

MAKENI HOSTS INTER-PROGRAMMING TEAM MEETING

The Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD) held this year's first Inter-Programming Team (IPT) meeting at the Sierra Leone Regional Library Board on Azzolini Highway in Makeni, northern region of Sierra Leone, on 8-9 July 2010. The meeting brought together both Administrative and Programme staff of the organization to reflect, share, learn and further plan.



Financial Controller (l), Human Resource Manager (c) and Deputy Executive Director (r) having a tete-a-tete during the first day's early morning coffee break

Explaining the purpose and importance of the meeting, which is held every six months, the Deputy Executive Director, Mrs Josephine Koroma, said it was a moment for programme and administrative staff to share their successes and challenges, as well as to explore new ways of working in order to further improve programme performance.

“The holding of this meeting is of crucial importance to the organization’s drive to bring about changes in the lives of people and communities that we work and interact with.

“During the last IPT meeting held in Bo in December 2009, the Management, through the Leadership, Learning and Development (L&D) Team of NMJD, introduced two approaches to include Results-Based Management (RBM) and Rights-Based Approach (RBA) to the organization. These two approaches are to be used by staff in all their work. Six months down the line, how far have we gone in integrating these two

approaches in our programming work? These are the issues we are hereby to deliberate on,” she said.

Mrs Koroma also said that staff would use the meeting to critically assess the level to which they’ve been using the RBA in implementing their programme activities, and the RBM in writing their reports. She further emphasized the need to put in place effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems for each of the organization’s core programmes.

“M&E systems have great significance in the effective use of the two approaches. Already, some programmes have established their M&E frameworks, whilst others are either on the verge of completing theirs or have not started yet.

“In addition to developing individual programme M&E systems, staff will also use the meeting to put an institutional M&E framework into perspective,” she said.



Staff of the Youth Empowerment Programme putting finishing touches to their report whilst the Programme Directors for Peace and Security (standing left) and Governance and Accountability (standing right) look on

NMJD has evolved quite a lot since its establishment in 1988. All of it was geared towards making the organization not only responsive to the emerging challenges of the changing environment at national and global levels, but also to be very effective in their engagements and interventions.

It was as a result of the growing demand for public accountability and the delivery of tangible results that the Management of NMJD, through the L&D Team, introduced the Results-Based Management in the organization's programming work in December last year.

The main purpose for introducing the RBM is to move the organization away from the traditional implementation-based approach towards the results-based approach. It's no longer about the number of activities, programmes and policies that have been put in place, but what change has these activities, programmes and policies brought in the lives of the people and local communities.

In the same vein, the introduction of the Rights-Based Approach (RBA) is aimed at linking the organization's interventions with citizens' rights. It can be the abuse or violation of existing laws, policies and systems at local, national and international levels, as well as rights and freedoms that these laws, policies and systems provide for. Or it can be the absence of appropriate laws and policies that will make the poor to enjoy their full rights and freedoms.



A cross-section of staff at the meeting

NMJD holds the belief that the people should be at the centre of development, therefore every intervention, be it by the government, its development partners and NGOs, should seek to address their needs and concerns. With the RBA, every intervention now made by NMJD should have a legal basis derive either from national policies and laws, or from international statutes to which Sierra Leone has signed up.

“As rights holders, citizens and local communities should be able to identify the link between their unfortunate situations and their rights, and how to use that right to demand duty bearers and service providers to address their situations. They should be able to analyze their situations wearing the lenses of a rights holder,” Umar Paran Tarawallie, NMJD Paralegal Supervisor said when making a recap of the RBA.

Whilst giving an overview of the RBM, Coordinator of the L&D Team, Sheku James, said results-based monitoring is a continuous process of collecting and analyzing information to compare how well a project, programme or policy is being implemented against expected results.

“Results-based evaluation, on the other hand, is an assessment of planned, ongoing, or completed intervention to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

“Right at the planning stage, staff should be able to be very clear about the challenges they want to see at the end of the intervention, and should develop indicators that are clear, relevant and monitorable,” he said.

One of the high points of the two days meeting was the presentation of reports by each of the four core programmes showing how they’ve been applying the two approaches in their work since they were introduced to the organization last December.

From all indications, the programmes have made significant progress towards the full application of the two approaches, though there a few areas that programme staff need to further improve on, especially in demonstrating clear evidence of change and developing change indicators.

The next IPT meeting will be held in Koidu, Kono district in eastern Sierra Leone, in December 2010.