

PROJECT TITLE: Kailahun Women in Governance

DONOR: Irish Aid

PROJECT IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: SEND Sierra Leone

PROJECT LOCATION: Kailahun

DURATION: 2017-2021

PROJECT BUDGET: 348 000 Euros

PROJECT THEMATIC AREAS: Women in Governance

THE PROBLEM

Sierra Leone is slowly recovering from the Ebola epidemic that erupted in May, 2014 and quickly spread to all the 14 administrative districts. By May 2015, the virus had infected 12,208 men, women and children killing over 3,800 of its victims. The economic and social impact has been equally severe. A World Bank January, 2015 Report approximates the loss to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) caused by Ebola to be US\$ 920 million. Iron ore mining companies which are key sources of foreign exchange earnings have closed down, exacerbating the unemployment situation in the country. The report emphasizes that women especially those in informal economic activities livelihoods were hit hardest by the Ebola crisis.

Sierra Leone is among the poorest countries in the world. Nearly 60% of its 6.2 million populations live below the poverty line. The majority of the poor are smallholder farmers. The country has a very low score on the Human Development Index, ranking 183 out of 187 in 2013 (UNDP Human Development Report 2011). Sierra Leone's low rank on the Gender Inequality Index, ranking 137 out of 146, shows the loss in potential human development due to gender inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity (GII, UNDP 2011).

Kailahun is among the four top poorest districts in the country, but it is a major export income earner. It is the largest cocoa producer in the country as well as key producer of rice, the staple food. Sharing border with Liberia and Guinea has

made Kailahun among the most fragile location in the country. Kailahun was where the civil war of the 1990s started and the last place where the rebels were disarmed. It reported the first cases of Ebola infection and death, and has recorded 565 infections, 228 death, 202 survivors and 620 orphans. Fortunately, since December 2014, Kailahun has not reported any new Ebola case.

SEND Sierra Leone operational communities of Beude and Koindu in the Kissi Tongi chiefdom recorded the initial victims of the Ebola crisis and it lost more than 40 of its direct beneficiaries especially women in the livelihood program. In addition, SEND was forced to reduce developmental activities and convert the resources to deliver relief. The staff and KWIGN members worked with District Ebola Relief Task Force to conduct Ebola prevention education across the district.

In Sierra Leone, rural women are particularly affected by poverty, a situation aggravated by the Ebola pandemic as underscored by the World Bank cited. Illiteracy, combined with an ingrained sense of stereotypical roles and responsibilities, have left many women without the confidence to become leaders or involve in governance. Harmful traditional practices, for example early marriage, FGM and secret societies increase the vulnerability of women and contribute to their discrimination.

At the national level, the country ranks 102 out of approximately 150 countries analyzed, in terms of

women's participation in Parliament. During the last elections in 2013, fewer women were elected to Parliament than during the 2007 elections, despite efforts by national and international organizations, demonstrating the enduring power of social norms. Of the 124 MPs only 15 (12.1%) are women. In 2013, of the 56 confirmed ministers and deputies only 9 (14%) were women. At the local level, culture and tradition play a strong role in determining women's access to power: In general, traditional beliefs or customary law (to which majority of rural women are subject) about women being consigned to private life strongly discourage women from attempting to participate in decision-making. In some cases, it is either implicitly or explicitly virtually forbidden for women to aspire to high positions, such as Paramount Chief. For instance of the 149 paramount chiefs only 13 (8.7%) are women.

As such, government attempts to improve respect for women's rights have had difficulty making a sustained impact. Such efforts include the passing of the 4 Gender Laws in 2007, which enshrine women's rights in a number of fields. Centralization of power in Freetown and lack of information-sharing in districts, combined with inadequate funding for implementing gendered policies, means a large section of the population remains unaware of critical policies. Additionally, most women, particularly in rural areas, lack the resources to mobilize institutions to protect their rights or to maintain unified networks for advocacy resulting in low collective voice and influence of women in political decision making at district and national levels.

THE SOLUTION

This project will contribute to increment in women's participation in governance by replicating two strategies that were developed in phase one and resulted in making the current Kailahun District Council (KDC) to have the highest number of women councilors in the history of Sierra Leone. First, it will enable the district council (DC) ward development committees (WDCs) and political parties (PP) to adopt gender equality promotional actions.

Secondly, it will strengthen Kailahun Women and Governance Network (KWIGN) to mobilize women and marginalized groups to take advantage of the gender equity opportunities in the governance institutions to increase their political participation and access to health and education services. Guided by this approach, the project will facilitate gender awareness, gender audits and gender action plan to mobilize KDC and 12 Ward Development Committees (12 WDCs) to integrate and increase gender equality measures in the political governance of the district. Toward this end, key staff of the DCs and 12 WDCs will jointly be trained and supported to serve as gender equality champions in the District. The district gender action plan will identify key gender issues and measures to address them.

Similarly, each of the 12 women councilors and her WDCs will be included in their gender action plan activities to strengthen gender equality within the

constituency. The women councilors will lead marginalized groups: persons with disability (PWD), youth, and KWIGN members to promote accountability and transparency in the delivery of education and health services. Monitoring information will be used by the 12 women councilors to demand improvement and increase access to services in several ways. First at the ward level, they will hold accountability forums with service providers to discuss monitoring findings and solicit responses of how to improve performance. Secondly, they will provide the district health and education units with monitoring and accountability forum results and get the officials commitment to take measures to overcome weaknesses. Finally, lobby the DCs especially the health and education committees to take actions to help ameliorate the problems identified.

Furthermore, the existing partnership between the KWIGN and two PP represented in parliament (Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and All People Congress (APC) will be strengthened. They will hold joint gender sensitization sessions followed by preparation and implementation of gender action plans to mobilize and increase support for the nomination and election of women in 2017 and 2018 elections. To increase the mobilization capability of the KWIGN, the grassroots membership of 106 women group will

be trained to improve management, leadership and networking.

Also, the more than 7000 individual members of the different women groups of the network will be sensitized to use the 4 Gender Acts to claim rights, for example to participate in the political process of the district. Equally, marginalized groups led by the KWIGN will be supported to hold the 28 district councilors accountable for their mandates especially as it relate to improving the access of their constituents to health and education. The preparation of the Performance Report Card besides fostering accountability and revealing the extent of compliance of the councilors with their

mandates will highlight high performers who can become role models for others to emulate.

Finally, women councilors and district executives of the KWIGN will be trained and supported to become internet literate and users to increase their communication, networking and to fund raise. The KWIG Network Secretariat will be provided with additional computers and modems to be used by the women leaders and councilors. Through these planned activities the project will on the one hand transform and make gender sensitive governance institutions and on the other hand, empower women and marginalized groups with knowledge, skills and platforms to improve on their participation in the DC, WDCs and PP

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Below are the proposed activities to be implemented under each objectives and their outputs:

Objective 1: To increase the capacity of 12 WCs to serve as champions of gender equality in the political governance of the Kailahun district

1. Gender sensitization of the Women Councilors, Gender desk Officer, M&E Officers , planning and Finance officers
2. Gender sensitization for 2 WDCs, DC
3. Gender audit and gender action plan DCs and 12 WDC
4. DCs and WDCs to implement Gender Action Plan
5. ToT for WCs and WDCs on Decentralization Act and 4 Gender Acts
6. Roll out ToT by WCs & KWiGN for WDCs
7. ToT on Leadership for Women Councilors
8. Leadership training for WDCs
9. Training on project monitoring for WCs and WDCs
10. Monitoring of Health and education projects by WDCs
11. WC Accountability Forum
12. Support women councilors advocacy

Outputs:

- 1.1 DCs and 12 WDCs gender sensitivity strengthened
- 1.2 12 WCs and WDCs are holding duty bearers accountable for development projects especially education and health services
- 1.3 Women Councilors intent literate with e-mail addresses

Objective 2. To develop the capacity of the KWIGN and political parties to partner in supporting women in governance of the district

1. ToT Gender sensitization of executives of KNiGN and political parties

2. Roll out ToTfor PP s constituency executives on gender
3. Sensitization of executives of KWiGN and political parties on the constitution and bye laws on the political parties
4. Gender Audit and action plans PPs
5. Implementation of PPs gender action plans
6. Women campaign support
7. Update the 2009 profile of the KWiGN
8. SEND develop training manual for KWiGN on group formation and management
9. ToT on training manual on group formation and management
10. Roll out ToT on group formation and management
11. Triple role training DVD (Production, reproduction and community management)
12. Training on 4 gender acts for KWiGN groups
13. Support computer training for 12 WCs & KWiGN District executives
14. Purchase computers and moderns for KWiGN secretariat

Outputs:

- 2.1: Political parties executive are gender sensitive and working with KWIGN
- 2.2: Women s in political parties are mobilized to support women’s candidate 2018 election
- 2.3: leaders of 106 women groups members of the KWIGN equipped with group formation, management , ,women’s triple and women rights promotional skills

Objective 3: To empower marginalized groups to hold district Councilors accountable for their roles and responsibilities

1. Sensitization of Councilors on performance report cards
2. SEND draft and solicit the input of the council into the assessment tool

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Identification of groups to conduct assessment4. Sensitization of the groups reps on the roles of the district Councilors5. Assessment, data processing and reporting6. Validate it with the groups7. Publication and dissemination | <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3.1 Youth , PWDs and KWIGN sensitized on the roles of District councilors• 3.2 Council leadership mobilized to support the exercise• 3.3 assessment conducted |
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TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

The project focuses on women empowerment and support for their participation in political governance. The main target group is the Kailahun Women in Governance Network managed by women, promoting women participation in political governance. However, youth groups, women councilors, community based women groups, women focused civil society organizations and female traditional leaders will also be engaged. SEND will empower these women groups and equip them with logistics to enable to train and mobilize other women for change.