BREAKING THE CULTURE OF SILENCE: HOW THE INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND OTHER MINORITY GROUPS IN LAND DECISION MAKING LEADS TO PEOPLE-CENTERED CUSTOMARY LAND GOVERNANCE?
The presentation is going to focus on Community Land Development Management Committee, a relevant customary land governance body that is inclusive of community members as provided in the Land Rights Act of Liberia. It calls for equal representation of women, men and youth in land decision making. It is a new revolution that will shift the traditional setting where women have been excluded from land management processes for over 100 years. Join me let’s exchange........
WHAT WILL YOU LEARN FROM THIS SESSION?

• The role of women, youth and minority groups in community land governance
• Understand the context- how land governance was practiced 50 years back and what the future looks like for women
• Understand the importance and benefits that come when communities are in the driving seat in the management of their land
THE CONTEXT: COMMUNITY LAND GOVERNANCE 50 YEARS BACK

• WHAT WAS WRONG?
  • The leadership exclusively men
  • Women leaders were few (one out of 10 communities)
  • Other minority groups (physically challenged, visually impaired, etc) had no decision making power
  • The chiefs, zoes and land owners were all men
  • Community laws/norms only carved in favor of men
THE OPPORTUNITY: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

- New Land Rights Law enacted in 2018 - calls for inclusion of women, youth and other minority groups in land decision making and governance

- Community Land Development and Management Committee includes equal representation of women, men, youth (Article 35&36)
The Community Land Development and Management Committee (Articles 35&36):

- The new legal body for customary land governance
- Approves sale, lease or transfer of customary land
- Membership comprises equal representation of women, youth and men
- The town chiefs considered ex-officials

OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY LAND DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CLDMC)
KEY STEPS WE EMPLOY FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY LAND GOVERNANCE

1. Develop simplified messages and create awareness
   Mobilize women, youth and other minority groups
   Organize awareness meetings

2. Support the community to develop By-Laws for leadership
   Support members to agree on consensus building approach

3. Ensure the community decide on an even number of representation on the CLDMC
   Ensure each group is represented equally
OUR PARTICIPATORY APPROACH FOR INCLUSIVENESS

• Focal Group Discussions
• Elections and decision
• Consensus building
• Application of the Local Liberian Vernacular
• Special mentoring and coaching support to women and minority groups
THE BENEFITS THAT COME

Women are becoming even more productive when they have secured access to land and making decisions.
Community members and leaders joint goal to protect their land highly impressive

Community willingness to accept new changes to their traditional norms

Men joining their wives in dialogue meetings at women peace hut

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR

OUR RECOMMENDATION

Have adequate understanding of the culture, norms

Legal frameworks- powerful tools to gradual change

Consider including women of fame as motivation for grassroots women

Adequate exclusive education forums for women, youth, other minority groups

Avoid imposing, accept and work closely with traditional leaders
THE RELEVANCE OF CROSS-LEARNING AND EXCHANGE

- Our work has been heavily supported by adopting new learning and best practices from our colleagues within this learning cycle. A learning on participatory By-Laws drafting also helped our work with local communities in designing inclusive By-Laws for the CLDMC.
THANK YOU