

REPORT ON THE TWO DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR FOR INTEGRITY CLUBS

PASTORAL CENTER KENEMA

MAY 30 -31 2008

The two day national seminar was held at the pastoral center in Kenema. Participants comprised of teacher coordinators and pupils from the twenty seven integrity clubs nationwide.

The purpose of convening the national seminar was to revive the long dormant, non functioning integrity clubs. The objectives of the seminar were therefore:

- To revisit the aims and objectives of the clubs
- To identify activities to be undertaken during the ensuing two year period
- To map out strategies to be adopted in carrying out the activities
- To distinguish ways through which the clubs could be sustained
- To identify an effective monitoring and supervision mechanism for the clubs

In achieving these objectives the need for transparency, accountability and best practice in school was also highlighted, given that integrity and honor should be components of the socialization process of the young in our society.

DAY ONE

In his opening remarks the Director of the Public Education and Outreach department of the Anti Corruption Commission said that the commission continues to pay special attention to school pupils as they are the leaders in waiting and can play a powerful role in influencing their peers, parents and others within their communities.

Session one

Participants were taken through the handouts depicting key points as contained in the new ACC Act on:

- What is corruption?
- What is a public body?
- What are public funds?
- What are corrupt practices?
- What are the offences?

- The consequences of corruption
- The purpose of integrity clubs.

This exercise served to give focus and direction, for the effective participation of both teachers and pupils who were given a free hand to devise and propose programs and plans according to the objectives of the seminar.

Session Two

Participants were divided into groups and requested to examine, review, discuss, on the five objectives of the seminar and thereby propose and make recommendations based on the new orientation of the ACC.

DAY TWO

Session One

Participants had the opportunity of meeting with the commissioner, Mr. Abdul Tejan Cole and some members of the senior management team. During this session participants were acquainted with developments within the commission and informed about the new approach being adopted in the fight against corruption based on the recently launched Anti Corruption Strategy. He revealed that the revised Anti Corruption Act which had been gazetted will soon be tabled in Parliament for promulgation. This new Act will give prosecutorial powers to the Anti Corruption Commission; remove the influence of the Attorney General, make the declaration of assets by public officials compulsory and ensure the protection of whistle blowers and informants.

The Director of system and process review department Mrs. Neneh Dabo spoke on the restructuring of the Prevention department to comprise of three units: the system review, compliance and Ethics and policy units. She stressed on the significance of corrupt practices prevention and urged the teacher coordinators and integrity club members to support the commission in its work.

Dr. Ivan Thomas Director of the department of Public Education and Outreach said this department is mandated to educate the public on the evils of corruption and to solicit public support in the fight against corruption. In this respect once the new Act is legislated, the commission will be conducting national and regional consultative meetings to design and implement the ACC's public education strategy.

The head of investigation Evelyn Walker outlined and elaborated on the definition of corrupt practices as contained in the current Act. She disclosed that the revised Act will increase this number to twenty nine. The new Act however will not authorize the commission to conduct a trial or pass judgment. This is the purview of the courts of Sierra Leone as the rule of law is supreme.

Session Two

Presentations of the deliberations in session two of day one were made by each group. Subsequently, given the common threads in the presentations the following resolutions were taken:

Objectives

1. To make pupils agents of change
2. To develop in pupils a sense of patriotism
3. To empower pupils to speak out on corruption

Activities to be undertaken by pupils during the academic year 2008 - 2009

On Campus Activities

- News reading on corruption at assembly
- Inter house/class quiz competition on corruption
- Debates on issues of corruption
- Drama displays on prize giving day.
- Use of suggestion boxes in school campuses for the report of corrupt practice

Outreach Activities

- Radio/ T.V discussions – pupils are to be active participants in the regular ACC radio and T.V programs where feasible.
- There should be a visit exchange program between integrity clubs.
- Integrity clubs to visit schools without these clubs to spread the message.
- Inter- clubs/ school games can also be organized to encourage more interaction between the clubs and other schools.
- Cross country runs by club members to raise awareness about clubs their purpose and functions.

- Jingles and skit performance at school programs.

Sustainability

- The ACC should update the clubs about its activities to keep members informed and for wider dissemination of accurate information.
- Annual workshop to review and assess progress and success of clubs
- Holiday camps for all integrity clubs nationwide or regionally.
- End of year celebration in the schools for e.g. Celebration of the international anti corruption day
- The inclusion of ACC issues in the curriculum
- The integrity clubs should always engage in a membership drive
- Deserving members of the integrity clubs should be given incentives such as awards or certificates of recognition.
- The ACC should assign an officer specifically for the integrity clubs and should have mentoring programs in the schools at regular intervals

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The ACC should pay monitoring visits to the schools at least once a term
- Teacher coordinators should make quarterly reports to the ACC on activities of their respective clubs.
- The heads/ principals of schools should be members of the integrity clubs to facilitate the effective implementation of, and participation in ACC programs.
- There should be effective communication between the schools and the ACC office.

Strategies

- A formal launching of the clubs within the schools will help to create greater awareness of the existence and purpose of the club.
- Pupils should be encouraged to write and publish articles on corruption either in the school magazine, national newspapers or in the ACC newsletter The Eye.
- Funds should be made available for financing club activities
- Teacher coordinators and pupils are to be trained by the ACC
- Members of the integrity clubs are to be identified by an I.D card and T- shirts.