

“Media’s Role Is Cardinal”

... To Information Dissemination



Participants at the end of the sensitization forum

Participants at the jus-ended three-day sensitization forum geared towards making information accessible for all including persons with disabilities in the country have called on the media to play a key role in the process of information dissemination.

The participants believed that information dissemination should not be left with the Government of Liberia alone but also the media is cardinal in the process.

The forum was a collaborative effort between Handicap International and Building Market

Wednesday 10 April 2013, the release concluded.

Media's

Liberia with funding from USAID and UNDP. Aaron Marvolo of Handicap International challenged the participants to take a bold step that will help in addressing some of the issues when it comes to access to information dissemination for persons with disabilities. Marvolo said the three-day forum was important because it provided methods for which persons with disabilities can have access to information.

"The three days forum was intended to provide knowledge on how we can learn to address some of these challenges when it comes to access to information and it is my belief that this forum has increased our knowledge and enhanced understanding" Marvolo stressed.

He said those with disabilities should have equal rights as any other Liberians and they should be treated the same way.

Marvolo explained that persons with disabilities are faced with problems when it comes to accessing information due to their condition and status in the society.

He commended Building Markets who have offered to provide technical training to persons with disabilities in the country and added that their initiative was laudable.

Others include the
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The delegation
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For her part, Kula
Thompson-Williams of
Building Markets
Liberia also encouraged
participants to respect
the views and actions of
persons with disabilities.
Madam Thompson
Williams said persons
with disabilities were
part of the society; and as
such, they should be
treated with care and
love.

Participants also
encouraged the media to
design programs that
would help to transmit
information to disabled
people.

Kenneth

for the massive show of
supports and prayers
during his illness.

According to Minister

Bring More Canes For Blind People

NUOD Prexy Urges Govt, NGOs

The President of the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled (NUOD) Rev. Fallah Boimah Thursday (April 4) called on the Government of Liberia, the NGOs community as well as the United Nations to bring in more walking sticks (canes) for people with visual impairment.

Rev Boimah said many visually impaired people in the country were using their children to take them around because they had no other

means to move about, and admitted that the use of these children was a violation of their rights.

He said though the use of children as guide for visually impaired people was unfair for these children, he said the act would continue to happen unless government and international organizations take concrete steps to address challenges faced by people with disabilities.

"It is not only a violation of

their rights," Rev Boimah said. "But it continuously keeps both the parents and the child in poverty forever." He said "It is not good to keep children in the streets just to get daily bread; but government needs to bring in more canes."

The disabled union organization chief made the call during the final day of a three-day sensitization forum on making information accessible for all including persons with disabilities held

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Bring More Canes

under the auspices of Handicap International and Building Markets Liberia.

Boimah said there were many challenges being faced by people with disabilities, and negative and false public perceptions about people with disabilities needs to be erased, calling on the public to accept and work with people in these conditions as anyone could be able to day and becomes disabled the next day.

He indicated that if the government and partners help those with visual impairment with safety canes, they would not use their children as guides and these children would go to school and become educated people who will earn money to take care of their families.

Boimah's comment was in response to the Site Coordinator of Handicap International's concern that the rights of children being used as guide for visually impaired people were being violated.

Mr. Aaron Marvolo said instead of being in school, these children were going to become illiterate people and later become liability to society.

At the close of the three-day forum, participants, among others, called on government and the general public to pay more attention to the wellbeing of people with disabilities. They recommended among others the training people in Information dissemination through Sign language and Braille for the dumb and blind respectively; the creation of Disability Desk at public places including the national archives, election commission, education ministry among others.

Handicap's Marvolo challenged participants to be ambassadors and agents of change in their work places and communities in making people understand the issues of disabilities.

Handicap International is the disabled watch dog, and in Liberia the organization primarily supports people with a physical disability nationally for rehabilitation services and all people and families affected directly or indirectly by disability for activities designed to promote the rights of people with disabilities.

On the other hand, Building Market, founded 2004, has a mission, among others, to build markets, create jobs and sustain peace in developing countries by championing local entrepreneurs and connecting them to new business opportunities.

In Liberia, an estimated 16% of the population of the 3.73 million inhabitants constitutes people with disabilities, according to the 2008 population census. People with disabilities are often discriminated and marginalized from the larger society, and are considered to be poor and deserve charity and care, organizers of the workshop said.

People with disabilities faced tough lives in Liberia with public facilities providing no opportunities for the betterment of the lives, and officials of Handicap and Building Markets said this is why they were partnering, with support from USAID Sustainable Marketplace Initiative Liberia (SMI-L), to host the awareness forum.

The forum was attended by members of government agencies, private companies and universities, among others. Writes D Kaihenneh Sengbeh, 0886586531, dakasen1978@yahoo.com