

Introduction

In an effort to know or understand about the Gbarnga Regional Hub which is currently going under construction and Funded by UNDP through the UN Peace fund, Through the Peace Building Office, the Center for Research and Development Initiative which was founded for the sole purpose of conducting research on the political, infrastructure, social and economic activities of the country and other issues decided to hold a focus group discussion in two communities in Bong County, to be to understand social impact of the Gbarnga Regional Hub. Among the two communities, `one of` which is call Wainsue where the awareness on the Security Hub was carried out by an NGO called Peace Building Resource Centre, and Blameyea Town where there was no awareness carried out on the Hub, all in Jorquelleh District. In each of these towns there were two sets of focus group discussion. There were total of twelve participants. Six men and six women in each of the communities. The women session was exclusive of the men and vice versa. This method was used to get everybody participate equally, because many at times when you put both groups together the women do not talk much.

Few issues or questions we were looking at or discussing in the focus group were,

Do you know about the Regional Security and Justice Hub? If no what do you want to know about the hub. Do you know about the security and justice it provides? Do you think the hub will improve justice and security in your community, Bong and Liberia? Do you know who has paid for the hub? How will you know that the hub is functioning? Where do you want to hear information about the hub?

The first session was conducted with the men and the second was with the women in Blameyea. Both groups said that they do not know about the security hub and they will want to know what work the hub can do. Once they did not know about the hub, it was observed that they did not know about the security and Justice it provides. A brief explanation was then given them about the hub and those regions that the hub will serve presently which are Bong, Nimba and Lofa. And they latter said that the hub will be a good think and it will surely improve the security and justice sector. They did not know who has paid for the hub and had no idea about how the hub is to function. They usually want to hear information about the hub through the radio and awareness raison. They actually welcome the idea of the hub and said it was a good initiative for the Liberian people.

The session at Wainsue town was very much encouraging. This time we started with the women, and then the men. Few of the women said that people told them about the security hub but they have been thinking that it was a police academy. Three of the women said that they were told by friends in the town that people went there and explain to them about the hub and what it will be use for. One said they have not heard anything about the hub, and Korto Togba said "I heard about the hub through `other people saying it was a police barrack," when passing to go Gbarnga. And Korto Gortay said that "I heard about the hub through one group that came to our town to talk about it."For Mama Sirlref she will actually know that the hub is working if the PSU officers are quick to respond to crimes in our communities and Rebecca Kollie added if they too are not asking for as money fuel when they are called. With the six men present four was able to tell us some key information about the hub. They were in the session held by Peace Building Resource Center. Both groups actually said that they wanted

to know more about the various functions of those different departments at the hub, example the Immigration, PSU etc and whether there will be contacts of the police at the hub that the communities will easily access. They also welcome the idea of the hub and said it will help reduce the crime rate and also help reduce the number of cases on the docket. But they did not really know who is funding the construction of the hub and how the hub will be maintained. They will actually know that the hub is function when there are issues and they called the police and they come there without asking for gas or fuel money.

From the four different types of focus group conducted, two in Blameyea and two in Wainsue it can be concluded that indeed the Blameyea people do not have any information about the Gbarnga Regional Hub, because there were no awareness on the hub carried out there.

And for Wainsue they have some fundamental ideas and information about the hub though not in full and not many women got the information.

With the following conclusion the Center for Research and Development Initiative will like to recommend the following:

- That there should be re-civic education conducted in those areas that were visited. Increase the number of villages within each county with more than one Community Based Organizations (CBOs), at least two.
- That the PSU officers sometimes go with the awareness group to also befriend the communities and they themselves explained their functions.
- That there should also be a base line survey on those specific issue that the hub will want to achieve in all of the targeted area, Bong, Nimba and Lofa and those area that the hub is going to be built. There can be a midline and latter an end line survey to measure the impact of the goals and objective of the hub.