



**Initiatives for Media Development**

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

THEME

ACCOUNTABILITY MATTERS!



This Non- Governmental Organization was first registered in January 2011 with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with registration number NNGO/396 to operate in the Information and Communications, Advocacy sectors in Sierra Leone

**Reg. No:** NNGO/ 396/2018-2019  
**Registered Address:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor,  
Adama Conteh House, 48 Siaka  
Stevens Street, Freetown

Yeama Sarah Thompson  
Executive Director  
Email:  
[yeama.thompson@imdev.media](mailto:yeama.thompson@imdev.media)  
[Yeama.thompson@gmail.com](mailto:Yeama.thompson@gmail.com)  
Skype@yankyango75  
Twitter@yankyango  
Tel:+ 232 79107752  
[www.imdev.media](http://www.imdev.media)

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To ensure that IMdev's vision is translated into improvements in human rights and dignity particularly for children in both rural and urban communities, we apply the following indicators of success across all our programming.

- Build more sustainable and resilient business models for media
- Develop a network/association of journalists that will provide support to journalists to continue to report on human rights related issues
- Establish a contingent of local trainers to ensure continuing local mentorship
- Enter Partnership with a university with a curriculum that will prepare future journalists to respond to emerging human rights and good governance issues appropriately.
- Support journalists to leverage the power of social media in their reporting

## FUNDING SOURCES

Most of our funding is generated from development partners through project proposals. In 2018, we were funded WACC – Canada, World Bank, UNWomen and UNICEF to undertake various projects in our Human Rights niche sphere. As expected, all the funded projects were successfully implemented to the appreciation of beneficiaries and the commendation of donors for the judicious use of their funds for the intended purposes. We are committed to continuing transparency and accountability for all donor funds and serving our target beneficiaries as per project description.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

NAME	DESIGNATION	DATE OF APPOINTMENT
MADAM MEMUNATU PRATT	CHAIRPERSON	JANUARY, 2012
MR. MARBEY SARTIE	MEMBER	JANUARY, 2012
MR. MOHAMED RAHMAN SWARAY	MEMBER	JANUARY, 2012
MS. YEAMA THOMPSON	EXECUTIVE SECRETARY/FOUNDER	JANUARY, 2012
MADAM JOSEPHINE KARGBO	MEMBER	MARCH, 2016



An IMdev mentee interviewing children in Makeni



IMdev Emeric Roy Coker at Radio Mankneh in Makeni City, Northern Sierra Leone

## OPERATING CONTEXT

As one of few surviving and thriving Local media development outlets dedicated to training and developing local journalists and strengthening media outlets to enhance Human Rights especially ethical child rights reporting, we contend with working with reporters who are often poorly paid and lacking formal training. These capacity gaps necessitate the compelling need for capacity building of local journalists to professionally report even in chaotic and dangerous situations. IMdev is convinced that Technical and theoretical solutions can improve local news organizations to competently report on crises with ethical considerations. This is the journey we are dedicated and committed to and have embarked on with the support of our donors and development partners.

In addition to traditional challenges, social media and the emergence of citizen's journalists has added another layer of complications as a new platform for the rapid dissemination of information including rumours and harmful images. In our work, IMdev works with both the mass and social media to promote a positive community-based action.



## Health Accountability project

With funding from USAID through UNICEF from 2017 to 2018, IMdev's Strengthening Post-Ebola Health Governance programme strived to create greater monitoring, accountability and citizens engagement on Health Governance issues. The media plays a complimentary role in galvanizing citizens voices and give them a platform to express their views and opinions on access to the Free Health Care drugs and services.

In the first year (October 2017 – September 2018) of the project, a total of 152 journalists were trained on Health Governance and Accountability and these formed the Health Accountability Network of Journalists (HANoJ) (partnership launched and will be formally established at the end of the year). The project will continue building the capacity of the media and citizens to improve the accountability of health service delivery, with a focus on drug and medical equipment distribution (including free health care, malaria and nutrition supplies), and (using the media) engage communities and health stakeholders at both the national and local levels and civil society. Furthermore, it will build the capacity of the media in promoting a collective platform for education and information that will facilitate citizens' engagement with governments in building strong systems of accountability and transparency in the health sector.

The project supports local radio platforms to share information on health services and health sector reform, raise awareness about rights and the benefits of health services, and provide feedback on the quality of health services. Within the first year of 2018, 30 community radio stations across the country and 75 radio programmes on Health Governance and Accountability were produced and broadcast. All of these programs remain accessible on the IMdev website <http://www.imdev.media/> and on the sound cloud link <https://soundcloud.com/user-445663626>.

In 2019/2020, 150 radio programmes on Health Governance and Accountability will be produced and broadcast. These programs will also be stored on sound cloud and will be made accessible to UNICEF and USAID for further use on their communication channels. Memorandum of Understanding will be developed with the 30 participating radio stations to indicate the radio schedules, fees and other related costs and feedback and tracking sheets for the listener groups will be developed as well.

A few listener groups were piloted in the first phase of the project and this will be scaled up to 30 listener groups during the second year of implementation. The listener groups (6 for each group - male and female), whose members are drawn from community stakeholders including chiefs, religious leaders, VDCs, mothers

support groups, youths/children's groups will provide constructive feedback on effective programme production and delivery.

## Global Media Monitoring Project

In partnership with the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), data was collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and church groups.



*IMdev Executive Director monitoring Media reports*

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. It seeks to monitor women's presence in their national news whether on radio, television or print. In 1995 when this monitoring project began, only 17% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about – were women. The findings revealed that gender parity was 'a distant prospect in any region of the world. It also found that News was more often being presented by women but it was still rarely about women.



*Cross section of newspapers monitored*

## Who Makes the News: 2018 Elections

Sierra Leone's national electoral processes in 2007 and 2012 witnessed an increasingly visible role of women as voters, candidates, representatives, protesters, journalists and civic educators in the home, the community and beyond. There were increased calls for female participation through civic advocacy groups such as the 50/50 movement and intense lobbying and negotiations for a 30% minimum inclusion of women in politics during the constitutional review process in 2016/2017.

However, women in Sierra Leone still struggle to consolidate in the struggle, overcome stereotypes and most often falter and breed disillusionment in political processes. In such a complex context of male superiority and dominance, political processes require the introduction of a granular gender lens which can present a new framework that accounts for all forms of gender-specific documentation and responses to breaking the mould of exclusion.

In April 2015, in a study conducted on women peace and security by the Initiatives for Media Development (IMdev) with support from the World Association of Christian Churches (WACC) through the Global Media Monitoring Project, 39% of women were directly quoted, compared to 60% of men in addition to the insignificant presence of women in the news reports overall.

Meanwhile, editorial policies on impartiality and fairness can influence equal gender equality and the presence of women in the news. It should also be noted that political parties are also likely to seek to influence editorial decisions through gifts or family ties.

In radio for example, programme and other content producers influenced by the internal policy can change an election dynamics and influence negative or positive change. Editors and content providers owe a special responsibility to audiences and readers who are about to vote.

The project was aimed at monitoring the media coverage of female candidates, gender-based violence and allows for inclusive programming in the field of electoral technical assistance. This was reinforced through empirical research from the print as well as the electronic media, covering 20 media houses in the 16 political districts. The Media Monitoring project collected data from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018 through 30 April 2018. This data and case studies reflected regional diversity

and include elections and post elections data analytics.

**The general aim of the project was to** promote gender equality and representation in news reporting through monitoring and advocacy with the following key objectives:

- *Enhance Gender equality and representation in the media, particularly in relation to the elections.*
- *A campaign to remind the media of their responsibility to uphold professional ethics on fair coverage, balance, accuracy and non-discrimination.*
- *Analysis of political parties' support to female candidates through media coverage.*
- *Editors and content producers and managers held accountable*

This report is arguably the first elections media monitoring report in Sierra Leone published in the framework of the project '**Sierra Leone Elections 2018: Who Made the News? A Media Gender Equality Score Card,**' funded by the United Nations Women in Sierra Leone. The project was implemented by the Initiatives for Media Development (IMdev).

A total of 40 monitors assessed 6 newspapers, 3 television stations and 7 Western and Urban community radio stations and 4 regional community radio stations. The Monitoring report assessed weekly findings for 8 consecutive weeks from 18th February 2018 to 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018

After the first week's analysis, the Initiative for Media Development facilitated an Editors and Station Manager's meet to discuss the initial findings. The meeting was attended by high level media practitioners and gender and women's rights stakeholders. These stakeholders include Dr Fatou Taqi of the 50-50 group, Mr. Ransford Wright, the head of Independent Radio Network, the network of journalists and radio stations across the country that report on elections.

The cocktail provided a conducive environment to discuss the initial analytical findings of gender and women's rights in the media. The discussants highlighted the extent to which women and gender issues are given prominence in the media and the lack of it; taking into consideration coverage of women's participation in politics. Some of the station managers, editors and heads of some women organization made commitments and proffered solutions on how to increase the

capacity of women during elections. The following recommendations were proffered:

- Confidence building of female politicians
- Media awareness and sensitivity
- Understanding the new wave of social media and traditional media
- Station managers and editors should give more airtime to women candidates during elections

## CHALLENGES

Despite IMdev's successes thus far, we are under no illusions that we are still a long way to go to achieve our vision of a country where journalists with the support of their media outlets will report professionally and responsibly on human rights issues especially ethical child reporting. Essentially, we still have many rivers to cross including the following

- Training and Supporting journalists to report child rights issues involving the high and mighty in society.
- Organise refresher training programmes for journalists on personal and organizational skills required to perform their job functions more effectively.
- Train and prepare journalists on how to extract important information from uncooperative sources like government agents and Police
- Giving journalists foundational or refresher trainings on how to write clear, concise and accurate reports.
- Sharpen the research and interviewing skills of journalists to enable them ask probing questions and get required responses.
- Train and support media proprietors to secure their support for human rights and ethical child rights reporting.
- There is also need for basic grammar and proofreading training particularly for new entrants into the profession to complement their raw talents.

