



TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS SCHOOL & PEACE CLUBS (HRPC) IN THE WESTERN AREA

It is globally accepted that education is a precondition for a healthy and peaceful democratic society. It is thus important that education include the study of peace, human rights, and democracy as essential to society's development. Sierra Leone like other countries have had situations of human rights violations and abuse at almost all levels. In view of this, it is necessary to have human rights education at all school levels and even at teacher education levels.

With this in mind, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone begun establishing human rights and peace clubs in selected secondary schools since 2018 with the objective of capacitating pupils and teachers with human rights education, training, informing and incorporating human rights values into their attitudes and behaviours. This was done through the sharing of knowledge, impacting of skills and shaping of attitudes to prompt action directed at strengthening respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, tolerance, equality and peace, among individuals within societies and the school environment they find themselves.



Participants from different schools



Imbibing the culture of human rights in the minds of pupils at an early age will enable them to understand human rights, value human rights, and take responsibility for respecting, defending, and promoting human rights.

To this effect, on 20th March 2020, HRCSL conducted a training workshop for pupils and teacher coordinators in the Western. Nine (9) schools participated in the training session with a total number of 50 participants comprised of 36 pupils and 14 teachers (27 male and 23 female). Additionally, Kenema and Bo Districts also established 9 HRPC each

The training was a third phase activity of HRCSL meant to capacitate school coordinators and pupils in the general human rights frameworks and information aimed at building on the culture of human rights in schools and communities and establish human rights and peace clubs in the aforementioned schools for a sustained human rights practice in those schools and the environs.

Importantly, the training enhanced the establishment of the human rights and peace clubs in the targeted schools, provided an opportunity for both teachers and pupils to be familiar with the concepts of Human Rights, Peace and their alignments with responsibilities. Also, the training enabled the participants to gain knowledge and understanding of the mandate and functions of HRCSL and the Commission's role in the establishment and operationalization of the Human Rights and Peace Clubs, it prepared pupils and teacher coordinators to make functional the human rights and peace clubs in their respective secondary schools in the Western Area, Bo District and Kenema District. In the Western Area, a network of school human rights and peace clubs was created and to compliment this there is now an existing WhatsApp Group known as "Schools HR & P Clubs" for Patrons or Club Coordinators in which the HRCSL Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson and staff of the directorate of education communication and training (DECT) are members.

As a result of the establishment of these Human Rights and Peace Clubs in schools, some schools have now reported increased empathy, tolerance, respect, increased student confidence to address bullying and peer education among pupils on human rights and its corresponding responsibilities. This is in compliance with the African Vision Agenda 2063 "Catch Them Young".

