

# ELDERS FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PROTOCOL

## COMMUNITY LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCE ACCESS, USE, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

This talk is about community land and the rich, rich things God give us. When I think about community land and the rich, rich things that God give us, then I think about the community FOREST land (the place that get big, big trees where people go to hunt and to bring bush plants). I think also about the community FARMLAND (the land on which different, different family members in the house groups can work together to make farm). Then, I also think about the community TOWNLAND (land in the town) and any different rich, rich things that God give us and swamp land.

1. You live in \_\_\_\_\_ town / community. You can tell me something about how this town/community started and who started this community? *[Probe: Reason for founding, where people came from]*
2. Please explain to me the way you can use the rich rich things that God give us they can use among your in your big Town/Headquarter/City/Clan/Small Area. What are the laws for using resources/ the rich rich things that God give us and how you and your neighbors go about it? *[Probe: Who you ask (if you suppose to ask somebody)? You can explain the way they let you to do it?]*
  - How do women use the rich rich things in this community and how do they go about it? *[Probe: Who they can ask (if you suppose to ask somebody)? You can explain to me the last time some of this thing happen here?]*
  - When young people use the rich rich things that God give us the way you just explain it, how they can let them to do so? Who they can ask (if you suppose to ask somebody)? You can explain to me the last time some of this thing happen here?
  - When some strangers or different tribe people use the rich rich things that God give us the way you just explain it, how they can let them to do so? Who they can ask (if you suppose to ask somebody)? You can explain to me the last time some of this thing happen here?
  - If it na happen before, then how things na change in the last year about the way you can work together with your leaders in matter about how to take good care of land and the rich rich things that God give us? *[Probe: Give an example of something that has happened that would not have happened before.]*
  - What last time you remember that they not let somebody to use community land or some rich thing that God give us?
    - If YES: You can really tell me about the thing that happen?
    - If NO: If you not remember anything like that then it means that everybody get equal chance to use these rich rich things that God give us? Or, you can tell me how some people get more chance over other people in using the land and the rich rich things that God give us in it?
3. As elders in this community, what part you can take in taking good care of the community farmland, the forestland, the townland and the swampland? You can show me one example for the way the elders can take good care of the community land and the rich rich things that God give us?
4. As elder in this community, what na change or it stay the way in the last three years, about the way you can take part in taking good care of the community land and the rich rich things that God give us?
5. In this community, what good feeling you get about the boundary areas of your community farmland, the forest, the townland and the swampland? “Good Feeling” means you are sure that inside people (big people in your area) and/or outside people (communities/clans near your area, big government people, companies/business people, big people from Monrovia) will not cross the boundary areas of your community farmland, your forest, your townland and your swampland by force.

- If you get good feeling that everything alright, then what make you to feel that way? What thing there to keep your community land and the rich rich things that God give us free from the inside people and outside people who can spoil boundary law?
  - If you not feeling good, you think that something can happen, then what make it like that? What make it hard for the community and the community leaders to control the community boundary areas? Who are the main people that you think they get the heart to just cross the land boundary areas? *[PROBE: from outside the community, you scare of companies/business people, big people from Monrovia, big government people? Or, from inside the community, you scare of people in the community who want to take land or other rich rich things that God give us for their own benefit?]*
  - Sometimes after some time na pass, we can feel too sure or little bit sure about the boundaries of your community land (because things can change)! In the last year, you feel too sure, little bit sure or you feel the same way you were sure of the boundaries of your community land?
    - If your feeling not change, then what make it like that?
    - If you feel too sure of things, then what happen to make you to feel too sure of things?
    - If you feel sure little bit, then what happen to make it like that?
    - *[Probe: what groups like people with power/people who make things happen/organizations are taking part in making people to feel too sure of things or not to fell sure of anything at all?]*
6. From this time to go in front, what type of land and the rich, rich things that God give us, are very important? What reason make it like that? What resources are very important to help the community to grow in business and money making? What resources are very important to help the community to grow in group work and God (praying) business?
7. You and your community want people to help you in controlling and taking good care of the land and the rich, rich things that God give us, that belong to the whole community or to one, one people?

## COMMUNITY LAND AND NATURAL RESORUCE INVESTMENT

- I. The land in your area, the different, different things that God put in that area, like the water, the bush and the things that in the bush like animals, things that in the ground and other things in the area, the land you make farm on, the land they build the town on, and the land like swamp where water can sit down, sometime, from time to time, they can change. Now, now, I want to talk about things that if you or other people were to do them, then it was going to make those things to be better in the past year.
- The bush, the land you people can make farm on, the land that they build the town on, or the land like swamp where water can sit down, this year that just passed, you able to explain what the people in this town did to make it better? How they did it? If the town people used money to do it, how they manage to get the money to pay for it? *[Probe: involvement of women, members of minority groups, and youth.]*
  - Sometime from time to time, for things to get better, it can't happen, it can get bad. In the last year, you able to explain what kind of change take place that make it things are not looking good the way it used to be on your community land? *[Probe: resources getting smaller, harder to access, changes in their quality and so forth.]*

## INVESTOR RELATIONS

- I. This year that just passed, the company people who can come to do business like cutting trees or dig diamond or gold or iron ore, they na come to your area to take your land you can make farm on, or your bush, or your land like swamp where water can sit down, or they na ask you about the things that in the ground like diamond, or gold or iron ore? *If yes, then ask the questions in Part A:*

## **PART A: ASKED IF INVESTOR IS PRESENT OR PAST HISTORY OF INTERACTION WITH INVESTOR**

1. How the company people do it? For example, who they asked or who they go to first? Who the company people check with first when they were finding out about the land? *[Probe: only government people, the town big people, the whole town people, etc.]?*
  - How they manage to agree to let the company put their foot on the land? The thing that on the land like the bush or the things under the ground, which one of them the company people put their hand on in your area? The way they talk about it and agree on it, who all was inside that talk? In the end, who really give the company the power to get the land?
  - The company really working on the land now, now? *[Probe: It good to know this because when people put land one side for something or they give it to company people, most of the time the company don't work on it for long.]* What kind of work they doing on the land (they digging gold or diamond or iron ore, they cutting trees, they doing farming business, they fix the place so people will come from different, different places and pay money to them to come and see the fine, fine things there)?
  - If people sat down together with the company to talk about what will come from inside for the town people, who the people that sat down together to talk? The government was inside? How you yourself take part in the talk? How women take part in the talks? They talked to women different and talked to men different?
2. If any benefit or pay come from inside for you, who the people in your area will get it (the poor people, the young people, the women who don't have husbands but they are the one taking care of their home)?
3. All the things that we na talk about, when any of them was going on, the people in your area go to government for help?

## **PART B ASKED IF NO PREVIOUS INTERACTIONS WITH INVESTORS**

1. If a big person, or a big company come to you to ask for some of your land in your area, how people will come to agreement to rent it or sell it. The people in your community, who will be in that talk?
  - What part women will play in the talk? They can talk to women different and talk to men different?
2. You believe in your heart that company or some money man is not able to take any piece of your land in your area when you and them don't talk about it for you to get something from inside? If you say yes, why? If you say no, why?
3. What will happen to money or some other things that company bring for your community for them to use the land and different, different things that God put in that area, like the water, the bush and the things that in the bush like animals, things that in the ground and other things in the area? Who will say how people must use the money?
  - What you will do if the company don't give the things they promised to give to the community Who you able to go to to help you?

Let's look at something in our mind like it happen for true. It between a company and one community in different part of the country. It's NOT a real story, it didn't happen to anybody, but I want for you to do like that real thing and you member of that community. You got any questions before we start?

4. In this community in our story, one rubber company and the community signed contract so that they will use the community land to make a rubber farm. In the agreement, they promised the community to build a road and clinic. But since they made the agreement, five years pass now and they never do the thing they promised the people.
  - What kind of rights the community get? What the community must do?

- If that was your community, what you were going to do for somebody to do something about the agreement that the company signed with you? Who you were going to go to? What kind of thing you were going to do? (If nothing was to come from inside, what the next thing you were going to do?)

## COMMUNITY LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCE RELATED DISPUTES

Even when people live together with no palaver, sometime small small mistakes can come between them about some things, sometime for land business. I get two or three questions about how you can talk these land matters in your community.

1. You can explain the last time there was land palava in your community? We talking about palava between the people who live in the community themselves [the women, the young people, and people who come from other tribes or from other part of the country, who are not plenty in the area]?
  - What people did to look into this palava?
  - It made the palava to finish or it didn't make the palava to finish? Why it made the palava to finish? Why it didn't make the palava to finish?
  - Who all took part in talking the palava?
2. You can explain the last time there was palava in your community about land with somebody who is not living in the community? Let's say, another community, a big person from Monrovia, a company, or some office of the Liberian government?
  - What people did to look into this palava?
  - It made the palava to finish or it didn't make the palava to finish? Why it made the palava to finish? Why it didn't make the palava to finish?
  - Who all took part in talking the palava?
3. In the three years that just passed, there was palava with people who say they have paper for the land in the community?
  - If it happened, please explain everything good how it happened. They talked this palava and it finished? If yes, how it happened?
  - *[Probe the kind of paper: deed, tribal certificate, company agreements, somebody died and leave the land with person, etc.]*

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Now now, plenty government business are going on and plenty things are changing in the country, especially in Monrovia, but the same thing can happen here in your community. I have two or three questions about your community and the government people in Monrovia, and also in the big town for the district *[put the name here]* and the big town for the county *[put the name here]* and how that connection can work.

1. In the year that just passed, have government big people and the District Commissioner and the county big people been involved in your community land business?
  - How have they been taking part?
  - In the year that pass, you see anything different in the way that the big people in your area and the big people for the country work together on land business? For example, can the government take part in the land business more than the first time, or they don't take part too much now?
  - How it change for you yourself? Explain the ways that things have changed.

## **CONCLUSION.**

I asked plenty questions today, you get anything you like to ask me? The questions I asked you, you were able to talk in a free way about the way you feel, the things that hold your heart and the things that in your mind about looking after the land and the things that in the land, the way people supposed to look after them? If you never talk your whole mind yet, you get anything you want to say again?