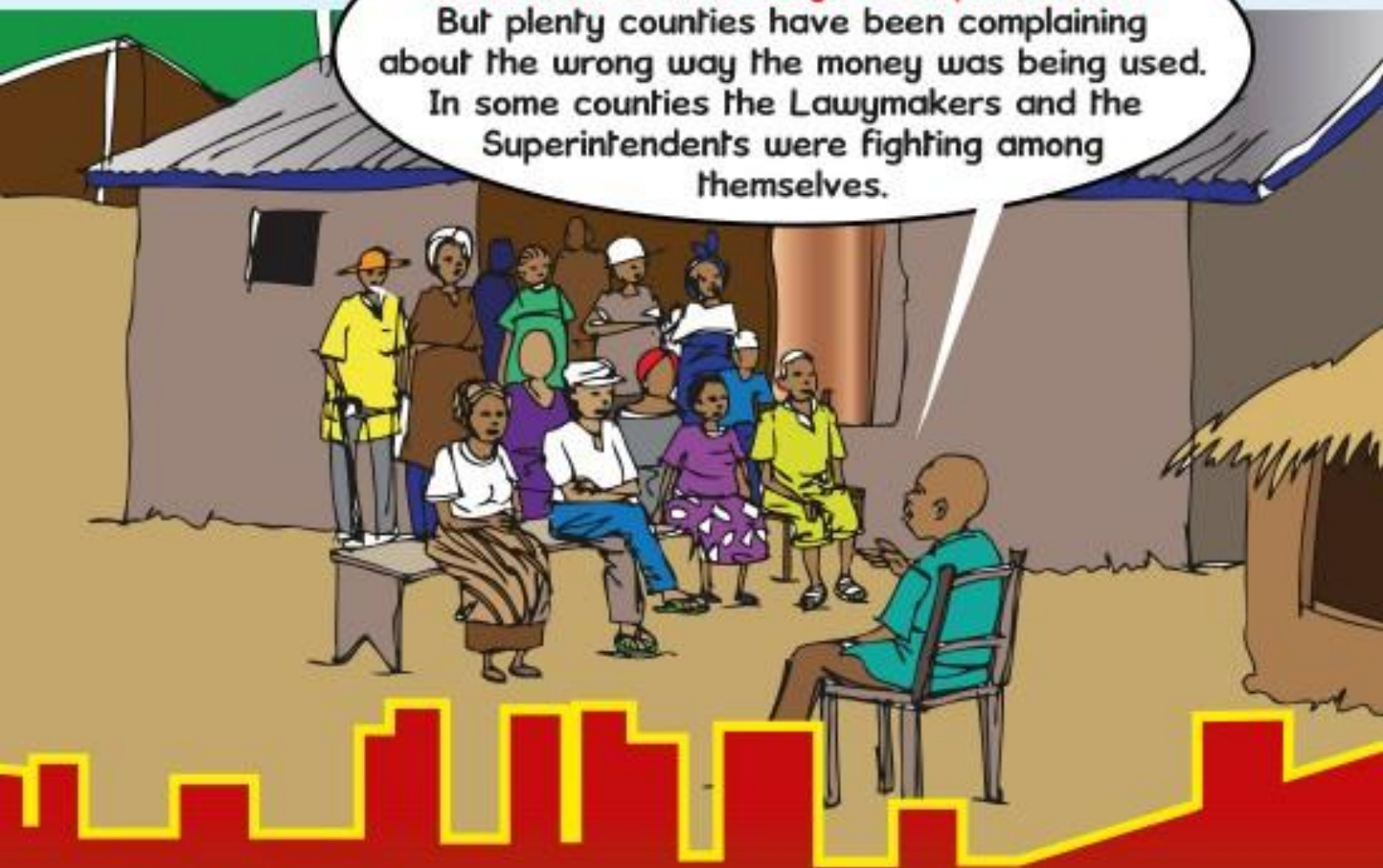


CITIZENS' GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING THE COUNTY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS (CDF & SDF)

Today, each county receives **US\$200,000** as **County Development Fund**. But plenty counties have been complaining about the wrong way the money was being used. In some counties the Lawymakers and the Superintendents were fighting among themselves.



LIBERIA





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INTRODUCTION

Liberians living in the rural parts of the county have the opportunity today to change the old ways development business used to go on in the county. For more than one hundred and fifty years, people living outside of Monrovia were left out of the decision-making processes about the development of their communities or counties. People in the rural parts are the true owners of the natural resources (minerals, forest product, iron ore, etc.) from their communities. It is these natural resources that central government take away through big big companies (extracted) and see, but the people in the rural part of the country never took part in the decisions about what, as community, they should benefit from and what the companies that are taking their resources should do for them. In the past all decisions about developments in rural Liberia, and all monies collected from the big big companies for the natural resources were made and kept by the central government in Monrovia. Rural Communities were only getting what the people in Monrovia say they should get or the kind of development the people in Monrovia think is good for them.

Since the coming into power of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in 2006, the Government of Liberia decided to change that and get the rural people involve in the decision-making process of their community/county development and companies working in their areas. All of this is to make sure that the rural people can directly benefit from the natural resources (minerals, forest product, iron ore, etc.) taken away from their communities.

So in order to do this, the Government of Liberia in 2007 passed a law and setup a program called the County Development Fund (CDF) and the Social Development Fund (SDF). Under this program the government agreed to always put some monies in the big money paper of the country called "National Budget" for each county in the country to do development work in their county. This will be done every year and this money is called "County Development Fund (CDF)." Also the government agreed that all big big companies working in a county and taking away some of the county natural resources, like gold, forest product, iron ore or using the people land to plant oil palm, etc. should give that county some money for development work every year. That money is called "Social Development Fund (SDF)."

The same law that the government make for this to happen also says that it is the citizens or people living in a county that should meet and decide on how

and what project (s) the monies should be spent on. The citizens are support to meet in the county and make those decisions. The idea behind this was for plenty development to take place in each county quick quick.



Since that law came into being in 2007 the Government of Liberia has been giving that money to every county in Liberia, but we still cannot see the development work going on the way we expected in the counties. People have been giving plenty different reasons for the lack of more development. Some say some big big people from the county in the government are “eating” the money that is sent to the counties for development, others are saying the rural people who support to make the decision as to how the money should be used are not involve in the decision making process, while others are saying the rural people themselves do not even know more about the CDF and the SDF or what to do so that their counties leaders will not “eat” their money which is for the development of their county.

One sure way to solve the problems around the CDF and the SDF is to give the rural people more information about the CDF and the SDF so that they understand their roles and responsibilities in the decision-making processes that leads to the use of CDF and SDF and it is them (rural people) that support to make the decision as to how the CDF and SDF should be used.

As a way of helping, the Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI), a non- government group that like working with women and young people and Society for Environmental Conservation (SEC) has decided to produce this small book called “Citizens’ Guide to Understanding the CDF and SDF” to explain in simple English the whole story behind the CDF and the SDF and encourage the citizens and people living in each and every county that the CDF and SDF is for the development of their county and not for any community, county or government officials to take and eat. If they the citizens decide on a particular project to be carryout with the CDF and SDF, they should see to it that the project is carryout the way they want it and within the time they agreed on. If for any reason(s) the project is not carried out they should ask their leaders to make report before they can make any other decision on another project.

The Citizens’ Guide to the County Development Fund and Social Development Fund is a simple way to tell the ordinary citizens about the money government is giving to the different counties, every year to help with their development.



WHAT IS THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Government of Liberia said that every county in the country must do their own development. This means that the people/citizens in the county must sit down and decide on what they want for their county for development. The money that the government gives to the county every year to do their own development is what they call the "County Development Funds."

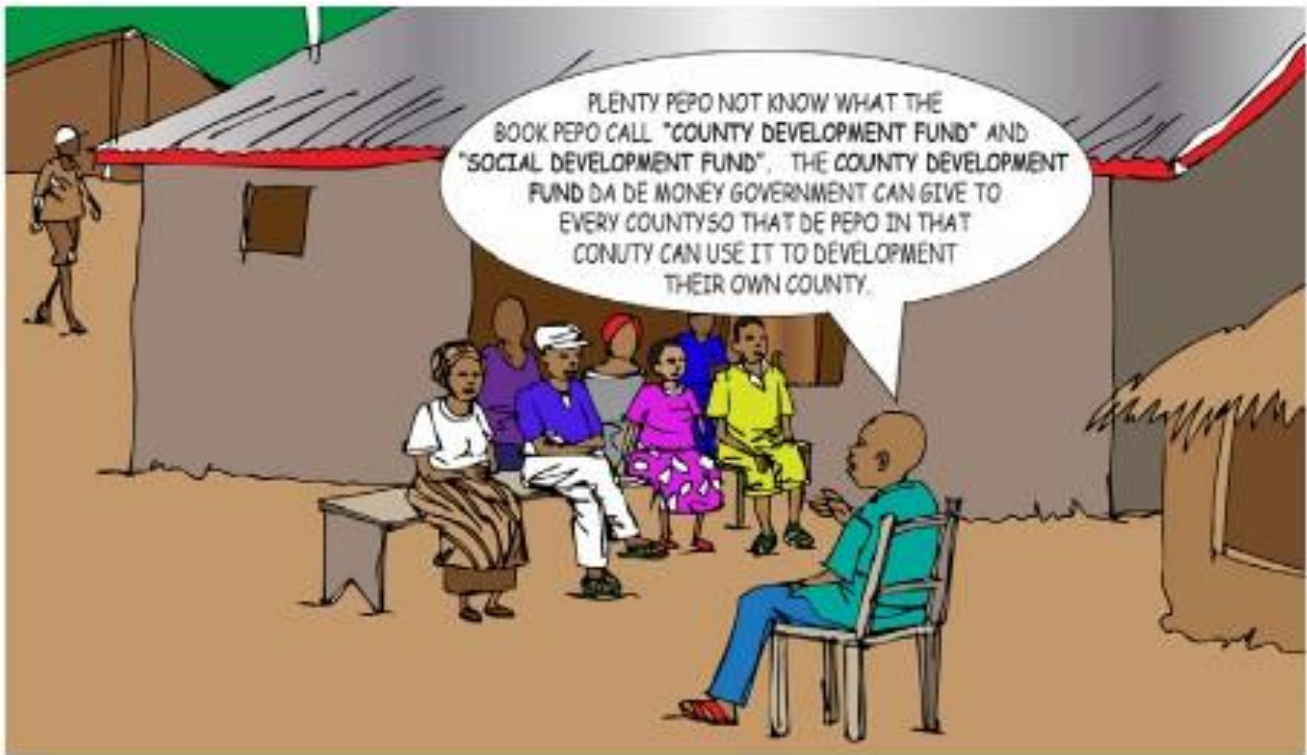
HOW DID THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT FUND COME INTO BEING

The County Development Fund (CDF) came into being when the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf government came to power in 2007. The government decided that the better way for the counties to be really developed is when citizens or people living in the counties take the development business in their own hands. That is, the citizens or people in the counties meet and discuss what they want to do to develop their county. So the government passed a law to give certain amount of money to each county every year to carry out development work in their county.

WHAT IS THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Government also says that big companies making business in the counties should pay some money to help with the development of the counties they are working in. The money that the big companies pay to the govern-





ment through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to help with the development of the county is the "Social Development Fund."

HOW DID THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND COME INTO BEING

The Social Development Fund came into being when the Ellen Johnson- Sirleaf government started work as the government in Liberia. The government said that the natural resources like the land, gold, oil, iron ore, etc. that God bless Liberia with must be used to develop the country and the people. So any big company that wants to take some of these things from any county must pay certain money to that county for their development work. This money is paid to the national government through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and is sent to the counties to do their development work.

WHAT ARE THE WAYS TO GET THE CDF AND SDF

Before a county can get the County Development Fund or Social Development Fund, they have to do certain things. The first thing according to the law is that each county should open and manage a County Development Account in the name of the county at a local bank. All the money for the County Development Fund and Social Development Fund for a county will be put into that account for the county. The people that can sign for money to be taken from the County Development Account for it to be used for development are:



WHAT ARE THE WAYS TO GET THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT FUND AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND?

A-Signature: the County Assistant Superintendent for financial and fiscal management as principal authorizer (main person); or if he/she is not in the county or country, the County Superintendent can sign. But two of them cannot sign to take money from the county account;

B-Signature: The Project Management Committee (PMC) Chairperson elected by the County Council as second principal authorizer (second main person); or if he/she is not in the county or country, the PMC Treasurer also elected by the County Council can sign. But two of them cannot sign to take money from the county account.

Before any money come from the County Development Account two person must sign, (the main person & the second main person) or if one of them not in the county or country the other person working with them must sign.





HOW DECISIONS ARE TO BE MADE FOR THE USE OF THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT

The law says the Superintendent in agreement with the County Lawmakers will call a big citizen meeting called County Council Sitting, most time this meeting is held in the capital city of the county, to discuss and decide on how the money will be used. At this meeting representatives from all the districts in the county including Statutory Superintendents, District Commissioners, Youth Representatives, Women Representatives, Elders and Chiefs. All these people at meeting are called "DELEGATES". Whatever they decide on is the final.

Also at the meeting some other people like the NGO people that can talk for people rights called Civil Society Organizations and other NGOs can be there to see how the people will discuss their development issues. The big person for the County Lawmakers will head the meeting. He/she is to allow everybody that got something to say about the development of the county to talk. Not because he/she is heading the meeting so any he say is final; no, the people got the right to speak too at the meeting. The County Superintendent will send out the invitation for the meeting if plenty of the county lawmakers agree.

At the meeting the citizens are to discuss and agree on which development



project they want to carry on and how much they will spend on each development project.

After all the discussions, the citizens will come up with the list of development projects they want to carry out that year and the money that that will be needed to do those projects; then all the “Delegates” will signed on that list of project and that list of projects with the other decisions taken at the, a Resolution, that is the things everybody agrees on will be signed by all the delegates. The things the delegates agreed to will be signed by them and those things will be the development projects for that year to be supported by the County Development Fund and the Social Development Fund.

After singing the Resolution, the Resolution is taken to the government house that can look after the county government matters, the Ministry of Internal Affairs. If all the Resolution is okay, they will send the Resolution to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning asking them to put the money in the bank account of the county. The Ministry will make sure each county ask for and get all of the money they have in their County and Social Development Fund budget for the year, especially in the first six months of the year to start their development work soon.



Another thing the delegates at the County Council can do is to elect a Project Management Committee (PMC). The Project Management Committee (PMC) is a group of people that the Delegates at the County Council Sitting elect to see to it that every development plan or project they agreed on at the County Council Meeting will be done. The PMC will work with the County Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for Development to see to it that companies or people that take money from the county to do development work in the county will do it as it is in the resolution.

WHAT IS THE COUNTY COUNCIL WHAT AND DOES IT DO

Each county is support to have a County Council made of representatives from the all districts in the county. The County Council is the highest decision making body about development projects in the county, especially development that will be paid for by the County and Social Development Funds. The County Council will also do the following:

- Decide on the way the County and Social Development fund will be divided on project around the county
- Decide on the project to be carried out
- Elect a 3member Project Management Committee (PMC) one time every three years: The PMC will include a Chairman, a Treasurer and

- a Comptroller
- Decide the qualification of the members of the PMC
- Review and assess the progress level of on-going development project in the county with the aim of correcting any mistakes in the project on the project money business

Whatever the delegates at the County Council agreed on will be written down and all the delegates will write their name on it. And that paper is called the RESOLUTION. The Chairperson and plenty of the County Lawmakers are to also write their name on that paper to make it correct. Also the Superintendent is to sign that paper.

If the County Council agreed for some of the County Development Fund and Social Development Fund to be used for development in any part of the county, the people of that area are to meet and lead that development project by appointing a Project Monitoring Team to make sure that the development work go on well. The Project Management Team will report to the people of that area and to the PMC, and the PMC will give report to the County Superintendent, the Lawmakers and the County Council when they meet the next time in session.

HOW DOES THE RURAL PEOPLE TAKE PART IN THE DECISION TO USE THE CDF AND SDF

The rural communities are supposed to send people (district commissioners, elders, youths and women) to the Development Council Meeting to talk for them. These people are called DELEGATES. The meeting the DELEGATES go to is called THE COUNTY COUNCIL SITTING. At that meeting the DELEGATES who are representing the rural communities are supposed to vote/decide on the projects that they want the CDF and SDF to be used on. All the projects they agreed on is put on a paper and the DELEGATES and LAW-MAKERS of the county sign on that paper. The paper (RESOLUTION) that the DELEGATES and the LAW-MAKERS sign on with have the list of projects and all the things they agreed on in the meeting.

They also supposed to make sure that the projects they agreed on in the resolution are done during the period. They are to hold their leaders to make sure because the monies are for their development.



IS THERE MECHANISM FOR REDRESS IF THE CDF/SDF PROCESSES ARE NOT FOLLOWED

The law says nobody should use any of the County or Social Development Funds for any different project beside the projects the citizens agreed on at the County Council Sitting. However, if the citizens are not happy with the way the development work is going on in the county or how their money (CDF&SDF) is being used, they (citizens), including Civil Society Organizations and youth as well as women groups have the right to ask their leaders, in a respectable way, to make report to them.

The people can hold their leaders to tell or explain to them things they do not understand when it comes to their development and money business. They can also use the radio or other respectable means to state their dissatisfaction. Delegates could even raise issues at the County Council sitting if they have dissatisfaction over the way the last Resolution was handled.

Another thing is that if a contract(s) are given to company (ies) to carry out development project(s) in the county and the company (ies) received money for the project and failed to do the work, the company (ies) should be taken to court to either complete the project or repay the county money.



HOW MUCH A COUNTY IS SUPPOSED TO RECEIVE UNDER THE CDF AND SDF

The County Development Fund started in the budget year of 2007/2008. In that budget year the government started by giving each county US\$66,666.00. The same amount, US\$66,666.00 was given the following budget year – 2008/2009.

Then the counties complained that the money was not plenty to do the things they wanted to do. So the government carried the money up to US\$200,000.00. So each county can receive the same amount of money US\$200,000.00 each year.

In 2011/2012 no county in the country received CDF because plenty people from plenty counties complained about the wrong way the money was being used. In some counties the Lawmakers and the Superintendents were fighting among themselves.

For the Social Development Fund, only counties that got big big companies working in that county can receive Social Development Fund. And the Social Development Fund is not the same for all counties. Some counties can receive more while some counties can receive small. It is all dependent on the work a company is doing in a particular county.

Here are some Development Projects that the CDF & SDF can do

No. Project

1. Rehabilitation of Presidential Palace
2. Rehabilitation of County Sports Stadium
3. Construction of clinics and/or hospitals
4. Rehabilitation of City Streets
5. Purchase of Yellow “Earth-Moving” Machines
6. Renovation of County Administration Building
7. Construction of County and Districts Administration Buildings
8. Construction of City Halls
9. Renovation of City Halls
10. Construction of Town Halls
11. Provision of Scholarship for citizens
12. Construction and/or Operation of Community College
13. Plus many more
- 14 Others base on the county context



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