



## Peaceful Election Education Campaign Report

**Implemented by:** Movement for Community-Led Development Sierra Leone Chapter

**Supported by:** OneVillage Partners

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From: (team)	Compiled from 8 MCLD Partners
To:	OneVillage Partners
Subject:	June 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2023 Multi-tier Peace Election Education Campaign Report

### Overview of Community-Led Development Movement

The Movement for Community-Led Development is a global platform of organizations established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 alongside the announcement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In mid-2021, several local organizations in Sierra Leone came together to establish a national chapter of the Movement for Community-Led Development. The vision of the national chapter of Sierra Leone is to envision communities in Sierra Leone with improved wellbeing by including the voices of all community members in decision-making on the future of their communities and nation.

OneVillage Partners is the Co-Chair organization for the Movement of Community-Led Development Sierra Leone Chapter. In this capacity, OVP provides front leadership for the Movement in Sierra Leone. The movement is comprised of 9 active partners (this includes INGO, NNGO, CBO, and CSO).

### Activities planned and Implemented

Moving towards the June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 multi-tier elections, the Government of Sierra Leone endorsed the Proportional Representation system. The country was practicing the system for the first time post-war era and the majority of the electorates for the elections were women and young people who also happened to be first-time voters. Hence the need for electoral education. In the past, Sierra Leone elections have been marred by much electoral violence from local to national (this includes physical and psychological violence). Women and youths were always at the receiving end. Unfortunately, young people; including young women have always been tagged either as victims or perpetrators of this election violence.

To ensure the meaningful and inclusive participation of young people, women, and persons with disabilities in the June 24, 2023, general elections, OneVillage Partners funded and partnered with the Movement of Community-Led Development (MCLD-SL Chapter) to educate young people, women, and general citizens on peaceful election participation as well as to understand why young people should peacefully participate in the new electoral system (the Proportional Representation System) for the benefit of collective cohesion in their communities.

OneVillage Partners work alongside organizations in the MCLD to conduct a countrywide Peaceful Election Education Campaign across 40 communities in 9 districts; namely; Tonkolili, Bombali, Kambia, Falaba, Kenema, Kailahun, Kono, Kambia, and in Freetown (Western Area Rural and Western Area Urban) of Sierra Leone. The project reached more than 16,000 people through the media and community meetings. The education focused on providing awareness to young people, women, and other citizens to peacefully participate in the **June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023** general elections through peace education messages that reminded people about the benefits of peace and the negative effects of election/political violence. Some of the messages the team uses are as follows;



- *If we maintain peace in our country, potential investors will come and youth unemployment will reduce.*
- *If we maintain peace in our country, our children will grow well,*
- *If we educate our women and youth about peace, they will serve as peace ambassadors*
- *Youth and women are the highest number of our population let's make sure we include them in informed decision-making.*
- *If we vote peacefully and go back to our houses, we will not be in conflict with the law*
- *If we participate in electoral violence, our lives and the lives of others will be at risk.*
- *When we are caught in any form of violence, before, during, or after the election, we will not enjoy the outcome of the election.*

The initiatives through live radio discussions and community meetings helped young people, women, and other community members to keep off from election violence in their communities across the 9 districts.

#### Live Radio Discussion and Community Education.

Each MCLD partner/district received **SLL 8,000.00** (Eight Million Leones) from OneVillage Partners to conduct 4 live radio discussions and 4 community outreach meetings (overall 36 radio discussions and community meetings were held) across the respective operational districts. Additional meetings were also conducted after the elections to complement those that were held before the June 24, 2023 elections. Overall 40 community meetings were held. OneVillage Partners also partnered with new MCLD members from Kenema to conduct these peace election education campaigns in both Kenema and Kailahun districts.

#### Results of activities:

- 9 Districts were engaged (Tonkolili, Bombali, Kambia, Falaba, Kenema, Kailahun, Kono, Western Area Rural, and Western Area Urban).
- 36 live radio discussions were held across Sierra Leone.
- 40 community education meetings were conducted in the 9 districts
- Collectively, we assumed that over 16,000 people (9,000 women and 7,000 men including youth) were reached through media and community meetings across the 9 districts.
- We assumed overall 11,000 people (6,000 women and 5,000 men including youth) were reached through the media.
- More than 4,500 people (2,400 women and 2,100 men including youth) were directly reached through community education meetings.
- From the facilitator's records, 850 Women collectively participated in discussions. This is a record of women who were very bold and proud to speak out to advocate for nonviolence as well as volunteer to serve as peace ambassadors in their communities.

#### Challenges/Lessons Learnt.

- The peace election education campaign contributed to fostering mutual understanding among community members. This was very necessary to cool off tension and reduce political conflicts in communities where the activities were conducted. It enhanced togetherness beyond the political inequality gap. Community members embraced each other and maintained the peace of their communities.
- Overall, MCLD partners were able to achieve the goal of the activity through community-led inclusion and re-claiming of the voices of women and young people. No MCLD partner community



reported any form of election violence, even at places where election-related violence happened in the past.

- All partners involved in the peace election education campaign, reported to have reached people outside of both the targeted communities and the country through their social media pages. More public visibility happened compared to the OVP normal radio discussion programs (The Sharpened Stone Hour). Live radio discussions gave a broader public view of the MCLD movement and OneVillage Partners' work. There was much appreciation from the public for the radio discussions.
- Listeners who either called or sent in comments, greatly appreciated OneVillage Partners and MCLD for serving as a platform to help prevent election violence rather than waiting to respond to violent situations in the communities.
- The exemplary leadership exhibited by the MCLD and OneVillage Partners by participating in sensitive national activities like this through media programs or community engagements was key for raising a broader public profile of the impacts of Community-Led Development.
- We realized that some partners received funds late to implement the peace election education campaign because they had no operational bank accounts. This delayed their implementation and overall reporting. Moving forward, we will continue to encourage all partners to open bank accounts as a strong requirement for future disbursement practices. It will also be helpful for external donor opportunities.
- Some partners (like CHANCE/KaWDA) also faced logistical challenges to send reports on time because of the lack of computers, electricity, and internet facilities in their areas of operations.
- Partners collectively identified that the fund was not enough, especially for the community outreach meetings. This made it challenging to reach more communities as MCLD partners would have wanted to. Also, feedback from the communities reached shows that people expected refreshments and transport refunds after these meetings which was not planned for in the budget. For future projects like this, much should be done to provide light refreshments and transport for people during the meetings.
- Through the MCLD, more communities can be easily reached and together we can all impact many lives beyond what a single organization can achieve doing a similar project.

#### Recommendations for Improvement:

- **Alusne York Road**, Waterloo, Freetown – “I am impressed with such a brilliant radio and television program, though the project started very late.” I am kindly recommending that such a project start earlier to serve as a voter education platform because the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone always has very limited time to do thorough voter education on peace. Most of the time, they do it in a more formal way which can make it very difficult for first-time voters to clearly understand their messages.”
- Some of the MCLD partners (CHANCE, NaMEP, and KaWDA, etc.) requested logistical support in the form of computers to enhance their timely participation and effectiveness in the movement activities moving forward.
- MCLD partners recommended an increase in funding for subsequent activities and including refreshments in the budget for participants in the communities. This will increase attendance and participation.
- Organizational bank accounts will be considered as criteria for all new partners moving forward. This will help minimize future challenges for external support.
- MCLD must be very proactive in taking part in sensitive national activities where necessary this will help amplify the movement and attract other partners to become interested.



- The impact of this project has shown that the MCLD chapter should continue strengthening both media and community-level Civic Education aspects of their obligations, duties, and responsibilities as state actors and citizens to support the upholding of democratic values which is one of the MCLD thematic considerations.

#### Quotes/Key Messages from Listeners/C Members:

- **Johnny B. Good**, Koidu City, Kono district; “I appreciate the initiative of the peaceful election education messages from OVP/ MCLD/ASJD. It is a good incentive for our country and communities. Many Civil Society organizations have been quiet for a very long time. Some can only become active when there are violent incidents to respond to, but difficult for them to be proactive to prevent such violence from happening.”
- **Johnny B. Good**, Koidu City, Kono district; “Preventing youth from election violence is very important for their future because when they are caught, their cases are treated as criminal acts and not as political party supporters.”
- **Mariam Musa**, Kenema, “OneVillage Partners and MCLD have shown more compassion and concern for young people than our political leaders. The knowledge I have gained from the education has made me realize that educating young people about the benefits of voting peacefully is better than just asking them to vote.”
- **Elizabeth Pratt**, Wilberforce Village, Freetown, “Without peace, there will be no development. I appreciate MCLD for educating people about the benefits of peace in our country.”
- **Osman Sankoh**, Waterside Stone Community, Freetown, “We have one name, “Sierra Leoneans,” and we are interconnected. Allowing elections to divide us will destroy the nation’s social capital. We need to stand up as citizens and say no to election violence”
- **Aunty Marie**, Water Loo Community, Freetown, - “Politicians had no time to educate young people to think about their future and benefits of peace because doing this will make it difficult for them to manipulate us or use us as tools for them to gain political power.”

Activity Gallery



*Radio Engagement in Western Urban, Freetown-SLANGO*



*Women's Engagement in Waterloo-WAADO*



*MCLD Paterners From Kenema- OneVillage Partners*



*Youth Engagement in Western Urban, SLANGO Freetown*



*MAFO Community Engagement*



*CHANCE Media Engagement*