



NMJD
Network Movement for
Justice and Development

2021

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT



Artisanal Gold Miners in Makamba Village
Tonkolili District



www.nmjdsl.org

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SECTION TWO: ACRONYMNS

ACA	Advocates for Community Alternatives
ASM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
CAG	Community Advocacy Group
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDA	Community Development Agreement
CDC	Community Development Committee
CFN	Children’s Forum Network
CHW	Community Health Watch
CHMVG	Community Health Monitoring Volunteer Group
CLSC	Community Legal Support Committee
DCSC	District Cattle Settlement Committee
DiCCLE	District Coalition on Community Legal Empowerment
DICOVERC	District Covid Response Committee
ESJ	Economic and Social Justice
FSU	Family Support Unit
KDHRC	Kono District Human Rights Committee
KoCEPO	Knowledge for Community Empowerment Organization
L&D	Leadership, Learning and Development
KMC	Knowledge Management and Communication
MAP	Mining Advocacy Platform
MAPO	Marginalized Affected Property Owners
MDA	Ministries, Department and Agencies
NACCLE	National Coalition for Community Legal Empowerment
NMJD	Network Movement for Justice and Development
ONS	Office of National Security
PHU	Peripheral Health Unit
PVCA	Participatory Vulnerability Capacity Assessment
SMT	Senior Management Team
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SPAG	School Pupils Action Group
ToT	Training of Trainers

SECTION THREE: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the result of the work of several people, organizations and institutions, including our staff, coalitions, partners and local communities, whose contributions are briefly described and acknowledged below. It is impossible to mention all of them here by name, but this report would not have been possible without their hard work over the course of the year.

However, we wish to thank the omnipresent God whose divine protection and guidance saw us successfully navigate through another year.

Also, we would like to express our deep and sincere gratitude to all the vulnerable and struggling communities who we worked with throughout the year. In line with our core values, we remain steadfast in our commitment to stand by the poor in their struggle to address the root causes of poverty and inequality. It is for them we exist. And, therefore, it is for them we work.

We give special gratitude to our donor partners for their financial, technical and moral support, as well as for their stimulating suggestions and encouragement.

Furthermore, we will also like to acknowledge with much appreciation the crucial role of our civil society partners, coalitions and community platforms whose dynamism, vision and motivation deeply inspired our work.

Last but not the least, many thanks go to the Board of Advisors, Management and staff of NMJD who were our strong pillar of support. We look forward to continuing working with you in the months and years ahead.



OPEN SOCIETY INITIATIVE FOR WEST AFRICA



SECTION FOUR:

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT UNDER WHICH ACTIVITIES WERE IMPLEMENTED

In the beginning of 2021, the COVID-19 Pandemic was still causing serious havoc around the world. Sierra Leone was no exemption. In order to contain the virus and prevent it from further spreading, the Government of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with its development partners and other relevant agencies, put out several preventive measures, including regular handwashing with soap and hand sanitizers, social distancing and face masking. In the efforts to comply with these measures, there were delays in the implementation of some activities, whilst others were reviewed to ensure participants in those activities maintained social distancing. This had some impacts on our work during the reporting period in terms of timeliness, duration of activities and number of participants.

The country was sharply divided along regional, ethnic and political lines. This is clearly evident by the pattern of voting during the 2018 elections, which heralded the present administration and the ensuing post 2018 bye-elections. About 16 bye- and re-run elections were conducted across the country after the 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections. In all of these elections, the campaigns were not issue-based and the outcomes clearly indicated the regional divide, which has also become a major source of political intolerance and elections-related conflicts. This situation is further worsened by the common practice of exempting certain offenders from punishment. We have observed incidents in bye-elections where people carted and broke ballot boxes, burnt voting materials and changed figures during tallying to give undue advantage to their candidates of choice. Even though these and many more of such incidents took place in the presence of security personnel, no action was ever taken to bring the perpetrators to book, or even investigate the incidents, at least.

During the course of the year also, two major national events were conducted. They are the National Mid-Term Population and Household Census and the Registration and Confirmation exercise conducted by the Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL) and the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) respectively. NMJD actively participated in all these processes through the National Election Watch (NEW). NEW is a coalition of 400 local and international organizations supporting free, fair and peaceful elections in Sierra Leone. Both exercises were marred by serious challenges, including low citizens' turn out, dysfunctional equipment, low knowledge of the processes among the citizens and other administrative problems. Some of those problems would have been avoided if the institutions leading these processes had listened to the concerns raised by civil society immediately the dates for their commencement were announced/proclaimed. Civil society believed the timing of the Mid-Term Census was not right and the reasons advanced for its conduct were not strong enough to embark on it in the midst of other equally pressing national priorities like the coronavirus Pandemic and the deteriorating conditions of our hospitals across the country. Likewise, the citizens were not sensitized enough to participate meaningfully in the exercise. Additionally, the consultations for both exercises were selective, leaving out key players, especially opposition political parties. Citizens are still waiting for the outcomes of both events.

Through the platform of NEW also, NMJD engaged various institutions to which the Elections Observer Missions (EOM) recommendations were directed in the bid to gauge the status of implementation of the recommendations of the EOM. Out of the recommendations proffered, 103 were prioritized for immediate action. The 103 recommendations were further catalogued and categorized into six thematic groups, which are: Management of Electoral Legal Reforms and processes, Management of Electoral Offences, Management of Electoral and Political Processes, Management of Election Security, Management of the Role of the Media in Elections and Management of Electoral Funding. The National Electoral Commission (NEC), now known and called the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) was tasked with the responsibility to coordinate and supervise the implementation of these recommendations by the various Agency Leads. NEC/ECSL, therefore, set up a Task Force, which comprised Elections Management Bodies and elections stakeholders to take the process forward. When NEW experienced a lull in the work of the Task Force and in the implementation of the EOM recommendations, they engaged those institutions individually to remind them of the task at hand and to urge them to continue to work on their respective recommendations. These engagements saw the restart of work by the various thematic lead agencies. Civil society's concern stemmed from the fact that the same recommendations have been popping up since 2002 and they did not want to see a repeat of them after the 2023 elections.

Towards the end of the year, in December, the Government of Sierra Leone released the Government White Paper on the Review of the 1991 Constitution. The review of the 1991 constitution was a direct response to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was set up at the end of the 11 years civil war in Sierra Leone. It was believed that the lapses and ambiguity in the constitution all contributed to the civil war. The review started in 2006 with President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as President. It was followed up by President Ernest Bai Koroma who set up an 80-member Committee to continue the task and then President Julius Maada Bio. Public reactions to the Government White Paper were mixed and they raised several concerns among citizens. This is because the Government White Paper is not clear on some critical recommendations made by the citizens during the consultations or the new proposals contained in the Government White Paper are a recipe for chaos. They include: fixed dates for elections, 30% quota for women, nomination fees, president's function which authorizes him to veto disagreeable legislations, linking freedom of movement and other fundamental freedoms to "National Security" among others. National Security is a new chapter the White Paper has proposed to be included in the reviewed constitution. Already, the White Paper is proposing that the enjoyment of certain fundamental freedoms should be in accordance with provisions of this so-called National Security.

**SECTION FIVE:
OUTPUTS ACHIEVED**

No	Strategic Activities	Outputs Achieved
1.	<i>Establishing, supporting and strengthening community structures in NMJD operational areas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated the formation of District Cattle Settlement Committees (DCSCs) in four chiefdoms in Kono district. The objective of the DCSCs was to help address issues of violence between cattle rearers and crop farmers and to promote peaceful co-existence in cattle rearing communities. The chiefdoms are Lei, Toli, Fiana and Soa chiefdoms. We provided the DCSCs with both technical and logistical support to enhance their effectiveness, especially in monitoring and ensuring compliance with the by-laws on cattle rearing and crop farming. Additionally, we provided oversight to the DCSCs to ensure regular reflection, feedback and planning. • Trained 20 women In Business Management and Savings Skills in Kombayendeh in Lei chiefdom, Kono district. At the end of the training, we provided all the trainees with seed monies as revolving loans to start their own businesses. We also monitored and mentored the recipients of the seed monies on a regular basis to ensure proper management of their businesses so that other women could benefit from the Scheme. • Established and supported six agricultural groups in Lei chiefdom with the main objective of reactivating and sustaining the Community Action Groups and at the same time contributing to food security in the chiefdom. It's a dual approach wherein the groups were reactivated and then supported to embark on increased food production and contribute to food security. • Facilitated and supported the establishment of the Kono District Coalition on Community Legal Empowerment (DiCCLE). This was to ensure stronger collaboration and partnership between and among justice service providers and communities in Kono district in addressing issues of human rights and injustice, as well as to promote access to free legal services for

		<p>especially women, youth and other marginalized groups in the targeted communities. NMJD first identified institutions and individuals working on legal and justice issues and mobilized them into forming the Coalition. The institutions that came together included the Ministry of Social Welfare and Children Affairs (MSWCA), the Family Support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone Police, Kono District Rainbow Initiative, Kono District Human Rights Committee (KDHRC), Legal Aid Board (LAB SL), Legal Aid for Women and Children, Local Court Chairmen, traditional leaders, including District Mammy Queens and Council of Paramount Chiefs, Gender Committee Chairpersons of the Kono District Council (KDC), Koidu New Sembehun City Council (KNSCC) and the media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized dialogue meetings for civil society organizations, students, community elders, religious leaders local court chairmen and members, the police, women, youth, CLSCs and individuals on rules and procedures of the Local, Magistrate and High Courts. Expert presentations on human rights from the perspective of civil society were made and issues raised therein were discussed and follow-up action points developed. The presentations and ensuing discussions were geared towards equipping participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them take concrete actions in response to incidents of human rights violations in their communities. • Organized two stakeholders' dialogue meetings in Fiama chiefdom. Both meetings focused on the persistent uncontrolled movements of cattle into farms causing serious destruction to crops. During these engagements, paralegals and CLSCs provided legal education on the cattle settlement policy and the district bye laws on same developed by NMJD. Prior to the engagements, the cattle rearers were very reluctant to accept complaints made against them by crop farmers in relation to the uncontrolled movements of their cattle. Whenever issues of cattle trespass occurred, the herders always responded with
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		<p>flimsy excuses to the annoyance of crop farmers. After the meetings, the cattle rearers began to take responsibility for the damage their cattle were causing to crops and started paying compensation to crop farmers,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified, trained and supported six Agro business groups. Members of the groups were drawn from Nimiyama, Gbense, and Gorama-Kono Chiefdoms in Kono district. These groups were provided with financial support to undertake agribusinesses in the project communities. • Facilitated the formation of 10 Masidama Groups in 10 communities in Bombali and Karene districts (5 in Karene and 5 in Bombali) with a membership of 200 rural women. The main objective for the formation of these groups was to create a platform to discuss gender-related issues with the aim of tackling social norms that militate against women and girls' empowerment. • Held outreach sessions in 20 communities in Bombali and Karene districts to raise awareness on the Customary Marriage and Divorce Act reaching out to a total of 400 couples. These outreach sessions were meant to deepen the knowledge and understanding of provisions of the Act, which are fundamental to the rights of women and girls. • Provided reusable menstrual pads to 96 girls and other hygiene materials such as soap and hand sanitizers to 24 boys in eight secondary schools in Bombali and Karene districts. This purpose of this output was to improve hygiene and sanitation among school going children. • Facilitated Sensitization on Cluster Formation and Development of Fund-Raising Plan for 80 Artisanal Miners (20 Miners in each of the 4 chiefdoms) across Kono and Tonkolili Districts (53 males and 27 females) to function as Cooperatives and to increase their income for improved living conditions. The chiefdoms are:
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		<p>Tankoro and Gbense in Kono District; and Kolifarowala and Kafisimira in Tonkolili District.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized Needs Identification and Prioritization Workshops in Kono, Moyamba and Bonthe Districts. The meetings were attended by women and youth groups, councillors, and Community- Based Organizations). Through these meetings, citizens in the targeted communities ensured their demands, needs and aspirations were reflected in their districts Development Plans and budgets. • Facilitated meetings in Kono, Moyamba and Bonthe Districts to validate the Chiefdom Development Plans. The meetings were attended by women and youth groups, councillors, and Community-Based Organizations).
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<p>2.</p>	<p><i>Capacity building events for staff, partners and community structures</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted capacity building training for 17 staff and paralegals focusing on: legal processes and substantive rights of citizens, especially in the areas of court orders, proceedings, procedures and rules of court, moreso procedures bordering on land issues, rights and protection of juveniles, referral cases to Magistrate and or High Courts, citizens’ rights in Magistrate and District Appeal Courts, the relationship between the Magistrate and Local Courts, obtaining statements from accused persons by the police, interaction between the Magistrates and the Local Courts, the role of the legal Aid Board in settling disputes. • conducted refresher training on Participatory Vulnerability Capacity Assessment Training (PVCA) in Gbense, Gorama Kono and Nimiyama Chiefdoms targeting 60 participants of which 24 were women and 36 were men including project staff (paralegals), chiefdom authorities, health workers, school pupils, women, youth, men, and the project oversight committee members. The Participatory Vulnerability Capacity Assessment Training (PVCA) was conducted using body mapping exercise, access and control, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) models. • Conducted two days training session on Team and Confidence Building, Community Mobilization, Advocacy and Lobbying Skills for 30 participants including 24 women and 6 men drawn from Nimiyama, Gbense and Gorama Kono chiefdoms. The participants included paralegals, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Oversight Committee Members, Citizens Action Group members, youth, and women. • Coached and mentored members of 15 SPAGs on life kills and good hygiene practices. The participants were drawn from school clubs and the District Children’s Forum Network (CFN) of which 8 were men and 7 were women. • Organized Constituency dialogue sessions in Bombali and Karene districts for 10 community women and 10 members of the Bombali Women in Leadership Network (BODWILN) to enable
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		<p>them champion the launch of the Yellow Ribbon Campaign with stakeholders at the district level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated the launch of the Yellow Ribbon Campaign in Bombali district bringing together 60 stakeholders, including the Makeni City Mayor, President of BODWILN, CSO representatives, Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare, Gender Focal Persons at the University of Makeni (UNIMAK), among others. The objective of the Yellow Ribbon was to raise awareness on the Gender Empowerment Bill and to galvanize more voices for the enactment of the Bill without further delay. • Provided teaching and learning materials to 640 adult learners across 20 communities in Bombali and Karene districts. • Trained 30 women aspirants in public speaking skills, manifesto development and personal profile development. The main objective of this training was to equip women who were desirous of vying for political positions at different levels with the necessary knowledge and skills, as well as to bolster their confidence to compete with their menfolk. • Carried out awareness raising/sensitization exercise in mining communities in Kono and Tonkolili Districts on the need for artisanal miners to form themselves into clusters and to start to function as cooperatives. They were encouraged to know that cluster mining will become a priority when the formalization process of the artisanal mining sub-sector commences in Sierra Leone, and that it will be advantageous to them if they start cluster mining now. 80 artisanal miners were reached out to during the sensitization exercise. • Facilitated the Training of Mining Advocacy Platforms (MAPs) on Influencing and Resource Mobilization. The training was attended by mining clusters in Kono, Moyamba and Bonthe Districts. 40 people participated in the training: 25 men and 15 women, amounting to a 62.5% male and 37.5% female participation. The knowledge acquired
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		<p>during the training enabled the MAPs to engage in effective advocacy, which eventually led to institutionalize public disclosure by private sector and local and national governments of annual revenue generation and disbursements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained 15 district-level CSO members on MAPS. The CSOs acquired critical knowledge on MAPS, which they are now using to play a pivotal role in promoting people-centred land governance in their communities.
3.	<p><i>Strengthening collaboration, coalition building and networking</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with Advocates for Community Alternatives (ACA), a Ghanaian -based organization, we conducted a five days Citizens Science Workshop on air, water, noise and soil pollution in Kono District. The purpose of the study was to train and equip CSOs and local communities on how to test for air, water, noise and soil pollution using modern technology. The knowledge and skills acquired during the training helped participants to embark on evidence-based advocacy for proper environmental management and quality control. 30 participants- 20 men and 10 women

		<p>Participants were awarded Certificates of Participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with the Sierra Leone Police and other human rights-focused organizations to intensify the fight to reduce incidents of human rights violations in Kono district. In September 2021, the Rainbow Initiative organized a Training of Trainers (TOT) for its field workers, interns and other core staff. Our paralegals served as facilitators and resource persons at the TOT. The paralegals also served as facilitators for another training organized by the Rainbow Initiative for Officers of the Sierra Leone Police and other partners. • NMJD in collaboration with ACA conducted a baseline Study on Women’s Economic Empowerment. The M&E Officer of ACA, Nana Ama, visited Sierra Leone from 16th – 22nd September 2021. The purpose of the visit was to establish a baseline for the Women-In-Me Project (WIMP). which targeted women in affected mining communities in Kono district. To accomplish this task, interviews were conducted with women engaged in stone mining, women members of Marginalized Affected People Organization (MAPO) and agribusiness. With the baseline established, the implementation of the project would start in January 2022 and end in December 2024. <p>NMJD in Collaboration with NaRGEJ, facilitated Policy Dialogue Forum to share communities’ views on the Draft Mines and Minerals Act 2009 and Land Bills for inclusion into the final draft before enactment. The Policy Dialogue Forum to share communities’ views on the Draft Mines and Minerals Act 2009 and Land Bills for inclusion into the final draft before enactment was facilitated by NMJD in collaboration with the Natural Resource Governance and Economic Justice -Sierra Leone (NaRGEJ-SL) on the 30th July 2021. Interestingly, on that same day was the day NaRGEJ shared a Press Statement for Immediate Release titled: “ Civil Society Worried over the state of the proposed Mines and Minerals Development Act 2021”. In this dialogue, communities’ concerns were shared with the relevant authorities and demanded from the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Resources to make the Draft Bill of the expected mining law</p>
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		<p>available to the public, explain why the delayed in the review process, and to inform the public on the timeline of the remaining process leading to the enactment of the new law. In respond to civil society position, the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Resources pledged its commitment to immediately inform and share the Draft Bill to the public for meaningful intervention before it goes to parliament for enactment. The immediate results were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Communities and civil societies concerns presented and shared with relevant policy actors for policy and legislative consideration; and b) Government commitment to share the remaining legislative timeline and to make the draft bills available for public understanding and follow up on the process enhanced.
4.	<i>Research and Documentation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated the development, printing and formal launching of eight Chiefdom Development Plans for Gorama Kono, Lei, Gbane Kandor, Mafindor, Nimiyama, Sandor, Soa and Toli Chiefdoms in Kono District. The development plans were submitted to the Kono District Council for integration into the Kono District Council Development Plan. • Developed a Compendium of Legal Procedures for the training of civil society organizations, students, community elders, religious leaders, Local court chairmen and members, the police, women, youth groups and CLSCs on legal procedures and rules of courts (Local, Magistrate and High Courts). The Compendium was not only meant for training purposes, but also, to guide and serve as a reference document for paralegals and CLSCs, especially, during outreach sessions or mobile clinics. The paralegals are also using the document to organize community town hall meetings with community stakeholders. • Facilitated the Collection of data to develop a slender version of the second five-year Strategic Plan carved out from our 25 Years Strategic Direction to make it accessible and more reader friendly and at the same time not lose sight of its key attributes. It was meant to inform NMJD and

		<p>partners about the successes made and challenges faced during the implementation of the first five-year Strategic Plan and to chart a new path going forward.</p> <p>Conducted a survey to profile existing youth and women’s groups in the 14 chiefdoms of Kono district; 42 groups (3 groups from each chiefdom) were profiled.</p>
5.	<i>Implementation of the Organization Development and Change (ODC)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed and erected sign posts in nine operational communities in Lei, Fiama, Kamara and Tankoro chiefdoms respectively to enhance the visibility and knowledge of our work among people in those communities. • Secured land in Kono district to build own office and the construction of the office has already started. When completed, the amount of money the organization spends every year on rent and other related costs will reduce significantly. Having our own office will also further strengthen our independence. • Facilitated staff and line managers to carry out their monitoring and oversight responsibilities: three Field Officers completed their monthly M&E exercise; the Project Officer completed his quarterly monitoring exercise, whilst the Executive Director and Programme Coordinator carried out the end of year programme review to harvest project successes, challenges and lessons learnt to inform future project activities. • Held one Annual General Staff Session in Bo and two Strategic Management Committee (SMT) meetings in Bo and Kono. These meetings enabled staff to reflect on their work in order to share the successes they achieved; identify lessons learned with the view to taking them forward as good practices; and as well identify challenges encountered. Also, the meetings helped to bring all levels of staff together from the different area offices and strengthen their individual and collective collaboration and partnership to enhance their work outputs.
6.	<i>Collaboration with Government and Development Partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was high level recognition and collaboration between NMJD and Government and development partners. during the reporting period and there have been series of bi-lateral engagements between NMJD

		<p>and relevant government institutions on resource rights and governance issues. Moreover, the initiative by NMJD to establish the Multi-Stakeholders Task Force on Public Disclosure of Sub-revenues remitted by corporate entities to the affected primary host communities is very laudable and welcomed by all actors. Public (governments) and private sector (companies) accountability and transparency is a key parameter for building a democratic culture that promotes sustainable development. As a result, many international accountability frameworks have been set up, including among others, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Open Government Partnership (OGP), Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) etc., all of which are been implemented in Sierra Leone and by Sierra Leoneans. Institutionalizing public disclosure by private sector and local and national governments of annual revenue generation and disbursement is both a requirement for the initiatives above and also a critical condition for accountability and improved governance of the mineral sector specifically to ensure accountable democratic governance generally. Hence, the establishment of this “Mining Sector Multi-Stakeholder Task Force for Public Disclosure”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained close collaboration and partnership with chieftom authorities in three chiefdoms in Kono district. Some of the chiefs, especially the Town Chiefs where the CLSCs were established, are very active members of the CLSCs; whilst we also maintained close collaborative partnership with other Town Chiefs where there are no CLSCs. In fact, the chiefs have become so confident of the CLSCs that they now refer cases to them for mediation and settlement. Cases where the chiefs would have made money from are now referred to the CLSCs because of this strong collaboration and the trust they have developed in the CLSCs. • Maintained good relationships with several MDAs in Kono district, including the Senior District Officer’s Office, the District and Chiefdom councils, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry,
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		<p>Office of National Security, District Youth Council and local authorities. Because of this good relationship, these stakeholders always actively participated in all our activities, including planning and implementation, and we also did likewise to the activities that they organized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with key government stakeholders in Kono district, including the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Office of National Security in developing bye laws to address the conflicts between cattle rearers and crop farmers and to ensure maximum compliance with the by-laws by both parties. • Collaborated with the Kono District Health Medical Team in the implementation of our project activities; they served as resource persons in all the health-related trainings and other capacity building events that we delivered. • Facilitated a Round Table Validation Meeting in Freetown for 23 participants (17 males and 6 females) drawn from ASM Communities, CSOs, Media and Policy Actors to discuss and map the way forward on the findings of the Assessment Study on the Implementation of the Washington Declaration 2012 on ASM Activities in Sierra Leone. <p>Facilitated two planning meetings for the Multi-Stakeholder/ Task Force on Public Disclosure of Sub-National Transfers. 20 Taskforce members comprising mining companies, government MDAs and CSOs attended all of the two meetings (a total of 40 participants). Out of the 40 participants that attended the two meetings. 30 were men and 10 were women amounting to 75% male and 25% female participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated National Public Disclosures by the Private Sector, CDC and National Government on CDA annual revenue generation and disbursements for 2018 and 2021. The disclosures were attended by Government MDAs, Mining Clusters, CSOs, Mining Companies, Women and Youth Groups, Community-Based Organizations and Local Authorities). <p>Specifically, National Public Disclosures of Sub-National Transfers/Payments (CDF, ADF, CSR and</p>
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		<p>Surface Rent) were made by Sierra Rutile Mining Limited to its Affected Primary Host Communities in Bonthe and Moyamba Districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 95 people comprising Government MDAs, large-scale mining companies, CSOs, CDCs, media practitioners and affected primary host communities of Sierra Rutile Mining Company’s operational area. This accounted for 62 men and 33 women, amounting to 65% male and 35% female participation. ● Key stakeholders identified for the formation of District Multi Stakeholder Platforms (DMSP), Chiefdom Multi Stakeholder Platform (CMSP) and Community Land committees (CLCs). The stakeholders included Local Councils, CSOs, Ministry of Mines and Mineral resources, Ministry of Lands Housing and Country Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, ONS, Anti – Corruption Commission, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, land owners/users, multi-National companies, Youths, women, men and Local Authorities. A database of all relevant stakeholders in communities, chiefdom and district working on land governance and agricultural investment was also established. ● Facilitated community engagements visits to four chiefdoms (Lower Bambara, Small Bo, Dama and Nongowa Chiefdoms) and 11 communities, including Sandeyeima, Mavehun, Tokpombu, Talama, Lowuma, Kpandebu, Serabu, Wanjama, Konjo, Ngiema and Tissor. One-on-one interviews and group discussions were held with local authorities, women leaders, youth, affected land owners and land users, companies, CMSP and CLCs on community land conflicts/issues identified and documented for the intervention of the DMSP. Among the issues discussed were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Dodo case between Lamin Dodo and Mariama Wurie over ownership of a piece of land/plantation. 2. The case between the Paramount Chief of Nyawa and the Chief of Mayobia. It was alleged, that the
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		<p>PC took their family land and also replaced him with another chief.</p> <p>3. The case in Lower Bambara Chiefdom where it was alleged the chiefdom authorities took the land and property belonging to the people of Mavehun and gave it to the Charles Family of Mavehun.</p> <p>4. In Dama Chiefdom, the Paramount Chief was accused of taking over 584 acres of land belonging to the Sow, Fasei and Feika Families and leased it to the Dayoub Agro Investment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated the strategic meetings of CMSP and CLCs to address gaps and challenges affecting the most affected communities. During those meetings, community land conflicts were discussed and resolved by the CLCs and CMSP in Small Bo and Lower Bambara Chiefdoms. • Follow up monitoring visit made by the CMSP in Lower Bambara on the land dispute between the people of Mavehun and Tokpombu since August 2021.
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SECTION FIVE:

KEY RESULTS ACHIEVED

Consequent upon the activities we implemented either at project, Area or national levels during the reporting period, we were able to achieve the following results:

- The Marginalized Affected Property Owners Organization (MAPO) in Kono district who through the collaboration and support of NMJD filed a court action against OCTEA, a kimberlite diamond mining company, formerly known as and called Koidu Holdings, some two years ago, continued to show no signs of let-up in their interest and desire to pursue the matter to its conclusion. This sustained interest is largely due to the platform which NMJD created to ensure regular updates and dialogue with MAPO members, the legal team representing them in court and the wider affected community. Also, NMJD supported MAPO members with mobility and other necessities to attend court sittings anywhere and whenever they were held, engage the local media and participate in discussions on the progress of the case and to seek clarification on critical legal issues usually arising in court. This way, the MAPO membership has not only been very active with the matter in court, but also, they have remained strong and united in the face of misinformation, disinformation and attempts by the company and their agents to apply the divide and rule approach. Many objections have been raised by the company lawyers since the case commenced and successfully cleared by the plaintiff lawyers. Meanwhile, at the last court sitting, lawyers from both parties presented their arguments on whether MAPO has legitimacy to institute legal action against OCTEA. The presiding judge will make his ruling on the next sitting. NMJD worked tirelessly with affected property owners in Kono district, mobilized them into forming MAPO, trained its members in national and international mining laws and human rights instruments to which Sierra Leone is a signatory and supported them to initiate the court action. Another good thing associated with the court action is that the affected communities no longer consider mining companies as “untouchables” who wield “supreme powers”.

- Our continued engagements on the health sector in Kono district, especially in the



areas of monitoring, awareness raising, sensitization and public education and stakeholders’ mobilizing, saw a positive response from Councilor Abel Kounday Fallah of Ward 78 in Nimikoro chiefdom. He took up the challenge to advocate and mobilize

resources to improve healthcare facilities of PHUs in the district, especially in Ward 78. He carried an assessment of all PHUs with the aim to identify gaps in the healthcare delivery system. One of the key challenges he discovered was the lack of

electricity facilities in the Ngaya and Motema PHUs. Councillor Fallah then lobbied the Member of Parliament for the constituency where these PHUs are located and the Kono District Council to address the situation. Solar light facilities have been provided to both PHUs. Also, when he found out that people were not able to access the PHU at Njala during the rainy season due to flooding of the river along the road, he lobbied the Kono District Council and collaborated with them to build a twin-bridge over the river. And today, people, especially women and children can access the PHU easily and safely. The MP's intervention triggered more initiatives aimed at improving the healthcare delivery system in the district. Our own Community Health Monitoring Volunteer Group (CHMVGs) in Tongoma Town lobbied GIZ, a German-funded organization, to help with electricity facilities for the PHU there. GiZ responded swiftly and installed solar light facilities to the Tongoma Town PHU. Prior to all these interventions, the PHUs were in complete darkness with all its attendant risks and negative consequences on the quality of healthcare delivery in the district.

- During their monitoring of the PHUs, the CHMGs through their umbrella body, Community Health Watch, discovered that the Community Health Centres in Kono district were not adequately staffed by trained and qualified personnel. At the Senjekor Health Centre, at the time the team visited, there was only one trained and qualified staff. This was affecting the effectiveness, efficiency and adequacy of the healthcare delivery in the Centre which also serves other satellite communities. With this finding, NMJD engaged the District Health Management Team on the issue and they responded by deploying two more trained and qualified health personnel at the centre. This has brought significant improvement on the quality of services delivered now at the Centre. In Jaiama Town, the CHMG requested the Knowledge for Community Empowerment Organization (KoCEPO) to support them in building a staff quarter for the Community Health Centre (CHC) there. KoCEPO agreed to the request and work on the construction of the staff quarter has already commenced. When completed, staff at the Centre will reside there, thereby making their services available to the community during the day and at night. At the moment, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to get the staff to respond to emergency cases that arise at night since they are not residing near the health centre. This is a clear example of the importance of collaboration and partnership to community development.
- The Chiefdom Speaker and the Council of Elders in Fiama Chiefdom used the Kono District byelaws to settle a dispute between a herder and two youth that stole and butchered one of his bulls in a stream, close to his cattle ranch. During the investigations, the Council of Elders referred to the bye laws, which they collectively made and unanimously agreed on, especially section (9.5) d, which talks about "Cruelty to Animals and Animal Theft". After going through the relevant provisions of the bye laws, the perpetrators complied with the terms of payment of the fines as prescribed in the bye laws. The matter was amicably resolved to the satisfaction of

both parties. Prior to the development of bye laws on the conduct of cattle rearers and crop farmers, such incidents could gravitate into full blown conflicts that would affect the peace and tranquillity of the entire chiefdom. But it's no longer the case today because of the existence of the bye laws, which were developed through an inclusive, participatory and highly consultative process. NMJD facilitated and supported the process of developing the bye laws in response to the growing destructive conflicts between cattle herders and crop farmers in the district, sometimes resulting in loss of lives and properties.

- The Community Action Groups (CAGs) successfully incorporated the aspect of agriculture in their work with the objective of promoting food security in the project chiefdoms of Kono district. The CAGs were initially established to monitor compliance with the bye laws on cattle rearers and crop farmers by both parties so as to minimize incidents of conflicts which used to tear the affected chiefdoms apart, as well as to promote peaceful co-existence in their respective communities and to encourage crop farming. In order to make the CAGs more productive and sustainable, we initiated the process of supporting them to engage in agricultural activities, in



addition to their usual monitoring role. Our engagements with the groups and their host communities led to a huge buy-in, which today resulted in the CAGs engaging in different forms of agricultural activities; some CAGs are engaged in animal rearing whilst others are engaged in crop production. The

CAG in Lei chiefdom is rearing goats; in Dia section, the CAG is engaged in groundnut farming; in Tankor and Sangbada sections, the CAGs are undertaking inland valley swamp rice farming; whilst rearing of local chickens is also being carried out in Tankor section. According to one of the members of the CAG in Lei Chiefdom, Pa Sahr Fasuluku, their main objective for engaging in agricultural activities is to grow enough food to feed their families and create community seed banks to help non-members of the CAGs who themselves are farmers with viable seeds. These efforts did not go unnoticed and unacknowledged by the Government of Sierra Leone. In June 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) supported the CAGs to establish the Chiefdom Cattle Settlement Committee, to continue to popularize the byelaws and engage in more agricultural activities.

- Also, the membership of the Loans and Savings Scheme increased significantly from 13 women to 36 women in Nimikoro chiefdom and still counting. The Scheme came about following the mid-term project review which Christian Aid Ireland carried out in 2019. The findings of the review showed women were economically more

vulnerable and less able to own a cow without external support. Likewise, NMJD's initial assessment of the Catchment population of the PHUs showed that if women were economically empowered, they could take care of their children when they are sick. It was as a response to these findings that the revolving Loan and Savings Scheme was introduced. It initially targeted 25 women who were divided into five groups with each group receiving a revolving loan of 1,000,000.00 for a period of six months. Because of the success of the Scheme, more women have come onboard and they are all benefitting in terms of expanding their businesses and increased savings with less risks involved. In fact, this has given rise to another challenge. With our limited capital, we now find it difficult to cope with all those that are clamouring to join the Scheme, especially those outside the project communities.

- In recognition of the great role the community bye laws on cattle herders and crop farmers is playing in settling the hitherto internecine disputes between these two groups of farmers, the Office of National Security (ONS) invited NMJD to Freetown to share their experiences with them on the implementation of the IAPGs project whose intervention led to the development of the district byelaws to regulate the conduct of cattle rearers and crop farmers in Kono district. The ONS as the institution tasked with the responsibility to coordinate responses to security matters across the country was desirous of learning from NMJD's work in Kono district so as to help them develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for cattle herders and crop farmers for the whole country. This recognition was as a result of the several engagements in popularising the bye laws in the affected communities and their successes, as well as the inclusive and participatory approach used in developing them. One good thing about this collaboration is that it reinforces the need and the importance of civil society and government institutions working together and learning from each other.
- The payment of compensation to crop farmers whose farms were damaged by cattle was the source of serious conflicts over the years in Kono district. This is because there were always disagreements over the worth of what was damaged and the refusal of cattle herders to take responsibility for the damaged farms. But the introduction of the bye laws which contain clear guidelines on how issues of compensation can be resolved, there are now less conflicts arising from issues of payment of compensation. The CAG in Lei chiefdom successfully ensured that a cattle herder satisfactorily compensated 22 crop farmers after his cattle destroyed their farm crops. The CAG negotiated the payment/compensation with the two parties in partnership with the Chiefdom Cattle Settlement Committee (CSC) using the district bye laws as a guide. Both parties are satisfied. Other CAGs are also scoring similar successes in other chiefdoms.
- We facilitated and supported the development of eight Chiefdom Development Plans for Lei, Gorama Kono, Gbane Kandor, Mafindor, Nimiya, Sandor, Soa and Toli Chiefdoms in Kono District. The plans were developed through wide-ranging consultations involving different groups of people in these chiefdoms. The Ward Councilors, Paramount Chiefs, Chiefdom Speakers, Section Chiefs, Women and Youth

all participated in the process. The purpose of the consultations was to ensure the development plans reflect the real concerns, aspirations and situations of the chiefdoms as seen, understood and felt by the people themselves. The Chiefdom Development Plans were submitted to the Kono District Council for integration into the Kono District Development Plan. The development plans, which are recognized by the Kono District Council, now ensured all development interventions by the government and its agencies are aligned to the chiefdom development plans. This is an improvement on what used to happen where development plans were developed without the involvement of the people in the chiefdoms and sometimes, they were developed outside the chiefdom by people who knew very little about the issues affecting the chiefdoms or district. Also, the development plans now make it less strenuous in agreeing on priorities when there are pending development interventions because the development plans are there to guide the communities to decide.



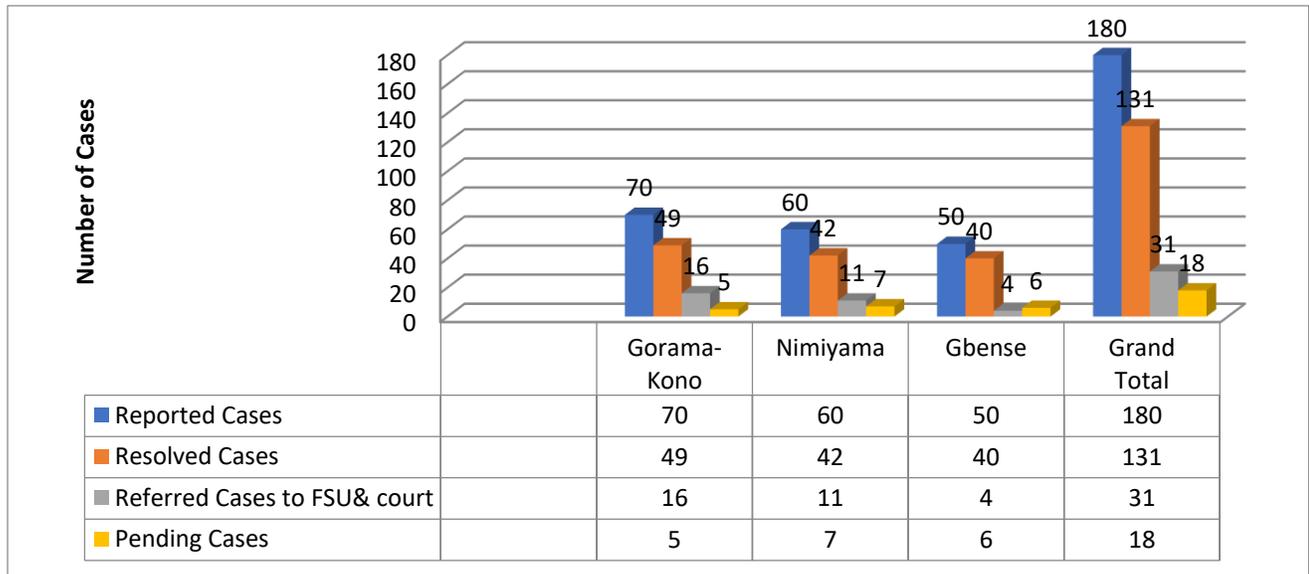
- Essentially, the Mines and Minerals Development Bill 2021, which was tabled in Parliament for legislative discussion on Wednesday 17th November 2021, is another key achievement, which the ESJ Project contributed to. NMJD in collaboration with NaERGEJ made lots of efforts and contributions towards the review process of the new mining law. NMJD facilitated bi-lateral

meetings between NMJD-NaERGEJ and the National Minerals Agency, the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Resources, Environmental Protection Agency, amongst others. Since the commencement of the review of the Mines and Minerals Act 2009 NaERGEJ shared position papers based on the knowledge and practical experiences of its members, organized series of consultations, hosted press conferences and issued press releases to engage policy actors in order for the final policy to reflect the people's wishes and aspirations. NaERGEJ is conscious of the fact that the Mines and Minerals Act 2009 was passed through the House of Parliament under a Certificate of Emergency, and this why this time they are demanding that the proposed Mines and Minerals Development Act 2021 should be the product of widespread consultations, openness and consensus building. NaERGEJ is pleased so far that the process has started well and have been an active part of all the consultative processes. NMJD did not only mobilize public opinion and facilitate citizens participation in reviewing the Mines and Minerals Act 2009, especially affected mining communities across the country to participate in the review process, but also, we closely monitored the various stages of the development process of the Bill, identified gaps and ensured actions were taken to address those gaps. Since the process started, we worked hard to educate and mobilize citizens on laws and policies in the mining sector in Sierra Leone, as well as how the mining sector generally operates in other countries whose

situations are similar to ours. One of the strong arguments we presented throughout our advocacy engagements is for an increase in the percentage of Sub-national payments made to affected mining communities from 0.001% to 1%. Because of our consistency and the evidence we gathered to back our position, the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Resources have affected the increase in the draft Mines and Minerals Development Bill 2021 in Section 139(4). The 0.001% is a fund annually remitted from mining companies to affected mining communities that have signed the Community Development Agreement (CDA) to support community development initiatives.

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- At the initial stages of our interventions in the area of peace building and conflict prevention in selected chiefdoms of Kono district, there were frequent conflicts between local chiefs and the paralegals and the CLSCs over the levying of fines by the former. Whilst the local chiefs accused the paralegals and the CLSCs of unnecessary interference with the view to denying them their legitimate source of income, the paralegals and the CLSCs on the other hand accused the local chiefs of exploitation and extortion of an already suffering population. The stage was then set for conflicts. But today, after continuous engagements and education, the roles have become very clear to every party and such roles are acknowledged and accepted by all. The paralegals provided free legal education to clients and other community members during mediations, and they initiated mobile clinics and outreaches through community town hall meetings. The local chiefs now accept the paralegals and the CLSCs as partners in the resolution of conflicts in their communities. This is evidenced by the fact that the local chiefs now willingly refer cases that are brought before them including land cases to the paralegals and the CLSCs for settlement. The Town Chief of Old Meima in Tankoro chiefdom referred three cases to the CLSCs for settlement and they were all amicably resolved. A total of 63 cases were referred to three paralegal centres in Tankoro chiefdom during the reporting period by the local chiefs. Out of the 63 cases reported, 35 cases were resolved and followed-up for at least one month, whilst 28 cases are still pending. Another evidence of the strong relationship which now exists between local chiefs and the paralegals is the moves taken by chiefdom authorities in three operational chiefdoms to provide land to the paralegals to build paralegal centres. In addition to providing the land free of costs, the chiefs also mobilized their communities to provide local building materials including sand, stones and unskilled labour, as well as for the clearing of the land/site.
- In another related engagement, the Medico International-supported project facilitated the establishment of paralegal centres in three chiefdoms in Kono district. They are: Gorama Kono, Nimiyama and Gbense chiefdoms. These three centres recorded a total of 180 cases during the period under review ranging from wife battery, child neglect, sexual penetration, child abuse, domestic violence, deprivation from access to property, early marriage and teenage pregnancy. Out of the 180 cases recorded, the paralegal centres succeeded in resolving 131 cases through mediation without demanding money from any of the parties involved. All the mediated cases were followed up to ensure there was no flare-up after the cases have been resolved.

31 of the cases, which required the intervention of service providers were referred and followed-up to ascertain the service providers played their own part to give justice to the victims, whilst 31 cases are still pending. These cases are pending largely due to the lack of evidence/witnesses, as well as lack of interest by both parties to pursue them. The table below shows the number of cases reported to the paralegal centres per chiefdom: Gorama Kono chiefdom recorded more cases (70), followed by Nimiyama chiefdom with 60 cases and Gbense chiefdom with 50 cases.



Number of cases reported in the three chiefdoms

- 600 adult learners in Bombali and Karene districts are now able to read and identify the alphabets, spell and write their names, and count numbers from 0-100; they can also identify different items in the classroom and community and name them using English words. This is in addition to their ability to read simple sentences.
- 96 girls in Bombali and Karene districts who received re-usable EcoJC pads confirmed to NMJD that the pads helped them to overcome the usual embarrassment which they faced during their menstrual cycles and that the mentoring sessions also helped to improve their hygiene practices as well. They said before the introduction of the EcoJC pads, they used old clothes/lappas (cotton materials) during their menstrual cycles. These used clothes lack absorbent make-up to catch menstrual blood and prevent odour. Today, the recipients of the EcoJC pads are now more confidence and comfortable going to school and interacting with other people even when they are in their menstruation. Invariably, this has helped to reduce the number of days girls are absent from school every month because of the menstrual-

related inconveniences. And with regular schooling, the performance of girls has also improved significantly.

- Following our engagements with the project communities on existing legal framework on the registration of marriages, as well as the advantages of doing same, 400 couples willingly opted to register their marriages with the Kono District Local Council. The processes to register their marriages have already begun and are at varying stages of completion. This move by the 400 couples



is prompted by the fact that communities have come to realize the importance of registering marriages with established state institutions and that women whose marriages are not registered are most times disadvantaged after the

deaths of their husbands, especially when they try to inherit their husband's properties. This was a clear violation of the rights of women. But this is now being addressed with the recent moves by couples to register their marriages and thus enabling married women to establish their legitimacy.

- As a result of the capacity building training organized for women in Kamakwie, 30 women who are desirous of aspiring to contest positions in the 2023 elections have become more knowledgeable in manifesto development and more confident in public speaking. These women demonstrated their new acquired skills and knowledge during the practical exercises carried out at the training. In a related theme, the executive members of the Women in Governance in Karene district embarked on mobilizing and educating women in the entire district on the need to stop women who will be contesting for various positions in the 2023 elections. This signals an improvement from what used to happen when women considered politics as an exclusively male domain where they were observers only and not participants.
- The voices of women in the project communities in Bombali district are now listened to and acted upon by the community stakeholders, including local chiefs. When conflicts arose over the management, maintenance and use of the boat, whose construction NMJD facilitated to cross people over the Mabaikoli River, especially women and children, to access the only community health centre in that locality, the women convened a community stakeholders' meeting to discuss the issue and other related matters. The meeting was attended by women from Mabotima, Magumbu and Mabaikoli communities, as well as youth, chiefs and societal heads. The meeting discussed extensively

the problems affecting the effective utilization of the boat and the lack of regular maintenance resulting in serious threats to the lives and wellbeing of users of the boat. The meeting succeeded in reaching an agreement on critical sticky issues such as the schedule for regular repairs/maintenance of the boat and the profitable use of the boat. The construction of the boat was a response by NMJD to solve a perennial problem affecting people in those communities where the only health centre is situated over the Mabaikoli River. People faced serious difficulties trying to access the health centre, sometimes resulting in fatal accidents or deaths.

- Our engagements with the gold and diamond artisanal miners in Kono and Tonkolili Districts in relation to the formation of mining clusters have helped introduce artisanal miners to the concept, need and importance of them working in teams or forming cooperatives. This is more so for women who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged when compared to their menfolk. There are still challenges bordering on confidence building, though, but there is no disputing the fact that even the miners themselves have clearly seen the need to form clusters as a way to enhance their capabilities and strengthen their collective voice to ensure they derive maximum benefits from their work. Through continuous education and sensitization, mining communities have come to accept the fact that cluster mining is all about collective responsibility, ownership and profit sharing. NMJD will continue to provide coaching and mentoring to the artisanal miners until their nascent clusters/cooperatives have become fully functional.
- Following the conduct of the public disclosure on sub-national transfers/revenues held in Sierra Rutile, the Corruption Prevention and Education Directorate of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) of Sierra Leone instantly became interested in how community funds derived from mining companies are managed and utilized. After discussing their interest with some community stakeholders, the ACC began putting measures in place to conduct an assessment of the systems and processes used by the beneficiary communities for the utilization of funds meant for community development. The key institutions targeted included: the District Councils of Bonthe and Moyamba Districts; Paramount Chiefs of Imperi, Jong, Lower Banta, Upper Banta and Bagruwa Chiefdoms; Members of Parliaments; and the Chairman of the Rutile Community Development Committee. The ACC served letters to all of these institutions inviting them to report to the ACC for investigations. This move by the ACC received the overwhelming support of the affected mining communities because it is now very clear to them that no one is above the law and that everyone is open to scrutiny for their actions or inactions. “We wish this would have started a long time ago. Much of the resources that have gone down the drain through corruption would have been saved and used for community development,” some youth in Upper Banta said.

- Strengthening the Multi-Stakeholders Task Force on Public Disclosure of Sub-National Transfers successfully contributed to facilitating the National Public Disclosure of mineral revenues remitted by Sierra Rutile Mining Company to its primary host communities affected by their mining operations. It was widely accepted by the local community and national stakeholders that the public disclosure at Rutile was first of its kind in terms of success and public participation. The initiative of having a national structure specifically charged with the responsibility to coordinate the disclosure of sub-national payments in Sierra Leone proved to be a laudable one and it added a lot of value to the disclosure at Rutile. A changing trend in the Multi-Stakeholders Task Force on Public Disclosure is the existence of a Draft Terms of Reference to guide the modus operandi of its members, encouraging them to continue engaging in constructive dialogue through regular meetings to discuss the relevance and procedures for public disclosures of mining companies' annual revenue turnovers and disbursements to their primary host communities. Besides, the Draft Public Disclosure Report serves as evidence of testimonies by all relevant players across Government Institutions, Mining Companies, Civil Society Organizations, Media and the affected communities endorsing the significance of the Multi-Stakeholders Task Force and the relevance of public disclosures of mineral revenues across all mining communities in Sierra Leone.
- Our work during the reporting period successfully facilitated the establishment of eight (8) Chiefdom Development Plans: Gbane Kandor, Mafindor, Nimiyama, Sandor, Soa and Toli Chiefdoms (in Kono District); Jong Chiefdom (in Bonthe District); and Lower Banta Chiefdom (in Moyamba District). The processes leading to the development of the Chiefdom Plans created space for citizens participation in charting the development paths of their respective chiefdoms and it also increased the confidence of local communities and strengthened their collective efforts towards addressing the problems facing their communities. Furthermore, the communities are now using the Chiefdom Development Plans to monitor the utilization of resources on community projects and to hold their local leaders and service providers accountable. In almost all of the eight chiefdoms, the Ward Councilors, Paramount Chiefs, Chiefdom Speakers, Section Chiefs, Women and Youths have developed action plans and submitted them to their respective District Councils for inclusion, budgeting and implementation.

- The Land for Life project successfully supported the formation and strengthening of advocacy platforms at District, Chiefdom and Community Levels. These platforms



brought together different stakeholders working on the land and agriculture sector and they meet regularly to discuss and solve community land-related problems. This brings hope to the people as these meetings enhance community dialogue and

conflicts resolution. The DMSP successfully resolved a land dispute in Dodo even though it is outside the L4L operational chiefdom. On the intervention of the DMSP, the Paramount Chiefs of both Lower Bambara and Dama Chiefdoms gave DMSP the go-ahead to carry out an independent investigation into a long-standing land dispute between some community members within their chiefdoms over bad land deals. The DMSP established a Technical Working Group (TWG) that was tasked with the responsibility to investigate the circumstances related to the land conflict, including the gathering of evidence and bringing it to the attention of the DMSP who amicably resolved the conflict through dialogue without extorting money from anyone.

- Also, because of the trainings and other capacity building events organized for local communities, community members are now confident enough to speak out and make their opinions/positions known on bad land deals. Women are also now insisting that their rights to access and own land should be respected and be allowed to equally participate in negotiating land deals. Madam Mariama Momoh and Madam Mamie Kanneh of Dama chiefdom and Madam Fatmata Kamara of Small Bo Chiefdom are cases in point. The same is now being experienced in Lower Bambara Chiefdom, where the women are effectively using the community radio station to educate women and other community stakeholders on and advocate for women’s rights to be respected and protected.

“The Land for Life project is a blessing to us, otherwise we shouldn’t have known our rights as women and as community land owners in general as stipulated in several of our laws and policies,” Madam Mariama Momoh of Dama Chiefdom said.

SECTION SIX CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Challenges:

The achievements outlined above are as a result of the several activities that we undertook either at project, Area or national levels during the reporting period. However, despite these achievements, we faced some challenges during the course of implementing our programmes and projects activities, including but not limited to the following.

- In the course of pursuing their rights through legitimate means, the executive of MAPO incurred the wrath of the host Paramount Chief and his sub-chiefs. They labelled the entire leadership of MAPO as trouble makers and they are treated with scorn by the chiefs in whose chiefdom OCTEA mining company is operating. This is clearly evidenced by the frequent hate speech that are directed at the individual members of the MAPO executive and are sometimes denied access to even their legitimate family lands. We believe these are all part of the grand plan to instil fear in the MAPO leadership and its entire membership with the objective of getting them to discontinue the litigation which they have instituted against OCTEA mining company.
- The ban by the High Court of Sierra Leone on all media engagements on the court proceedings posed a serious challenge to the leadership of MAPO and to NMJD as the Accompaniers. The ban makes it difficult for MAPO to share regular updates on the court proceedings and the emerging issues with the affected communities. Before the ban, they used radio or social media to communicate quickly and easily to everyone interested in the matter and this helped to keep motivation and interest in the matter high and intact. The ban has the potential to cause people to lose interest in the matter, as they could not get real time information about how the matter was progressing. The only way to engage the affected communities now is through community outreach sessions, which also have their own challenges under the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Victims of domestic violence were also challenged by the fact that when their spouses/perpetrators realized that their violent actions have been reported to the paralegal centres, they resorted to threatening for separation, sometimes they got the support of some community elders and in-laws. This usually led to a situation where victims ceased cooperating with the paralegal centres in the investigations into the reported gender and sexual-based violence.
- The continued reluctance of some community elders and local chiefs to stop levying exorbitant fines on people who appeared before their courts, especially women. For all bush cases, the chiefs charged a “Sightseeing” fee to enable them go to the contested bush/land. This fee varies from chiefdom to chiefdom, but the least amount they charged for “Sightseeing” is Le500,000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand Leones). In Tankoro chiefdom Court No 1, a woman was charged Le300,000 (Three Hundred Thousand Leones) for digging a gutter/drainage between her house and that of her neighbour. It was only the intervention of the paralegals that saved the woman from paying the said amount.

- Due to limited resources, NMJD cannot expand the project on community peace building and conflict prevention to cover all the chiefdoms in Kono district. As a result, we are now seeing a situation where whilst conflicts between cattle rearers and crop farmers have decreased significantly in the chiefdoms where the project is implemented, other chiefdoms are still grappling with conflicts related to cattle trespass and payments of compensation to farmers whose crops are destroyed.
- Migration of SPAG Mentors: The relocation of mentors from Baptist and Model Secondary Schools in Kamakwie resulted to a delay in the implementation of the SPAG sessions in the affected schools. The mentor of the Baptist Secondary school left to head a new school in his hometown, whilst the mentor for Model School also left to further his university education. In addition, the SPAG members are not permanent in the schools because most of them are in Junior Secondary schools and when they sit to the BECE exams they relocate to Senior Secondary Schools in other towns and cities.
- The integrated programme of economic, advocacy and GBV is a holistic empowerment process. The POWER project used the integrated approach and it led to increased enthusiasm among project participants when they were receiving livelihoods, GBV and advocacy support. But no sooner the livelihoods support aspect ceased after the pull out of our partners, the level of participation of beneficiaries correspondingly dropped.
- Instability in prices of goods and services was a challenge to the effectiveness of project implementation and it made budgeting and adhering to budget targets more difficult. Prices of essential commodities like fuel, foodstuffs increased on almost a daily basis, thus causing a huge gap between what was budgeted and what was actually spent.
- Mobility remains a serious challenge to organizational effectiveness and to the wellbeing of staff. NMJD's work covers the whole country with offices in all the regions. Despite this national spread, NMJD lacks road-worthy vehicles, especially Cross-Country vehicles/4-Runners and XL motor-bikes. This inadequacy is adversely impacting the effectiveness of the organizational MEAL system.
- Insufficient financial support allocated to the DMSPs and land-related conflict resolution limits their scope of work. The land-related cases in our operational districts are many and need continuous engagements to actualize the twin-objective of resolving existing conflicts and preventing new conflicts from happening.
- Political interference and the involvement of Paramount Chiefs on behalf of Chiefdom Authorities over land deals in the district is negatively affecting the community people resulting to increased land conflicts and disputes because land governance and management is not clearly defined and properly managed. Land owners/users are not usually informed or their consent sought during land deals because of the high level of corruption in the land sector.
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6.2 Lessons Learned

During the course of delivering project activities and interacting with different stakeholders, we learned several lessons, among them are the following:

- When communities are mobilized, consulted and properly sensitized on new initiatives with the view to get their buy-in, they will ever be willing to support those initiatives and will do everything to see those initiatives succeed. This is evidenced by the role the CLSCs are now playing in Kono district. The CLSCs are now making voluntary contributions just so that they can buy fuel to enhance their movements into very hard to reach areas to monitor human rights-related issues, including gender and sexual-based violence, follow-up on cases reported to the paralegal centres and the local courts, as well as to monitor cases in the Magistrate Courts. Others walk several miles on foot to identify human rights abuses and to resolve issues that might otherwise have graduated into full-blown conflicts. In fact, they have expanded their engagements beyond the project communities into new communities.
- Capacity building is essential for development and enhanced citizens participation in governance and development processes. Because of the several capacity building events organized for women during the reporting period, they were able to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and confidence to engage key stakeholders productively. This is evidenced by women in Constituencies 038 and 064 lobbying their MPs to support the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Bill 2021 which has been tabled in Parliament. In the same breath, women in Kamakwie were full of confidence to have moved around the Karene district and sensitized their colleagues to vote for women in the 2023 elections. Also, the fact that more women are now turning up to the paralegal centres to report incidents of gender and sexual-based violence indicates women are now more knowledgeable of their rights and how they should seek redress when those rights are violated.
- The adult literacy programme is not linked to direct women's empowerment. It is true that we teach women how to read and write, but in the process, are we teaching them or opening up discussions on issues of how women are exploited, oppressed and suppressed in the home, at the work place and in the community, as well as issues around child abuse and its consequences? This link is inadvertently missing in the empowerment trajectory because women should know issues about oppression and inequality and how they are affected by these.
- Seeking to empower women should go side by side with educating men about the exploitation, oppression and disadvantaged situation of women and the role men play in such situations. Since men are the power holders in especially local communities, so they must be involved in moves aimed at having them release some of those powers to women, otherwise they will become uncooperative and challenging because some men don't want to lose their seeming stranglehold on women.
- There is now a strong shift of tensions from between community members and mining companies to between community members and the local authorities that are receiving and spending funds for community development. This new shift in the wave of tensions is due to the fact that local communities have lost confidence in their leaders because of their poor management of the resources that they are receiving from mining companies on behalf of the people.

6.3 Recommendations

In order to further improve the quality of NMJD's work and increase its impact, we recommend the following:

- NMJD continue to work with the leadership of MAPO and its entire membership to ensure they remain united, focused, fearless and unintimidated in the face of threats from local chiefs. It is only when the membership of MAPO remain united behind their leadership that they can be unruffled and resilient in their pursuit of justice for their suffering communities.
- NMJD and the MAPO leadership fully comply with the ban the High Court places on all media engagements regarding the matter in court. This is because any breach can lead to contempt of court, which carries a hefty fine or jail term; either way may prove disastrous for their struggle for justice.
- NMJD continue to engage the Local Government Minister and traditional leaders to ensure they enforce the Kono District bye laws on cattle rearers and crop farmers.
- NMJD engage their partners to raise more resources to expand the community peace and conflict prevention project to all chiefdoms in Kono district where cattle rearing and crop farming are taking place. Let them document the successes they have achieved with the project in the pilot chiefdoms and share the data/reports with interested institutions and organizations.
- NMJD engage their partners to mobilize resources to acquire/purchase vehicles and motor-bikes for the use of staff. This will create greater opportunity for effective monitoring and facilitation of work across the country.
- The adult literacy curriculum/programme be reviewed to adopt the Freirean Adult Education that is more empowering and transformative.
- NMJD review the women's empowerment project in Bombali and Karene districts with the view to creating a Men's Only Space as it is in the Masidama Women's Only Space. This approach will enable men to better understand the issues involved in women's empowerment and the collaborative role they, as men, should play in the process of empowering women.
- NMJD engage their donor partners to increase the allocations to the DMSPs to make them not only more effective, but also to increase their scope and area of work

SECTION SEVEN: ANNEXES
Success Stories

SUCCESS STORY ONE



Madam *Bondu Josiah*

“When my state of despair had worsened, someone whispered to me that my husband was seeing another woman who he was preparing to marry. I was shocked in disbelief. If anybody had told me before now that my husband could do this, I would not have believed because of the tight bond that was between us. I investigated this allegation for several days and I found out it was true. My husband was indeed on the verge of marrying another wife without even telling me, let alone seek my consent as our tradition requires,” Madam Bondu Josiah narrated her ordeal punctuated by muffled sobs.

Madam Bondu Josiah’s marriage was a customary one done several years ago with no marriage certificate. The marriage itself was not registered with any established institution. Her fear then was that if her husband married another wife whose marriage was certificated and registered, she would not only lose her husband, but also all that they had worked for over the years.

Madam Bondu Josiah joined the NMJD-supported Kono Women’s Network in Governance since its inception. The Network was formed in 2019 with the objective of combating violence against women and girls and strengthening women in political governance in the district. She became more active in the affairs of the Network during this period. Through individual interactions with other members of the Network and trainings on human rights and the rights of women as enshrined in our laws and policies, as well as international legal instruments to which Sierra Leone is a signatory, Madam Josiah realized her marriage was not secure under the circumstance because it was not certificated or registered.

“It’s now very clear that my husband was determined to abandon me and go for a new wife even though I did absolutely nothing wrong to him. So, with the knowledge I have acquired, I concluded that crying will not solve the problem. I decided to do everything at my disposal to get him to sit down and listen to me. When he finally did, I asked him for a civil wedding/marriage. Initially he was furious and outrightly refused. But after several engagements and with the interventions of friends and relatives from both families, we got married in a very low-key ceremony. The marriage was certificated and registered. But he

reverted to his old ways immediately after our marriage. He started nagging. He started staying very late at night and became more hostile to me and even the children,” she said.

Madam Josiah soon became convinced that her husband only agreed to marry her in order to pave the way for him to marry his new wife. She discovered that all marriage preparations had been made even before her own marriage. Despite the interventions of several people who advised him to put the marriage on hold until she sought and got the consent of his first wife, he boastfully insisted that nothing would stop his marriage from taking place as planned.

“We live in the same community with the woman he was getting marriage to, so I saw all the lavish preparations. With a broken heart, I went to the paralegal centre to make a formal complaint and the centre turned out to be “my solution centre”. The centre invited my husband and after educating him on provisions of the law, they advised him to postpone the marriage and put his house in order first. He flatly refused. The paralegal centre then referred the matter to the Family Support Unit and the Local Unit Commander of the Tankoro Police Station. It was the LUC who reminded him again in no uncertain terms of the law of bigamy and that if he goes along with the marriage and the matter is reported to the police, he could be charged to court with bigamy. He got frightened and he agreed to postpone the wedding indefinitely. We both returned home happily together. Since that day, he’s been the perfect husband I married to several years ago. And I can happily say that my husband is no longer thinking of taking a second wife. I thank God Almighty and all those who helped to save my marriage,” Madam Bondu Josiah concluded her story with broad smiles.

SUCCESS STORY 2

7.1.2 Tongoma Health Centre Gets Electricity and Improves Health Service Delivery

Lack of electricity is a major problem affecting the healthcare delivery system in Sierra Leone. The problem is more challenging on PHUs in rural communities where electricity supply is absolutely non-existent. This situation has taken its toll on the lives of many people of all ages across the country. The Tongoma Health Centre in Nimikoro Chiefdom is among the many rural health posts that are challenged by the lack of electricity and other basic facilities for the effective running of the Centre. It’s common occurrence to see pregnant women on



labour wreathing in pain in the Tongoma Health Centre, especially at night when the nurses cannot do much to save lives or minimize the sufferings of patients at the Centre. Desirous of improving on this situation, the Community Health Monitoring Volunteer Groups

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(CHMVGs) in Nimikoro chiefdom lobbied several partners operating in the chiefdom including GIZ, a German Humanitarian Organization, to help provide electricity at the PHU. GIZ responded swiftly and provided electricity supply to the Tongoma Health Centre by installing solar system to the Centre. This has significantly enhanced the work of nurses, especially during child birth. The action of the CHMVGs was made possible by the series of trainings and other capacity building events, which NNMJD provided for them.