

Disability & Start-Up

Civil society as protagonist of inclusive
development in Liberia

Diagnostic Study

On

Disabled Peoples' Organizations
(DPOs)

&

National Union of Organizations of
the Disabled (NUOD)

2018



Report of the Diagnostic Study on Disabled Peoples' Organizations (DPOs) and the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled (NUOD), prepared by Sunil Deepak (consultant, AIFO/Italy), with support from Naomi B. Harris, (President, NUOD/Liberia), November 2018

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List of Acronyms

AICS	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
AIFO	Italian Association Amici di Raoul Follereau
BSC	Business Start-Up Centre
CAB	Christian Association of the Blind
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
CCPR	Centre for Civil & Political Rights
CDA	County Development Agenda
CDW	Community Disability Worker
CFUH	Cultivators of Users' Hope
CRID	Centre for Rehabilitation of Injured & Disabled
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DISEI	Department of Economics & Management, University of Florence
DPO	Disabled Peoples Organisation
EU	European Union
EVC	Ebola Virus Crisis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGAD	Grand Gedeh Association of Disabled
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LISGIS	Liberian Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services
LNAB	Liberian National Association of the Blind
LNAD	Liberian National Association of the Deaf
L\$	Liberian Dollar
MoE	Ministry of Education
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection
MoH	Ministry of Health
NAP	National Action Plan
NCD	National Commission on Disability
NDC	Nimba Disabled Community
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUOD	National Union of Organisations of Disabled

PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PwD	Person with Disability
RIDS	Italian Network on Disability & Development
SAPRO	Salayea Agriculture Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SHG	Self-Help Group
SIDA	Swedish Agency for International Development
SME	Small & Medium Enterprise
UCL	University College London
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
US\$/USD	United States Dollar
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

A diagnostic study was carried out by a consultant to the DASU project in collaboration with the national umbrella organisation “National Union of Organizations of the Disabled” (NUOD) to assess the institutional capacities of Disabled Peoples’ Organizations (DPOs) in Liberia. The study involved DPOs from the national capital Monrovia and in three counties – Bong, Grand Gedeh and Nimba.

This study was conducted as a part of the Disability and Start Up (DASU) project, a three-year initiative funded by AICS, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

The study included an initial Desk Review, collection of case studies from the field and visits to the counties to meet the county DPOs. Following these, a workshop was organised in Monrovia in which representatives of NUOD and the concerned DPOs took part. The workshop looked at the strengths and challenges faced by NUOD and DPOs, focusing on the skills needed for stronger and active DPO leadership.

The study showed that the civil war (1989-2003) and the Ebola virus crisis (2014-16) had a devastating impact on Liberia. This impact affected all the citizens though its effects on marginalised groups like the persons with disabilities (PwDs) has been even worse. In spite of these challenges, the study showed that NUOD has been able to develop a dynamic national network of relationships with the DPOs.

Through the Diagnostic Study, the main institutional learning-training needs of the NUOD and DPOs were identified in 4 domains – (i) Networking (ii) Advocacy (iii) Fund-raising, and (iv) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There was a fifth domain of learning needs related to the inclusive business and start-ups, for which some information was collected during this Study. However, more information regarding this domain will be collected through a separate Baseline Study. Therefore, this report does not touch on Inclusive Business & Start-Ups.

Based on the discussions during the Diagnostic Study, a proposal regarding different learning & capacity-building needs of NUOD and DPOs has been prepared. This will be presented to NUOD and DPOs in Liberia for the definition of the specific contents of the first institutional capacity-building training course of the Disability & Start-Up (DASU) project to be carried out in October 2018. It is suggested that instead of dedicating the whole course to one theme, the course be used to touch on specific skills related to different domains – CRPD & SDGs in Liberia, networking and making an advocacy plan.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

A “Diagnostic Study” on the institutional and management capacities of the Disabled Peoples’ Organisations (DPOs), was planned as a part of “*Disability & Start-Up - Civil society as protagonist of inclusive development in Liberia*”, a three-year initiative funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. The Study focused on a couple of DPOs in Monrovia, along with the DPOs from three counties (Bong, Nimba and Grand



Gedeh) and on the National Union of the Organisations of Disabled (NUOD) in Liberia. Among the county-DPOs, there were 4 DPOs in Bong county, 2 in Nimba and 1 in Grand Gedeh.

Disability & Start-Up (DASU) Project started in May 2018. One of its first activities was to collect reports and documents in Liberia for the Diagnostic Study. An international consultant was identified for the study, who carried it out with support from NUOD, DPOs and AIFO-Liberia.

At the end of information collection, a workshop was organised in Monrovia in July 2018 to conclude this study.

This report presents a summary of the different activities carried out for conducting the Diagnostic Study and its main results.

OBJECTIVES OF THE DIAGNOSTIC STUDY

The Study was planned as an instrument for strengthening an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, especially in terms of their institutional and operational functioning, of NUOD and DPOs. Through a participatory process it aimed to identify the gaps and the areas needing strengthening, for the definition of a capacity building training plan.

The DASU project foresees two kinds of trainings targeted at NUOD and DPOs – (1) courses targeted at institutional strengthening; and, (2) courses for promoting economic independence of persons with disabilities (PwDs) through start-ups and entrepreneurship.

The Diagnostic Study was aimed mainly at providing indications regarding priority needs for the institutional capacity building training courses. A separate Baseline Survey is

being carried out under the DASU project to understand the training needs related to economic independence of PwDs.

METHODOLOGY

The initial plan for the Diagnostic Study involved NUOD and DPOs from 3 counties. Preliminary discussions had highlighted the limited participation of persons with mental health conditions and persons with hearing and speech disabilities in the DPOs in the counties. To facilitate their representation and inclusion in the Diagnostic Study, after consultation with NUOD, it was decided to involve two Monrovia-based DPOs in the process – Cultivators for User’s Hope (CFUH) and Liberia National Association of the Deaf (LNAD). Thus, the Diagnostic Study was carried out with NUOD, 2 Monrovia DPOs and 7 county level DPOs.

The Diagnostic Study was organised in the following 4 steps – a desk review, collection of case studies, visits to the counties and organisation of a workshop.



Desk Review: The aim of the desk review was to collect all formal and informal documents, reports and publications about the evolution of disability movement and the broad context of development in Liberia affecting the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities. The materials were searched online as well as by visiting the State and the Non-State organisations and institutions including the UN organisations and international NGOs active in Liberia.

The review also looked at specific information regarding the DPOs and the national umbrella organisation NUOD. Principal findings from the desk review are a part of this report.

Case-studies about self-employed persons in the counties: No specific reports, publications and documents regarding the DPOs could be identified. Thus, to facilitate an understanding about their capacities, DPOs were asked through NUOD to prepare short case studies about their income generation activities.

A total of 42 case studies were collected from the DPOs and analysed. This analysis is presented in this report.

County visits and meetings with DPOs: A small team of persons including the consultant, a representative of NUOD and AIFO-Liberia staff, visited Bong and Nimba counties from 16 to 20 July 2018. During the visit, the team met the office-bearers of all the county DPOs and some of their members. Some Self-Help Groups (SHGs) associated with DPOs were also visited.

Due to the rains and the poor conditions of roads, it was not possible to visit Grand Gedeh county. However, representatives of the Grand Gedeh county came to meet the visiting team in Ganta (Nimba county).

The county visits were also an opportunity to observe and discuss the links and relationships between the county DPOs and NUOD. Main findings from the county visits are presented in this report.

Diagnostic Study Workshop in Monrovia: A two-and-half days workshop was organised at the Exceeding & Corina hotels in Monrovia from 23 to 25 July 2018. Representatives of NUOD and the DPOs took part in this workshop. DASU staff managed the logistics and management of this workshop. Six community workers from the three counties and the county regional coordinator also took part in the workshop.

The first two days of the workshop focused on the participatory analysis of specific institutional activities of NUOD and DPOs including the following – organisational management, membership, inclusion of persons with different disabilities, advocacy, fund-raising, planning and implementation of projects, monitoring and evaluation, promoting self-employment and making of a business plan. The organisations were asked to focus on identification of their strengths as well as weaknesses. They were asked to discuss the specific skills that they lacked and would like to gain through the training courses.

On the last half-day of the workshop, a summary of the priority learning needs, emerging from the discussions over the first two days, was prepared and discussed with the participants for finalising the indications about the planning of the different training courses foreseen in this project.

The workshop was also an opportunity to discuss the specific activities and capacity-building issues with the representatives of Monrovia-based DPOs and NUOD. A summary of the key discussions during the workshop is presented in this report.

DIAGNOSTIC STUDY REPORT

The Diagnostic Study report has been prepared by the consultant with active support from NUOD. A draft version of this report was shared with all the stakeholders before finalisation.

A shorter and “easy to understand” version of the report presenting key information in simple language and supported by graphs and visual aids has also been prepared.

The first training course on the institutional capacity-building of NUOD and DPOs, based on the key recommendations of this report is being planned during October 2018. During the second and third years of the project (2019-20), shorter consultations with the DPOs and NUOD are planned to gather the feedback about the training and to review the plans for the future training courses.

DESK REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

A Desk Review is expected to search for all documents, reports and publications about a subject. Before the advent of internet, this meant searching for printed materials, both formal publications, as well as, the “grey literature” including any project reports, annual reports, and evaluation reports. Since Liberia was involved in a civil war lasting more than a decade till early years of 21st century, this search was expected to be difficult.

After the end of the civil war, many international organisations had been active in Liberia in the post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation, which could have provided valuable insights about the events and activities. However, the Ebola Virus Crisis (EVC) during 2014-16 had forced evacuation of staff and closure of offices of most international organisations based in Liberia. Thus, valuable archives of their activities were lost, and their project-related websites were closed, creating further challenges for this desk review.

However, in spite of the above challenges, the desk review has managed to find some significant documents and reports, helping in a reconstruction of events and their impact on the evolution of disability sector in Liberia.

Methodology: For the Desk Review, an effort was made to collect all formal and informal documents, reports and publications about the evolution of disability movement and the broad context of development in Liberia affecting the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities with special reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The materials were searched online as well as by visiting the State and the Non-State organisations and institutions including the UN organisations and international NGOs active in Liberia.

An effort was also made to collect information about NUOD and the involved DPOs. Though the main focus of this part of the review was the institutional and management capacities of these organisations, it also looked at some information about the capacities of the DPOs regarding promotion of self-employment, business start-ups and income generation activities.

Apart from the published documents, an online search was carried out through the keywords – Liberia, disability, disabled, DPO, NUOD and the names of specific DPOs involved in the DASU project. A list of all the documents consulted for this desk review is provided in Bibliography.

BACKGROUND

Any discussion about Liberia has to take into account of two recent events which had a huge impact on the country, its people and its institutions. These two events were a 14 years long civil war and a deadly epidemic. Though formally over, these two events still continue to have some impact on Liberia’s development and on the lives of its citizens even today.

Liberia was affected by a violent **Civil War** from the end of 1989 till 2003. According to the estimates of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (LTRC, 2009) about 250,000 persons were killed in the war and more than 1 million persons were displaced (p. 61). In 2003, Liberia’s population was estimated to be around 3 million. This means, during the civil war, around 8% of the population was killed and more than one third of its people were displaced.

During the war extreme acts of violence were committed against the people. According to the LTRC report, *“Children suffered some of the most horrific crimes committed during the Liberian Civil War ... They were forced to kill friends and family members including their parents, rape and be raped, serve as sexual slaves and prostitutes, labour, take drugs, engage in cannibalism, torture and pillage communities.”* (p. 62)

According to a report by Amnesty International (2004), at the time of peace accords in 2003, there were an estimated 21,000 child soldiers, many of them addicted to substance and alcohol abuse, who had to be integrated in the society. (p. 2)

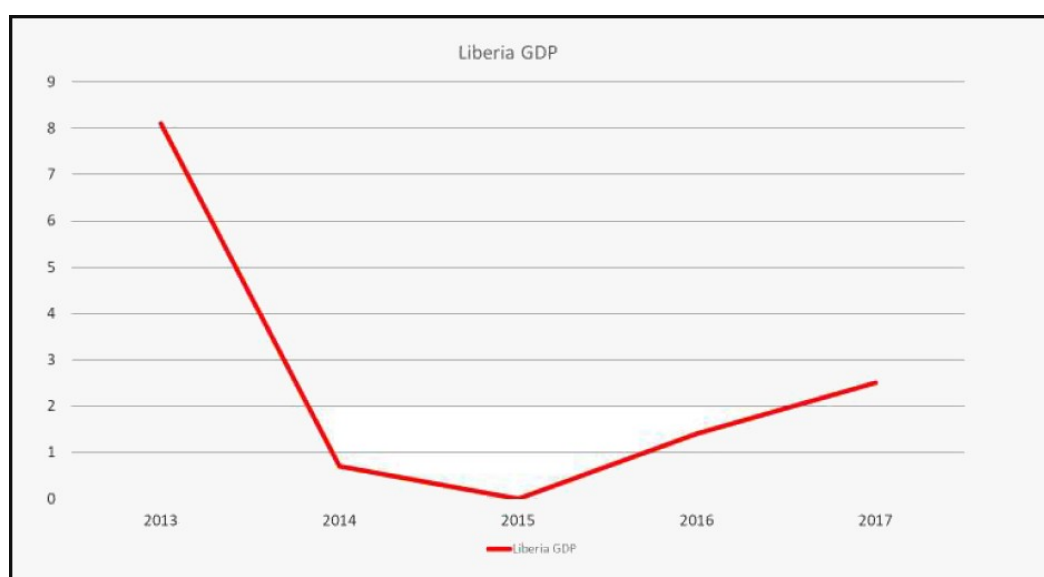
The war destroyed essential public services including health and education services. For example, according to an UNFPA press release (2003) on the impact of the war on Liberia, *“Massive displacement during the war led to a shutdown of public services, and maternal and infant mortality rose to levels not seen in decades.”*

In 2010, seven years after the end of the civil war, Liberia was still among the poorest countries of the world - it was at 162th position out of the 169 countries in the Human Development Index report of the UNDP. According to the Health and Social Welfare

policy of Liberia (2011), in 2010, Liberia was among the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries with an external debt that was 800% of its GDP. (p. 5) However, slowly the country's economy had started to grow. In 2013, its economy had grown by 8.1% and its real GDP was projected to expand by 8.2% in 2015.

However, in 2014 Liberia was affected by the epidemic of an infectious disease, the **Ebola Virus Crisis**(EVC), which had a 60% mortality rate among the infected persons. EVC had a crushing effect on Liberia's economy -according to a World Bank report, Liberia's GDP growth crashed to 0.7% in 2014 and was zero in 2015 (MPO, 2016). Since then slowly country's economy has started to recover, though it is still far below the pre-EVC levels. For example, the GDP growth was only 1.6% in 2016 and 2.5% in 2017 (MPO, 2018), as shown in the graph below. This had a devastating impact on the country's capacity to run different services, including those for the persons with disabilities.

Impact of Ebola Virus Crisis on %growth of GDP of Liberia (2013-2017)



DISABILITY SECTOR IN LIBERIA

The first section of the Desk Review focuses on the different stakeholders influencing and determining the policies, strategies and programmes related to the Disability Sector. These determine the general context under which the DPOs and NUOD have to operate.

This analysis looks at both State and Non-State actors, including different ministries and commissions, UN bodies, international and national NGOs.

State Organisations & Institutions Related To Disability Sector

The State bodies and institutions related to disability sector include policies and programmes of different Government ministries, national disability data collection, National Commission on Disability (NCD), National Action Plan (NAP) for the

implementation of the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the inclusion of disability issues in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Government Ministries & Departments: The challenges before Liberia are huge, not just for the persons with disabilities. For example, the national *Household Incomes and Expenses Survey* (HIES) 2016 showed that at national level, 50.9% of the population was below poverty line (31.5% of urban population and 71.6% of rural population). Almost 80% of the population was engaged in informal sector, most of them in what was called “vulnerable employment”. This has implications for the avenues of economic independence available to PwDs in Liberia.

Disability is a cross-cutting theme touching all the different Government ministries. As citizens of the country, persons with disabilities have a right to access the different services and programmes under each ministry. For example:

- PwDs engaged in agriculture activities should be able to access the different schemes of Ministry of Agriculture
- Programmes for promotion of violence against women should also think of needs of women with disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities have to take part in sports, leisure and cultural activities.

This part of the Review focuses on policies & programmes related to PwDs of 4 key ministries, starting with the **Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection** (MGCSPP), which has the overall responsibility for promoting and monitoring disability rights and for mainstreaming of disability.

Till 2012, it was called the Ministry of Gender and Development (MGD). In 2013, Government of Liberia proposed an amendment to transfer the Department of Social Welfare to this Ministry along with the responsibilities for the activities targeted at PwDs, with the following justification: “*it has become necessary to consolidate the governance of women’s and children’s issues and those relating to vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized groups under the authority of one institution of government for proper coordination by combining the Ministry of Gender and Development and the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare*”. (p. 1)

Though MGCSPP was created in 2013, Ebola crisis created challenges for its activities. There were different reports expressing concern about lack of access of PwDs to the Government services. For example, according to a report of the Independent Human Rights Commission (2016) in Liberia, “... *educational infrastructure and equipment suitable for disabled persons continues to be unavailable at primary, senior secondary and tertiary institutions to enhance the learning process, while special care remained unavailable to disable persons at clinics and hospitals across Liberia.*” (p. 31)

Only after the end of Ebola crisis in 2016, MGCSPP has taken steps to promote mainstreaming of disability. For example, Government of Liberia is also working on the preparation of a Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). During a

PAPD inter-ministerial meeting in 2017, there was a discussion on expansion of social protection network including the possibility of a disability pension under Pillar 1 of PAPD (Power to the People – Social Protection Floor). It proposed the hypothesis of a monthly pension equal to “50% of the Liberian poverty line” to persons with severe disabilities (p. 22). In 2018, MGCSP has been involved in the preparation of the National Disability Action Plan (NDAP) for the implementation of CRPD.

This shows that there are different areas in which the MGCSP is moving, though there may be a big gap between plans and their implementation. Approval of the NDAP in 2018 should provide a basic framework to its policies and programmes over the next years.

To ensure that there are adequate resources for the implementation of MGCSP-plans, NCD, NUOD and DPOs will need to strengthen their advocacy activities.

Ministry of Education (MoE): During 2017, the Special and Inclusive Education Division of the Ministry of Education developed the National Inclusive Education (IE) Policy in collaboration with other line ministries/agencies of government and relevant Civil Society organizations. A 2017 report from the Alliance for Disability confirmed that the IE policy was validated on 30 November 2017.

Before the IE policy, no other specific MoE documents about education for children with disabilities could be identified. For example, the “Right to Education Factsheet Liberia” (2012) analysing the situation of education sector, mentioned free and compulsory primary education for all children, but it did not say anything specifically regarding children with disabilities. An “Education for All National Review” carried out by the Ministry of Education in 2015, also did not have anything about children with disabilities, special education or inclusive education. Similarly, the “Liberia Education Statistics Report 2015-16” from the Ministry of Education (2016) had no statistics or statement regarding access to education for children with disabilities.

However, Liberia has some special schools for the education of children with disabilities. For example, a SIDA report on disability situation in Liberia (2014) had noted that “*Special schools exist for visually impaired children and children who are deaf, but they basically only reach a small portion of the urban population.*” (p. 3) A USAID study (2017), had also provided information about special schools in Liberia - there were 4 schools for the blind children and 4 schools for deaf children in Liberia. (p. 18)

Thus, NCD, NUOD and DPOs need to strengthen their advocacy with MoE to ensure the collection of baseline information about children with disabilities in the education system.

Ministry of Health (MoH): The National Commission on Disability (NCD) Act was approved in 2005. It had delegated the responsibility for the Social Welfare activities to the Social Welfare department of the Ministry of Health. The first social welfare policy was prepared under the MoH in 2009 for the period 2009-11.

A new National Health and Social Welfare (NHSW) policy of Liberia was approved in 2011 along with a policy implementation plan for the period 2011-21.

As explained above, in 2013 the department of Social Welfare (SW) was shifted from MoH to the MGCSP. It is not clear if the rehabilitation and SW activities planned under MoH were also shifted to MGCSP or they were frozen, awaiting the definition of a new National Disability Action Plan.

Regarding the rehabilitation services, the NHSW plan 2011-21 had envisaged 63 physiotherapists in county hospitals and 16 physiotherapists in regional hospitals. It also specified the presence of social workers in health services and in districts. (p. 61) It had a goal of reaching “66% of each target group of the social services by 2021”, along with “a revitalisation of Doloken rehabilitation centre and establishment of three regional centres, provision of assistive devices, monitoring and case management of adults with disabilities, acute treatment facilities for the mentally challenged and Post-treatment rehabilitation including counselling”. (p. 63) No updated information about the implementation of these activities could be identified.

Ministry of Labour (MoL): The National Employment Policy of Liberia was approved in 2009. One of the aims of this policy was to “*promote the active inclusion and participation of disabled people in the labour market*”, guided by the principles of CRPD. (p. 18) It included plans for development of legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and to enhance access to opportunities and services such as vocational training courses.

However, no other documents regarding the implementation of this policy for PwDs could be identified. The National Decent Work Act passed by the Liberian Government in 2015, did not mention anything about the accessibility to the world of work for the persons with disabilities. It only mentioned disability as a consequence of work place accidents and in terms of compensations for temporary and permanent disabilities.

Regarding the opportunities for work for the persons with disabilities, the draft report (2017) on the implementation of CRPD says, “*The Government of Liberia through legislative enactment has taken steps to ensure that PWDs have opportunities to work and employment. Section 5 of the NCD Act states that for every hundred non-disabled employees, four (4) percent must be qualified PWDs who are gainfully employed or funds be provided for their employment elsewhere. In addition, and in light of the needs of PWDs to have equal opportunities to work and employment, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of the Republic of Liberia in 2012 issued an Executive Order calling on each government ministry and agency to employ two (2) PWDs.*” (p. 16) This report underlines the difficulties in ensuring access to work and economic independence for PwDs.

National Disability Data: The last National Census conducted in Liberia in 2008 had collected some information regarding persons with disabilities (pp. 204-229). A total of 110,260 persons with disabilities were identified out of a total population of 3,476,608

persons (3.17%). Among them there were 56,562 males (51.3%) and 53,698 females (48.7%). Among them there were 24,878 persons below 19 years of age (22.56% of the population).

Children with disabilities in the schools: The 2008 census also provided other useful information regarding persons with disabilities, for example, regarding their access to schools. There were 6,330 Children with Disabilities (CwDs) in the 5 to 9 years age group, out of which 5,153 (81.4%) were not in the school. There were 7,197 CwDs in the 10-14 years age group, out of which 3,788 (52.6%) were not going to school. Finally, there were 7,020 CwDs in the 15 to 19 years age group, out of which 2,875 (40.9%) were not going to school. (p. 249)

However, just looking at school-going does not provide a full picture of the barriers faced by CwDs. For example, in the 15 to 19 years age group, 78% of them were still in the elementary school, and only 7.4% of them were in high school.

Different kinds of disabilities: The census also collected information about the different kinds of disabilities among the PwDs (p. 251) in Liberia - persons with limited use of legs 17,858 (16%); persons with leg amputations 3,826 (3.5%); persons with limited use of arms 4,193 (3.8%); persons with arm amputations 1,514 (1.4%); persons with hearing difficulty 9,590 (8.7%); deaf persons 2,574 (2.3%); sight difficulty 35,538 (32.2%); blind persons 3,701 (3.3%); persons with speech impairment 1,417 (1.3%); mute persons 1,552 (1.4%); persons with mental retardation 1,797 (1.6%); persons with mental illness 2,924 (2.6%); dumb persons 962 (0.9%); persons with multiple disabilities 6,480 (5.9%); and, persons with other disabilities 18,344 (16.6%).

The categories used for classifying PwDs in the 2008 census, apart from the use of inappropriate terminology (such as mental retardation and dumb persons), were arbitrary and non-comparable to disability data from other countries. Some of the categories seemed to be under-represented (for example, the number of persons with mental illness) or missing (for example, persons with convulsions). Still the 2008 data is important for Liberia as it can serve as a baseline.

Limitations of 2008 Census data on disability: Some additional data analysis can provide information for the planning of services. For example, knowing how many CwDs have hearing difficulties and complete loss of hearing will give an idea about the coverage of existing special schools for the deaf and the uncovered needs.

However, the disability data from the 2008 census is not well-known in Liberia. Many recent Government documents (for example, the draft 2017 CRPD Implementation Report and the National Action Plan 2018-2022) as well as, international reports (such as the SIDA report 2014 on Disability Rights in Liberia) maintain that “*there is no recent data about disabled persons in Liberia*” and quote the figure of “16% of population has a disability” from a pilot survey carried out by the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Injured and Disabled (CRID) in 1997.

NCD, NUOD and DPOs can liaise with relevant Ministry and department to ensure a better analysis of 2008 Census data about PwDs. There is also a need for including appropriate of questions (for example, based on recommendations of the Washington Group) about disability in the next national census originally planned for 2018, which may be postponed.

National Commission on Disability (NCD): NCD is a statutory body of the Government of Liberia and is responsible for disability related activities in the country. It was established under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2005.

The NCD Establishment Act (2005), had noted that the responsibilities of rehabilitation services and education for children with disabilities were with the Ministry of Health but should be passed on respectively to the Ministry of Social Welfare and to the Ministry of Education. The Act gave the powers of monitoring and supervision of the rehabilitation and education activities to NCD. The NCD Act did not mention livelihood and vocational training related activities, though it included a proposal for nominating 3 persons with disabilities as members of the Liberian parliament. The information about disability related information from the 4 key ministries presented above, clearly indicates that many of those initial ideas about the role of NCD were not implemented.

NCD was established as a result of advocacy and mobilisation by NUOD under the leadership of Mr. Beyan G. Kota and other Liberian Disability Advocates. The idea of establishing a commission came from late Mr. Deree K. Johns, a disability advocate. However, the commission was not well structured/established. The Act establishing NCD had stated that immediately upon passage into law, the commission shall be established and the president shall appoint three persons with disabilities to head the commission. However, the appointments were not made until 2011 and it occurred only after persistent advocacy by some disability activists.

A 2012 report of the Liberian Government on the situation of human rights in the country had given a positive view about the activities of NCD: *“In November of 2005, Liberia established the National Commission on Disabilities (NCD). Since its establishment the Commission has consistently carried out the task of protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. Currently, the Commission is involved in: providing financial assistance to registered and accredited disability centres, individuals with disabilities engaged in self-sustainable income generating activities and students with disabilities; advocating and lobbying for the creation of job opportunities for persons with disabilities; conducting nationwide awareness raising and sensitization campaigns; engaging in agricultural activities to ensure food security for persons with disabilities and taking an active role in the implementation of Liberia’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).”* (p. 22)

In 2013, a legal consultant hired by the NCD with financial support from AIFO/Italy, reviewed and revised the 2005 Act after several consultations. Till 2017, the proposed Act was still awaiting approval at the National Legislature, when the African Youth with

Disabilities (AYD) with support from OSIWA proposed additional changes in the proposed Act. NCD and NUOD, along with others including legal experts, supported this exercise. Similar acts from Ghana and Sierra Leone were consulted for this review.

In 2018, discussions on the proposed Act have been initiated in the National Legislature, under the guidance of Hon. Sekou Konneh, former representative of district 12 in Montserrado county. For example, a news-report dated 4 June 2018 on the Liberian Observer newspaper had an interaction with Hon. Koonneh regarding the new Act: *“... the bill also seeks to revise the definition of people with disabilities, who are the poorest of the poor. He indicated that the new Disability Bill would amend certain provisions in the NCD of 2005, which violates the 1986 Constitution as well as change some of the nomenclature and strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”*

In the mean time, limitations in the NCD activities continue. For example, a recent report (CCPR, 2018) also mentioned about NCD: *“It has not yet committed itself to its task in a significant way, mostly due to inadequate budgetary support from the government and the delay in getting it operational. It has, though, ensured the partial implementation of a disability policy and provided development funds to schools and rehabilitation centres.”*

Ms. Ricardia Dennis, Executive Director of NCD, confirmed this situation, *“Presently, NCD has a limited budget for providing support to build the capacity of DPOs through quarterly subsidies. As well as to PwDs for self-supportive aids. Its role is to ensuring disability related policies and programs.”*

CRPD Ratification and Implementation in Liberia: Liberia had signed the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2007. It was ratified by Liberian Government on September 11, 2008 (Page 43, CBR Baseline Survey Study Report, AIFO/Italy, April 2011), but the ratification was not officially communicated to the UN for some years. The official ratification of CRPD was finally deposited with the UN in July 2012.

A publication of Italian Agency for International Development Cooperation (AICS) provides the following information about delay in CRPD official ratification in Liberia: *“In 2011, in Liberia, a country recovering from a civil war, AIFO and Handicap International launched an empowerment project aimed at breaking the deadlock in the CRPD ratification process. Thanks to the organisation of a workshop on the CRPD, open to various African countries, and a training programme focusing on human rights, on the implementation of the CRPD and the possible forms of lobbying offered by the National Federation of the DPOs, it was possible to achieve a result coveted for over four years, in just six months, which finally led Liberia to ratify the CRPD.”* (page 71, Disability & Development, AICS, RIDS & AIFO, 2015)

CRPD implementation requires harmonising of all the different national laws and acts through a national plan of action. In 2013, there were some initiatives for preparing a National Action Plan (NAP) for CRPD implementation. However, the Ebola crisis in 2014 had blocked those efforts even before they could take-off.

In 2017, the Liberian Government has initiated the preparation of the first national report on CRPD implementation, five years after ratification. This process is supported by financial and technical support from the UN Women, the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, NCD and other line ministries and agencies of government.

The first 5 years' **National Action Plan (NAP) for the period 2018-22** for the implementation of the CRPD was finally finalised in summer 2018. It acknowledges the difficulties in implementation of CRPD: *“A new Government was elected in 2018, and it has expressed a renewed interest in its commitment to prioritizing disability. The Government of Liberia has agreed to strengthening support and protection measures for persons with disabilities, and to submit a progress report to the CRPD, which was due in 2014 under the prior administration.”* (p. 5) NAP is expected to be officially launched on 3 December 2018.

Among other things, NAP proposes priority action in 6 areas: Public accessibility, Inclusive Education, Employment and Livelihood, Health Care, Independent Living & Self Determination, and, Access to Justice & Social Protection.

For each of these 6 areas, NAP proposes some “Performance Indicators”. However, most of these indicators are expressed in generic terms and thus cannot be used to monitor if NAP is being implemented or not. For example, the indicator for access to health services is expressed as: *“Access to appropriate health-care in the local community (where available)”*.

NAP acknowledges that *“Establishing an implementation plan requires considerable effort and resources. It is not realistic to assume that all objectives, no matter how relevant, can or will be achieved quickly ... This plan aims to identify actions which can be achieved immediately and those than can be achieved over a reasonable period of time, with achievable milestones to be established ...”*

NAP includes budgets and responsible ministries for each action. For example, for the activity *“Affordable inclusive education, with accommodations/assistive devices provided free and appropriate to the child”*, it is planned that IE will be integrated in all the schools during 2019-22 and NCD will be upgraded from a unit to a bureau for a total budget of 12.5 million USD.

Over the next months and years, NUOD and DPOs will need to follow the action plans of different key ministries, to ensure that actions planned in National Action Plan are followed by specific plans under each ministry.

In the meantime, the 2018-19 Budget Forecasting (2018) of the Government of Liberia foresees financial cuts in different services linked to persons with disabilities compared to the budgets of previous years. For example, the 2018 budget of National Commission on Disability (NCD), the statutory body of Government of Liberia charged with overseeing the services for persons with disabilities has about 7% cut in its budget compared to 2016 and its planned budget for 2020 is supposed to be 23% less than the 2016 budget. In this document, budgets for community empowerment activities and social welfare are also decreased for 2018, with bigger cuts proposed for the next few years. These point towards plans for a fiscal austerity to contain the domestic spending on expenses deemed “non-essential” for reducing the national debt and promoting economic growth. This also points to a contradiction between the commitments in NAP and the national financial planning.

Thus, DPOs and disability advocates will also need to prepare advocacy plans for the implementation of NAP and will need to engage with Ministry of Finance to ensure adequate funds for its implementation.

Liberia and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are universal goals approved by the United Nations in September 2015, to answer the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing the world. SDGs are a collection of 17 global goals to be reached by 2030. The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger health, education, global warming, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice.

SDGs require each country to undertake specific activities to reach the 17 goals by 2030. These goals influence the priorities of bilateral and multi-lateral Government collaborations, regional bodies, UN agencies and international NGOs. At the same time, it is important to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the development activities linked to the different goals.

On May 5, 2018, a representative of Government of Liberia presented the update on the progress towards SDGs in the country in the meeting of the SDG monitoring committee. According to this update, SDGs were launched in Liberia in January 2016. Initially 7 priority goals have been chosen including the SDGs related to health, education, gender equality, clean water & sanitation, infrastructure, peaceful society and Global Partnership. (p. 1) The image below provides a pictorial representation of the 17 SDGs.

 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Liberia Development Alliance (LDA) is responsible for coordinating the implementation of SDGs. This Alliance was originally set-up to coordinate the implementation of the “The Agenda for Transformation” (AfT) plan in 2013. LDA has a Steering Committee chaired by the President and comprising of representatives of the Government of Liberia, Development Partners, Private Sector and Civil Society. The LDA Steering Committee’s role was to provide overall policy direction to ensure that the AfT delivered the expected transformational development to the Liberian people. (All Africa.com, 2013)

52 key indicators have been identified to monitor the progress towards SDGs in Liberia. Different development programmes of the Government such as Pro-Poor manifesto, Vision 2030, have been aligned with SDGs. (p. 4) In Liberia, the activities for the SDGs are closely linked to those for the National Action Plan for the implementation of CRPD.

For example, the development of NAP was supported by UNDP-Liberia as a part of SDGs implementation. During the 2 days meeting to finalise NAP, a resolution was approved: *“We, members and officials from 24 disabled people organizations (DPOs), the Alliance for Disabilities, 5 government line ministries (Public Works, Education, Gender, Justice and Health), and other institutions concerned with the rights and welfare of persons living with disabilities (PWDs) realizing the need for concerted national efforts to promote the welfare of PWDs throughout the length and breadth of Liberia in line with the Liberian Constitution, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Liberia signed and ratified in 2012 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”* (UNDP, 2018).

Thus, SDGs implementation process in Liberia is inclusive of PwDs. However, PwDs and DPOs will need to take a proactive role in the coming years to understand the different SDGs and the key indicators identified by the Liberian Government to monitor their continuing inclusion and to benefit from the specific programmes.

Independent Human Rights Commission of Liberia (IHRC): This Commission is an autonomous agency created by law to monitor and supervise all human rights activities throughout the country. It has also taken an active role in safeguarding the rights of PwDs. For example, it had prepared the Human Rights Action Plan (HRAP) 2013-18 which included a section on PwDs, and among other things recommended: *to empower and decentralize the National Commission on Disabilities, by establishing county offices and level up the budget spent on the NCD so that it is on a par with other institutions; and, to develop a policy geared towards enhancing job opportunities to persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, and promote inclusion of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the County Development Agenda (CDA).*

Conclusions: This brief review of the different state bodies and institutions related to disability sector shows different positive actions during 2017-18 including the approval of inclusive education policy, NAP for the implementation of CRPD and links between NAP and SDGs implementation. At the same time, they underline a huge need for advocacy and coordination with different ministries to ensure that individual ministries make appropriate action plans for their implementation. NUOD and DPOs, in collaboration with NCD can play a key role in this process.

Non-State Organisations & Institutions Related To Disability Sector

Ever since the end of the civil war, international organisations starting with the UN organisations, have played a key role in reaching out to DPOs and NUOD in providing support and promoting development of persons with disabilities. This part of the desk review looks at the significant activities of non-state stake-holders in the Disability Sector.

Alliance on Disability: The Alliance is a conglomeration of national and international organizations in the field of disability, human rights and social inclusion. The Alliance aims to advance the realization of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Liberia and, strengthen the voices of persons with disabilities to hold their leaders accountable.

At the end of 2017, Alliance had 6 members (AIFO, Carter Centre, Handicap International, NCD, NUOD and Sight Savers). Handicap International (HI) was the chair of the Alliance in 2016-17. In 2017-18, Sight Savers (SS) became the chair. During 2017, GLRA asked to become a member of the Alliance. (p. 4, 2017 annual report of Alliance) The Alliance also has non-paying “associate members” including the Division of Special and Inclusive Education of the MoE, Human Rights Division of Human Rights Protection (Ministry of Justice) and Independent National Commission on Human Rights.

During 2017, its activities included opening of its bank account, collaboration with election commission for inclusion of PwDs in the national electoral process, advocacy for the preparation of Liberia National Progress Report on CRPD, and support to NUOD for presentation of its CRPD monitoring report to the HR commission of the UN.

The Alliance can trace its origins back to the Human Rights & Disability Task Force (HRDTF) created in 2010 as a part of advocacy for the formal ratification of CRPD in Liberia. Its Terms of Reference were revised in 2016 when it was decided to create three levels of membership – full members, associate members and observers.

The Alliance does not have a website or a Facebook page. It prepares annual reports, which seem to be only for internal circulation.

UN Organisations in Liberia: Different UN organisations including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO, UNICEF and World Health Organisation (WHO), support different programmes in Liberia. For example, UNESCO is supporting networking among universities, UNICEF has programmes regarding ending of discrimination against girls, while WHO is involved in many national programmes such as mental health, non-communicable diseases and infectious diseases like leprosy and Buruli ulcer.

However, except for UNDP, none of them seem to have any specific activities related to PwDs in Liberia. As mentioned earlier, UNDP has been supporting the development of National Plan of Action for the implementation of CRPD.

At the same time, there is scope for DPOs to advocate for access to the programmes of the UN bodies. For example, ILO is involved in “*Strengthening agriculture-based livelihoods of vulnerable population through markets and road accessibility, skills training and employment creation*”. Activities under this area were being carried out in Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties. ILO had developed a TREE tool for training – “Training for Rural Economic Empowerment”, which was tested in some areas of Liberia. DPOs in Liberia can make efforts to ensure that PwDs can benefit from these programmes and trainings.

International NGOs active in the disability sector: Over the past 20 years, especially after the end of the civil war in 2003, three international NGOs have been active in Liberia with specific programmes targeted at PwDs – AIFO, Handicap International (HI) and Sight Savers. They are all represented in the Alliance on Disability.

AIFO (Italian Raoul Follereau Association) has been active in Liberia since mid-1990s through community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programmes implemented by partner Liberian NGOs. Since 2010, when AIFO-Liberia was established, it has been involved in a number of activities including CBR programmes, setting up of self-help groups of persons with disabilities, skills training, strengthening of DPOs, strengthening of

provision of orthopaedic appliances at Ganta Rehabilitation Centre, support to the national leprosy programme and support for the Ebola Virus Crisis management.

Handicap International (Humanity & Inclusion): HI is present in Liberia since 2000. Its first project in the country was to set up a physical therapy and orthopedic care centre for the people with disabilities and the victims of the civil war in Liberia. Over the past few years, it is engaged in improving the living conditions of vulnerable people (including people with disabilities), especially by facilitating the access of children with disabilities to education. During 2018 it has ceased activities in Liberia.

Sight Savers (SS) works with partners to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities. Their focus is on eye health, neglected tropical diseases, social inclusion and inclusive education. SS-Liberia is supporting the activities of the National Union of Organization for the Disabled (NUOD). On the last IDD (December 3rd) SS had organised a one-day workshop on the rights and responsibilities of persons with disabilities, a parade in the main streets of Monrovia as well as talk shows on the radio to raise awareness about disability.

European Union is one of the biggest donors supporting cooperation programmes in Liberia. The European Development Fund budget for Liberia for 2014-2020 is 310 million USD. EU supports different areas including - Liberia Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Fund, elections, budget support during Ebola, security and justice, Monrovia electricity grid, support to alternative education and vocational training. Its thematic programmes in Liberia include food security, health, water and sanitation, environment and forestry, human rights programmes as well as support to civil society.

Though at present, EU delegation to Liberia is not involved in the disability sector, some of its programmes can be important for PwDs. For example, EU-Liberia Agriculture Programme (EULAP) was launched in June 2018. The programme will go on till 2023. This programme aims to help 6000 small scale farmers to improve their yields. In the counties, there are many PwDs who are engaged in small scale farming. It could be worthwhile for NUOD and DPOs to see if some of them have the prerequisites to benefit from this initiative.

Other International Organisations Involved in Disability Sector: The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) had prepared a report on the situation of Disability Rights in Liberia in 2014. According to this report: *“The National Health and Social Welfare Policy and Plan 2011-2021 needs to be reviewed order to include essential medical, rehabilitation and habilitation services for persons with disabilities through Community Based Disability Inclusive approaches and strategies. ...The Labour law needs to be reviewed to allow reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and to set up a permanent desk to deal with disability issues.”* (p. 3)

However, the on-going SIDA Cooperation plan in Liberia (2016-20) does not mention disability or disabled persons.

Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR): CCPR is based in Switzerland and works to promote the participation of NGOs in the work of the Human Rights Committee. It also helps civil society organisations to prepare country reports on Human Rights. The “CCPR Implementation report in Liberia” was prepared by the Liberian civil society organisations in March 2018 and it also touched on some issues related to PwDs. For example, regarding the accessibility of health services to PwDs it mentioned, “*These are poorly developed, especially in rural areas and are mostly not accessible to persons with disabilities*”. (p. 12)

2. NUOD & DPOs IN LIBERIA

Generally speaking there was a paucity of formal documents such as annual reports or programme reports that can provide insights about the institutional capacities of DPOs and NUOD. Most of the information about their activities came from indirect sources. The Liberian DPOs have an extremely limited presence online and in the social media. Thus, the following account about the institutional and management capacities of DPOs and their federations, can at best be seen as a partial view.

A recent document from UNDP (2017) gave the following opinion regarding the DPO-world in Liberia: “*The disability community in Liberia is vibrant. National DPOs have been established, and the National Union of the Disabled (NUOD) even has recently opened chapters in all of the 15 counties. NUOD has also recently become a full member of the African Disability Forum. Nevertheless, the DPOs remain weak in terms of technical capacity, membership base, and they are largely excluded from decision-making and consultations. Persons with intellectual or psycho-social disabilities are not adequately represented within the DPO movement. There is a great need to build the DPOs’ capacity, amplify the voices of persons with disabilities, and to ensure that the key duty-bearers have the sufficient data, expertise and political will to respond to their demands in meaningful and appropriate ways.*”

National Union of the Organisations of the Disabled (NUOD)

NUOD was formed as an umbrella organisation of all the different Liberian DPOs and its first statute was registered in 1995. That statute was modified in 2012. It is the main partner of the DASU project.

NUOD was launched during the first phase of the Liberian civil war, which ended with elections in 1997. The second phase of the civil war started in 1999 and ended with the peace accords in 2003. Thus, NUOD as an organisation was a “war-child” and it grew up amidst and in spite of the uncertainties and travails of a war.

The new statute of NUOD adopted in 2012 includes county coordinators who represent the counties in the general assemblies. This represents a stronger network of NUOD to provide representations from the interior regions of the country in the UNION.

The *Face Book page of NUOD* (not updated since 2015) provides the following information about the federation: *“The Union was founded and formally registered with Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 October 1995 as a non-profit corporation in accordance with the not-for-profit corporation act of Liberia, 1977. It was founded to promote and advocate for the protection and social inclusion of all persons with disabilities in Liberia. In Liberia, the general population is still resentful of persons with disabilities though the country has signed and ratified several international protocols and conventions on the rights and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Union works to strengthen its institutional membership and advocate at policy level to ensure that development activities reflect the needs and constraints of persons with disabilities in Liberia. Membership with the Union is institutional and is determined by formal Disabled People Organizations registered within the Republic under applicable laws. There are currently 25 registered DPOs accredited with the Union.”*

An updated document from NUOD informs that currently it has 28 DPO members. The full list of NUOD members is provided in annex 4 of this report. Some of the key activities of NUOD in the recent years are described below.

In 2012, NUOD organised a *week-long seminar* of people with disabilities in Gbarnga, (Bong County). The seminar brought together hundreds of persons with disabilities affected by the Liberian civil conflicts from the fifteen counties of Liberia. In 2013, NUOD organised a *training course on the preparation of a shadow report* about the monitoring of the implementation of CRPD.

In April 2015, the then *President of Liberia Ms. Ellen Jonson Sirleaf* participated in the General Assembly of NUOD. According to a news-report about the speech of the President Sirleaf: *“The Liberian leader assured the NUOD of government’s inflexible resolve to work along with their organization in achieving the goals and agenda that will emerge out of the Assembly. “We want to thank you for the hindsight to advance those lofty aspirations that will continue to inspire your participation across the broad spectrum of national activity,” she indicated.”*

Reports from different years about *celebration of World Disability Day* in different counties – for example, in Bgarnga (Bong county) in 2012 and in Voinjana (Lofa county) in 2017 – show that NUOD could successfully mobilise local authorities, Government institutions, DPOs and other civil society organisations in these events. This again shows the stronger network of NUOD in the different parts of Liberia.

In 2017, NUOD presented a *draft report on the implementation of CRPD* for the period 2012-July 2017 to the CRPD committee in Geneva. In this report, NUOD described its achievements: *“... the establishment of Liberia’s first National Institution for Disability Issues, the National Commission on Disabilities in November of 2005, Liberia’s signing of the United Nations Convention in March 2007, domestication of the Convention in 2008 and its ratification in July 2012.”*

This report covered nine thematic areas from CRPD, it highlighted the enormous challenges still facing the persons with disabilities and recommended the implementation of CRPD in Liberia. Preparation of this report denotes good capability of NUOD in terms of understanding the importance of CRPD and for the fight for its implementation in Liberia.

A newspaper interview of the NUOD president published in March 2018 provided information about the different partners and supporters of NUOD: “On the implementation of its earmarked projects, NUOD gets some financial help from the office of the Head of State. The United Nations Development Project (UNDP) provides a larger chunk of the Union’s project implementation funding. In 2016, for example, UNDP sponsored the Union’s National Referendum awareness workshop in five of the 15 counties. Other supporters include: Sight Savers (mainly for the visually impaired), Handicap International, AIFO (an Italian humanitarian organization), the National Lottery Authority (Liberia), among a host of helpers for NUOD in time of financial distress.”

There were few reports by other organisations expressing opinions regarding NUOD, including the following:

An unpublished AIFO report (May 2010) about a CBR project funded by European Union provided the following analysis of the institutional capacity of NUOD: “... National Union of the Organisations of the Disabled which in the past years played an important role in promoting positive actions at policy level (i.e. the constitution of the National Commission on Disability, the legislative provision of three seats for PWDs in Parliament). ... However, the capacity of this civil society’s federation appears to be really weak. In general terms the relations among all the Liberian DPOs’ organizations (within and external to the Union) are characterised by personal conflicts and competitions which hamper the capacity of these organizations to effectively lobby on Government and International agencies.”

A report of the Government of Liberia on the situation of human rights (2012) provided the following information about NUOD: “The NUOD, in collaboration with the NCD, successfully lobbied for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, which instrument was deposited with Secretary General of the United Nations on the 26th of July, 2012.” (p. 22)

A SIDA report on the disability sector in Liberia (2014) had also appreciated the work of NUOD: “It has become an important advocacy organisation, participating in the effort to include disability in the Agenda for Transformation. NUOD reacted in 2011 on the inaccessibility of voting places in the presidential election and in 2013 took several actions to compel the 53rd Legislature to repeal the highly discriminatory law that discriminate and deny children with disabilities the right to be included and to freely participate in obtaining education.”

Conclusions: The above reports and newspaper articles highlight the growing institutional capacities of NUOD in planning and organising specific activities in different parts of the countries. They also underline the expansion of the NUOD network to different counties.

On the other hand, some reports also mention continuing financial difficulties (for example, lack of funds to pay the rent for the NUOD office in 2015). The lack of annual reports and the lack of updates on the Facebook page since 2015, also indicate that the Federation does has many bottle-neck areas of activities, though many of these can be due to lack of resources.

DPOs in Monrovia

Cultivators of Users' Hope (CFUH): This association of persons with mental health conditions, CFUH, was formed in 2012 with support from the Carter centre. It was legally constituted in 2014 (Accreditation n. 1425).

The main objectives of CFUH, as described in their statute (2014) are as follows: (i) community engagement for creating awareness and fighting the abuses and violence against persons with mental illness; (ii) support for development of sustainable livelihood through skills development, education and scholarships; and, (iii) psychosocial Support and peer counselling.

Their initial efforts to join NUOD and network with other disability organisations were not very successful. An external evaluation of the institutional capacity of CFUH was carried out in 2014. It found limited participation of persons with mental health condition in the organisation except for the founding members. They had carried out some training activities (sensitising law enforcement officers and journalists, peer counselling) but otherwise, they had no practical activities, and no bank account.

The evaluation of the institutional capacity prompted different changes in the organisation as can be seen from their 2017 annual report. According to this report their office continues to be in the Carter Centre. However, they have been steadily expanding their activities and increasing their membership. At the end of 2016, their membership had increased from 3 founding members to 60 persons and they had 3 branches. During 2017 their membership increased to 90 persons and the number of branches were 5 – 2 in greater Monrovia (dormant) and in 3 in the counties. They were hoping to open a new branch in Nimba county in 2018.

Other activities of CFUH during 2017 included a visit to SHGs in Nimba county. They also received a grant of 300 USD from Government and they conducted soap making skills training in 2 counties. They have started the process for joining NUOD. On the other hand, they had difficulties in completing formalities for renewal of their accreditation. For audit they needed help of the Carter Centre. In 2018, they became a member of NUOD.

Conclusions: Though CFUH is a recent organisation, it is starting its transformation to expand its coverage with branches in different counties. The support from the Carter Centre has been fundamental for its development. With its expanded membership, county branches, first annual report and their networking with DPOs, it is showing signs of good institutional capacity.

Liberian National Association of the Deaf (LNAD): LNAD had started as an informal group during the years of the civil war. It was formally constituted as a DPO in 2003 during the final phase of the civil war. LNAD promotes projects and activities for the benefit of deaf persons in the communities, in the areas of education, training, workshops, seminars and sign language.

LNAD has a total membership base of 275 persons which are divided into three sub-groups – 190 adults, 50 children and 35 elderly persons. It is a member of the World Deaf Federation.

A revised statute of LNAD was adopted on 30 July 2016. It defined the mission of LNAD in the following terms: *“Our mission is to promote quality education, advocacy, accessible interpreting services, self-help employment opportunities and other development programmes for the deaf and hard of hearing persons ...”*. It defines itself mainly as a “lobby and advocacy group”. Among its objectives is – *“to become and remain an ordinary member of the world federation of the deaf (WFD); to create and promote development of organisations in the service of deaf and hard of hearing persons following a needs assessment survey in various communities; to promote the adoption of Liberian sign language ...”* The statute does not mention any branches in the counties.

According to a 2016 newspaper report, its president Mr. Jallah Karbbah complained that they had never received any funds from the Government and their only support was from the deaf association in USA and some local organisations in Liberia. He also mentioned that they had branches in 14 counties. Among its activities, the news report said that LNAD had provided support to 13 persons for a technical training course and scholarship to 8 persons for university education. (Africa online, 2016)

LNAD has a Facebook page which provides limited information and was last updated in August 2017. No other annual reports or activities reports related to LNAD could be identified.

Conclusions: LNAD seems to be an active community DPO with a local network of support and membership. However, its organisational activities such as preparation of annual reports and its communication activities are very weak. Its networking with other disability organisations in Liberia also seems limited.

County DPOs from Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh Counties

Broadly speaking there were two kinds of DPOs in the 3 counties –

- Local branches of national level DPOs in Monrovia. These include SAPRO, National Association of the Blind (NAB), Christian Association of the Blind (CAB)

and Group of 77. All these four organisations were present in Bong county while only Group of 77 was present in Nimba county.

- Grass-roots level DPOs that started at county level. These included Nimba Disabled Community (NDC) and Grand Gedeh Association of Disabled (GGAD).

No formal documents or reports could be identified about the grass-roots level DPOs from the three counties. While some documents related to the national level offices of the county-DPOs (SAPRO, NAB, CAB and Group of 77) were available, no information was found in any of these regarding any specific activities of their county branches.

During 2010-2013, as part of a community-based rehabilitation programme AIFO-Liberia had supported the setting up of some Self-Help Groups of PwDs in the counties. A total of 13 SHGs were set-up in the three counties (Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh). The SHGs were provided skills training in soap making, pig and chicken rearing. These SHGs had strong links with local DPOs and many of the county DPO leaders have come from these groups. In 2017, according to an AIFO-Liberia report (2018), 8 of these SHGs were still active and some of them continued to have good participation in the county DPOs, helping to create links between the DPOs and the communities.

Conclusions: Thus, from this limited information, it was not possible to have an indication about the institutional and management capacities of the county DPOs.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE DESK REVIEW

The objective of the desk review was to collect information regarding the disability sector in Liberia along with an analysis of the institutional and management capacities of DPO umbrella organisation NUOD, DPOs. The Review was able to reconstruct a broad overview of the disability situation in the country along with information about the state and non-state bodies and institutions. However, the information regarding DPOs, especially about the county level DPOs, was extremely limited.

The Review shows that after the end of civil war in 2003, it had taken a few years for the different disability stake-holders in Liberia to mobilise themselves and to lobby the State for giving more attention to the rights of persons with disabilities, which had led to the formal ratification of CRPD and initiation of a process for implementing CRPD. However, this process had come to a stand-still in 2014 with the Ebola virus crisis.

After the end of the crisis 2016, once again the different disability stake-holders in Liberia have slowly reactivated the struggle that has recently concluded with the validation of a 5-years National Plan of Action for the implementation of CRPD. A national policy for inclusive education is already in place. However, the new statute, role and functioning of national statutory body for implementation of disability related activities, National Commission on Disability, is not yet in place. There is a huge amount of work awaiting NUOD and DPOs for ensuring that the policies and programmes of all the different ministries, their programmes and those of other stakeholders are in line with the commitments of the Liberian Government for the CRPD implementation.

In spite of difficulties in identifying and collecting reports and documents related to the DPOs, the Review found evidence from different sources about a stronger institutional and management capacities of NUOD, the national umbrella organisation.

The Review also points towards different weaknesses including lack of sustainable funding, preparation of annual reports and activities reports, lack of a communication strategy, and lack of an advocacy strategy in NUOD and DPOs. There was insufficient information to decide if different groups of persons with disabilities (children, women, persons with severe disabilities, persons with specific disabilities) are adequately represented and have possibilities to express themselves in the organisations.

Case-Studies in the Counties

Through NUOD, 7 county DPOs and 2 Monrovia-based DPOs were asked to collect case studies about persons with disabilities engaged in income generation activities (IGA). Since the previous AIFO-Liberia project had supported setting up of SHGs of persons with disabilities in the counties, and skills-training courses were conducted in all the three counties, it was decided to focus the case studies on activities of self-employment and income generation.

SHGs of PwDs bring together persons from near-by communities, who can meet regularly. Apart from income generation, most of them are also involved in awareness-raising, promoting group savings and providing emergency support to needy persons. SHGs can be seen as grass-root level informal DPOs and in some countries, SHGs in an area join together to create a DPO. Though there are no formal links between the SHGs and DPOs in these 3 counties of Liberia, often the SHG leaders also play key leadership roles in the DPOs.

A simple format for collecting the case studies was prepared and finalised with NUOD and AIFO-Liberia. NUOD distributed this form to the concerned DPOs, provided instructions about how to collect the relevant information. A copy of case-studies format is presented in Annex 1 at the end of the report.

The county DPOs were asked to talk to individual PwDs involved in self-employment and income-generation activities. They were asked to ensure gender balance and involve persons with different kinds of disabilities. They were also told to look for both positive (successful) and negative (unsuccessful) case studies.

An analysis of the case studies provided the following information:

- **Total Case studies:** A total of 41 case studies about businesses & IGA run by persons with disabilities were collected.
- **Geographic provenance of the case studies:** 4 DPOs from Bong county presented 23 case studies; 2 DPOs from Nimba county presented 6 case-studies; and one DPO from Grand Gedeh presented 7 case studies. The remaining 5 case studies came from the 2 DPOs based in Monrovia - 3 from CFUH and 2 from LNAD. Thus all the concerned DPOs collected case studies.
- **Gender representation in case studies:** 22 case studies (about 54%) were about men and 19 case studies (46%) were about women.
- **Persons with disabilities represented in the case studies:** 31 case studies (75%) were about persons with physical disabilities, especially mobility related disabilities and these were all collected by cross-disability DPOs in the counties.

There were 5 case studies about persons with visual disabilities and were collected by the county branches of DPOs of persons with visual disabilities (CAB and NAB). 3 case studies about persons with mental health conditions were provided by CFUH and 2 case studies about persons with hearing & speech disabilities were provided by LNAD.

Thus, while single disability DPOs collected case-studies about one kind of disabilities, in the cross-disability DPOs, almost all case studies were about persons with mobility related disabilities. This pointed towards a possible dominance of this group of persons in these DPOs and would require discussions with them to ensure inclusion of different groups.

- **Kinds of businesses in the case studies:** Most of the case studies (83%) were about persons selling along the roadside and through informal “table markets”, including one case study about door-to-door selling. All these were activities with a minimum investment and earning, without any savings and a subsistence level of living standards for the PwDs. The products sold varied from drinks, vegetables, food and grocery items, cooked food, fish and used clothes.

5 persons were (12%) in service provision such as electrician, sewing, beautician and hair-dressing, who were making a little higher level of earnings, though 2 of them expressed a desire to change because they did not earn enough. Among them only 2 case studies were about persons who had a proper shop. These were about persons who had started small, made small savings, learned new skills and gradually increased their businesses.

2 case-studies (5%) were inappropriate, in the sense that they were about persons facing poverty, who had no previous experience in self-employment and who wanted help for starting an income generation activity.

- **Funds for starting the business:** Most persons started their business when they received small amounts of money from someone, usually from a family member. Only one person mentioned that he had approached a bank for a loan but was refused.

3 persons mentioned that they were able to get some funds for starting their IGA from “community clubs”.

The two persons running the shops reported gradual building of their business through their own savings. Many others declared that they needed more funds from someone to expand their business.

- **Business skills and training:** None of the persons in the case studies mentioned any kind of training. None of them mentioned any support from DPOs or NUOD. On the other hand, some persons who have specific skills such as basket making, declared their willingness to teach their skills to others.

Discussion

The case studies collected by persons with disabilities from the DPOs raised up different points for reflection. Overall, they reflected lack of skills, lack of any personal savings and difficulties in accessing funds to start their IGAs.

While there were some active SHGs in the counties where PwDs are engaged in collective IGA such as raising pigs and making and selling soaps, these were not included in the case studies, which focused on individual IGAs.

A key point arising from the case studies was regarding opportunities for participation for persons with different disabilities in the county DPOs. Almost all the case studies collected by cross-disability DPOs were about persons with mobility problems. These DPOs need to reflect if this is an indicator about challenges in participation and inclusion faced by other groups of PwDs.

The quality of preparation of the case studies was very variable. About 10% of the case studies were very well prepared with all the information. Another 60% of the case studies had some missing information, but they did provide all the necessary details. Around 30% of the case studies were poorly prepared. For example, some of the case studies of persons with vision disabilities from Bong county were not about IGAs.

Another issue that emerged from the case studies was that of lack of business skills and lack of action from the DPOs in this sense.

Five years ago, during the evaluation of the AIFO-CBR project, the external evaluator had written regarding the IGAs in the SHGs: *“The choice of income-generating activities seems to have been based on subjective assumptions, rather than on a systematic assessment of unit production costs in relation to pricing/profitability.”* While the SHGs had received some skills-training, the individual PwDs in the case studies also show a lack of support from the DPOs.

For example, a majority of individuals in the case studies lamented lack of funds for expanding the business. They were mostly talking about tiny amount of funds, which a SHG with a small monthly saving could have provided to them or they themselves could have managed it with a small monthly saving if they had a group support. DPOs can facilitate such understandings but they need the training to do so.

Conclusions

About 70% of the case studies showed that the persons from DPOs were able to collect relevant information from the communities and prepare a reasonably written document

about it. On the other hand, the majority of the case studies showed lack of capacities in the DPOs in supporting individual members in starting and expanding small income generation activities.

We also need to acknowledge the lack of an established small-credit system targeting poor and marginalised persons in the rural areas and counties of Liberia. This becomes even worse for PwDs who are often seen by communities as persons needing help and charity instead of support for self-independence. Partly this could also have been a reflection of the difficulties in the community-support systems caused by the Ebola virus crisis. All these different aspects will be looked at in greater depth during the Baseline Study on Entrepreneurship and Start-Ups.

NUOD & the DPOs: County Visits

During the consultant's visit, there were discussions with representatives of NUOD and DPOs to collect information about their activities and the challenges faced by them. These included some field visits.

From 16 to 20 July 2018, a team of persons including the consultant, a representative of NUOD and DASU staff visited Bong and Nimba counties to meet the DPOs. Due to the bad conditions of the roads because of the rains, it was not possible to visit the Grand Gedeh county. However, representatives of the Grand Gedeh DPO came to meet the team. In some meetings with DPOs, not all participants could speak or understand English, though almost all DPO leaders knew the language. Thus, those meetings were supported by translators.

A summary of information gathered during the discussions with the representatives and the field visits is provided here. *Annex 2* presents the list of DPO representatives met during the visit.

EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL UNION OF THE ORGANISATIONS OF DISABLED (NUOD): Apart from the information about NUOD gathered during the desk review, some additional information was collected from discussions with NUOD representatives.

During the early years, from its establishment in 1995 till about the signing of peace accords in 2003, during the period of the civil war, NUOD had limited activities and was mainly involved in the distribution of food-aid to persons with disabilities and DPOs.

In 2005, NUOD played an active role in the setting up of the National Commission on Disability (NCD). In 2007, along with NCD, it was involved in lobbying the Government for the signing of the CRPD. In 2012, once again, along with NCD and Alliance for Disability, NUOD played an active role in the ratification of CRPD in Liberia.

In 2013, NUOD had a 4 years long project called "Making it Work" with Handicap International, for creating awareness about CRPD in the 15 counties. It was through this project that NUOD was able to establish a NUOD coordinator in each county, and to provide training to these persons.

During the Ebola Virus crisis (EVC) in 2014-15, the activities of NUOD were greatly reduced. During the crisis, Government's whole attention was on fighting the epidemic and there were no resources for the work of DPOs. Most of the international organisations active in Liberia left the country and there was little support for the DPOs during this period except for the emergency supply of food, in which NUOD took part.

After the end of the Ebola crisis, in 2016-17, NUOD has taken up different new projects. For example, it had a project with Ministry of Interiors on "Peace Building"; a project with Leonard Cheshire Disability on "Understanding the Political and Institutional Conditions

for Effective Poverty Reduction for Persons with Disabilities”; and, a UNDP project for promoting the participation of PwDs in the election process in Liberia.

In 2017, Mr. Fallah Bioma, president of NUOD was nominated to the role of Deputy Director for Administration of NCD. At that time, Ms. Naomi Harris was elected as the new president of NUOD.

A key challenge for NUOD has been funds for running its office and its network. While partnerships result in funding for specific activities and projects, such as celebration of World Disability Day, there is lack of sustainable long or medium term support for maintaining its coordinators in all the counties or paying its office rent.

NUOD County Coordinators & Community Workers (CWs): In the three counties (Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh), the DASU project includes support for two community workers in each county. Thus, there are total 6 CWs under this project. The work of these 6 CDWs is coordinated by a regional coordinator based in Ganta in Nimba county.

In each county, one CW is male and the other female. Among the CWs, at least one of them is also a PwD and that person also acts as NUOD county coordinator.

DPOs IN BONG COUNTY

Bong county has 12 districts and its capital is in Gbarnga. There are four DPOs in Bong county – Salayea Agriculture Project (SAPRO), Group of 77, National Association of the Blind (NAB) and Christian Association of the Blind (CAB). These are all local branches of DPOs based in Monrovia, which are affiliated with NUOD.

Arthur Bondo, one of the CWs, is the NUOD coordinator for Bong county. Earlier he was part of SAPRO. The other CW for Bong county is a woman, Krubo Boinay. Arthur and Krubo organised the visits of the team to the different DPOs.

Salayea Agriculture Project (SAPRO): Meeting with the SAPRO representatives was held at the NUOD office in Bong county, located at Civil Compound in Gbarnga city.

They started in 2005 as beneficiaries of an agriculture project for persons with war injuries in Sulayea town in Bong county. After a couple of years, the funder, a Lebanese businessman based in Monrovia, left the country. However, they continued as a group and have their head-office in Monrovia. Now SAPRO has groups in 5 districts, spread in 3 counties. All the different groups meet twice a year, usually in the Bong county.

The central Board of SAPRO has 7 members, including 4 persons from Montserrado county and 3 from Bong county. The other 2 counties (Lofa and Grand Bassa) where they have SAPRO groups, are not represented in the Board as the members are unable to come for the meetings due to logistical difficulties. The Board includes 6 men and 1 woman (treasurer).

According to their constitution, they should have board-elections every 4 years. However, the last time they had elections was in 2012, as they did not have funds to hold proper elections in 2016. During the initial years, they had received funding from different

sources including from UNDP and YMCA. However, in recent years, all outside funding has stopped. The fund-raising is done at the SAPRO office in Monrovia and only when they get something, the head-office can share it with the county branches.

The SAPRO group in Bong county has about 80 members including 20 women. Most of the members are engaged in agriculture. They are open to persons with all kinds of disabilities, though most of their members are persons with mobility disabilities.

Over the last few years, they have tried to fund-raising from the institutions at the county level but they have not been successful. The previous NUOD county coordinator had managed to get some funds from county but those were mismanaged and the county DPOs did not get anything.

Their activities are reduced now. The last time they had celebrated the World Disability Day was in 2015. They just organise meetings between the members. They have not prepared any annual report in the past few years, as there are no funds and they have no place to keep the reports. They do not have any bank account. Their treasurer had been to a training and knows how to maintain accounts. They are not linked with any SHGs and they have never done any savings and credit activities.

Group of 77: This Monrovia based DPO has a branch office in Cotton-tree area of Gbarnga town of Bong county. According to a 2013 report in the Development & Cooperation magazine, *“The ‘Group of 77’ was established in 1977 with the intention to cater to the needs of the less fortunate citizens of Liberia. The organisation is administered by the Office of the Vice President of Liberia, and its executive director is the spouse of the vice-president. The objectives include assisting disabled children to attend school and ensuring that disabled people become self-supported.”* This description points to it being a NGO rather than a DPO. At the same time, at grass-roots level in the districts, it has direct representation from the PwDs, so it can be considered as a mixed NGO-DPO.

The branch office has a coordinator who is nominated and receives a stipend from the head-office in Monrovia. During the visit to its office, the coordinator was not present, as he had been called for some other engagement. Only the county coordinator participates in the meetings held in Monrovia.

It has 2 district coordinators in each district (one male and 1 female). In Bong county there are 12 districts, thus they have 24 district coordinators, who are elected. All the district coordinators are unpaid. It has a county-board with 8 members who are nominated among the district coordinators.

In 2018, Group of 77 started a registration process all the persons with disabilities in the country. In the counties different DPOs have been asked to support this process. Due to this process, the DPOs are updating their membership data. At the same time, the new registrations make it difficult to assess the effective memberships of the DPOs. Under this registration, for each PwD a form is filled along with a picture. During this exercise they have registered 1,250 persons (60% male and 40% female). They call them as their

members though some of these persons are members of other DPOs and do not come to their meetings.

They meet in their office on every Saturday. On an average about 40 persons come to these meetings. Members from other districts do not come to these meetings, however sometimes some district coordinators can join them. They usually start around 9 AM and the meetings can last 1-1.5 hours.

Group of 77 is planning to make a regional office in Gbarnga which will be responsible for 5 counties. Following the Ebola crisis, their office-building in Gbarnga was demolished. Only recently they have been able to get the present building from the county authorities, though it is not well-accessible to the wheel chairs.

Their activities depend upon the support they receive from their head-office. For example, they had received seeds from Christian Aid which were distributed to members. They also have a savings scheme, where during each meeting, each member contributes 10 L\$. They do not yet have a bank account but are discussing about opening an account to keep the money they are saving.

Liberia National Association of the Blind (NAB): This DPO is based in a village near Suacoco, close to the Cuttington Technical University and is the Bong county branch of the national organisation. It was started in 2016 by a blind person, Emory, who is a university graduate and its founder-president. When NAB was started, there were no other DPOs in this area, therefore, it attracted persons with different disabilities. Emory informed and asked permission from the NAB head-office in Monrovia to create a cross-disability group, open to persons with different disabilities.

At present it has 39 members including 16 persons with vision disabilities and 23 persons with other disabilities, mainly mobility related disabilities. All members live in that area. The members meet twice a month in a school building and all members have to contribute 50 L\$ to the savings fund of the organisation. They have saved about 1000 L\$ so far. Their meetings are held at 4 PM on second and last Sunday of the month. The meetings last for around 1.5 hours.

They have tried starting some income generation activities with their members including soap making and providing seeds for agriculture. Soap making has been a little difficult since the costs of the raw-materials are high and the profit margin is little.

Christian Association of the Blind (CAB): It is the branch office of a national organisation. It has an office near the centre of the town in Gbarnga. It mostly includes persons with vision disabilities (they have a member who is a wheel-chair user but she does not come to the meetings). Most of its members live in the surrounding areas of the city. Its head-office is in Monrovia. For many years, this group in Gbarnga was not very active, however over the past one year, they have restarted their activities.

John De Weand became the coordinator of the CAB group in Gbarnga in 2017 and the present office-building was identified in September 2017. Now it has 54 members

including 40 men and 14 women. Their members also include some children, whose parents participate but they are not counted as members. They have a local board of 7 members. The last elections were held in 2018. Their new office is not accessible to wheel chairs because of the raised entrance door.

They have a monthly meeting with all the members. It is held at 9 AM on every second Saturday of the month. During the meetings they talk about projects (soap making and sewing), problems, how to increase membership, office renovations, etc. Around 18-19 members participate regularly. During the meetings, each member has to pay 50L\$. They have saved more than 5000 L\$.

They had mobility training for their members so that they move independently. Among their income generation activities, they had also tried making and selling the Canna oil, but it did not work out. Soap making is an on-going activity. They sell their soaps in the local market for 10 L\$ each.

During the first half of 2018, they received a 40 US\$ contribution from the head-office in Monrovia. No funds have come yet for the second half. They have opened a bank account and they prepare monthly reports which are sent to the office in Monrovia.

Some of their members have long experience in the organisation. They try to be transparent and participatory in their decision-making. However, lack of funds and consequently, lack of activities is their biggest problem.

SHGs of PwDs in Bong County: Till 2016, AIFO-Liberia was working with 4 SHGs in the Bong county. In 2018, 2 of these SHGs (Leprosy colony and SKT) are still active while 2 other SHGs are no longer active (VI community and Wainsue). These SHGs are not formally linked with any of the county DPOs. Though these are not formally registered organisations, they also represent community groups of PwDs.

DPOs & OTHER VISITS IN NIMBA COUNTY

Nimba county is divided into 6 districts. Ganta city in the Nimba county is the second most populous city in Liberia after Monrovia. Nimba county has 2 DPOs – Nimba Disabled Community and Group of 77.

Nimba Disabled Community (NDC): NDC head-office is situated in Sanniquellie city. The visit took place on a Wednesday morning, the day when the Sanniquellie group of the DPO usually meets.

Therefore, during the initial part of this visit, apart from the DPO leaders, around 20 persons with disabilities from the Sanniquellie group were also present. Thus, the team spent some time to listening to the different challenges the group members faced in their daily lives. There were young mothers who have been abandoned by their husbands and there were grandmothers who have to look after their disabled grandchildren, talking about difficulties of surviving. There were mothers worried about their children being excluded from school and community lives. There were young persons with cerebral palsy and epilepsy who spoke about stigma and exclusion. Another common theme was that of

lack of skills and incomes. After this sharing, the Sanniquellie group left for their own meeting.

NDC was started in 2008 when a person working in a Human Rights project for the Nimba county came to Sanniquellie and met some PwDs. They made announcements on the local radio and thus, PwDs from different parts of district joined them. Slowly they expanded to other districts. They had their first elections in 2012 when Ms. Nanley Doe was elected as the president.

NDC was registered with the state authorities in 2014 and has a county level Board. They are open to all the different groups of persons with disabilities. NDC has 7 branches and has an elected district coordinator in each district. Each district coordinator is supported by a board of nominated members. The district branches maintain relations with the district authorities. Regular community meetings are held in the districts during which members are asked to pay 50 L\$ for the DPO functioning. For example, the Sanniquellie group of NDC has about 11,000 L\$ in their bank account. Written reports of district meetings are prepared and kept in the districts.

Quarterly meetings of district coordinators together with the county level board of NDC are held in Sanniquellie. They make county plans and budget approvals. The county authorities know them and help them. For example, the office building and chairs for the meeting rooms in Sanniquellie were given to them by the county authorities.

Not all the districts are represented in the county Board, as some of them are too far and persons cannot come for the Board meetings. The Board is formed mainly by persons from Sanniquellie and Ganta districts. At present Ms. Nanley Doe is the CW and NUOD coordinator while Mr. Abestine Tozayis the county president.

They hold their annual assemblies on 3rd of December each year when all district boards and other members participate. This meeting is held in Ganta as it is more central and easier to reach from the different districts. The last general assembly was held in December 2016. It was not held in 2017 due to lack of funds.

They are collaborating with the national campaign for registering all PwDs. They have already registered 3005 PwDs in their county. They had done their first registration of PwDs in 2008. Through the new registration, they have found that many of those persons had died or shifted, while many of the new persons were not known to them. Thus, the registration process has been very useful. Among their members, the number of women is much higher.

They have taken part in different trainings over the past years such as leadership training, how to manage bank accounts, agriculture training, chicken poultry training, home gardens for vegetables, etc. They have a bank account at the head-office and in some districts, but not in all districts. They have received some subsidies from NCD (about 10-15,000 L\$ for income generation projects). They have also received support from EU-AIFO CBR project. Other donors are local steel and rubber companies. They also get food items like rice from local donors, which are distributed to members.

They feel that their strengths are advocacy and networking. They are recognised by the county authorities and they participate in NUOD activities. In 2015, they worked with NUOD for the organisation of the World Disability Day celebrations in Nimba county. Their greatest challenge is to find enough resources to support the needs of their members.

Group of 77: Some of the leaders of Group of 77 we met in their office in Ganta were the same persons we had also met in Sanniquellie at the NDC office. This DPO had started as Nimba Disability Association (NDA) in 1987. In 1997 they joined Group of 77 and became one of their official groups. At present, they are also a part of the NDC network, where they represent the Ganta district. Thus, Mr. Kougbay, the president of Group of 77 in Ganta, is also a board member of NDC.

They had developed different activities in Ganta including an elementary school, which was destroyed during the civil war. The civil war affected persons with disabilities in different ways. Many of the persons with disabilities were killed. One group member explained that he had broken his arm while running away to save his life and was unable to reach any health service, so his arm could not heal properly. During the war, the Group of 77 worked with Red Cross to provide food and basic subsistence to persons with disabilities.

At the community level, Group of 77 is linked with a SHG, “Life is Good” as many SHG leaders play leadership role in the DPO. They have a long history of organising different activities and projects. For example, they were involved in provision of assistive technology aids to needy persons with support from Christian aid and different church groups. They have many educated but employed persons with disabilities in Ganta who can help them in accounting and writing project reports.

Visits to the Nimba county SHGs: From the past AIFO-Liberia project, till 2016, there were 4 SHGs of PwDs in Nimba county. Three of those SHGs are still active (Kpein, Life is Good and Wuo’s Town), and were visited by the team. The fourth SHG (Tokey Hill) is inactive at present.

These SHGs had received funds and training on IGAs such as soap making and running a piggery. “Life is Good SHG” is still engaged in soap making while in the other two groups (Kpein and Wo’s Town), both soap making and raising pigs are continuing. All the three SHGs informed that their incomes from soap making are down because of higher cost of the raw materials.

The visits in Nimba county highlighted close links between the SHGs and the two DPOs (NDC and Group of 77). This means that PwDs can play an active role at grass-roots level in a SHG, at the district level and also at the county level.

Visit to Ganta Rehabilitation Centre and Hospital: Between 2010-17, AIFO-Liberia was involved in different activities in collaboration with the national leprosy programme in Liberia including the Ganta Rehabilitation Centre and Hospital (GRC&H).

GRC&H was opened in the 1920s by the American Methodists. Since 1970s, catholic Consolata sisters joined this centre and now look after its activities. Sr Irene is the in-charge of the hospital management since mid-2016. The hospital includes a wheel chair and orthopaedic appliances workshop. Previous AIFO projects had provided resources for the functioning of this workshop and it continues to be an important centre for providing AT services for persons with disabilities in this part of Liberia.

The last year for which Liberian Ministry of Health provided leprosy data to WHO was in 2014 when it had 355 new cases. In 2015 and 2016 Liberia did not report the number of new cases. In 2016, the leprosy programme was decentralised to the counties. Through the previous CEI-AIFO project, about 180 primary health care workers were trained for leprosy diagnosis and referral. However, GRC&H was unable to tell anything about the present leprosy situation in the country. In July 2018, they had about 77 cases of leprosy under treatment from the hospital clinic.

The WHO-Liberia annual report 2016 declared that during 2016 all counties of Liberia had reported new cases of leprosy and that leprosy elimination goal of reducing the prevalence to less than 1 per 100,000 population has not yet been reached.

GRC&H is also the referral centre for Buruli ulcer and tuberculosis. Since both leprosy and Buruli are disabling conditions, they contribute to the PwDs in the surrounding areas. Wuo's Town, next to GRC&H, has a large number of PwDs, who have been treated in GRC&H and then stayed here.

DPOs IN GRAND GEDEH COUNTY

The asphalt road from Monrovia finishes in Ganta. Thus, reaching Grand Gedeh county on the non-tarred road requires more time and during the rainy season, it becomes difficult. The capital of Grand Gedeh county is in Tchien town. The county is composed of 3 districts and has one DPO.

Grand Gedeh Disabled Association (GGDA): G. Gedeh county has only one DPO, based in Tchien town in Zwedru (Tchien) district. GGDA was started in 2007. It covers all the three districts of the Grand Gedeh county with an elected district coordinator in each district. GGDA is a cross-disability organisation.

Due to the rainy season, the consultant and the team could not visit Grand Gedeh. However, representatives from GGDA came to Ganta for a meeting.

GGDA was not very active over the past few years, when a vacuum in its historical leadership stimulated a renewal of its leadership and greater participation from other DPO members. As part of the renewal process, first the district coordinators were elected. Then in May 2018 the county elections were held. Due to logistic difficulties, participation from the other two districts to the head-office in Tchien was difficult, still 10 persons from the other districts came to the county elections. At present, all the elected board members are from Tchien district and elections are planned every 4 years.

Thus, though GGDA is a 11-years old DPO, its leaders are new and are slowly gaining experience. They have a land for their office but need funds to make their building. They have been lobbying the county authorities for help. They also have some farm land and they hope to use their produce to support the functioning of the office.

The Tchien group meets twice a month and each time members pay a contribution of 25 L\$. They had an account in Ecobank but after the bank closed, they did not open another one. However, they plan to open a bank account soon.

They are part of the national campaign to register all the PwDs. In Tchien, they have registered 150 persons including 60 males and 90 females. Due to the logistic difficulties, it is possible that there are many other PwDs in their district that have not been registered. They did not have the updated information from other districts about the PwDs they have registered.

SHGs in Grand Gedeh County: During the previous AIFO-Liberia project, till 2016 there were 2 SHGs of PwDs in Grand Gedeh. In 2018, one of those SHGs (Carville) was still active while the other SHG (Toddy-Ville) was inactive.

CONCLUSIONS

The following table summarises the information about organisations of PwDs in the three counties:

Organisations	Comments
Bong County: has 4 DPOs (SAPRO, Group of 77, LNAB and CAB) and 2 SHGs of PwDs	All DPOs are local branches of DPOs based in Monrovia. Group of 77 is a mixed NGO-DPO. There is no county level network of the DPOs. The SHGs are not linked to specific DPOs. Their county level advocacy and fund-raising are weak, they depend upon their Monrovia offices for most activities.
Nimba County: has 2 DPOs (NDC and Group of 77) and 3 SHGs of PwDs	One is a county level DPO with representative structure in 6 districts. The second is branch of a DPO based in Monrovia but has also joined the county level DPO (double affiliation). They have a strong network in the county with links to SHGs (and communities). They receive support from county and district authorities.
Grand Gedeh County: 1 DPO (GGDA) and 1 SHG of PwDs	The one DPO is similar to Nimba, with branches in all 3 districts, but it is going through a renewal process with new leadership. They need a new office. Their county level networking is more difficult due to logistical problems.

The visits to the DPOs in Bong and Nimba and the meetings with DPO representatives from Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties was very instructive in understanding the

different organisational models chosen by them in their different contexts, and also their commonalities. At the same time, the county visits were an opportunity to have discussions with the representative of NUOD and to gain additional information about the Union.

This information gathered from this visit was important to understand the backgrounds, contexts, strengths, weaknesses and training needs of the DPOs.

County Level Networking - Strengths and Difficulties: The DPOs in Nimba county showed a remarkable structure that goes from the county to the districts and in some places, through the SHGs links with persons with disabilities in communities. At the same time, the double affiliation of “Group of 77” in the Nimba county to both a national DPO and to a county network (NDC) and through it to NUOD, highlights the overlapping spaces and difficulty in categorisation of DPOs. At the same time, it denotes their strength and synergies at the county level.

The DPO set-up in Nimba county can serve as a model for creating county level networks under the guidance of NUOD. Thus, all the different DPOs present in each county can come together in these networks to strengthen their advocacy for rights with the county and district authorities. Such county level networks with common norms may not be feasible in the short term but NUOD can verify the feasibility of such an approach in some pilot areas. As shown by Grand Gedeh, the logistical difficulties in a county can make such larger networks difficult to organise.

The NAB branch in Suacoco, raises another kind of categorisation difficulty. At the national level, NAB represents blind and low vision persons but its group in the Bong county is a cross-disability group.

Common Issues in the County DPOs: The visit showed that in almost all DPOs, representation of the women was limited in the leadership roles. There were very few women in their Boards. Even during the discussions during the DPO visits, though there were a few forceful and articulate women leaders who intervened, in some DPOs the women did not intervene in the discussions.

Another common aspect in the DPOs was the lack of persons with some disabilities such as hearing and speech disabilities, persons with mental health problems, persons with leprosy related disabilities and persons with intellectual disabilities in the boards and leadership roles.

Diagnostic Workshop on the Capacity-Building Needs of DPOs and DPO-Federations

INTRODUCTION

A two-and-a-half-day workshop was organised jointly by DASU project and NUOD at Exceeding hotel in Monrovia from 23 to 25 May 2018. Its objective was to share the preliminary findings from the desk review and county visits and to understand the capacity-building needs of the leaders from the different organisations of PwDs.

The workshop participants represented the DPOs in Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties, 2 DPOs from Monrovia (CFUH and LNAD) and NUOD as the umbrella organisation. Bong county with representatives from 4 DPOs had the largest number of participants.

A total of 34 persons participated in this workshop, along with a variable number of observers from Monrovia based organisations. The workshop was facilitated by the consultant along with support of persons from the DASU staff and NUOD.

The Workshop was organised in 5 sessions. The workshop programme is presented in Annex 3 of this report.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

All the participants were asked to fill a 3-page questionnaire with some general demographic and disability related information. Out of the total 34 participants, 33 persons completed this questionnaire. An analysis of these 33 questionnaires provided the following information:

Geographical Provenance: There were 13 participants from Bong county, 7 from Nimba county and 4 from Grand Gedeh county. Finally, there were 6 persons from Monrovia and 3 persons from NUOD.

Age and Sex of the Participants: The average age was 47 years while the youngest participant was 23 years old and the oldest, 65 years old.

Among them there were 23 males (70%) and 10 females (30%). As already mentioned under the county visits, female representation in the DPO leadership is weak and this was reflected in their workshop participation. There were 20 married persons, 2 were separated and 11 were unmarried.

Educational status: Among the participants there was 1 illiterate person and 9 persons with university level education. Among the remaining 23 persons there were 3 persons with 6-8 years of schooling and 20 persons with 9-12 years of schooling. Thus, persons with all the different educational backgrounds were represented in the workshop.

Kinds of disabilities among the participants: as can be seen from the following analysis, the participants had different disabilities, though not all the disability groups were equally well represented. Many persons had more than one kind of disabilities, therefore the total adds up to more than 100%.

Vision disabilities: A total of 19 persons (58%) had vision difficulties including 11 persons with some difficulties, 3 persons with severe difficulties and 5 blind persons. Among the 14 persons with moderate or severe vision difficulties, 9 used eye glasses and 3 persons declared that they needed eye-glasses.

Hearing Disabilities: A total of 5 persons (15%) had hearing difficulties including 2 deaf persons and 2 persons with severe hearing difficulty and one person with mild hearing difficulty. Among them 2 persons used a hearing aid.

Speech disabilities: 3 persons (9%) had speech difficulties including the two deaf persons who communicated through sign language.

Mobility and physical disabilities: 18 persons (54%) had mobility related difficulties. Among them 7 persons had severe difficulties while 11 persons had moderate difficulties.

Difficulty in remembering and concentrating: 5 participants (15%) mentioned some difficulty in remembering things and in focusing attention.

Convulsions: One person (3%) reported convulsions a few times every month. The person is not taking any anti-convulsion medicines.

Difficulties in Self-care and Activities of Daily Living: 12 persons (33%) reported difficulties in self-care including 4 persons with severe difficulties.

Use of Technical Appliances: Some participants used more than one technical appliance. 1 one used a wheel chair, 9 persons used crutches, 7 persons used a walking cane, 9 persons used eye glasses and 3 persons used a hearing aid. 2 persons said that they needed eye-glasses and one person said that he needed a hearing aid.

SESSION 1: DIFFERENT WAYS OF ORGANISING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The first session of the workshop on the first day opened with an introduction to the Disability & Start-Up (DASU) project and introduction of the participants. This was followed by an exercise on participants' expectations.

Most persons' expectations focused on learning new skills from the workshop. Thus, it was explained that it was not a training workshop but rather the continuation of the processes started through county visits and discussions, and that its goal was to identify their strengths and weaknesses for understanding their training needs that can be answered through the training courses planned in the DASU project.

To promote an understanding of the role of DPOs and the different ways of organising persons with disabilities in the communities, the participants were asked to meet in small groups and define some commonly used terms including community-based organisation (CBO), civil society organisation (CSO), self-help groups (SHG), non-governmental organisations (NGO), disabled peoples' organisations (DPO) and DPO-Federation.

The group presentations showed different ideas about the meanings of these terms. This was an opportunity of discussing the difference between organisations that work for PwDs (NGOs) and the organisations of PwDs (DPOs). It was also an opportunity to talk about different kinds of DPOs including single disability and cross-disability organisations and their respective advantages and disadvantages.

The general discussions were followed by a presentation about the key findings from the visits to counties and the meetings with the DPOs of Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh. The similarities and differences between the way the different DPOs are organised in the counties was presented.

The consultant concluded by suggesting that the organisation of DPOs in the Nimba county with some community level SHGs, district coordinators and county level network of all DPOs which links with NUOD, could be a DPO-strengthening model for all the counties.

SESSION2: NETWORKING, ADVOCACY AND FUND-RAISING

The second session held on the afternoon of the first day of the workshop looked at the activities of DPOs and NUOD in terms of the three key inter-related areas – networking, advocacy and fund-raising.

The session focused on promoting discussions among the participants in small groups to bring out their understanding about the different goals, activities and related skills for each of these three areas.

The group discussions highlighted a relative lack of understanding about the different aspects of networking both at the federation level as well as at the county and district levels. Different aspects of building and strengthening the networks of PwDs including inclusion of persons with specific disabilities that are little represented in DPOs, promoting greater gender balance, making greater accessibility of DPOs, mentoring and building of new leaderships and building specific roles and skills among DPO members, were missing from the discussions. On the other hand, in their discussions the groups mixed up networking role of DPOs with income generation or other activities. None of the groups, in their discussions mentioned CRPD or the SDGs and how these can be the basic principles around which the DPO networks can be strengthened.

The group discussions about advocacy and fund-raising were more pertinent, showing that they had already engaged with these activities. Some groups presented information about the success of their lobbying and their awareness raising campaigns in the communities. However, here a global understanding of how the advocacy and fund-raising activities are part of a strategic plan, how do we prepare the strategies, and the different kinds of skills that are needed for their implementation, were missing from the discussions.

SESSION 3: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Session 3 on the second day of the workshop focused on planning, preparing, implementing and monitoring a project including the financial planning and monitoring.

The session started with a simulation exercise with a case study, which proposed that an organisation was willing to provide training to selected persons with disabilities in how to prepare and repair simple mobility aids and asked the participants to think of the information they had to collect and the different issues they needed to keep in mind while preparing a project proposal.

The simulation exercise was not understood properly and most groups focused only on calculating the costs of sending persons to Monrovia for a training on making appliances, while the critical thinking about the implications of setting up of a sustainable community service for making simple appliances was missing.

Plenary discussions regarding the critical thinking about assessing feasibility, sustainability and profitability of an activity brought out a lack of skills in a systematic analysis and preparation of a new project activity. The discussions also highlighted the lack of understanding about the different ways in which communities need to contribute for ensuring the sustainability of activities, which are started due to availability of external funds. Monitoring, evaluation and risk assessments were other areas in which participants' skills were perceived to be weak.

SESSION 4: INCOME GENERATION, INCLUSIVE BUSINESS AND START-UPS

The 4th session (second session on day 2) of the workshop was dedicated to discussions around the skills needed to promote and support income generation activities, especially around inclusive business and start-ups.

The session started with a presentation on the analysis of case studies made by the workshop participants, as already explained earlier in this report. Then the participants were divided into small groups and given simulation exercises about proposals for starting different kinds of small businesses, asking them to think about how to assess the proposals and decide if the DPO could provide loans from their collective savings to start these businesses.

The responses from the groups focused more on formal aspects of giving loans (for example, if the person asking the loan had someone to guarantee the loan, the amount of interest rate to be charged and the planning for instalments for the repayment of the loan). There was little input from the groups in terms of understanding the market for different kinds of services, thinking about the costs and supplies of raw materials, doing risk assessment, etc.

This was followed by plenary discussions on specific skills related to business start-ups and the related learning gaps. Apart from starting poultry farming and raising pigs, there were few ideas about the kinds of small businesses that can be run by persons with

disabilities. Most discussions focused on difficulties of finding resources for starting any activity and the need for vocational training courses.

SESSION 5: TRAINING COURSES, NEXT STEPS

The last session of the workshop was held on the afternoon of Day 3 at Corina hotel, where in the morning, the workshop participants had participated in the official launching of the DASU project.

This session started with a presentation by the consultant on the main domains of knowledge & skills gaps for the DPO and NUOD, identified during the process of the Diagnostic Study. Four knowledge-skills domains were identified – Networking, Advocacy, Fund-raising and Inclusive business start-ups. In addition, there was a fifth common area whose influence affected the above-mentioned four areas - application of CRPD and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the different aspects of DPO work.

Under each domain, specific areas of learning and skills were also identified, which can be part of the training courses planned in the DASU project. Some examples of specific learnings and skills for each domain were presented during a plenary discussion and participants' feedback was invited.

It was explained that based on their feedback a specific proposal about the knowledge and skills gap will be prepared. This proposal will contain more specific inputs regarding the training courses for the first year. Following this, AIFO-Liberia will organise meetings for the DPO representatives to review the proposals and make final suggestions about the first training course.

The DASU project foresees the organisation of total five training courses during the next three years – three courses for the institutional capacity building of DPOs and two courses for the promotion of inclusive business and start-ups.

During the first year (May 2018 to April 2019), two training courses are planned – a 4 days course on institutional capacity building and a 5 days course on inclusive business and start-ups. These courses will be organised as Training of Trainers and will be followed by organisation of decentralised training courses for persons with disabilities in the counties.

Proposals about the 5 knowledge-skills areas for the first 4 days training course on institutional capacity building are given in the next chapter of this report. These can be seen as starting point for refining the specific contents of the training.

A specific baseline study on social economy in Liberia is being conducted by DISEI, who will coordinate the second training course on inclusive business and start-ups and will decide the contents of that training, which will be linked to specific activities of DASU project such as advocacy activities.

Evaluation of the Workshop: All the workshop participants were asked to provide an anonymous feedback about the different aspects of the workshop. 32 participants provided the feedback.

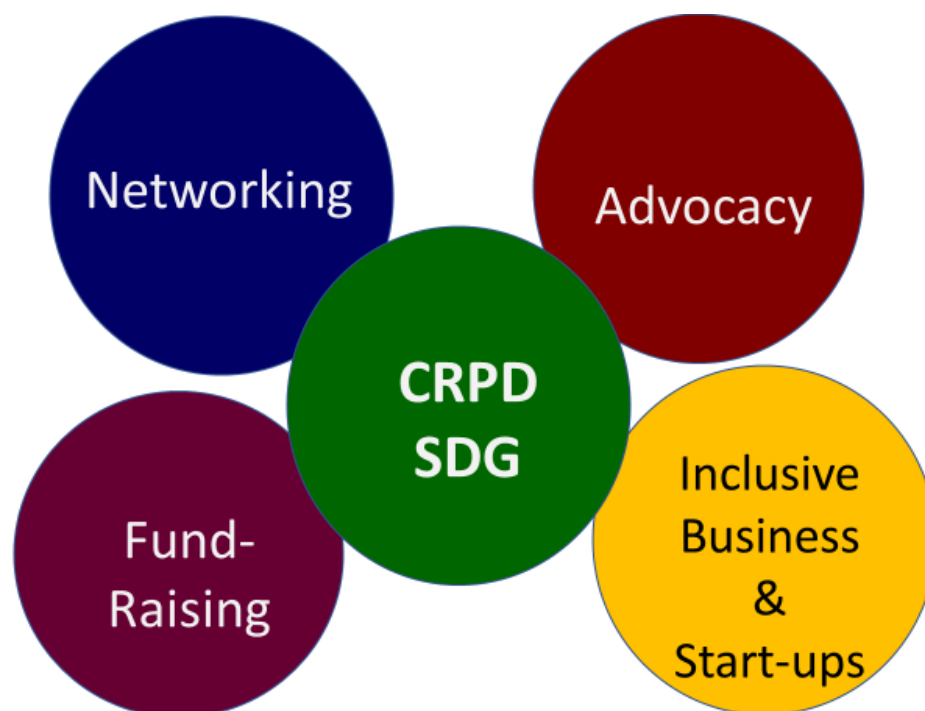
While the workshop contents and discussions receive mostly positive to extremely positive feedback, there were some negative feedback regarding the accommodation and food. A few participants also felt that they did not get many opportunities to state their views.

Conclusions: The workshop concluded with the assurance that the information about the follow-up meetings to discuss the specific training proposal will be provided to the participants and in the coming months, there will be different activities of DASU project that will take place and involve representatives from the DPOs.

Institutional Capacity Building

Proposal for the First “Training of Trainers” Course

5 Domains of Knowledge-Skills Gap to be covered in the DASU Training Courses



The four key domains of the knowledge-skills gaps in the DPOs and DPO Federations are – Networking, Advocacy, Fund-Raising and Inclusive Business & Start-ups. There is a fifth domain which influences and supports all the other four, it is the domain related to CRPD and SDGs.

This proposal *does not look* at the domain of “Inclusive Business & Start-Ups”, which will be covered under the “Baseline study on social economy”. The contents of the 5-days “Training of the Trainers” on Inclusive Business and Start-Ups will be planned based on the findings of the Baseline Study.

This proposal focuses on the remaining four domains (Networking, Advocacy, Fund-Raising and, CRPD & SDGs) of institutional capacity-building, which will be covered under the three training courses planned in the project. It makes suggestions about the contents of the 4-days first training course to be held in the first year (May 2018 – April 2019).

Though the domains have been shown here as separate categories represented by circles of different colours, in reality their subjects are often overlapping and cross-cutting. For example, “Understanding the disability-related indicators of SDG” can be seen as part of CRPD-SDG domain. At the same time, using these indicators can also be important part of preparing project proposals for funding and for planning advocacy activities. Thus, in the training proposal some degree of overlapping and duplication is inevitable.

It is also suggested to link the institutional capacity-building training to specific activities of DASU project. For example, the DASU project activities include “Exchange of good practices with African Platforms” and “National and County Workshops on the application and revision of existing laws and programmes for PwDs rights”. The training course can focus on how to carry out these activities under “Networking” and “Advocacy”. This will ensure that after the course, participants will have opportunities for putting their learnings into practice.

Some examples of issues that can be covered under the training on specific domains are given below.

Domain 1: CRPD and SDGs

What does it mean: It means having a clear understanding of different articles of CRPD and the different goals and activities of SDGs, including how to monitor their implementation, understanding the role of different indicators and how to link these with all the activities of the DPOs.

Importance of knowledge about CRPD and SDGs for the DPOs: CRPD and SDGs are the basic language of dialogue for DPOs. They need to know CRPD and SDGs to communicate with all the different stakeholders for all their different activities.

All the strategies, planning, communications and documents for all the different activities, including networking, project implementation, advocacy and fund-raising should be understood and expressed in line with the basic principles and ideas of CRPD and SDGs.

Building an inclusive and comprehensive CRPD perspective on development and understanding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, will help the DPOs to apply for SDG-related project funding, to further implement the CRPD, and to report to UN monitoring mechanisms and engage with them.

Specific skills related to CRPD and SDGs: DPO leaders need to think of all their objectives and activities in terms of CRPD and SDGs. Acquiring some of these skills can be the goal of the first training course planned in the DASU project.

Skills needed for participating in the national level CRPD and SDG Processes: Government of Liberia has international obligations because it is a signatory to the implementation of CRPD and it has decided its own priorities for SDGs. The country needs a monitoring process to ensure that it respects those obligations.

CRPD is all about persons with disabilities. At the same time, in the SDGs, there are different goals that have important relevance for the lives of persons with disabilities. For each SDG there are indicators, some of which are equally important for the persons with disabilities.

Thus, knowing the different articles of CRPD, the different SDGs and their specific indicators is important for the DPOs for all their advocacy work with the Government institutions. DPOs are mostly aware about CRPD and have experience in using it in their lobbying and advocacy. However, they are not so familiar with SDGs and their indicators, they may not be aware of links between SDGs and CRPD, and they may not be part of the national organs responsible for monitoring SDG implementation.

DPOs need to take a proactive role in ensuring that SDGs keep account of the needs of persons with disabilities and all the SDGs related activities are inclusive.

CRPD and SDGs in networking: NUOD and national level DPOs need to link with and create partnerships with West African regional, African continental and international DPO networks, federations and bodies. They also need to reach out and inform other regional and international organisations including African Union, Disabled Peoples International (DPI), International Disability Alliance (IDA), World Bank, and different UN bodies such as World Health Organisation (WHO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNHCR (refugees), UNESCO (education) and UNICEF (children).

The dialogue with these international networks, federations and bodies is important for knowing what is happening in other countries, sharing of ideas and experiences, learning from each other and for taking part in international advocacy initiatives. This dialogue can only be based on a common language – the language of CRPD and SDGs.

CRPD & SDGs in project proposal writing and fund raising: Most of the calls for proposal from international organisations targeted at DPOs are usually linked to some aspect of SDGs and sometimes to CRPD. Thus, to apply for such funding and also to plan the implementation of these activities, requires an understanding of SDGs that have to be explained in the project proposals.

Domain 2: Networking

What does it mean: Networking can be understood at different levels – international, national, county and local.

For NUOD, it means working together with regional and international federations and the different U.N. bodies. It also includes linking with different stakeholders inside the country such as the Government bodies, International NGOs and national NGOs. For the DPOs, it means working with different stakeholders at local levels.

The DASU project foresees an analysis of principle African networks and creation of a cross-cutting working group composed of NCD, NUOD, AIFO and RIDS which will define the exchange of best practices with other networks.

For the DPOs, it means expanding their network till all the persons with disabilities in their areas know about the organisations and their roles. It means building relations and working together with the Governmental, NGO and other bodies active in that county. It also means making sure that the organisation is accessible to and inclusive of all the different groups.

Importance of Networking: Networking is the life and blood of an organisation. It provides the resources, public support and synergies for the different organisational goals.

Specific skills related to networking: A wide variety of skills are needed for the DPOs to fulfil their networking needs. The following are some examples of specific networking skills, some of which can be covered under the first institutional capacity building training course under the DUSU project:

Skills related to equal participation and inclusion: DPOs and federations fight for the equal rights and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in their communities and societies. At the same time, they need the skills to look at themselves critically and ask themselves if they are equally accessible to all the different groups of persons with disabilities – to women with disabilities, to children with disabilities, to elderly persons with disabilities.

They also need to ask themselves if different groups of persons with disabilities get equal rights and opportunities in their organisations. Often certain groups of persons with disabilities such as - deaf persons, persons with epilepsy and mental health conditions, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with disabilities due to leprosy – do not have equal voice and leadership roles in the DPOs and federations.

One way to learn these skills can be through the “Disability Equality Training” (DET) which focuses on understanding the different barriers faced by different groups of persons with disabilities, conducting accessibility audits of organisations, companies, public services, buildings, museums and parks.

Skills related to social media and communication: Networking also requires informing members, stakeholders and general public about disability related rights, laws and norms, as well as, about programmes and activities. This means developing social media and communication skills such as - knowing how to create and maintain press-contacts, how to write a press-release, how to run a blog and how to use a social media site such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for institutional purposes.

Skills related to dealing with other DPOs and federations: Many disability organisations think of themselves in specific terms – organisations of the blind persons, organisations of the deaf and hard of hearing persons, organisations of mental health users, and so on.

Their relationships with cross-disability DPOs and DPO-federations can have some history of distrust founded on competition for scarce resources. Forging new relationships based on trust and synergies which benefit everyone can be a difficult and long drawn process.

Some of the skills needed to promote this networking include having a frank and mutually respectful dialogue (for example on the roles, advantages and limits of single and cross-disability organisations) and conflict resolution.

Domain 3: Advocacy & Lobbying

What does it mean: Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic and social systems and institutions. Advocacy can include many activities that a person or organization undertakes including media campaigns, public speaking, public meetings and marches, commissioning and publishing research or conducting surveys and fighting court cases.

Lobbying is a form of advocacy where a direct approach is made to legislators and decision-makers for making or changing laws and norms.

Importance of Advocacy and Lobbying: Fight for equal rights and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities is the main objective of DPOs and federations. Advocacy and lobbying are the key instruments to help them to reach this goal.

Specific skills related to advocacy and lobbying: Even if no one teaches how to do advocacy and lobbying to DPOs and federations, some of the skills required for advocacy are self-acquired by DPO leaders because of their own personal life experiences and by using the numerical strength of their members through organisation of protest marches and meetings with decision makers. At the same time, there are specific skills related to advocacy and lobbying that can be a part of the DASU training courses:

Collecting and organising information: Sometimes DPOs feel that laws and practices are wrong, and that there is an injustice, so they want conduct advocacy campaign to change those practices. They may be able to tell some stories about what is happening, but the legislators and decision makers want more information before they make decisions. Therefore, DPOs need to be able to provide more detailed information such as what kind of injustices are there, who are the persons affected by those injustices, how many persons are affected, what is the impact of the injustices on them.

Collecting key information in a systematic way, analysing the different information and presenting it properly are fundamental skills for advocacy.

Effective communication: Advocacy requires convincing law-makers and decision-makers regarding something. It requires building public opinion and awareness. Simply sharing a lot of information is not enough. If the information is not presented in such a way that it attracts peoples' attention or if it is not presented in a way that can be easily understood, it will not be effective.

This means that DPOs need to learn how to make an effective communication, including the use of stories and data, and use of respectful and forceful language.

Making an advocacy plan: This means analysing the different problems persons with disabilities are facing and reflecting on the need for advocacy for each problem. Often the challenges faced by PwDs are too many and DPOs need to decide priorities.

Making an advocacy plan requires the DPOs to identify the key issues that they want to influence and change. They must understand and plan their short-term and intermediate objectives, identify the different stakeholders involved in that issue, decide who are the main decision-makers that they wish to influence, and decide a strategy for each stakeholder and decision-maker. Doing advocacy requires skilled persons and resources, so DPOs must identify persons and their roles for specific advocacy activities.

DASU project includes some communication related activities such as community radios, community meetings and preparation of awareness materials. If the training course on advocacy makes an advocacy plan with some specific objectives, DPOs will be able to apply their plan in the field through these communication activities.

Domain 4: Fund-Raising

What does it mean: Fund-raising for DPOs and federations means finding resources to support the organisations and their activities.

Importance of fund-raising: DPOs and federations are collective bodies of persons with disabilities. They usually have some system of collecting a membership fee but the amounts collected in this way are usually insufficient to cover their activities. Thus, DPOs and federations need to find additional resources.

The resources needed by DPOs include funds and also other kinds of support – buildings to be used as office, people volunteering to provide free or subsidised services, office equipment, assistive devices, scholarships, trainings, etc.

Specific fund-raising skills: There are different groups of potential funders and supporters of DPOs and federations, both at national and international levels.

At the national level, these include national, county and district government authorities, local NGOs, local offices of international NGOs, country offices of the UN bodies, embassies of different governments, and local companies and business-persons.

At the international level these include regional and international organisations such as African Development Bank, World Bank, European Union, UN Bodies, Governments, international NGOs, foundations, country federations of DPOs, and international federations of DPOs.

The skills needed to deal with fund-raising overlap with those for networking and advocacy. At the same time, each potential funder has its own norms and procedures.

DPOs and federations need to learn the different communication and project proposal writing skills for each potential funder. It may also require an ability to identify specific activities of their work which can be proposed to specific funders such as activities related to women or children with disabilities.

Fund-raising also requires an understanding about the funding cycles of potential international funders and setting up of a monitoring system to identify launching of new call for proposals.

First DASU Institutional Capacity Building Course

A 4 days long training course for Training of Trainers (ToT) is planned for the first year of DASU project. This course is being planned in October 2018.

It may be more useful to plan this course to cover 2-3 areas of the training needs identified in this document instead of focusing on only one specific aspect. During the training it will be important to link theoretical understandings and concepts to practical skills. For example, an understanding of SDGs can be linked to the use of specific disability-related SDG-indicators and making references to the SDGs in the preparation of project proposals. It will also important to link the training to specific activities planned in the DASU project, as mentioned earlier.

Suggestions for contents of ToT: These are suggestions for starting a dialogue with the DPOs, thus the final plan for the ToT training can be different from these suggestions. The 4 days of training can be subdivided into the following sessions:

Day 1: CRPD and SDGs, linking these to National Plan of Action for implementation of CRPD in Liberia and the 7 priority SDGs selected by Liberia, their indicators and their links with DPOs

Day 2: Networking – ensuring equal participation and voices to different groups of persons with disabilities in the DPOs, and exchanging experiences with African platforms

Day 3 and 4: Skills needed for making advocacy plan – coming up with a detailed plan with objectives and contents for radio shows, community meetings and public awareness.

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Diagnostic Study

Institutional & Management Capacities of The DPO Federation (NUOD) & its Member DPOs In Liberia

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR COLLECTING CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

Each DPO participating in the workshop related to Diagnostic Study on the institutional and management capacities is asked to collect 3-5 case studies about economic self-independence of persons with disabilities from their counties.

The DPOs should submit their written case studies to NUOD latest by the end of first week of July 2018.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF PERSONS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CASE STUDIES

The case studies are about individual persons with disabilities or groups of persons with disabilities who have started a significant income generation activity in the county. Preference should be given to those persons who started some successful or innovative activities.

The persons identified for the case studies should be interviewed by a person of the DPO. After the interview, the case studies should be written down and sent to NUOD. If possible, attach a picture of the person interviewed to the case study.

The objective of preparing the case studies is to understand the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in starting a successful/innovative business, the different kinds of support needed for starting such activities and the strategies used by those persons to overcome the challenges.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR COLLECTING THE CASE STUDIES

1. Collect general information about the person or persons who started the business: General information should include name, age, sex, education and kind of disability, name of his/her village or town, if he/she is part of a Self Help Group (SHG) or a DPO and role in the SHG/DPO.

2. Collect information about the business: Explain what is the business about? It can be a formal or informal business.

3. Collect information about starting of the business: How did the person think of starting that business? Did the person need any training to start it? Did the person need

any money for the starting and how did he/she get that money? What were the initial difficulties in starting and how did the person overcome those difficulties?

4. Present state of the business: Is the business running well? Is the person able to earn enough money for a dignified life? Is the person able to employ other persons in his/her business? If there are any difficulties, what are these? How does the person see the future development of that business?

5. Impact of the business on the personal and family life of the person: Did the business have any impact on the personal, family and social life of the person? In which ways?

6. Advice for other persons with disabilities: What advice would the person give to other persons with disabilities who want to start a business?

DPO leaders & Institutions (During County Visits)

AIFO-Liberia Regional Coordinator for Bong, Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties:
Jonathan Davies

BONG COUNTY

County Community workers: Mr. Arthur Buno (also NUOD coordinator) and Ms. KruboBoinay

Salayea Agriculture Project (SAPRO): Mr. Jackson Baina (coordinator), Mr. Junior Gokernah (Assistant coordinator), Mr. K. Benedict Kollie (secretary), Mr. Joe T. Kollie (member)

Group of 77: Mr. Koto G. Kollie (Assistant coordinator), Mr. J. B. Samuel Kehkollie (General secretary), Mr. John O. K. Flomo (Programme officer), Ms. Lucy Kollie (Warehouse manager)

Liberian National Association of the Blind (NAB): Mr. Emary A. Jessie (Coordinator), Mr. Emmanuel Flomo (Secretary), Ms. Pauline M. Sumo (Treasurer), Mr. James Y. Dogbror (Financial secretary), + Mr. Paul Collins, Mr. Eduard Borbor & Mr. Jacob Sebgbe (members)

Christian Association of the Blind (CAB): Mr. John de Weand (Coordinator), Mr. Dickson Flomo (Administrator), Mr. Momo Montgomery (Chaplain), Mr. Tarnue Max (Secretary), Ms. Marie Freeman (ASF Women) + Mr. Edwin Salay, Mr. David Solonteh (members)

NIMBA COUNTY

County Community Workers: Ms. Nanley Doe (also NUOD coordinator) and Mr. Augustus Makor

Nimba Disabled Community (NDC): Mr. D. Abestine Tozay (President), Mr. Gabriel Soh (Speaker), Mr. Paye Suah (Secretary), Mr. James Tour (Chaplain), Mr. Kougbey Kuleh (Adviser), Mr. Abigail Gonkarnue (Treasurer), Ms. Shailay Kou Menzoe (district chairperson)

Group of 77: Mr. Kougbay Z. Kuleh (County coordinator), Mr. Byron (Assistant coordinator), Mr. Paye W. Suah (General Secretary), Ms. Abigail Gonkarnue (Treasurer), Mr. Abel S. Gbeanguot (Financial secretary), Mr. Railey K. Dahn (assistant secretary), Mr. Gabriel Soh (member)

Ganta Rehabilitation Centre: Sr Irene Madika (Hospital administrator), Mr. John (Nursing supervisor), Mr. Martin Dolo (Orthopaedic Workshop)

SHGs visited in Nimba county: Kpein, Wuo's Town and Air-field 1 (Life is Good)

GRAND GEDEH COUNTY

County Community Workers: Mr. Washington G. Gwoah (also NUOD coordinator) and Mr. Franklin W. Blaye

Grand Gedeh Disabled Association (GGDA): Mr. Patrick Jarwloh (Coordinator), Mr. Abraham Dugboh (General secretary), Ms. Sharon R. Godu (District coordinator)

Annex 3

DISABILITY AND START UP, Civil Society as Protagonist of Inclusive Development in Liberia
DPOs Diagnostic Study workshop, held at Exceeding Hotel
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday July 23-25, 2018

DAY-ONE

ACTIVITIES	TIME ALLOTTED TO ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE SPERSON
Registration and Breakfast	8:00AM-9:00AM	Participants
Welcome remark	9:00AM-9:20AM	Jonathan Davis, AIFO Regional Coordinator Daniel N.O.Dagbe, NUOD Vice-President
DASU projectoverview	9:20AM-9:30AM	J. Sylvester Roberts, AIFO Local Project Coordinator
Participants' <i>find your friend</i> introduction	9:30AM-10:15AM	Participants
Expectations from the workshop	10:15AM-10:45AM	Participants/ Heylove Mark, NUOD Financial Secretary
Understanding the terms – Community organization, SHG, DPO, Federation/Network	10:45AM-11:10AM	Group work - Participants
Short Break	11:10AM-11.30AM	Participants
Presentation of group work results	11:30AM-12:00PM	Group Representatives
Who is Who – DPOs and Federations in the Workshop – Results of the county visitsand discussion on DPO Network in Liberia	12:00PM-12:30PM	Dr Sunil Deepak, AIFO Technical Expert / Heylove
Overview of the workshop, expected outcomes and Workshop rules	12:30PM-1:00PM	Sunil
LUNCHBREAK	1:00PM-2:00PM	ALL PARTICIPANTS
Understanding a network	2:00PM-2:10PM	Sunil
Group work how to expand a network – DPOs' competencies: strong and weak areas	2:10PM-2:40PM	Participants
Presentation of group work results	2:40PM-3:10PM	Group Representative
What is Advocacy	3:10PM-3:20PM	Sunil
Group work what skills are needed for advocacy – DPOs' competencies: strong and weak areas	3:20PM-3:40PM	Participants
Short Break	3:40PM-04:00PM	Participants

Presentation of group work results	4:00PM-4:30PM	Group Representative
How to do fundraising	4:30PM-4:40PM	Sunil
Group discussion on what skills are needed for fundraising – DPOs’ competencies: strong and weak areas	4:40PM-5:10PM	Participants
Presentation on group work results	5:10PM-5:40PM	Group Representative
Conclusions and closing of Day 1	5:40PM-5:45PM	PARTICIPANTS

DAY-TWO

ACTIVITIES	TIME ALLOTTED TO ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Breakfast	8:00AM-9:00AM	Participants
Welcome to the participants and recap of first day activities	9:00AM-9:10AM	Heylove
Group simulation exercise – Preparing a Project plan	9:10AM-09:45AM	Participants
Presentation of group work results	09:45AM-10:15AM	Group Representative
Identifying & Planning projects	10:15AM-10.30AM	Sunil
Group discussion on skills needed to identify and plan a project – DPOs’ competencies: strong and weak areas	10:30AM-11:00AM	Participants
Short Break	11:00AM-11.20AM	Participants
Presentation on group work results	11:20AM-11:50AM	Group Representative
Implementation, monitoring and reporting a project	11:50AM-12:00PM	Sunil
Group work on skills needed to implement, monitor and report a project – DPOs’ competencies: strong and weak areas	12:00-12:30PM	Participants
Presentation on group work results	12:30PM-1:00PM	Group Representative
LUNCH BREAK	1:00PM-2:00PM	ALL PARTICIPANTS
Introduction to Economic Independence and Income generation – Results from the case studies	2:00PM-2:30PM	Sunil and Participants
Simulation exercise on planning a business enterprise	2:30PM-3:00PM	Participants
Presentation of group work results	3:00PM-3:30PM	Group Representative

Preparing a business plan	3:30PM-3:50PM	Sunil
Short Break	3:50PM-04:10PM	Participants
What skills are needed for preparing a business plan – DPOs’ competencies: strong and weak areas	4:10PM-4:40PM	Participants
Presentation on group work results	4:40PM-5:10PM	Group Representative
Identifying the different needs for income generation activities	5:10PM-5:40PM	Plenary discussion facilitated by Sunil
Conclusions and end of the day 2	5:40PM-5.45PM	Participants

Day-THREEAfternoon, held at Corina Hotel, 24th Street, Monrovia

DPOs needs identified during the workshop – clarifying, classifying and grouping	2:00PM-2:30PM	Plenary discussion facilitated by Sunil
Identifying learning priorities	2:30PM-3:00PM	Plenary discussion facilitated by Sunil
Group work - Defining priorities’ learning outcomes	3:00PM-4:00PM	Participants
Presentation on group work results	4:00PM-4:30PM	Group Representative
Feedback about the Workshop	4:30PM-4:45PM	Participants
Conclusions and closure of the workshop	4:45PM-5:00PM	Silvia Poggioli, AIFO Country Director / NUOD Representative

Disabled People Organizations (DPOs) Members of NUOD

No	Name of Organization	Type Disability	Location
1	Liberia Christian Handicapped Organization (LICH0)	Visually impairment and Physically challenge	Montserrado and Lofa
2	Liberia National Association of the Blind (LNAB)	Visually impairment (BL)	Montserrado, Bomi, Bong, Margibi and River Gee
3	Salayea Agriculture Program (SAPRO)	Visually impairment and Physically challenge	Montserrado and Bong
4	Association of Disabled Female International (ADFI)	Visually impairment and Physically challenge	Montserrado and Maryland County
5	Hope in God Association of the Blind (HIGAB)	Visually impairment and Physically challenge	Montserrado, Gbapolu, Grand Gedeh County
6	Mission of Hope for the Disabled	Physically Challenge	Montserrado
7	Liberia National Muslim Association of the Blind and Disabled (LNMABD)	Visually impairment and Physically challenge	Montserrado and Cap Mount
8	United Blind Association of Liberia (UBAL)	Visually impairment	Montserrado and Grand Bassa
9	Disabled Children Rehabilitation Organization (DICRO)	Physically challenge	Montserrado and Gbapolu County
10	Liberia National Association of the Physically Disabled (LNAPD)	Physically challenge	Montserrado county
11	Organization for the Social Integration of the Liberian Deaf(OSILD)	Deaf	Montserrado county
12	Association of Disabled Women International, Liberia (ADWIL)	Physically challenge	Montserrado county
13	Group of Seventy, G77	All Disabilities	All the Counties
14	Christian Associate of the Physically Disabled (CARPD)	Physically challenge	Montserrado
15	Hope For the Deaf	Deaf	Montserrado

16	Liberia National Association of the Deaf(LNAD)	Deaf	Montserrado
17	Antoinette Tubman Cheshire Home (ATCH)	Physically challenge	Montserrado
18	My Heart Appeal	Down syndrome	Montserrado
19	BAHCAGWE	Visually impairment and Physically challenge	Montserrado
20	National Association of Disabled Advocate (NADA)	All Disabilities	Montserrado, Margibi and Bong County
21	African Youth With Disabilities Network (AYWDN)	All Disabilities	All the Counties
22	Liberia School for the Blind	Visually Impairment	Montserrado
23	Christian Association of the Blind (CAB)	Visually Impairment	Montserrado, Bong, Margibi Grand Bassa, River Cess, Bomi and Maryland county
24	Cultivation For User's Hope	Mental Disabilities	Montserrado county
25	Liberia United Rural Association of the Disabled.	Visually Impairment	Lofa county
26	Lofa United Blind Association	Visually Impairment	Lofa county
27	Inclusive Development Initiative (IDI)	Visually Impairment	Montserrado county
28	Maryland Blind Association (MBA)	Visually Impairment	Maryland County