**Study circle - Local community democracy**

**Introduction** This is a very important study circle, because it will help you to get more influence over your own lives in your local area.

Start by learning about Your local Village development committee and your local area council!

Then you can continue with the study circle method “FASE” to reach your goals for changes!

Take the time you need, invite the people/experts you want or visit the people you want, to get answers to your questions. from! And discuss continuously what you find out and the new questions that arise**.**

**1.Village development committee**

**Find out:**

* Who are the members in the village development committee? How and when were they elected or selected?
* Can you invite any of these to your study circle or to your member meeting?
* What would you like to ask them to learn more about?
* What did they do last year? Have they presented an activity report and a financial report for last year? Do they have a planned budget for this year?
* What is their task and responsibility?
* What would you like them to prioritise? Why?
* How can you do to get more women and more people who can work more for you and with you in the committee? Make a plan for it!

**2.Local area councils and tax- money**

When listening to the Gambian parliamentary sessions on Facebook during summer 2020, I learned that in JANJANBUREH AREA

In 2017 = 7,735,130.00 was collected and the amount spent on development projects is 7.3% = 563,041.00. While the 60% on development projects should've been = 4,641,078.

In 2018 = 7,761,614.00 was collected and the amount spent on development projects is 8.2% = 640,148.00. While the 60% on development projects should've been = 4,656,968.40.

In 2019 = 7,242,881.00 was collected and the amount spent on development projects is 9.8% 708,428.00. While the 60% on development projects should've been = 4,345,728.60.

**Discuss**: To find out how much the area Council have for Your area for 2020 and 2021- And how much taxes were collected in the area 2020`? what can you do ? Where or from who can you get these answers?

Have the council presented an annual activity report and a financial report? If not why? ‘When and how have they presented their work? And how do you think they should do it ?

Are there any journalists asking questions to them? Are these questions reported e.g. on GRTS ? Is there any local radio-stations, or local pod- radio program on internet for your local area, where these issues are scrutinized?

* Discuss with your parliamentary members and the parties you support: what they intend to do to change this so that the local areas get what they legally are in titled to?
* Ask your local area council about how they have used the money they have got these recent years and what they have budgeted for this year and if they have plans for coming years?
* What are the task and responsibility for the local area council according to the local government act, which is part of the Gambian constitution.?
* Discuss what you think should be prioritised in your area?
* Go back to the local council and discuss your conclusions with them! What do they agree on and what do you have to engage in when it comes to opinion building to organize a bigger demand for changes according to your thinking?
* Find out: how and when are the representatives in the council elected or selected? ‘
* And then discuss What can you do to get mor women and more people who do the same priorities as you do, to be elected next tim?. when will that be?
* Who should you try to get nominated and elected?
* Make a plan for it to happen!
* Who are the members in the local area council? When will there be new elections?

**3. Activities for change** What are your goals when it comes to the issues that local government act describes for local area councils and Village development committees respectively?

Use the method FASE (Find-Analyse-Solve-Evaluate) to reach your goals, in a new study circle/action group.

How will you organize this? Who will be the study circle leader? When will you meet to start? Who are interested in participating? Or will you just continue in this group? Can you organize some study circles who will have some meetings together to inform each other about your ideas in the different faces of the work?

And be sure to report your findings and suggestions back to your organisation and the political parties you support to organize actions!

Keep up the good work for change! Rosalie.Sanyang SAELG autumn 2020