



# Annual Narrative Report January-December 2020



**NMJD**  
Network Movement for  
Justice and Development



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# Knowledge Management and Communication (KMC) NMJD

First and foremost, we give praises and thanks to the omnipresent God whose divine protection and guidance saw us successfully navigate through another challenging year.

Also, we would like to express our deep and sincere gratitude to all the vulnerable and struggling communities that we worked with during the reporting period. It is for them we exist and work. Our guiding objective always been to improve their situations and to restore trust and confidence in their individual and collective abilities to bring about positive social change.

We are further extremely grateful to our donor partners who provided us invaluable support during

the outgone year. It was through both their financial and technical support we were able to accomplish what we accomplished in the year 2020.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all our civil society partners and coalition colleagues whose invaluable dynamism, vision and motivation deeply inspired our work. It was a great privilege and honour and work and closely interact with you. We would like to thank all of you for what you offered us during the reporting period.

Finally, many sincere thanks go to the Board of Advisors, Management and all the staff of NMJD who served as a strong pillar of support and an invaluable source of feedback during the course of



Canada's Capital University



# Introduction and Contextual Analysis

This report documents the work we did, how we did it, the successes we achieved and the challenges we faced in the reporting year. The year 2020 was very challenging, not only for the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), but also for every organization and institution that was engaged in the business of development in Sierra Leone, including the government and its partners. The outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic impacted negatively on economic growths around the world. But Sierra Leone was impacted more negatively because: 1) it's already a fragile state that largely rely on the international community, including multilateral institutions for support through grants and loans; 2) Sierra Leone was hit by the Ebola epidemic in 2014 and caused the deaths of over 3500 people in less than one year and the corresponding sharp fall in the prices of the country's major exports. The GDP contracted (negative growth of minus 22% by 2016) – even though from an abnormal high level mainly due to initial very large investments and exports of iron ore and subsequent fall in iron ore prices. The country was still grappling with this shock when the coronavirus hit the country early in the reporting year as part of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. It was a double jeopardy for the country.

This is the more reason why even though Sierra Leone was one of the last countries to contract covid-19 with the index case announced on 31 March 2020, nervousness and apprehension had already gripped this fragile state because of memories of the colossal devastation caused by the Ebola. Every facets of life, including the economy, social, cultural and community livelihoods were adversely affected and memories of it still lingered on the minds of the people. At the time of the coronavirus outbreak in March 2020, the country was going through serious economic difficulties, with the value of the local currency, the Leone, on a free fall against foreign currencies like the Dollar, Euro and British Pound and the country's major exports were not faring any better. Social amenities were very poor with a healthcare system that was one of the weakest and less funded in the whole world; the education sector was fraught with serious challenges that included frequent strikes by teachers and lecturers of higher institutions of learning for poor remuneration and appalling working conditions. These actions caused regular disruptions in the school calendar and the work of our learning institutions. In the midst of all this, divisive politics continued to take its toll on the country's development, peace and national cohesion.

It was, therefore, not a mere coincident that the influence of covid-19 on our engagements in the reporting year was huge. Covid-19 was not part of our action plans for 2020, though, but as a people-centred and responsive organization, we could not be insensitive to the plight of our people and local communities as a result of the covid-19, especially when the need to complement the efforts of government to stop the spread of the disease was overwhelming. This drove us to go back to the drawing board, assess the impacts of covid-19 on our local communities, engage/negotiate with our donor partners with the view to allowing us some amount of flexibility with funds meant for projects and programmes and redirecting some of these funds to fighting covid-19. Our donor partners gave us the flexibility we requested, hence our intervention in the fight against covid-19.

## *Establishing, supporting and strengthening community structures in NMJD operational areas*



### OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- Facilitated the formation of ten Masidama groups in five old communities in Bombali district where NMJD was working with each community having 40 members (20 women and 20 men). The process brought together 60 community members inclusive of town chiefs, women farmers, adult literacy teachers and community youths.
- With support from community facilitators, we facilitated female Masidama sessions in five communities in Bombali district reaching out to a total of 100 women.
- Provided support to the community facilitators to undertake adult literacy classes for 640 people (470 women and 170 men) in 20 communities in Bombali and Karene districts (14 communities in Bombali and 6 communities in Karene).
- Facilitated the Community Health Monitoring Volunteer Groups (CHMVGs) in Nimikoro chiefdom in Kono district to come together and form the Community Health Watch to serve as an umbrella body to supervise and strengthen the work of the CHMVGs in the twelve PHUs across the chiefdom. The CHW developed a governing constitution that regulates their affairs. It is registered with relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Kono district with a functional executive body.
- In collaboration with the Community Local Support Committees, we supported local communities in Kono district to build resilience in resolving environmental protection challenges, especially through paralegal settlements.
- Undertook actions aimed at sensitizing, raising awareness and educating citizens in Kono district about national laws and policies on environmental protection and human rights.
- Scaled up advocacy activities in Kono district for increased government's commitment to addressing issues of human rights abuse, environmental degradation and denial of justice

- environmental degradation and denial of justice for the poor and marginalized people living in rural communities.
- Facilitated the establishment of 1 district-based Multi-Stakeholders Platform (15 members – 5 women and 10 men); 3 chiefdom-based Multi-stakeholders Platforms (15 members each – 15 women and 30 men); and 10 CLCs (15 members each – 50 women and 100 men) on land governance and agricultural investment in Kenema district.
- Supported farmers in our operational communities in Kenema district to form farmers cooperatives and to undertake diversified food production chains using improved farming methods. This has resulted in the creation of seed banks in these communities. The cooperatives that have so

far been formed include: Gbotima Farmers Association at Missila comprising 30 members (13 men and 17 women); Kpuayea Farmers Association at Tupuwoma comprising 60 members (29 men and 31 women); and Mattru: Amunafa Farmers Association in Mattru comprising 48 members (22men and 26 women).

- Supported farm families with the following seeds/seedlings and farming implements in the project communities in Kenema district:160 Shovels;

160 cutlasses; 160 khodialie hoes; 640 cassava bundles; 320 potato vines; 80 bushels of Pakiamp and Nerica L19 rice;40 bushels of groundnut; 18 watering cans; and assorted seeds of corn, pepper and grain-grain.



PC Tommy Mualalay Jombla VIII signing the Chiefdom Development Plan of Low Banta Chiefdom in Moyamba district.

## Capacity building events for staff, partners and community structures



Community Action Planning at the PHU in Kamadu, Gbense Chiefdom

### OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- Trained 14 community facilitators (7 women and 7 men) on the two Core Masidama Manuals in Bombali district. The training was rolled in two phases: phase one, which was on the Core Facilitation Skills, lasted for five days and phase two on Exploring Attitudes and Beliefs lasted for four days.
- Trained 12 people (8 mentors and 4 NMJD staff) on Trocaire's Healthy Relationship Manual in Bombali district. The 12 people trained included four women and eight men and they were in turn required to train eight SPAG schools in the district. As a follow up to the training, NMJD supported 120 (96 girls and 24 boys) SPAG pupils in eight secondary schools with weekly mentorship and coaching sessions. Both NMJD staff and the mentors facilitated the weekly sessions for SPAG as co-facilitators after school hours.
- Trained 30 farmers cooperatives members (15 men and 15 women) in advocacy and lobbying skills.

## Strengthening collaboration, coalition building and networking



Task Force for Responsible Minerals Supply Chain in Sierra Leone meeting at GIZ Office in Freetown

### OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- Hosted one day experience sharing and coordination meeting in Makeni targeting civil society organizations operating in Bombali district, including AAD-SL, CARL-1, AJLC, CDHR, Rainbow Initiatives and WOFHARD. The partners shared inspiring lessons that they learnt from their different engagements and they developed Action Points to address the challenges they had identified as those that were impeding their work over the years. 15 people attended the session (8 women and 7 men).
- Facilitated the holding of strategic meetings in Small Bo and Lower Bambara chiefdoms with stakeholders, including DMSP, CMSP, CLCs to address gaps and challenges affecting communities that have been identified as the most affected or most in need.
- Membership of several national and regional civil society coalitions and platforms on different sectors. Among them are: National Election Watch (NEW), National Coalition for Community Legal Empowerment (NACCLE), Land for Life Consortium, Sierra Leone Network on the Right to Food (SiLNORF), Natural Resource Governance and Economic Justice Network (NaRGEJ), National Civil Society Forum (NCSF), Sierra Leone Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, Kimberly Process West African Civil Society Coalition and International Alliance on Natural Resources in Africa (IANRA) and African Coalition on Corporate Accountability (ACA). Mano River Union Civil Society Natural Resource Rights and Governance Platform

# Research and Documentation

## OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- Hosted quarterly radio discussion programmes on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Policy and did a vox-pop (short video) on people's perceptions and understanding of the subject matter. A two minutes video on gender inequality issues faced by women in Sierra Leone and especially during the coronavirus epidemic was developed. The video targeted the Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone Police, Rainbow Initiatives, Women's Forum for Human Rights and Democracy (WOFHRAD), Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) and African Young Voices Television (AYV). The video highlighted various issues affecting women ranging from neglect, low representation in decision-making processes, weak economic base, exclusion and marginalization.
- Conducted two Project Safeguarding Risks Assessments in Kono district using a checklist for mitigating and Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct; reviewed partners' work using the Strategic testing methodology.
- Under the project titled: "Improving Livelihoods, Food and Nutrition Security of Family Farmers" in Kenema district, we undertook community assessment to identify 11 communities in three chiefdoms that were most in need and these communities became our targets for the implementation of the project.
- Established database of all relevant stakeholders in communities and chiefdoms in Kenema district that are working on land governance and agricultural investment issues to inform the formation of the Multi Stakeholders Platform (MSP).
- Facilitated quarterly reflection, learning and planning meetings with farm families to share information on project activities. These meetings enabled farm families to collectively reflect on their activities, share successes, challenges and lessons learned and inform their future plans and implementation strategies.
- Hosted bi-monthly radio discussion programmes on our activities, projects and programmes in Kenema district. Through these radio discussion programmes, we regularly updated the general public about our engagements and created a platform for more direct interactions with the people on our work through phone-ins. This way, the people are now fully aware of our work on land governance and other related issues in Kandu Lepiama chiefdom, Kenema district.

# Implementation of the Organization Development and Change (ODC)



CDC members of in Imperi Chiefdom displaying copies of their Chiefdom Development Plan

## OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- Facilitated and supported the holding of our Board of Advisors meeting in Kenema.
- Facilitated and supported the development of six policies including Personnel Policy, Financial Procedure Manual, Procurement Policy, Building Internal Reserves Policy, Safeguarding Policy and New Ways of Working. The Board of Advisors has approved all these policies. This was followed by debriefing of staff on these policies in all our Area Offices.
- Held two Senior Management Team Meetings in Makeni and Kono.
- Undertook the consolidation of the organization's assets and the exercise is now near completion.
- Supported the Communications unit to produce visibility materials such as 2020 Christmas cards and 2021 Calendars, as well as the upgrading of our sign boards in our Area Offices, including the Freetown office.
- Supported the Communications unit to train in the management, uploading and editing of contents for the organization's website to reduce the dependency on outsiders to do so. Already, the Comms team now edits and uploads materials on the website.
- Facilitated the holding of the annual general staff reflection, learning and planning meeting in Bo. The meeting brought together staff from all our Area Offices in Kono, Kenema, Makeni, Freetown and Mobimbi in Moyamba district to reflect on our engagements in the previous year, share successes, strategies used, challenges faced and lessons learnt and developed action plans for the new year.
- Supported the Director of Finance and Admin to undertake training in Financial Reporting and Auditing of Projects in Accra, Ghana; Advanced Procurement Best Practices in Cape Town, South Africa; Budget and Reporting and Human Resource Management in Freetown Sierra Leone.
- Supported former Admin Assistant to attend a seminar in Freetown on Human Resource Management.
- Supported the Project Officer of the Economic and Social Justice Project to participate in the Kimberly Process Civil Society Coalition General Meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe.

## OUTPUTS ACHIEVED

- Contributed and participated in the celebration of this year's "International Day of the Girl Child" in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs in Bombali district. A candle light parade was organized on October 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 followed by a symposium. On the day of the symposium, we facilitated and supported five of our SPAG girls to witness the event in Makeni so as to enable them gain more insights into the subject matter.
- Worked with the government and its agencies in all our operational communities across the country to support national efforts to contain the spread of covid-19 in the country. Our interventions focused on awareness raising, sensitization, provision of coronavirus preventive and handwashing materials such as veronica buckets, soap, hand sanitizers and face masks. We also supported communities affected by covid-19 with rice, onions, salt and palm oil, as well as Bluetooth speakers (with memory cards containing jingles in different local languages).
- Facilitated the formal launching of the Bye-laws on crop farmers and cattle rearers in Kono district by the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development. The objective of developing the bye-laws is to minimize or eradicate the frequent conflicts among the two groups of farmers in the district. The bye-lawshave finally received the recognition and approval of the Government of Sierra Leone.
- Collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in holding consultations and planning for this year's Tree Planting Day in Kono district on the theme: "*Plant a Tree, Save Lives*". NMJD and other stakeholders, including chiefs, EPA, CSOs, teachers and pupils participated in the tree planting exercise to mark the day.
- Facilitated district-level information and knowledge sharing meetings with local councils, relevant MDAs and CSOs working in the land sector. These meetings helped to enhance the knowledge of local councils, CSOs, Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security, Office of National Security (ONS), Anti – Corruption Commission (ACC), and Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone on the structures, relevance and activities of the Land for Life project (L4L).
- Supported the efforts of government and its partners to stop the spread of COVID-19. With support from our partners, we carefully designed our interventions to ensure they enhanced community sensitization and awareness raising, increase compliance with preventive measures put out by government and health experts such as hand washing, social distancing and wearing of face masks, as well as supporting inmates of quarantine homes and other vulnerable communities with food items. In all our interventions, we collaborated with local structures such as community advocacy teams, youth and women's groups, community leaders and the government-established District Coronavirus Emergency Response Centres ( D I C O V E R C s ) .

# Key Results and Achievements

- The objectives of our intervention in Magumbu community in Bombali district were two-fold: first, to empower women and girls in the community to increase their voice and space in decision-making processes, particularly on issues that directly affect them; second, to ease the challenges facing the community, especially women and girls, through contributing to building resilient community infrastructure. Magumbu community is saddled with several problems, principal among them was the difficulty of movement of people to access livelihoods and social services such as schools, healthcare centres and markets due to its topography. Most of these facilities are concentrated in Magbaikoli, which is separated from the surrounding communities by a big river. This means no one can access schools, health centres or markets without going through this river. The situation was further worsened by the fact that there was only one small canoe to serve the entire Magumbu and its satellite communities. As a result, there were delays in ferrying people over to Magbaikoli, no matter the excruciating conditions they were in. The most prevalent victims of this were women and girls, especially women in labour and school going girls. We responded to this hitherto perennial problem by supporting the community to construct a bigger and better boat for the use of Magumbu and its surrounding communities. This has enhanced movements of people, safety and protection of lives and property. And throughout the process of constructing the boat and during the launch, the voice and presence of women were very outstanding. In her statement during the formal launching of the boat, Madam Mariama Kalokoh was upbeat about how the newly-constructed boat would help to improve their lives and that of their children.
- “Today is one of the happiest days in the entire lives of women in these two communities, as we will no longer be subjected to long hours of waiting to cross this short distance to go to the clinic or for our children to attend school. It’s a dream come true. And we thank NMJD for supporting us to realize this dream,” she said.
- Also, we have seen an increased number of women that has become more confident and willing to play leadership roles in diverse ways in their respective communities. Before our intervention in these communities, women were less confident and unwilling to take leadership positions in community initiatives; even during meetings, they preferred to sit at the back and leave all the talking to their menfolks. But this narrative is changing very fast, as women are now more focal, visible and competitive. For example, women farmers in our operational communities in Bombali and Karene districts who are members of the farmers groups and who have participated in our women’s empowerment sessions are now pivotal in encouraging more women to come onboard. They are going out on their own to engage their colleague women and their spouses in other communities to educate them about the importance of the women’s empowerment project and to encourage and motivate them to attend the women’s empowerment sessions and adult literacy classes. This is a good indicator for the expansion and sustainability of the project. Likewise, during the MASIDAMA trainings, women’s participation was very high, constructive, passionate and fearless, especially when they were advancing issues of gender biasness in their communities. The same can be said about women in Gbanka Potho who initiated and facilitated a community meeting to discuss the situation of teachers in the community school. These teachers were not paid by the government. The key take-away of the meeting was the unanimous agreement that all parents that have children in the community school should contribute Le2000 every month to give the affected teachers as stipends to cushion their sufferings and to encourage them to continue to teach the children. Before now, men would hardly participate in a meeting called by women, no matter how important and relevant the issues involved. In fact, no woman would even dare convene a community meeting. Parents are fully complying with what they all agreed on and the affected teachers are receiving their regular monthly stipends

- Though we cannot take full credit alone for the remarkable successes recorded in the fight to contain the spread of the coronavirus in our operational communities, we believe our early intervention and our strategy of inclusion and strengthening community ownership did not only open the doors for other NGOs and CBOs to come onboard, but also contributed immensely to those remarkable successes. We belong to several civil society networks and coalitions across the country and we used these platforms to create awareness about the pandemic right from the outset and to arouse interests of sister organizations to join the fight. For example, in Kono district, we rallied round our colleagues and established the Coalition of Civil Society on COVID-19. This Coalition soon became recognized by all stakeholders in the district and served as the focal point for civil society organizations engaged in the fight against COVID-19. Additionally, because we worked in all the communities that we intervened in, we led by examples. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we followed strictly all the preventive measures put out by government and health experts in all our engagements and we enforced same in our offices. Generally, since the index case was recorded on 31 March 2020, Sierra Leone worked very hard and, with support from its partners and CSOs, was able to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country. This is evidenced by the fact that most of the restrictions, bans and other measures, which the government put in place

when the COVID-19 Pandemic just broke out were either removed or relaxed by end of November 2020. Another positive about the COVID-19 is that it increased citizens' awareness and understanding of the importance of good hygiene practice in the home, community and work place. Handwashing with soap and clean water has become a culture now for many people. Further, the seven districts where we intervened went for varying long periods of time without recording any new case of COVID-19 towards the end of the year. Example, Kenema district went for 101 days without recording a case, Tonkolili district since September 2020, Bo district since early August 2020 and Kono district since July 2020. Cumulatively, Sierra Leone recorded only 72 coronavirus-related deaths by the beginning of December 2020.

- There is increased access to inclusive, good quality healthcare treatment and services by the people, especially pregnant and lactating women and children Under 5s in 12 PHUs (10 of which are in new project areas) in Nimikoro chiefdom in Kono district. This achievement is largely due to the fact that the Community Health Monitoring Volunteer Groups (CHMVGs) in Nimikoro Chiefdom developed and rolled out a sustainability strategy to effectively continue to monitor and improve healthcare service delivery in the entire Nimikoro chiefdom. Additionally, all the CHMVGs in the chiefdom came together and established an umbrella body known as the Community Healthcare Watch (CHW).

<sup>1</sup> Quality here implies timeliness, equal access, respectful, reliable treatment and services, and free treatment for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under 5s.

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- The main purpose of this umbrella body is to supervise and strengthen the work of the Community Health Monitoring Volunteer Groups in all the 12 PHUs across the chiefdom. In order to effectively regulate and guide its work, the CHW developed rules and regulations (constitution) and established a well-structured governing body (executive) to provide leadership and direction in the discharge of its duties. It's also been registered with relevant government Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Kono district. The Kono District Health Management Team (DHMT) equally recognizes and approves the CHW and it's now willing to work and partner with them on all health sector-related issues. The driving force for the establishment of the CHW is to ensure that the CHMVGs in the chiefdom further strengthen their collaboration with the Chiefdom Council and the DHMT to foster good quality healthcare service delivery in Nimikoro chiefdom, as well as to enhance sustainability.
- There is now reduced violent hostilities in the crop farming and cattle rearing communities in the seven cattle rearing chiefdoms of Lei, Fiama, Toli, Soa, Gbense, Gbane Kandor and Mafindor in Kono district. The hostilities between crop farmers and cattle rearers in these chiefdoms have been a very challenging security issue in the district for many years and had occasioned the unwarranted destruction of animal lives and property, as well as ceaseless conflicts between and among the affected communities. As a way of responding to this perennial problem, which had seemingly defied all prescribed solutions, we initiated the idea of developing bye-laws through an open, inclusive and participatory process to regulate and guide the way these groups relate to each other. We engaged the relevant stakeholders in the district in order to seek their buy-in,

which we eventually got. And in partnership with the Senior District Officer (SDO), Kono District Agriculture Office, Kono District Council, Council of Paramount Chiefs and the Kono District Security Committee, we developed and signed the Kono District Bye-Laws on crop farming and cattle rearing. The stakeholders who participated in this process were driven by their collective desire and commitment to tackle violence and build peace between herders and farmers in their respective communities. It's the inclusivity of the process that led the Government of Sierra Leone through the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development to accept and endorse the bye-laws. In fact, it was the Minister himself and senior officials of his ministry who did the formal launching of the bye-laws in Koidu City in Kono district in May 2020. Impressed by the comprehensiveness of the bye-laws, the Minister recommended strongly that the bye-laws be replicated in other districts in other parts of the country that were faced with similar problems between herders and crop farmers, and that they would use government official channels to ensure this happen. This demonstration of political will by the Minister is critical to the effective implementation of the bye-laws. NMJD and other stakeholders are now monitoring the level of compliance by both parties. But what is evidently clear is that violent hostilities between herders and crop farmers in these communities have reduced significantly since the bye-laws were signed. Also, this has encouraged some CBOs operating in the affected chiefdoms to support farmers with farming inputs such as seedlings and also train them in modern farming practices and techniques with the main objective of helping them to increase food productivity.

<sup>1</sup> Quality here implies timeliness, equal access, respectful, reliable treatment and services, and free treatment for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under 5s.

- Local level accountability of service providers is taking firm roots in our operational communities in Kono district. This is as a result of series of engagements with local communities with the main objective of strengthening their capacities with the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to enable them undertake effective monitoring and advocacy, as well as to demand public accountability from service providers. Increasing local-level accountability has been the key focus of our engagements and it's now being realized. The project communities are now confident enough to question some healthcare workers about their attitudes in dealing with patients. Because most of the concerns raised against healthcare workers bordered on bad attitudes, we carefully designed the contents of the trainings we delivered to the CHMNGs to focus on conflict prevention, public and monitoring of service delivery. This way, we are able to assure healthcare workers that the CHMVGs are not established to witch-hunt them, but to ensure quality and accountable delivery of services. Also, the voluntary sharing of information by service providers has increased significantly. This has helped to empower communities – the rural women, men and youth and other marginalized groups - to articulate their own priorities and make their own decisions. Information is shared with communities through different channels such as mobile phones, SMS text messages and face to face contacts with focal persons. As a result of this high-level interaction, we are now able to listen to stories of beneficiaries, receive regular feedback from them and influence programme decisions at different stages including project design, planning, implementation, monitoring and review.
- Under the project titled: “Promoting Environmental Justice and Human Rights”, we supported the paralegals and the Community Legal Support Committees (CLSCs) in Kono district to embark on monthly outreach sessions on COVID-19, engage in village-to-village sensitization and awareness raising on risks and preventive measures against the spread of the disease. We also supported the Civil Society Emergency Call Centre and the District Corona Virus Emergency Response Centre (DICOVERC), as well as engage the media to inform the public about human rights abuses committed during COVID-19 restrictions and inter-districts lockdowns. Coupled with the project's traditional activities, we were able to reach out to 1358 targeted rights holders and duty bearers (783 women and 575 men), including traditional authorities, Community Legal Support Committees (CLSCs), medical personnel, youth leaders, women's leaders, media, relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), such as the District Health Management Team (DHMT), DICOVERC, National Minerals Agency (NMA), Environment Protection Agency (EPA), Crop Farmers, Cattle Rearers, Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners, Local Court Authorities, Healthcare Workers and Civil Society Organizations. Equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools through refresher trainings. This was in addition to providing mentoring and coaching to the CLSCs in the 15 project communities in Kono district.

- As a result of these interventions by both the paralegals and CLSCs, communities have become more aware about the dangers and risks involved in environmental degradation, more communities have endorsed and are now complying with community by-laws, whilst at the same time undertaking community development initiatives such as road maintenance, construction of community paralegal centres and settling disputes, among others, as well as demanding for stronger laws on environmental protection. Examples abound: the CLSC in Tombodu in Kamara chiefdom condemned the town mining being carried out by a senior government official (Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development) and demanded its immediate cessation, whilst those in Bayama, Woama and other communities demanded for trashcans to be located in strategic areas in their communities for proper garbage collection and disposal. The CLSCs in Kamara chiefdom further organized a stakeholders' meeting involving officials of NMA, NMJD, Chiefdom Speaker and other chiefdom authorities to discuss the then ongoing mining taking place in the township and to impress upon these

authorities to take concrete actions to stop the mining and reclaim the mined-out pits within the township. The Chiefdom Speaker endorsed the request and reminded the meeting about how five children had already drowned to death in unclaimed mind-out pits in the township.

- “I will personally engage Mr Mani Koroma and get him to cover these open pits in the town to prevent other disasters. Our children have died enough in these pits. We don't want to lose other innocent lives,” Chiefdom Speaker Kondae Pessima said.
- Another positive outcome of our engagements is that the CLSCs have successfully negotiated with the chiefdom authorities for the provision of land to build permanent chiefdom paralegal centres in the three project chiefdoms. The chiefdom authorities have not only provided the land the CLSCs requested for, but have also made public commitments to support the construction of the centres. Some chiefdoms authorities have already proposed that they would use some money from the chiefdom development fund to support the CLSCs in their construction work. These actions have helped to strengthen peace, development and community cohesion.



Family farmers in Kandulepiama chiefdom preparing farms for cultivation

- The establishment of the District Multi-Stakeholders Platform (DMSP) in Kenema City and Chiefdom Multi-Stakeholders Platforms (CMSP) in Lower Bambara, Small Bo and Dama chiefdoms, and 10 Community Land Committees (CLCs) has created platforms wherein strategic stakeholders in both district and chiefdoms can come together and discuss issues affecting their communities with the main objective of resolving them locally. Since their establishment, for instance, the CLCs have helped to resolve several land issues that have the potential to plunge these communities into full-blown conflicts. For example, in Small Bo chiefdom, an agro investment company called Green Life came to Wanjama community to acquire 150 acres of land on lease for a period of 58 years. Green Life successfully negotiated the lease with some members of the Vandy Family, who owns the land. Conflicts erupted shortly after the lease had been negotiated when those members of the Vandy Family who were not involved in the negotiations or consulted, at least, protested against the lease and declared it null and void. The concept of 'free prior and informed consent' was never observed in this case. The problem is compounded by the fact that another agro investment company called TASSTORS has also leased 100 acres of the same family land, whilst also other members of the family who have plantations on the land are not ready to forego their plantations. When the CLCs in Serabu and Wanjama learned about this dicey situation, they engaged members of the family immediately. Since then, the CLCs have had series of meetings with the Vandy Family aimed at pacifying the aggrieved members of the family and resolving the conflicts amicably. Although the conflict has not yet been fully resolved, there is the likelihood that a way forward is in sight.
- Its clear meaningful community development can be impeded by the lack of development plans that are clearly articulated by the people themselves. In the absence of development plans, development becomes adhoc with no clarity as to how development relates to the needs of the people or how development is to be delivered. Our intervention in helping communities to develop chiefdom-level development plans is to ensure sustainable development at the local level. We do not only facilitate the process, but also, we ensure inclusive participation of the chiefdom people at all levels. The chiefdom plans that were developed are, therefore, a true reflection of the concerns and aspirations of all shades and all groups of people in the chiefdoms. This approach has also helped to strengthen relationships between the district councils and the chiefdom-level governance structures, as well as increasing attention of district councils to developmental needs of the chiefdoms, especially far-flung communities.
- The Chiefdom Development Committees (CDCs) are responsible to manage projects that are funded from the Community Development Fund (CDF). Building the capacity of CDC members with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to manage projects efficiently and effectively for the overall benefits of their respective chiefdoms is, therefore, imperative. It was in this regard that, we trained the CDC members in Bonthe, Moyamba and Kono districts in project management, monitoring and reporting. Our intervention is driven by the fact that CDA is one of the subnational payments mining companies are making to their host/mining affected communities as provided for in the Mines and Minerals Act 2009.

- If these projects are not managed properly, it will be a big loss to not only the CDC members, but to the whole chiefdoms as well. The training created an opportunity for increased knowledge of Bonthe, Moyamba and Kono districts CDCs on how to responsibly manage the CDA Project, do proper reporting and engage public accountability programmes. The CDCs will, in turn, be effectively monitored to ensure that they utilize communities' funds for the benefit of societies through the implementation of developmental projects that reflect felt needs of local communities.
- We held successful National Multi-Stakeholders Platform/Task Force meetings in Sierra Leone as a replica of the Global Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) Multi-Stakeholders Group. The purpose of these meetings was to support the KPCS initiatives at the West Africa level, Mano River Union level, and at national level. They were also intended to complement the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Due Diligence Guidance, as well as other responsible sourcing initiatives linked to artisanal mining, such as the Maendeleo Diamond Standards (MDS) developed by the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI). In these meetings, issues and plans that support the Mano River Union countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire) to implement the KPCS, fight smuggling and enhance the development and livelihood aspects of artisanal mining within member countries and across borders were discussed and adopted.
- In collaboration with the National Minerals Agency (NMA), and the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Resources facilitated regional and national public consultation meetings on the review of the Mines and Minerals Act 2009. The consultation

meetings were held in Makeni, Kono, Bo, Kenema and Freetown. Participants were invited from nearly all the districts across the country, regardless of where mining is currently taking place or not. There were about 150 participants at each of the meetings. The participants were divided into two groups in order to comply with the coronavirus preventive measures announced by the government. Each group had a set of facilitators, who demonstrated a great deal of professionalism and open-mindedness in their presentations and feedback sessions. The discussions were frank, participatory and interesting. Women, especially, were given the opportunity to participate and make their views, concerns and aspirations heard. From the consultations, communities clearly demonstrated that they are determined and prepared for a progressive reformation of the present Mines and Minerals law with a specific focus to addressing the gaps in the existing laws, as well as narrowing the implementation breaches. Besides, participants also placed keen emphasis on issues of accountability and transparency in the management and use of proceeds of mining activities by traditional authorities, environmental degradation, and they further pushed for a new law and regulations that would strengthen state institutions to ensure that minerals rights holders are undertaking effective land reclamation activities for protection of affected communities. Key recommendations these meetings made on the proposed amendments encompass issues such as: increase in the share for land owners from surface rent; reduction of exploration period from 7 years to either 5 years or below; and increase in the percentage of Community Development Fund from 0.001% to at least 2.5%.

- We have successfully established seven mining advocacy groups/platforms in seven districts across the country. They are: Port Loko, Tonkolili, Kono, Kenema, Bo, Moyamba and Bonthe districts. All these platforms are functioning effectively and are providing leadership and inspiration in defending, promoting and protecting the rights of affected mining communities. Also, the groups are interfacing at the local level with Government Ministries Departments and Agencies, as well as communities on environmental and communal concerns that need urgent attention for redress. Additionally, they sensitize, educate and raise awareness of communities on social, environmental, policy, legislative and development issues. They are doing so through community meetings, field monitoring exercises, public consultations, and radio discussion programmes. NMJD is providing technical and financial support to enhance the work of the groups.

Civil society continued to demonstrate its importance and relevance on national issues throughout the reporting period with the district-level civil society structures leading these engagements. The District Convening Teams have deepened their collaboration with government MDAs and further broadened their areas of engagements. This has helped to reduce the high tensions and suspicion, which used to

characterize the relationship between CSOs and government MDAs. In Port Loko district, for example, civil society had to intervene in an impasse between the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Welfare over the transfer of funds. The impasse almost rocked the work of the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs in the district. The problem was resolved amicably, the money was transferred and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs was able to effectively engage the increasing incidents of violence against women in the district with the view to minimizing or eradicating it. Also, in Port Loko, the intervention of civil society helped to save Le700,000,000 (Seven Hundred Million Leones) from going down the drain in the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. The said money was about to be converted into use that would only benefit a few officials of the ministry at the detriment of the nation when civil society sprang into action, brought strategic stakeholders of the district together to discuss about the "almost missing money". The meeting took a unanimous and bold decision that the money be used to rehabilitate four Peripheral Health Units (PHUs) in the district and that civil society should monitor the rehabilitation work. Civil society have also successfully taken similar actions in other districts around the country.

# SECTION SIX: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

## • 6.1: Challenges

- During the reporting period, we faced the following challenges:
- Despite the significant improvement towards strengthening their voice and space in Bombali and Karene districts, women's representation in community leadership structures has still not reached desirable levels. This is caused by traditional and social norms, which have made some women to believe they are not meant to hold certain positions, as these positions require membership of secret societies that are male-dominated. In the same vein, some women who are confident to vie for less restrictive leadership positions are still not economically strong enough to compete in equal measure with their male counterparts for these positions. The weak economic base of women is reinforced by the beliefs and practices of these communities, which allude to the fact that men are the ones to keep and control the economic resources of their households. A lot of work has been done in this direction and a lot of positives are also now being realized, but the problem of inequality of access, ownership and opportunities between men and women still exist.
- Our activities were greatly affected by government's restrictions on public gatherings and movement of people as part of covid-19 preventive measures. Initially, public gatherings were restricted to not more than 20 persons and must observe social distancing. In adherence to these restrictive measures, we had difficulties in organizing activities that required bringing together more than 20 participants. In cases wherein this was unavoidable, the groups were further divided into smaller groups of ten with two staff facilitating simultaneously at different locations. This brought with it some financial implications relating to additional fuel costs and number of facilitators.
- There were serious misconceptions among

chiefs in Kono district when we started implementing the project titled: "Promoting Environmental Justice and Human Rights". This misconception soon gave way to fear among chiefs that because the paralegals were offering free legal services and mediation to community people, they (Chiefs) would no longer have the opportunity to collect summons fees and fines, which were their main sources of revenue. This led to some resistance lukewarm attitude among some chiefs towards

- There were stiff challenges in identifying the hidden forces behind conflicts arising from among cattle rearers and crop farmers. With the establishment and implementation of bye-laws, the hitherto conflicts between herders and farmers have subsided significantly, with hardly any serious cases reported during the reporting period. But it's highly likely that the herders themselves are not the real owners of these cattle; they are only employees. The employers who are the real beneficiaries of these cattle and who are considered to be highly influential and connected such as chiefs and politicians are the ones giving covert support to herders against farmers.
- Meeting the expectations of community structures that we facilitated to establish was a challenge, particularly when some of the expectations and demands of these structures such as the CHMVGs and CHW did not fall within the purview of the project and were therefore not budgeted for.
- There are serious institutional challenges ranging from the grossly inadequate logistics and equipment such as vehicles, motor-bikes, computers and generators to improving the retention rate of staff, especially the rate at which senior and experienced staff are leaving the organization.

## • **6.2 Lessons learned**

- We learned the following key lessons during the reporting period:
- Mobilizing, organizing and building capacities of local communities to be able to advocate for themselves, as opposed to doing it on their behalf, is the best approach to ensure sustainability of community development initiatives. This came out very clearly in all our engagements, especially in Kono district where our community programmes received overwhelming community approval, support and cooperation. This is because we ensured there is community ownership through involving communities in identifying and analysing the problems, designing, implementation and monitoring. This open-door approach builds the confidence of communities to see the projects as theirs and not anything forced down on them.
- There is seeming reluctance of people to align with perpetrators of sexual penetration offenses. Community people have demonstrated this many a time. When a family member is accused of sexual-based offenses, especially sexual penetration, his family members will find excuses not to accompany him to the courts or any other public place where people will gather to settle/try the matter. This is because of the fear that family members of the victim will consider them to be supporting the perpetrator against them. This has significantly contributed to aggravating family feuds in these communities.
- When community leadership lacks integrity and credibility, development in that community can be stifled. This came out very clearly in Tokgpbombu town, Gorama Kono chiefdom, where the chairman of the Village Development Committee could not account for five bundles of zinc meant to construct a waiting house at the PHUs to ease the problems of visiting patients. The project is yet to be completed.
- Providing money to women through loan schemes is not enough to get them out of stone breaking. The assumption that if you provide money to women to do small-scale businesses, they will stop the dangerous work of stone breaking has proven to be not so true. This is evidenced in Kono district where women who were provided with money to leave stone breaking never did, but continued to engage in stone breaking. In fact, they are instead using the money given to them to hire labour and break more stones for sale.
- Local communities where large-scale mining is taking place have very little trust in their leaders, especially when it comes to representing them or negotiating with mining companies on their behalf. This mistrust comes as a result of past experiences; they rather prefer to work with NGOs.

# Recommendations

## Recommendations

In view of the challenges and lessons set out above, we recommend that:

- NMJD continue to engage local communities, especially community elders, societal heads and religious leaders on the rights of women, and the importance of supporting women to hold leadership positions in community structures. This is because religious leaders, community elders and societal heads wield enormous authority and influence in decision-making processes in their communities, and getting them as allies in advocating for more favourable environment for women to compete with men for leadership positions will be helpful.
- NMJD work with local communities and cattle rearers to identify the real cattle owners in their communities who are the invisible force behind the actions of cattle rearers towards crop farmers and engage them on the bye-laws once they are identified.
- NMJD work with local communities to establish clearly-defined and articulated criteria for all leadership positions in community structures to minimize electing/appointing people with questionable past to occupy those

offices. People in these communities know themselves better and with criteria set to guide the process of electing community leaders, it will be easier to not elect those people lacking integrity.

- Mining communities make sure to include affected people that are not in leadership positions in community structures in the negotiation teams meeting mining companies. These people should be appointed by the affected communities themselves and given clear terms of reference that includes giving regular feedback to the general community who they should be answerable to.

- NMJD to continue to engage its donor partners to improve the logistical challenges of the organization through the provision of vehicles, motor-bikes, generators, computers and computer accessories.

- NMJD leadership to take steps to find out why senior staff to whom the organization has invested a lot to build their capacity are leaving at the rate they are going and take necessary action to reverse the trend.

## SECTION SEVEN: ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Research Paper on Extractives and Violence against Women in Sierra Leone

#### Annex 2: Case Studies

##### Case Study 1

**Case Study Title:** Deprivation of Property

**Name of storyteller:** Tamba Tomah Koroma

**Address:** 11 Punduru Road, Koidu

**Position:** Paralegal (Team Leader)

**Date:** 29 April 2020

##### Introduction of the beneficiary/main character

**Name of person/main character:** Sia Hawa Nyandemoh

**Address:** Helmakono-Njaiama Sewafeh, Nimiyama chiefdom

**Age:** 57years

**Occupation/role:** Petty trading

**Gender:** Female

##### Introduction

Sia was married to a polygamous husband with three other wives. She was the first wife to her husband, Mr. Tamba Amara Mara. She did not bear him children. In 2007, the husband died and left a house in Makeni City, Bombali district. After the funeral rites, her late husband's younger brother, MrTamba Marrah, took over possession of the house without reference to her or the other wives. He collected rent for the house in question and utilized the money the way he deemed fit. Every year, he collected Le4,000,000 (Four Million Leones). Since the death of her husband, SiaNyandemoh never benefited from that money, even though she worked hard together with her husband to build the house. She made several complaints to family members and chiefs, but they all did nothing to listen to her plight.

It was believed that the younger brother was taking advantage of the fact that Sia did not have a child with his late brother to deprive her of what rightfully belongs to her.

##### The Journey

But when she recalled that she had met with the paralegals that visited her community and sensitized them about Devolution of Property Rights, she went to the office and narrated her story. Consequently, the paralegals intervened into the matter through mediation, education and dialogue and the sum of One Million Leones (Le. 1,000,000.00) was given to her by her late husband's younger brother as her own share of the rent for this year. He also made a firm undertaken to be sharing proceeds from the rent equally with her in subsequent years. Sia is now in her late fifties and presently lives at Helmakono- Sewafeh, Nimiyama Chiefdom making her living through soap making.

##### Her Hope for the Future

Beaming with smiles, Sia visited our office and thanked the paralegal staff for their timely intervention. She had this to say. "I am very grateful for all you have done for me. Everyone failed me but you stood by me and helped me realize my right. A right I was deprived of for many years. I hope and pray that the paralegal work will stay in our community and continue to help other women in similar situations," she concluded.



