



LIBERIA MEDIA FOR DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES

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Dialoging for Peace, Democracy & Development in Liberia

ZEE---MAANEH-----ZEEMAANEH (PEACE AND ENJOYMENT)

LMDI / LRA / OSIWA Event...LMDI AND LRA END A TOUR OF FIRST SET OF RURAL LIBERIAN CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES PARTIALLY ROLLING OUT THEIR RECENTLY LAUNCHED OSIWA SPONSORED VIGOROUS TAX EDUCATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT ROAD SHOW FOR RURAL DWELLERS AS RURAL TAX PAYERS EXPRESS WILLINGNESS TO PAY REAL ESTATE AND SMALL BUSINESS TAXES, BUT DEMAND COMMENSURATE DEVELOPMENT FOR TAXES AND ALARM ABOUT FAKE TAX COLLECTORS AND UNDUE EXPLOITATION BY REVENUE AGENTS...LMDI/THE DIALOGUE/DUCOR DEBATES-ZEE-MAANNEH---ZEE-MAANNEH (PEACE & ENJOYMENT)...PLEASE VISIT AND VIEW OUR NEW WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE AT www.lmdilib.org AND www.facebook.com/lmdilib.org. PLEASE FOLLOW AND KNOW ALL ABOUT US AND LIBERIA AND ALL THAT WE DO TO SUSTAIN LIBERIA'S POST CONFLICT DEMOCRACY.

MONROVIA LIBERIA...Monday April 23, 2018... In fulfillment of their recently launched National Tax Education and Enlightenment Road Show, the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and the Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives (LMDI) and the Liberia have ended the first of a vigorous and sustained tour of the first batch of rural cities, towns and villages to enhance the knowledge of Rural Dwellers on the country's general tax regime.

The first tax education and enlightenment campaign tour took a joint team of the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and the Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives (LMDI) to seven cities, towns and villages in Bong, Grand Bassa and Nimba Counties.

The tour began at COMPOUND No. 2 in Grand Bassa County, moved on to SACLEPEA in Nimba County and descended to Monrovia via GANTA, NEGBEIN, PALALA GBARTALA and TOTOTA, all tax paying sensitive settings in rural Liberia.

Besides GANTA where the team met LRA created tax clubs in high schools and the Liberia International Christian College (LICC) to enhance their tax education in an interactive People To People style DIALOGUE forum, it held similar DIALOGUE forums with general community dwellers REAL ESTATE owners and small business people in frank horizontal communication on the re-introduction of REAL ESTATE TAX for Rural Dwellers.

At all the seven realized forums on the tax education and enlightenment trial, the people agreed to pay taxes but with calls for commensurate development and welfare for Liberian tax payers and concerns that tax agents are misinforming and exploiting them.

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Discussants at the DIALOGUE forums appealed for transparency in the collection and usage of taxes. They described the latest tax education and enlightenment road show by the LRA and the LMDI as late but a welcoming game changer for the lawful collection of taxes for Liberia's development.

They revealed that revenue collectors in their communities are over charging them and are demanding monthly and quarter payments rather than the largely annual collection as required by the LRA. The people alarmed about fake tax collectors roaming rural Liberia and claimed that revenue agents are announcing flat bills ranging from 1000 Liberian Dollars to any amount in flat rates for houses.

They told the joint LRA-LMDI team that they are happy for the tax education as it will inform them to duly pay their taxes but also resist exploitation by revenue agents and fake tax collectors.

At the High School and College Tax Club forum at the Liberia International Christian College (LICC), the tax club members and other students who joined the forum called for sustained direct People to People tax education across all counties and towns of Liberia.

On the tax education trail, GABI AZZAM an LRA tax education specialist is telling various gatherings of people under the LMDI People To People flagship platform, THE DIALOGUE that tax payment is not a matter of choice but a compulsion as taxes are required to run the nation and government. To this extent AZZAM informs his audiences that the government has vigorously launched the collection of REAL ESTATE TAX formerly called HUT TAX and SMALL BUSINESS TAX mainly for owners of land, houses and small businesses.

AZZAM and the people facilitated by the LMDI moderation team exchange views on the need for tax payment as their share of contribution toward Liberia's National Budget and general Nation Building. The people ask about why they must pay REAL ESTATE and SMALL BUSINESS TAXES and AZZAM responds with explanations that taxes are the surest way of ensuring that progress is realized and sustained for over all National Development efforts.

There are also exchanges on the procedures in paying taxes. On this, AZZAM educates the people on the actual and legal ways of paying their taxes. He tells the gatherings that when they pay taxes, they must ask for what he calls the pink looking tax receipts with a silver looking batch in the lower left side and the colored engraved seal of Liberia on the upper right of the flag receipt. Short of the named features, paying taxes on flying sheets would be illegal and unacceptable.

He advises the people to ask for LRA official letters of assignment from any one claiming to be agents of the LRA.

AZZAM also informs the people that taxes are calculated on percentages based on costs and profit or gross margins and not flat rates as the people claim is being done by revenue agents in rural communities.

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In further frank exchanges, the people are asking questions ranging from why they must pay taxes and types of land, houses and businesses they should pay for. The forums are largely attended by elderly people showing interest in REAL ESTATE TAX discussions and young apparent market men and women showing interest in SMALL BUSINESS TAX conversations.

The LRA-LMDI Tax Education and Enlightenment Road Show team has completed its initial Rural Liberia education trail and recessed at Monrovia to plan a series of tax based general knowledge Quizzing Competitions and debates between and amongst a set of high schools.

The series of tax based general knowledge quizzing competitions and debates will be followed by a second round of rural community tour that will take a joint team of the LMDI and LRA tax education campaigners to Rural Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Margibi and Grand Gedeh Counties.

The LMDI facilitated LRA tax education and visibility campaign was started at Compound Number Two, Glarcon District or District No. Two of Grand Bassa County recently followed by its soft launch by LRA Commissioner General ELFRIEDA TAMBA

The LMDI/LRA tax education and visibility campaign is a two month long set of activities supported by the Liberia office of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA).

Deliberations from all LMDI programs are produced into media contents for weekly broadcast on a partner network of 45 National and Rural Community Electronic Media Outlets (Radio and TV Stations) across Liberia.

You may also follow us at our new website at www.lmdilib.org and also visit our face book page at Liberia Media for Democratic initiatives-LMDI. You can send comments to info@lmdi.org and john@lmdi.org THE DIALOGUE & DUCOR DEBATES at this campaign are generally in association with the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)..

Signed:



John O. Kollie

DIRECTOR