



National Alliance Against Hunger in Sierra Leone (SLAAH)



Fundamental right to food for small and landless farmers is far from reach, though efforts have been made by central government in the process of planning for food security.

The establishment of District councils empowered by the local council act 2004 have now been given the absolute power to plan and implement development programs of which food security is the 2nd national priority.

Discussion with Bathamo women in vegetable production in the Koinadugu District Northern province

We have higher expectations from our government to improve agriculture in our community. We have very fertile soil especially for vegetable production mainly undertaken by women. It is an important source of income for our families but our roads are too bad to access easily to market centers. Some of our products get rot before they can reach the market centers and we have earned very little money which does not reward our hard labour. We have complained to our local government on the bad state of our roads but nothing has been done to improve this situation.

Traders that manage to visit our communities pay very little money. We use the money to pay our children's school fees, medication and other amenities. In some cases, it is very hard to properly take care of the children and for them to be well fed. Access to credit is another big problem as banks cannot give credit to women because most women cannot afford it. Many children are malnourished and some need de-worming. Most of the lands we use are borrowed from land owners, and some land owners have been very friendly with us. The best way of alleviating hunger is to support women's groups with all necessary means to produce, process and market food.

There is also need to organize more women's groups, and support them with tools and seed. The women are always left out in the planning and implementation of governments programs; we are asking the government to change this attitude. Hunger and malnutrition affect women and children greatly especially during the hungry season which goes from July to September. We claim to be better involved in government's policies so as to be able to better organize ourselves to reduce our suffering during this period. We want the Alliance of Sierra Leone to educate the masses on their rights to have enough food. Very few are the women who know about the Right to Food.