



IRISH AID/UNDP FUNDS HRCSL RADIO PROGRAMMES

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone is mandated by law to protect and promote human rights in Sierra Leone. Part of the Commission's promotional activity is done through the media. In that direction, the Commission received funding from the Irish Aid/UNDP to undertake a bi-monthly radio programme.

The Commission has undertaken series of activities since it was fully constituted. In that direction, the funding was aggregated to the regions where the commission has offices. The western rural received more because it has moved to a new location and have been generally deprived of media activities.

The radio programmes gave hope to the people in the regions that the HRCSL was back with renewed zeal and vigour to protect and promote their rights. To back that up, it also explained to them some of the successes undertaken so far and the activities of the new commissioners.

In the South Regional office, the officers partnered with the civil society to hold the radio programmes at Radio New song on Friday November 29th, Radio KISS 104 on Tuesday December 3rd and December 6th 2019. The discussions were around the reviewed sexual offences Act, emerging human rights issues in the southern regions including illegal detention, excessive fines in the local courts, bail and conditions in the correctional centers.

For the Northern Region, the radio programmes were held with the district human rights committee at Radio Makneh 95.0 and SLBC radio 98.0. The topics discussed were on business and human rights because of the large presence of mining companies in the region. Women and Children's rights were also discussed because of the high rate of sexual and gender based violence.

The Eastern Regional office utilized four slots for their radio programmes at Star Line radio 98.4. The Vice Chairman and the Acting Chairman of the Kenema District Human Rights Committee participated in these programmes. The Western Regional office in Waterloo paid for six slots at Radio Lion Mountain 101.5 and Radio VOPAD 96.5. The region utilized those slots to increase their presence in the western rural areas and to discuss emerging human rights issues.

OBJECTIVE OF THE RADIO PROGRAMMES

The objective of the radio programs are to, in the first instance increase the visibility of the HRCSL, educate the public on human rights issues and the activities of Commission, inform and educate the public about the amended sexual offences act and emerging human rights issues. It is also for the commission to realize its mandate and function.



TARGETED AUDIENCE

The radio stations chosen have a far outreach to towns and villages in each of the regions. These far away towns and villages are inhabited by mainly deprived people lacking knowledge on human rights. Since it is a radio program and can be listened to by anybody, it has wide mass of audience from all ages and all walks of life.

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

The communities got various knowledge on the human rights topics discussed and also some understood the activities and functions of the human rights commission. They also learnt about the amended sexual offences act and the penalties therein. The programmes gave a boost to the HRCSL in the regions and especially for the Western Region.

FEEDBACK AND LESSONS LEARNT

The discussions encouraged questions from the public in the form of phone-in programme and text messages. Most of the questions centered on the sexual offences act, difference between human rights abuse and human rights violations. And also there were several questions on Sexual offences, the right of the child and police detention.

The amount of money could not sustain the anticipated radio programmes in all the regions as four or six slots are short-lived. Also there was no provision for our partners invited for the radio programmes in terms of transportation and also no allocation for studio moderators from the various radio stations.



The Northern Region office



The Eastern Region radio discussion



Waterloo radio discussion at Lion Mountain



The Southern Region