

Protect and Promote Women's Voice and Space through Masidama



The Masidama Initiative is a community-driven approach designed to facilitate gendered social norms change, rooted in ten core principles developed by Trócaire. It aims to empower women and promote gender equality by encouraging collective learning and growth within communities.

In the Karene district, North-Western region of Sierra Leone, the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), with support from Trócaire, with funds from Irish Aid through the Ireland Civil Society Programme, (ISCP), focuses on elevating the voices and roles of women through dedicated actions for female Masidama groups in the district. As part of the efforts to protect and promote women's voice and space, NMJD has successfully facilitated the establishment and construction of five Masidama Safe Spaces for women in 5 operational communities, including Kagboray and Kamsokoh in the Sella Limba Chiefdom, and Makankoi and Rogbonkoh in the Sanda Loko Chiefdom. The initial idea for these safe spaces was conceived by the female Masidama members during their weekly meetings. The Female Masidama Safe Spaces serve as hubs for women's empowerment and community development.

Already, two of the newly-constructed Masidama Safe Spaces in Kagboray and Rogbonkoh have been inaugurated and handed over to the Female Masidama groups. These safe spaces will be utilized by the women to facilitate discussions on community issues affecting women and girls, providing skills-enhancing trainings, offering refuge for women and girls facing domestic violence, and creating an environment conducive for engagement and the empowerment of women.



Women-only safe space at Kagboray Community in Sella Limba chiefdom



Women-only safe space at Rogbonkoh community in Sanda Loko chiefdom

The inauguration attracted notable attendees, including representatives from Trocaire, NMJD and local authorities, reflecting a strong commitment to community welfare through the Masidama Initiative. Community leaders highlighted the necessity for the establishment of more safe spaces to encourage dialogue, education, and development amongst women and girls. In his remarks, the NMJD Executive Director, Mr Abu A. Brima, emphasized the importance of inclusivity for marginalized groups, particularly women and girls. He assured of his organization's resolve to work with local communities to tackle issues of social injustice and inequality. The Trócaire representatives at the event reiterated the value of partnerships in achieving sustainable development and assured of their organization's continued support to NMJD's initiatives.

The attendees, including Masidama women and male allies, shared their experiences and voiced out their hopes for the transformative effects of the newly-constructed safe spaces. The event was climaxed by the official handing over of the Masidama Safe Spaces in Kagboray and Rogbonkoh, and it marks another significant step towards enhancing the well-being of women and girls in the Karene District, fostering a culture of support and resilience. The collaboration between NMJD and Trócaire exemplifies effective partnership aimed at addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls.

