

STORY OF CHANGE



SEND
SIERRA LEONE

Working to promote good governance and
equality of men and women in Sierra Leone



INTRODUCTION

SEND Sierra Leone is a national non-governmental organisation with offices in the Eastern Region, Western Area and Bonthe Districts. SEND Sierra Leone implements numerous projects related to Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, Nutrition and Health, Livelihood and WASH. These projects are funded by partners including Irish Aid, UN Women, Christian Aid, Welt Hunger Hilfe, GIZ, Trocaire, Terra Tech and Solidaridad.

SEND Sierra Leone started operations in a town called Kailahun located in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone. Its vision is to contribute to a Sierra Leone where people right and wellbeing are guaranteed

THE CHALLENGE

Over the years, the youth, women, persons with disabilities, widows and the aged were excluded from participating in community functions. Society looked down upon them and tagged them as "vulnerable or taboo groups". Although there is a high influx of many NGOs engaged in projectstargeting different thematic areas, the problem remains unsolved.

However, strides are being made by SEND Sierra Leone with its women empowerment projects which ensure that in all meetings and project interventions there is an equal representation of all regardless of status in society. Even though the expectations of these groups are enormous, staff were able to better collaborate and strengthen the relationship with them. Through this, the staff did not have the necessary tools to track the progress or involvement of this group of people.

During community mobilization, awareness-raising and workshops, little or nothing was done byother staff to include these marginalized groups in project implementation. This is so because, in certain communities, it is a taboo to be seated with or mingle with persons with disabilities whileother communities excluded women and youth from participating in decision-making processes. This perception led to the withdrawal of marginalized groups as they see themselves not be recognized, looked down upon, and ultimately not having their views heard.

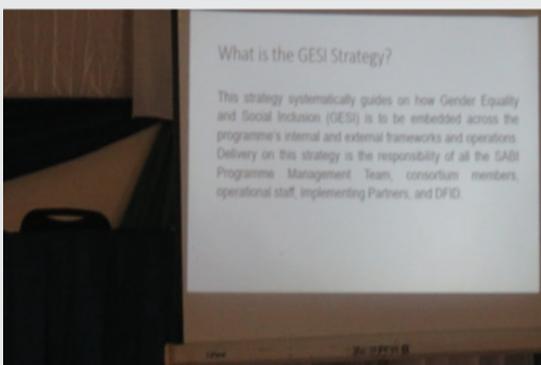
This led to a poor turnout of these groups of people in activities and resulted in low inclusion for community development.

THE INTERVENTION

To address challenges faced by project staff in encouraging and promoting community involvement of marginalized groups, SEND together with the staff of Christian Aid under the SABI project, held a two-day workshop for staff on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. This training was held for all SEND Sierra Leone staff and was geared towards enhancing the relationship between the staff and the community stakeholders in promoting gender equality and social inclusion.

The training increased the human capital and capacity of all staff. It allowed staff to discuss challenges they faced, share experiences and look at opportunities to increase and strengthen the relationship with traditional or other stakeholders, raise awareness in especially communities that look down upon these marginalized groups.

THE INTERVENTION



Fanta Dabor, Head of Programs-Christain Aid SL facilitating a session on GESI

THE CHANGE (RESULT)

After the training SEND Sierra Leone reviewed its templates used in all project during project interventions. These revised templates now serve as a guide for staff to obtain relevant information required on the marginalized groups during workshops or project interventions.

It has also helped the organisation track records on women and youth taking lead in the decision-making process and their active participation in community development projects. SEND Sierra Leone has also emulated the model of SABI programs such as the development of actions plans across all projects and follow-ups. This helps communities take ownership of developmental activities. Now, the organisation can ascertain the number of youths and women taking active and responsible roles in their different communities. Persons with disabilities and other groups are acting as champions in some projects. For SEND Sierra Leone, the GESI training has greatly enhanced and strengthened the relationship among all actors and this makes the implementation easier.

CONCLUSION

The story of change for this reporting period under review with regards to the GESI training to SEND Sierra Leone staff is a success with an emphasis on reviewed templates to track changes and progress. This story of change contributing to achieving the objective of the SABI project and promoting community ownership and obligation through contribution. The effort of the SEND staff and the increased participation by the communities saw the realization in solving the problem. This achievement can be attributed to the support by the SABI project staff. SEND Sierra Leone constantly conducts follow up on activities during the process and ensures staff engage effectively with traditional authorities and other stakeholders for a successful project implementation

LOOKING FORWARD

SEND Sierra Leone believes that everyone is important and for development to take place, inclusivity, accountability, creating access and improving on the quality of work we deliver is paramount. We look forward to improving on the best practices for better impact on project implementations.