Each time a set of healthcare workers are transferred and a new set comes in, we will have to start another orientation of the project all over again with the new set of staff that comes. This slows down progress on the implementation of project activities.
- In Bombali and Karene districts, our greatest challenge was the late approval of the project, which also led to other challenges. For example, the trainings, especially the adult literacy classes, were ultimately scheduled close to the farming season because of the late release of funds and this affected the punctuality of the women farmers in the literacy classes. This is because, the women farmers used the time they were to attend classes to work on their farms. The M&E reports and monthly reports from adult literacy teachers also indicate that there is low participation from women adult learners in Magbithnor and Mabolleh communities.
- The two crops (cassava and potato) that were chosen by farmers in Kandulepiama chiefdom in Kenema district for cultivation did not do well for a number of reasons, which included the negative effects of climate change and the delay in implementing the project plans as scheduled resulting in late start of cultivation. The soaring temperature and humidity caused the influx of pests that correspondingly caused huge destruction to the crops.
- Another challenge related to these crops is

that there is gross unavailability of potato vines and cassava stems in the project farming communities. This created a situation where even when farmers had the money and wanted to buy vines and stems for cultivation, they would not get them anywhere nearby.

- Inadequate mobility (vehicles and motor-bikes) is a very concerning issue in the organization. We work in different rural communities across the country and despite the fact that we have always tried to establish community structures and strengthen their capacities, there is need for staff to provide supportive supervision, coaching and mentoring. Because we do not have adequate vehicles and motor-bikes, our staff are not only unable to provide this supportive supervision, but are also constraint to travel on public transportation thereby exposing them to danger.

B. Lessons

- Dialogue is the best way to settle conflicts in local communities. A practical example is the conflicts in Kono district between cattle rearers and crop farmers, which have been raging for many years and which have defied all sorts of peace efforts. But because we created the conducive environment for all parties to the conflicts to sit together and dialogue genuinely, they were able to resolve the conflicts to the satisfaction of both parties. Today, they are all enjoying peace and progress.
 - The integration approach initiated by Trocaire is a strong pillar for success. The presence of different livelihood partners that are working in a single community and are coordinating their efforts very well will minimize duplication and

increase impacts on the beneficiary communities, particularly when they are supported by one donor partner.

- The involvement of community members and other community stakeholders in project development and planning will increase community ownership. Once the community people are involved from the outset, they will be willing to do everything to ensure that the project succeeds.
- When local communities become aware and are able to do critical analysis of their situations, they can equally become more confident to make demands on duty bearers and service providers. This came out very clearly during the course of the reporting period when our animated communities are confident enough to stand up and share their feelings, concerns and aspirations with their leaders.
- Local communities where multinational companies are operating do not trust their local leaders. This is because the local communities always believe that their chiefs are betraying them by siding with the multinational companies for the seemingly personal benefits they are getting. In the absence of trust, affected communities rely more on CSOs to seek redress.

Recommendations

Section VII: Recommendations

In order to address the challenges highlighted above, we recommend that:

- NMJD continue to engage both the Government of Sierra Leone and its development partners, including the INGOs to respond to the needs of PHUs and other healthcare centres in terms of provision of equipment and other needed facilities to improve the quality of service delivery by these centres.
- NMJD increase its engagements and support towards the adult literacy programme for women so as to improve the quality of outputs, as well as to increase the number of beneficiaries.
- NMJD seek collaboration with trained Agriculture Extension workers (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security) in Kenema district to provide extension services to the farmers they are working with. With their experience and expertise, the extension workers will help minimize some of the challenges the farmers faced in the year under review.
- NMJD engage their donor partners and other development agencies to help improve their mobility challenge. Project staff and the

leadership of NMJD should convince their partners to see the dire need to support the purchase of motor-bikes and vehicles for the effective implementation of project activities.

Section VIII: Success stories

Kakamba Women Reclaim Right of Access to Land

Like many other women in the northern region of Sierra Leone, the women of Kakamba in the Karene district face serious challenges in the enjoyment of their rights and freedoms. The architecture of these communities is such that women's rights are always compromised, especially when it relates to inheritance, ownership and access to land. This state of affairs, which has become a culture in some communities, is ably animated by culture, tradition and religious practices. The women of Kakamba are mainly subsistence farmers and land is very critical to them. But despite the fact that land is in abundance in their community, the community elders are always unwilling to apportion land to them to cultivate. However, following our interventions in Kakamba and its environs, which were geared towards empowering women and young girls with appropriate knowledge, skills and tools, the women of Kakamba did not only organize themselves into a strong farmers group, but they also became aware of their rights and freedoms and how to pursue them. It was this awareness that propelled these women to request the community chiefs and elders to provide them a portion of land to cultivate. The women made this request against the background of the fact that as of the community, they were also entitled to the community land to carry out their farming activities.

As it was expected, the elders were quick to dismiss the women and reject their request. The women were unruffled. Rather than give up hope, they raised the issue with our office in Makeni during one of the empowering sessions. The NMJD Project Officer responded by taking the women through their rights and entitlements, as well as the tools available to them to use to reclaim those rights and entitlements. The session further re-energized the women who returned to the village and once again engaged the community chiefs and elders to further renegotiate their request. Again, this did not yield any positive fruits for them. Undeterred and determined to get

what's due them, the women mobilized in their numbers and went to the chiefdom headquarter town to complain the community chiefs and elders to the Paramount Chief. The community chiefs and elders on hearing that the women had led a delegation to the Paramount Chief became troubled and called for another meeting of village elders to reverse their earlier decision and grant the women their request. The Kakamba women are now cultivating the land that the community chiefs and elders gave to them.