

News from The Carter Center

THE
CARTER CENTER



www.cartercenter.org/liberia

Welcome to the sixth newsletter from The Carter Center in Liberia. This forum is to help partners stay informed of our work and that of our civil society partners as we continue to support the government's implementation of PRS priorities. The Center provides technical and capacity support to the Ministry of Justice and Judiciary, and works in partnership with the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs, civil society organizations (see side panel), and indigenous leaders to improve access to justice and knowledge of the rule of law. The Center also supports a Community Legal Advisor service in the North and Southeast in partnership with the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. We welcome all questions and suggestions.

Vol. II, Issue 1
April 2010

The Carter Center is located on UN Drive in Monrovia, four compounds east of the Mamba Point Hotel. Our Project Manager, John Hummel, can be reached at 06 452 022. We also have field offices in Harper (06 452 682) and Gbarnga (06 558 429).

Carter Center Launches Two New Capacity-Building Partnerships

The Carter Center has recently been awarded two grants to build on our existing Access to Justice work in new and exciting ways. First, with USAID funding, the Center will begin work in April with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to build the dispute resolution capacity of traditional leaders, consistent with the rule of law. This 18-month grant builds from training on the rule of law to traditional leaders in 15 counties and subsequent requests from the MIA and the National Traditional Council for further training in community dispute resolution. Training and local support will be targeted in Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Margibi, and Maryland counties.

Second, the Center is part of a group headed by IREX (the International Research and Exchanges Board) that was chosen by USAID to implement a five-year Liberia Civil Society and Media Leadership program. We look forward to working with a full range of civil society and national stakeholders, including Social Impact, the YMCA, and the Liberia Media Center who are the other implementing partners.

Civil Society Partners

- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC)
- Bong Youth Association (BYA)
- Modia Drama Club
- Southeastern Women Development Association (SEWODA)
- Inter-Religious Council of Liberia (IRCL)
- Traditional Women United for Peace (TWUP)
- Crusaders for Peace
- Common Action Liberia (CAL)
- Flomo Theatre Company

Carter Center Starts Year with Training for Civic Educators and Community Legal Advisors

Civic education is a critical element of creating an active and empowered citizenry, and a key component of the Carter Center's activities in Liberia. Since 2006, the Carter Center has partnered with the MOJ and county-based civil society organizations (see side panel) to carry messages on the rule of law directly to rural communities most often via drama, group dialogue, or radio. Currently, the Center works through CSOs in Bong, Lofa, Nimba, five southeastern counties to educate Liberians

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National Conference on Enhancing Access to Justice Held

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) held a National Conference on Enhancing Access to Justice in Gbarnga between April 15-17. The Carter Center, in partnership with UNMIL and the United States Institute for Peace (USIP), assisted the meetings that built upon the findings of the Legal Working Group (LWG), a group of Liberian legal experts who have been studying the current status of, and ways forward for, the dual justice system in Liberia.

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Manjoe of Flomo Theater trains Carter Center CSO partners on dramatic techniques to convey messages to villagers.

TCC's Access to Justice work is or has been supported through grants and other support from DfID, Humanity United, Irish Aid, OSI, OSIWA, UNHCR (through the UN Peace Building Fund), UNMIL LJSSD, and USAID.

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Carter Center Announces Access to Information Project

The Carter Center is pleased to announce plans for engaging the right of access to information (ATI) in Liberia. Access to information is a cornerstone of good governance, transparency, accountability and public participation, and can create and expand political space for citizens and the media. With one full-time staff member and another part-time consultant, to be hired shortly, the Carter Center's ATI Project will work to support key stakeholders from government, civil society, and the media to advance the right of access to information in Liberia through technical assistance and sharing international experiences and lessons learned.

To date, the Center's ATI project has already conducted several visits to Liberia, presenting its observations of the draft Freedom of Information Act, which were also shared with the Legislative Committee on Information. The ATI project also recently hosted the African Regional Conference on the Right of Access to Information, held in Accra, Ghana, with several attendees from Liberia from government, civil society, and the media. At the conclusion, the conference issued the African Regional Findings and Plan of Action for the Advancement of the Right of Access to Information. (<http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/americas/conference2010/african-reg-findings-plan-of-action.pdf>).

(Carter Center Trains Civil Society Partners continued from page 1)

on topics including the Inheritance Law, the Rape Law, the criminal justice system, trial-by-ordeal, the constitution, and conflict resolution skills. Throughout February 2010, the Center's trainers conducted two-day trainings in six counties for partner CSOs to bolster their ability to conduct civic education. The Carter Center is consistently reminded of the quality, professionalism, and dedication of our partner organizations; these trainings proved no exception.

Law Fellows Program Helps Fill Gap

The Carter Center and Washington and Lee University School of Law are pleased to announce an expansion of our Law Fellows Program. The program places recently graduated international lawyers within Liberian ministries and government bodies to assist with their legal functioning and build capacity. Ten lawyers are currently placed in the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Judicial Institute. We encourage any Ministry who may be interested in this kind of legal assistance to contact John Hummel (see contact on p. 1).

(National Conference continued from page 1)

In advance of the National Conference, the MOJ, MIA, and the Judiciary held regional pre-conference consultations in Monrovia, Tubmanburg, Gbarnga, and Zwedru. The meetings brought executive, legislative, and judicial officials together with the Law Reform Commission, members of the bar, civil society leaders, traditional leaders, and other local-level justice actors to solicit input and feedback to the conference. The Conference then sought to build consensus on how to frame key issues of justice reform and develop a process for producing policy recommendations to address the dual justice system and improve access to justice in Liberia.



Traditional leaders in Zwedru participate in consultations

Briefly Noted...

- During the first quarter, the Center renewed Memoranda of Understanding with the MOJ and MIA to manage ongoing collaborations.
- Snr. Project Coordinator Pewee Flomoku conducted an assessment in Lofa County March 7-13 following the outbreak of inter-communal violence there on February 17. His report can be found at: www.cartercenter.org/liberia
- The Carter Center bids a sad farewell to Sean MacLeay, who has served as a Project Officer in the Center's Monrovia office since March 2008. Peter Chapman takes his place.

Activity Tracker

County Attorney Training—Sinoe, February 2-4.

Civil Society Trainings—February 16-March 4.

Ministerial Consultation on Access to Justice—February 10

Regional Consultation on Access to Justice—Bomi, March 2

Regional Consultations on Access to Justice—Gbarnga, Zwedru, March 18

Community Legal Advisor Training, - Zwedru, March 24-27

Carter Center Staff in Liberia

John Hummel, Attorney
Project Manager

Monrovia
Pewee Flomoku
Senior Project Coordinator

Cllr. Lemuel Reeves
Senior Legal Associate

David Kortee
Senior Finance and
Administration Officer

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Laurie Reyman
Project Officer

Yah Pay-Bayee
Project Officer

Gbarnga
Bindu Kromah
Project Officer

Nyan Flomo
Project Officer

Emmanuel Kwenah
Project Officer

On the Air

The Carter Center sponsors weekly radio shows on Star Radio:

Wednesday, 11:00am;
Repeating Saturday, 3:30pm –
Rule of Law Hour

Friday, 3:30pm –
County Attorney Half Hour