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**and**  
**Making Democracy**  
**Work**



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**The Legislative Budget Office at Work**

The Legislative Budget Office (LBO) has published an informational brochure, with assistance from NDI, to better inform legislative offices and the public about the work of the LBO. The brochure includes a short history of the LBO and describes the services it provides to the Legislature. Examples of these services include impartial and objective analysis of public expenditure and the National Budget, fiscal impact analysis of legislation, and consideration of issues related to the National Budget and economic policy.

As a follow-up to LBO study missions to three countries in October, namely Uganda, Kenya and the United States, the LBO organized a two-day workshop last month for its staff to share information and best practices learned on those missions. These new practices will be used to strength the working methods of the LBO in the second session of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Legislature. Some examples include methods for building stronger ties between the LBO and committees of the House and Senate and producing more diverse financial and budgetary documents to support lawmakers in their work.

**Legislative Spotlight**

*Every Wednesday*  
*Truth FM – 96.1*  
*11:00 – 12:00 am*

- 5 December:**  
 Access to Justice and  
 Judicial Reform for Rural  
 Liberia
- 12 December:**  
 Land Reform and Natural  
 Resources
- 19 December:** National  
 Defense and Security
- 26 December:**  
 Constitutional Review

**Happy  
Holidays!**



## **Committee Support Staff Build Capacity in Computer Skills**

In November NDI organized a training for 69 members of the Legislature's staff who will support the future work of committees. This workshop consisted of IT training to provide committee support staff with new capacity to manage the workflow of committees effectively and efficiently using computer technology.

Some training topics included:

- An introduction to Ubuntu, an open source operating system;
- Tips and guidelines for professional etiquette when using email and social media; and
- Document management, including recording changes to drafts of bills and other documents, adding comments to documents, and using technology to check spelling and grammar.

The 69 participants benefited from hands-on training and practice and actively questioned their trainers as the workshops proceeded. A wide range of inquiries were raised such as: *"How do I input a signature on a document or email?"*

## **Upcoming Events**

- Training Community Radio Stations and legislative staff in the use of Audio Clips/Freedom Fone to disseminate the work and views of lawmakers by mobile telephone
- Study Investigation Mission on Extractive Industries
- Re-training for Legislative staff on Bill Tracking

## **House and Senate Press and Public Affairs Bureaus take Refresher Courses in Digital Communications**

To increase public awareness of the work of Representatives and Senators, and the policy issues being addressed by the National Legislature, 10 staff members of the two Press and Public Affairs Bureaus committed themselves to refresher courses organized by NDI. The Legislature's existing website will be the first reflection as staff put these stronger skills to active use.

The training topics for Press and Public Affairs staff included:

- A refresher course on Drupal, the open source software used to manage the Legislature's website;
- An introduction to Ubuntu, an open source operating system;

- GIMP, the open source software used to edit and manipulate images;
- Audacity, an open source software used to record, edit, and manipulate audio clips of legislative proceedings and legislators' comments; and
- Open Office, an open source word processing software that also includes spreadsheet and presentation document options.

Refreshing skills in open source softwares such as these, is a more sustainable approach for the Liberian Legislature as it pursues its Modernization Plan.

These advanced trainings were participatory. The Legislature's staff watched videos and performed hands-on practical tasks and put a wide range of questions on the table. Some examples are: *"My boss has asked that I put a 'draft' watermark on initial press releases, how do I do this?"* and *"Can I still use Microsoft if I download Ubuntu to my computer?"*.

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