

HRCSL ORGANIZES REGIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHT-BASED APPROACH TO SEXUAL PRODUCTIVE HEALTH

With support from UNFPA, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone in collaboration with the Ministry of Health on Wednesday 13th November, 2024 facilitated community engagement with 350 stakeholders in selected communities on Human Rights-based Approach to Sexual Reproductive Health Rights.

The engagements were hosted in Kenema, Bo, Makeni, Port Loko and Western Area Rural with the Directorate of Gender and Children's Affairs spearheading.

The objective was to enhance participants' ability to identify and address maternal health risks and barriers within their communities.



Sexual and reproductive health remains a significant concern in Sierra Leone, with high maternal mortality rates and limited access to quality maternal healthcare services, particularly in rural areas. Sexual and reproductive health initiatives play a crucial role in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality.

During the interactive sessions, participants agreed to engage their peers with the right information on best health practices and also advocate for and promote sexual and reproductive health practices within their communities.

Deputy Matron at the Bo Government Hospital, Madam Jenneh Momoh stated that human rights and sexual reproductive health issues are interrelated.

"Sexual reproductive health rights is critical in the life of our mothers, pregnant women and children," she said and added that women have right to what they want to do with their body.



While noting the importance of the engagement in saving the lives of mothers and babies, Matron Momoh appealed to the Commission to consider engaging key health workers across the country on SRH issues.

Tabba Joseph from the Criminal Investigation Department in Kenema promised to educate his colleagues on SRHR and to always visit health facilities regularly to monitor happenings there.

"Ensuring timely hospital visits during pregnancy is essential for addressing routine needs and handling complications effectively," he said.

Simitie Lavalley stressed the importance of sexual reproductive health issues, which was why the Commission decided to engage community stakeholders.

"You've to be alive to be able to enjoy your rights. So, the issue of Sexual Reproductive Health cannot be overstated. As a Commission, we're always committed to protecting and promoting the rights of all in the county," she said.