

Solidaridad

50 years



Natural Habitats



The LEGEND Project: **Accomplishments & Lessons**

CHANGE THAT MATTERS

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LEGEND

*Land: Enhancing Governance
for Economic Development*



WHAT IS LEGEND?

LEGEND stands for Land: Enhancing Governance for Economic Development. The programme, which started in October 2016 with funding by UK Aid, ends in June 2019.

The goal of LEGEND is to apply and test the Analytical Framework for Due Diligence in Responsible Land-Based Agricultural Investments on a large-scale oil palm plantation by Natural Habitats Ltd. The programme is active in Zimmi, Makpele Chiefdom, Pujehun District and is aimed at protecting the land rights, livelihoods and food security of vulnerable people while promoting sustainable businesses. Furthermore, Solidaridad is testing the recent adoption of the New Land Policy (NLP) on Natural Habitat's work in the chiefdom. The NLP was inspired by the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forest, and Fisheries (VGGT), promoted by FAO and the Committee of World Food Security.

Implementing Partners

Solidaridad

Solidaridad West Africa (SWA): Solidaridad is a not-for-profit organization that works globally towards the sustainable production of commodities. In Sierra Leone, three projects have been implemented to promote inclusive and sustainable developments in cocoa and oil palm.



Natural Habitats Sierra Leone (NHSL): Dutch organic and sustainable oil palm company, private partner in programme, investing in green field plantation in Zimmi, Makpele Chiefdom. **Nedoil;** subsidiary of Natural Habitats, active in Gbonkolenken, Valunia, Niawa Lenga and Bargbe Chiefdom.

Collaborators



Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Sierra Leone: Line Ministry

Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment, Sierra Leone: Implementing Ministry



United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO): The FAO provides technical support to ensure VGGT sensitive implementation of the National Land Policy in Sierra Leone. This places specific focus on strengthening land administration and capacities for effective land use management throughout the country.



NAMATI: Paralegal organization which provides local communities with legal support regarding land rights.

Funder



UK Government: Primary donor of the LEGEND programme through DFID.

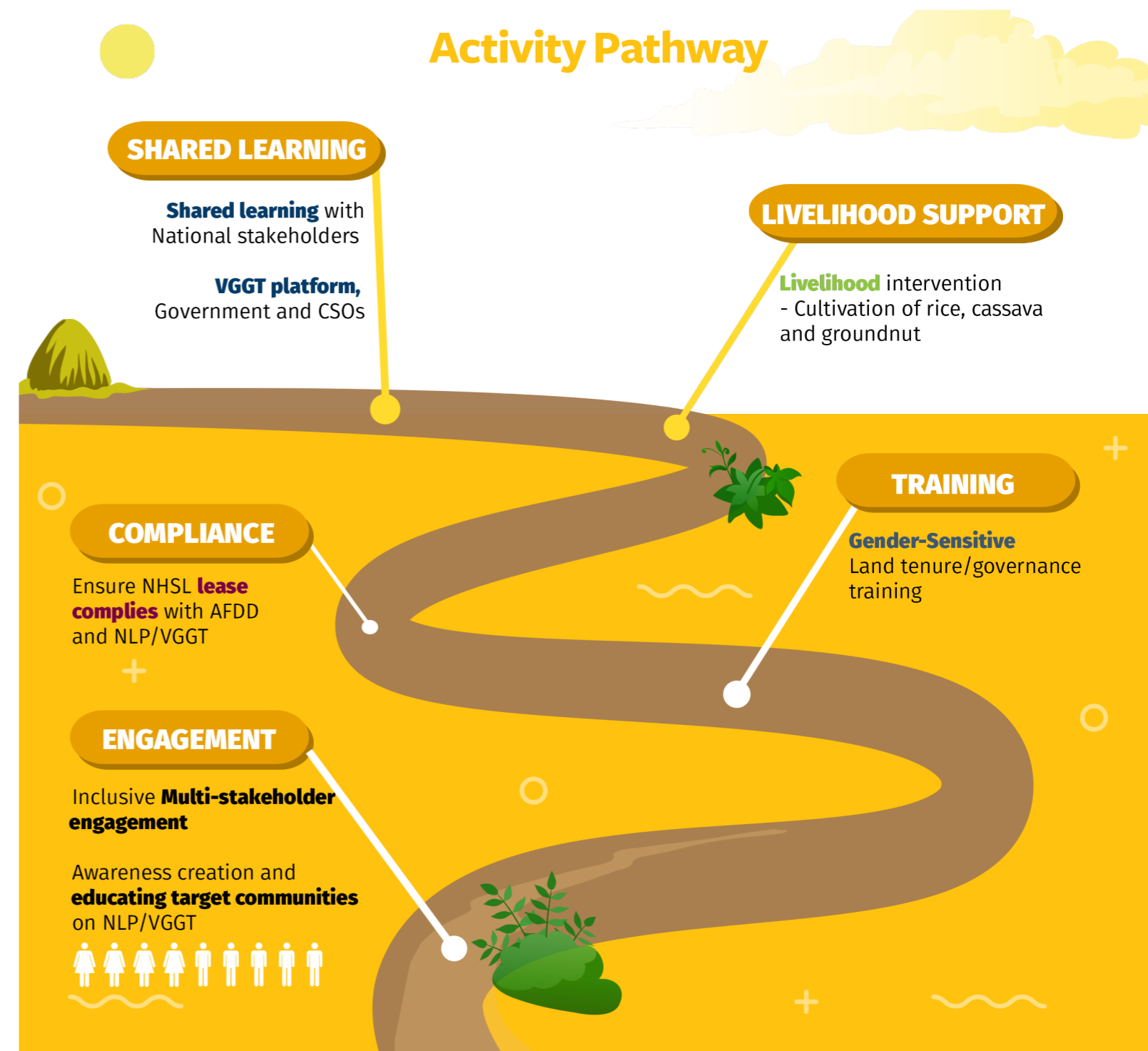
VGGT- The Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forest, and Fisheries were developed by FAO's Committee of Food Security in order to promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests as a means of eradicating hunger and poverty, supporting sustainable development and enhancing the environment.

Related Policies

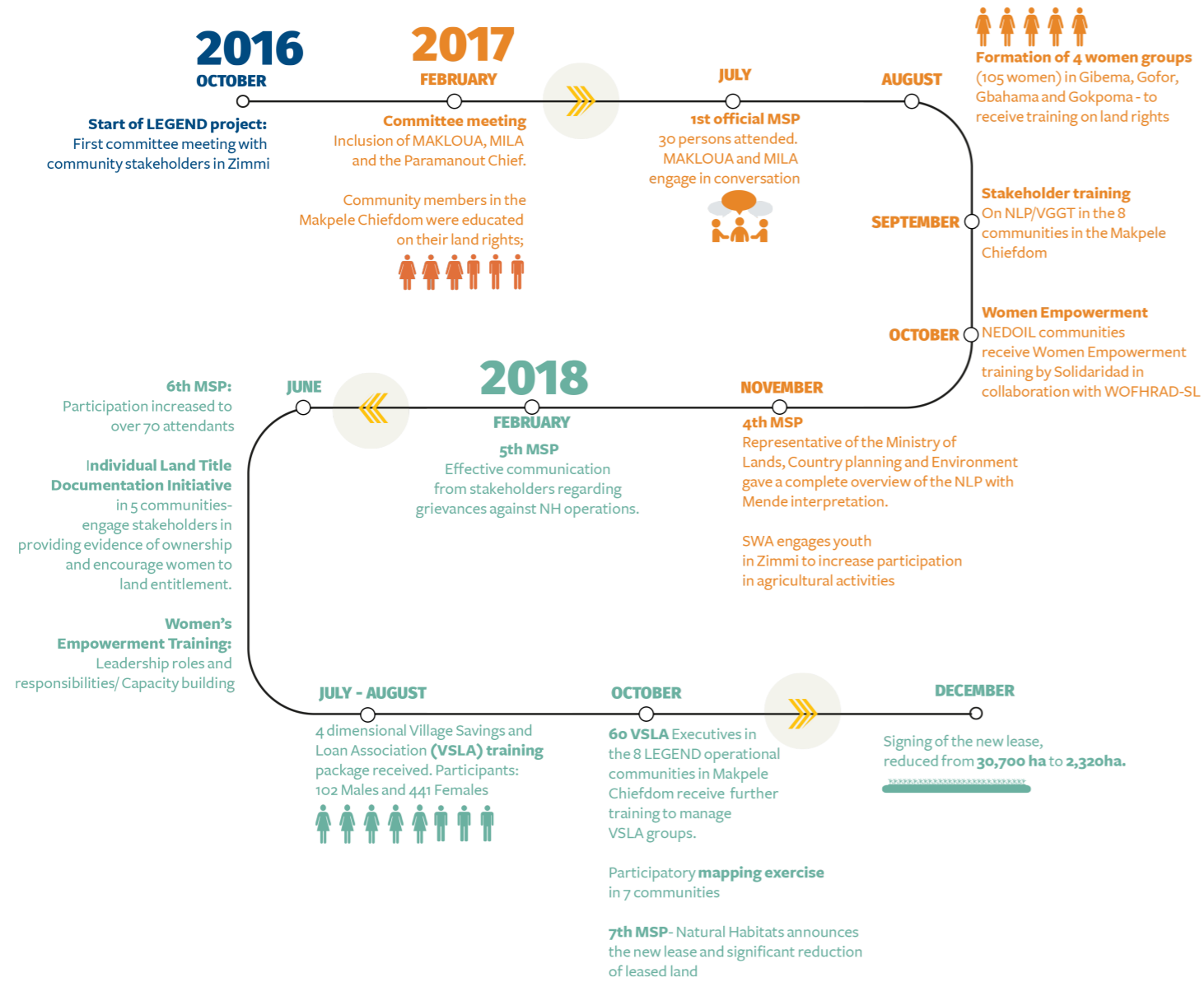
NLP - The National Land Policy of Sierra Leone, inspired by the VGGT guidelines, was published in 2015 by former president Ernest Bai Koroma. The new regulations as stated in the NLP have had significant impact on land tenure systems, with the aim of protecting land rights of Sierra Leoneans.

RSPO - Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil, an internationally recognized standard for sustainable oil palm production, introduced the New Planting Procedures (NPP), with the aim to ensure that the social and environmental requirements of the RSPO are taken into account before new plantations are developed.

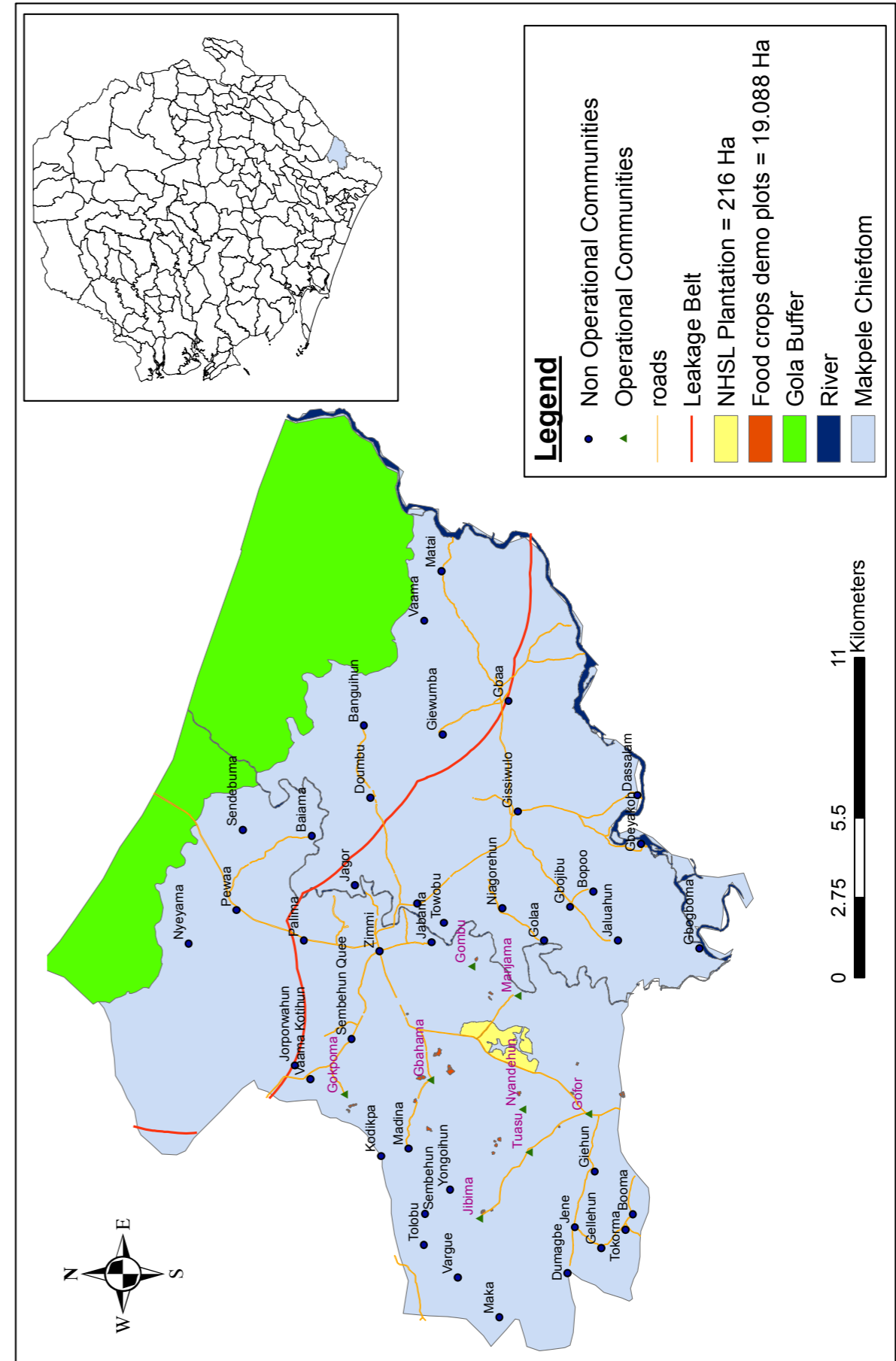
Activity Pathway



Key Milestone



Project Area - The Makpele Chiefdom



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS (MSP)

In 2015, Natural Habitats Sierra Leone Limited inherited a lease that covered the entire chiefdom. But this was not without a contest from stakeholders within the Makpele Chiefdom. On the one hand, the Makpele Land Owners and Users Association (MAKLOUA) opposed the lease agreement, citing lack of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), sidelining some family members and depriving the people land to improve their livelihood. The Makpele Individual Landowners Association (MILA), on the other hand, were in favor of the lease arrangement.

Solidaridad collaborated with the Natural Habitats to ensure that the company's investment in large-scale oil palm production is responsible, sustainable, inclusive, transparent and recognized as such by all stakeholders.

The first step toward achieving this objective was the establishment of Multi-stakeholder Platform (MSP) to facilitate open talk. The platform included state actors from the Provincial level, District level, civil society, Traditional Authorities, farmers, religious leaders, landowners, land users, women groups, youths and representative from the office of National Security.

Dialogue on the platform has been a key factor in maintaining a healthy relationship between Natural Habitats, local stakeholders and local authorities. The multi-stakeholder platform has proven instrumental in resolving disagreement over land, promoted transparency and inclusivity and fostered peace.

NOTE: Promoting inclusivity and empowerment

MILA - Makpele Individual Land Owners Association | Association of farmers who agreed to lease their land

MAKLOUA - Makpele Land Owners and Users Association | Association of farmers who refused to lease their land

NAMATI - Paralegal entity contracted by Solidaridad to educate stakeholders on their land rights and offer legal advice to create the new lease.

NHSL - Natural Habitats Sierra Leone | Private partner in LEGEND project, leases land from communities in the Makpele Chiefdom

Paramount Chief - Chiefdom leader of the Makpele Chiefdom

CSOs - Civil Society Organizations active within the chiefdom

Women groups - Collective of women from different chiefdom sections

Religious Leaders - Representing the Muslim and Christian communities

Youth representatives - Representatives of several youth organizations within the chiefdom

Women are traditionally not involved in decisions that relate to land. Many believe that they cannot own land. However, on the multi-stakeholder platform, both women and men were educated about their land rights. Solidaridad provided additional training on gender mainstreaming. Women now participate in land governance and freely share their opinions.

Another group that benefitted from participation in the MSP were farmers belonging to the Makpele Land Owners and Users Association (MAKLOUA) who were originally against the land lease arrangement with the Natural Habitats Sierra Leone.

"Previously, our opinions were disregarded in the lease arrangement. However, thanks to Solidaridad and the LEGEND programme, we now participate in decisions that affect us. We understand our rights and we know that no one can take over our lands without our consent," said Sidie Mansaray, Secretary of MAKLOUA.

"The MSP was essential. It brought everyone together," says Edmond Mustapha Konneh, chairman of the Makpele Individual Landowner Association (MILA).

Following months of engagement on the multi-stakeholder platform, Natural Habitat Sierra Leone Limited announced that it has ceded **28,380 hectares (92.4%)** out of the original lease concession of **30,700 hectares** to the Makpele Chiefdom.

"We believe that Solidaridad's role as a neutral facilitator has promoted this dialogue, cleared doubts and finally, brought peace to the chiefdom." - Perspective of Natural Habitats SL

The success of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform



Paramount Chief of Mapkele Chiefdom Saffa Monya Tamu is happy with the results. 'Now it is clear how investors can acquire land. Which is important, because our virgin lands can attract investors who can be our partners in development. We should be open to discussion.'

Moreover, the MSP is gaining interest from other chiefdoms dealing with land governance issues. Alie Bao, the Community Relations Officer from Natural Habitats underlines the law-abiding function of the MSP. 'It serves as a mechanism and tool where land-related issues can be discussed. Let us see how we can maintain the MSP and let it serve the whole country. I believe issues relating to land will be drastically reduced.'

Signing of the New Lease

The Makpele Chiefdom celebrates as stakeholders sign a new lease agreement which will free land to the people. With this agreement, the original 30,700 hectares of land leased by Natural Habitats Sierra Leone Ltd. (NHSL) has been reduced to 2,320 hectares, of which each hectare has been leased with full support of the landowners and strictly following Sierra Leone's National Land Policy (NLP).

"I am glad for today, because what has happened is what MAKLOUA has been yearning for. We did not agree with the 30,700 hectares, so we are really happy that the coverage area has been reduced", said Ibrahim Fofanah - chairman of Makpele Land Owners and Users Association (MAKLOUA), former opposer of the lease.

"The LEGEND project has brought about many positive changes, such as the internal policies of NHSL."
- Natural Habitats SL

LEGEND improved local livelihoods

Besides the multi-stakeholder platform, the LEGEND project has also created community awareness; helped improve local livelihoods and provided extension services in the production of rice, cassava and groundnuts. More than 6,500 individuals across eight chiefdoms in three districts – Pujehun, Bo and Tonkolili – have so far benefitted from the project.



Lessons Learned

- Due to the active inclusion of all chiefdom stakeholders, land issues became a public matter that concerned stakeholders who initially believed did not require their involvement, such as women and youth.
- MSP is a suitable platform to settle disputes, coordinate land use planning, foster engagement, support education and enable inclusive decision making on community benefit sharing.
- MSP serves as a neutral convener of groups to facilitate communication and sharing of information.
- Involving NAMATI as the paralegal entity to educate chiefdom stakeholders on their land rights and support the lease negotiation has been critical in the process and proved to be effective.

Outcome of MSPs

- Awareness creation and education on the New Land Policy of Sierra Leone and the VGGT guidelines.
- Ensure Natural Habitats SL land lease is in compliance with NLP/VGGT.
- Transparency in Natural Habitats land lease agreement processes.
- Natural Habitats SL concession revised from **30,700ha** to **2,320ha** to conform to the requirements of the NLP.
- Significant reduction in tension and complaints between land owners and land users in Zimmi.
- Stakeholder awareness of consultation steps to agree on land acquisition.
- Platform for dispute settlement, land use planning, engagement and education, decision making on community benefit sharing.
- Platform enabled creation of a step-by-step land acquisition process poster which is comprehensible for all stakeholders.
- Inclusion of formerly excluded chiefdom members; such as women and youth.

LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

Why Food Security matters:

Large scale land acquisition can have adverse effects on the food security of those living in and around the affected areas. Lack of knowledge on land rights, disputes around access to land and land use as well as poor farm management can hamper food production, which in turn leads to an increase in hunger and poverty. The regulations in the new National Land Policy protect vulnerable people from losing access to their food sources. For every acre of leased land, land owning families are recommended to set aside plots in which they can cultivate food for consumption and trading. Due to the fact that oil palm takes at least three years to yield after planting, farmers must have access to alternative food sources to sustain themselves and their families.

Within the LEGEND project, several interventions have taken place to enhance the food security of people in the operational areas. Participatory mapping, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) trainings, the set up of the Village Savings Loan Association (VSLA) groups and the provision of tools and planting materials to set up food security demonstration plots have had positive impact on the food situation within the beneficiary communities in the chiefdom.



Tajoe Kpaka, one of the beneficiaries of the VSLA training, explains how this has impacted her life:

"Before, we used to form women clubs where we got together and planted some groundnuts, but we were unable to make profit. Following the VSLA training, we were able to save our money and spend it better."

We have used the money to improve our village. We contributed to building the hall and the mosque. We also give support when someone falls ill or when we have a naming ceremony for our children. As we also help pay school fees, the burden on our husbands has lessened. They even come to us now when they run out of money. This has improved our relationships as well."

Livelihood Interventions

 **865**

(454 Females, 332 Males) farmers received **input, training and extension support** for rice, groundnut and cassava production

1,077+ 

Farm working tools were distributed and received

543 

Beneficiaries (441 Females and 102 Males) **trained in VSLA and making significant savings**

6,500

Participants (3,900 Females and 2,600 Males) received **Land Tenure Training** across 7 Chiefdoms in 3 districts (Pujehen, Bo and Tonkolili).

208 

Women sensitized on **land tenure security** in Zimmi



Participatory Mapping Exercise: Community representatives took active part in **mapping the various land** uses in their communities

Livelihood Support Activities

“The process of participatory mapping allowed us to fully understand the land use patterns present in each parcel of leased land, an essential part of sustainable palm oil development.” - Perspective of Natural Habitats SL

Seeds

- 783 farmers supported to plant 429 bushels of groundnut in 2017-18
- 761 farmers supported to plant 144 bushels of rice in 2017-2018
- 761 farmers supported to plant 377 bundles of cassava sticks in 2017-2018
- 865 (male:332, female 454) farmers received food security training

Tools

24 wheel barrels, 141 shovels, 377 ploughing hoes, 51 mattocks, 86 head pans, 172 big hoes, 69 tarpaulins, 46 watering cans, 49 garden lines, cutlasses, 62 Pick axes

VSLA training

- Educating stakeholders on right to land, tenure security and resource mobilisation through VSLA and Gender Model Family training
- Reduction of poverty; loans are given to members with a small amount of interest
- Raised income to support children
- Creation of social fund - used for burials, school fees, illness

Individual Land Title Documentation Initiative

In five communities 208 participants were actively engaged in providing evidence of ownership and women were encouraged to land entitlement.

Participatory mapping

A key requirement for Natural Habitat to ensure that the new lease is in compliances with national and international guidelines, is to engage in a participatory mapping exercise. During this exercise, community representatives took active part in mapping the various land uses in their communities. The team guiding the participatory mapping was of mixed composition including representatives from Solidaridad, NAMATI and Natural Habitats. The purpose for NH is to confirm the plots of land to be leased are not in use or of cultural or religious importance to community members. The aim was to use the participatory mapping as a validation exercise for the individual and family land plots identified to be leased and get a sign off on these maps. Furthermore, the exercise ensures that land usage follows the regulations as stated in the NLP and ensures that future yields are within RSPO guidelines.

“We initiated a food security project and contributed 24 bushels of rice to the land owners in three communities: Tuasu, Manjama, and Gbahama. Later that year, Solidaridad took over the project activities and included them as part of the LEGEND project. This cooperation helped to extend the project and bring it to the next level.” - Perspective of Natural Habitats SL

OVERVIEW OF TRAINING FOR WOMEN

Timeline

AUGUST 2017

(105 women)

Formation of four women groups (105 women) in Gibema, Gofor, Gbahama and Gokpoma - to receive training on land rights

OCTOBER 2017

(187 participants: 156 males- 32 females)

NEDOIL communities receive Women's Empowerment training by Solidaridad in collaboration with WOFHRAD-SL

- » Gbonkolenken Chiefdom > Yele
- » Valunia Chiefdom > Pelewahun and Mandu
- » Niawa Lenga Chiefdom > Nengbema Community
- » Bargbe Chiefdom > Benduma community

TOPICS COVERED:

- VGGT/NLP
- Capacity building
- Explanation to community stakeholders in power positions, such as the paramount chief, of the important role women play in the community and their land rights

The four dimensional VSLA Training Package

1. Gender Model Family (GMF) Module

To enable participants understand why it is necessary to talk about gender issues at the household level and the need to promote gender equality in their homes and the community.

2. Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Module

Participants learn to understand the relationship between sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) issues and income generation as women and/or as a family.

3. Resource mobilization (RM) Module

Participants learn to understand available resources at their disposal in order to generate enough income to be self-reliant.

4. Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) Module

Participants learnt the importance of saving own-resource towards self-reliance and economic productivity.

SKILLS LEARNT BY PARTICIPANTS:

- Basic business management
- Peace building and conflict management
- Leadership roles and responsibilities
- Capacity building; land rights & decision making

JULY/AUGUST 2018

(543 participants, 441 women)

Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) Training

“The ‘four dimensional VSLA training package’ for women’s groups in the LEGEND operational communities in Makpele Chiefdom was tailored to meet their multiple socio-economic needs.”
- Natural Habitats SL



How Solidaridad Empowers Women in the Makpele Chiefdom - Uman Sef Get Rayt

In Sierra Leone, women are severely marginalized and underrepresented. Although 80% of rural women are primarily engaged in agriculture, they remain disadvantaged in relation to land ownership. Furthermore, gender-based violence, lack of access to financial tools, high pregnancy mortality rates are among some of the serious issues Sierra Leonean women face. One of the key objectives of Land: Enhancing Governance for Economic Development programme is to improve land rights of women in order to increase their involvement in community decision making, to combat gender-based violence and to safeguard community food security and income.

Women are accelerators of change. Due to the central role women play in raising and educating children in their communities, women can pass on their education more easily. In addition, women often invest their income in nutrition, health, and education. This in turn positively influences their family and the community. As the LEGEND programme seeks to protect the land rights, livelihoods and food security of vulnerable people within targeted areas in the Makpele Chiefdom, Solidaridad has made concerted efforts towards empowering women in the community.

Investing in Women, investing in the future

- Profile of Sedia Massaquoi

It takes Sedia Massaquoi a couple of minutes to walk from her house to the primary school where she teaches. She passes a couple of people from the community, who greet her with warmth and respect. Just before she enters the school compound she spots her adopted daughter from afar, carrying a large bowl with slippers on her head. Sedia smiles. 'Things are better now.'

Sedia Massaquoi, teacher, community advisor, mother, business owner, farmer and gardener, was born and raised in Gofor, Makpele Chiefdom. The village had its own share of problems; unemployment, poverty, malnutrition and lack of access to basic facilities to name a few. Sedia explains, 'the market was empty. Because the road from here to nearby villages is bad and our yields were low, we could not sell effectively. Piles of cassava lay to rot. Although the entire village suffered from the situation, women were burdened more severely. 'The women here suffered because of high unemployment rates in the chiefdom. We went to the farm even when pregnant. Holding our children in one, and farm tools in the other hand.' Meanwhile, they often did not receive anything from the small profits farm yields used to bring. 'We were allowed to farm the land, but had no rights or saying in land issues.'

With the implementation of LEGEND programme, Solidaridad gave concerted efforts towards empowering women in the chiefdom. Not only as part of their objectives, but also realizing that women pass along their knowledge to

the next generation, and therefore act as accelerators of positive change. In Gofor, 119 people received the Village Saving Loan Association (VSLA) training, of which the Gender Model Family (GMF) was one of four modules. Sedia explains, 'During the GMF training we were told how to make peace in a household. Men were shown how much work the women do, and this changed their opinion of us. We got educated about dividing labour more fairly, and on how to solve our issues more constructively. Now, men take on some of the household tasks, and are treating women with more respect.'

Because of this change in workload, women have more time to spend on other activities. Considering the unemployment issues, the women in Gofor welcomed the VSLA module on savings with open arms.

'We were taught to do business in the VSLA and our cash is safe. During the training we learnt how to use a savings box. We all contribute 2.000 leones per week and were taught how to use this money effectively by investing in side businesses which can support us.' Sedia proudly mentions all the extra businesses she has started since the training. 'I buy slippers and sell them just above cost price to have a quicker turnover. The extra money I use to invest in palm oil, caustic soda and buckets, things I sell here and in Gendema. Many women have started petty trading since we started the VSLA groups.'

Lessons Learned

- Small scale business as a life skill and means of income generation for women is an essential tool for sustainable empowerment
- Education is key to increase gender equity; traditions, prejudice and lack of knowledge can contribute to exclusion of women in decision making

What the beneficiaries say:

- Women have right to land, decision making processes and financial empowerment.
- Women should make use of their locally available resources as a means of income generation for their homes.
- Women are using the share of their (VSLA) funds to educate our children, engage in vegetable gardening and as social fund.
- Cohesive group formation contributes to peace in the communities.
- Women should be concerned with land issues, it is not only men who have the right to decide on land issues

Outcomes of gender training



LEGEND KEY RESULTS



Transparency in Natural Habitats
Company lease agreement (FPIC)



Peace and unity restored between feuding entities in Makpele Chiefdom



6,500
People trained on NLP/VGGT



1,785
People trained in Gender-sensitive land tenure security



543
People received VSLA training and kits, and making significant savings



2,320ha
Natural Habitats concession reduced to 2,320ha (from 30,700ha)



865
Beneficiaries received inputs, training and extension support for rice, cassava and groundnut production

FPIC - Free Prior Informed consent

VGGT - The Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forest, and Fisheries

NLP - National Land Policy

VSLA - Village Savings and Loan Association

Solidaridad

50 years



Funded by:



Department
for International
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