



# **Gender Analysis Research Report**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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AIFO	Italian Association Amici di Raoul Follereau
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease—2019
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPO	Disable People Organisation
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHH	Female Headed Household
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
HOH	Hard of Hearing
KII	Key Informant Interview
MHH	Male Headed Household
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
NCD	National Commission on Disability
NUOD	National Union of Organization of the Disabled
ORS	Oscar Romero School
OWWDS	Organisation of Women with Disabilities
PAPD	Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PWDs	People with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
VOICE	Voices for Inclusion and Civil Society Empowerment
WSH	Williette Safe House

## LIST OF GENDER AND DISABILITY TERMINOLOGIES

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<b>Terminology</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Gender	Refers to the socially constructed attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men, girls, and boys.
Gender equity	Refers to process of being fair to women and men in distribution of resources and benefits. This involves recognition of inequality and requires measures to work towards equality of women and men. Gender Analysis is necessary for gender equity.
Gender equality	It is understood to mean that women and men enjoy the same status on political, social, economic, and cultural levels. It exists when women and men have equal rights, opportunities, and status.
Gender Roles	Socially learned roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men in a given culture and the societal structures that support these roles.
Gender Sensitive	Being aware of differences between women's and men's needs, roles, responsibilities, and constraints.
Gender Analysis	Is an organised approach for considering gender issues through the entire process of programme or organisational development. Gender Analysis requires gender disaggregation of data
Gender Mainstreaming	is the process of integrating gender issues into policies, programmes and institutions. The goal is to achieve gender equality
Gender Awareness	Recognition that women and men perform different roles in society and therefore have different needs which must be recognized
Gender Discrimination	A difference in treatment of people based entirely on their being male or female. This difference contributes to structural inequality in society.
Disability	Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Disability Inclusion	Focus on understanding the relationship between the way people function and how they participate in society and making sure everybody has the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Voices for Inclusion and Civil Society Empowerment (VOICE) Project, led by AIFO Liberia with support from European Union. The VOICE project is a two-year innovative project aimed at enhancing the capacity of civil society organisations, promoting and empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring that people with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights in Liberia. The VOICE project provides advocacy training for selected DPOs, institutional capacity-building, awareness, and technical and livelihood skill training for disabled people particularly deaf and hard of hearing (HOH) persons. The gender analysis research aims to understand gender constraints that prevent disabled women participation in project activities. The gender analysis research methodology involves a desk review of project related documents, field research including semi structured interviews with selected project participants (4 in Nimba, 10 each in Bomi and Montserrado counties respectively), focus group discussions in Montserrado, Nimba and Bomi counties. The key findings show the following:

Key Findings 1: Participants motivations for accessing the trainings under the VOICE project were to improve their technical skills to become employable or self-employable. Key Findings 2: In relation to challenges encountered by participants based on their gender, participants expressed haven't experience any form of gender-based constraints. Key Findings 3: Recognition of the potential wider impact that the VOICE project could have on programming, and policy making if replicated or expanded to other counties in Liberia. Key Findings I: Women/girls (especially those with disabilities) face challenges in accessing school, healthcare, employment which reflect and are reinforced by inequitable gender norms. Key Findings II: Women lack decision making power and leadership role. Key Findings III: Women face financial constraints. Key Findings IV: Norms, belief, religion, ethnicity deepen gender inequality and exclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace/society/community. Key Findings V: Women are not involved in community consultations regarding resources. Key Findings VI: Gender-related institutions exist to support women's full participation in society.

Key Recommendations:

- Train and support (with access to credit/grant, business advisory services) women (particularly disabled women) entrepreneurs who would like to start or grow their business
- Establish vocational training programs for girls (especially disabled girls) who are not in school as a means of providing education about entrepreneurship and financial literacy
- Empower women (particularly disabled women) through education and awareness building to have a voice in consultation to speak about education, health and social issues affecting them
- Provide financial support to women entrepreneurs
- Link women entrepreneurs with business development services and microfinance institutions, cooperatives and saving clubs.
- Create awareness on the importance of empowering women and girls
- Create awareness on the rights and inclusion of people living with disabilities (especially disabled women/girls)
- Promote women and girls' empowerment including disabled women and girls.





## 1. INTRODUCTION

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In Liberia people with disability (PWDs) are faced with many challenges. Recent and exact data on persons with disabilities is unavailable, but, so far, data from a UNICEF study from 1997 indicate that 16 per cent of the Liberian population have a disability. Of these 61 per cent have a mobility disability, 24 per cent are visually impaired, 7 per cent are deaf and 8 per cent have an intellectual or psychosocial disability. The disability prevalence in Liberia is estimated to be around 20 per cent due to the effects of the civil war, which means around 800000 persons are disabled. Despite Liberia being a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) since 2012, there is a need for greater attention toward ensuring that people with disabilities in Liberia can access economic, social, cultural, medical, and educational facilities and opportunities without any constraints. In Liberia, people with disabilities, especially women, are amongst the most vulnerable population that are being affected the most from the impact of Covid-19. Estimate from Disabled people’s organisation (DPOs) indicates that 99 per cent of persons with disabilities live in extreme poverty, mainly due to exclusion from education, skill training, work, and income generation opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Disable people still lack access to employment and other opportunities, access to and control over resources, participation in decision making and political leadership and processes. Ensuring that people with disabilities in Liberia, particularly deaf and hard of hearing (HOH), are capacitated to engage in employment and self-employment initiatives and to advocate for inclusion and equal access to opportunities, resources and participation in decision making processes is crucial to achieving inclusive and sustainable development in Liberia.

Both globally and nationally, some progress has been made in the area of women's rights. However, more work is needed in Liberia to achieve gender equality. 35.9 percent of women aged 20–24 was married or in a union before the age of 18. As of 2018, the adolescent birth rate was 128 per 1,000 women aged 15-19, down from 150.3 per 1,000 in 2015. Women held only 11 percent of parliament seats as of February 2021. In 2018, 26.9 percent of women aged 15 to 49 reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months. In addition, women and girls aged 15 and up devote 6.7 percent of their time to unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 2.6 percent for men. Furthermore, women of reproductive age (15-49 years) frequently face barriers to their sexual and reproductive health and rights: despite progress, 41 percent of women in 2020 had their need for family planning met using modern methods<sup>2</sup>. Only 41% of the indicators needed to monitor the SDGs from a gender perspective were available as of December 2020, with gaps in key areas, including key labor market indicators such as the gender pay gap and information and communications technology skills. Furthermore, many areas lack comparable methodologies for regular monitoring, such as gender and poverty, physical and sexual harassment, women's access to assets (including land), and gender and the environment. Closing these gender data gaps is critical for Liberia to meet its gender-related SDG commitments.

The Association Friends of Raoul Follereau (AIFO), with support from EU and in partnership with Williette Safehouse – WSL, Oscar Romero School - ORS and the National Union of Organization of the Disabled – NUOD, is currently implementing “Voices for Inclusion and Civil Society Empowerment (VOICE)—Disabled People Organisations stepping up for people with disabilities rights in Liberia” project in Nimba, Bomi and Montserrado counties. VOICE is a two-year innovative project aimed at enhancing the capacity of civil

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<sup>1</sup> SIDA Disability Rights in Liberia, 2014. <https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/05/07125814/rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-liberia.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> UN Women Liberia Profile.

<https://data.unwomen.org/country/liberia#:~:text=However%2C%20work%20still%20needs%20to,150.3%20per%201%2C000%20in%202015.>

society organisations, promoting and empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring that people with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights in Liberia. Currently, the VOICE project is in its second year of implementation. The desk review conducted as part of the gender analysis research indicates that some activities planned for year-1 were not implemented mainly due to the impact of COVID-19 and have been moved to year-two. As part of the implementation activities, the gender analysis research aimed is to generate information on equitable participation of women in all activities, including decision-making. The Action intends to address gender imbalances in participation by posing programmatic resolutions related to their participation and preferentially work with Organisations of Women with Disabilities (OWWDs), as well as other Disabled People's Organisations and disable community within the project target areas particularly as evidence-based data to develop a gender policy and implementation plan for the project and other future projects. More specifically, the purpose of this desk review is to understand gender gaps that exist in participation in project activities by both disabled men and women (deaf and HOH persons). Initial study conducted by AIFO Liberia between 2018-2021 focused on challenges face by people with disabilities in Liberia. While adopting the community-based emancipatory disability research approach, the results detailed how various barriers influence and affect various life domains. The importance of various types of barriers varied by domain, but poverty, a lack of resources, a lack of services, and community misconceptions about people with disabilities were common barriers in most of them. Across all the themes, women were typically more affected than men. The study also found that certain types of disabilities, such as hearing and speech impairments, mental health conditions, and stigmatizing conditions like leprosy and epilepsy, were associated with greater barriers, not only in communities but also in Disabled People Orgainsations (DPOs).

### **1.1 Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices**

Article 11B of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia clearly states that all persons, irrespective of ethnic background, race, sex, creed, place of origin or political opinion, are entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, subject to such qualifications as provided for in this Constitution. The constitution also provides guarantees such as equality in the workplace regardless of sex and women's rights to ownership and access to resources.

According to disabled people's organizations (DPOs), 99 percent of people with disabilities live in extreme poverty, owing primarily to exclusion from education, skills training, work, and income generation opportunities. This compares to the UN's estimate of 48% of the Liberian population living in extreme poverty.

The Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) states that, "social and cultural factors limit opportunities to find work while living with disability, but even more so, people with disability face discrimination from employers. Even those who find employment face wage discrimination because they tend to earn less than their colleagues. Disability and poverty are mutually reinforcing. Insecure living conditions, lack of access to basic services, malnutrition and other dimensions of poverty can lead to disabilities. Persons living with disabilities are usually excluded from social and economic life and their rights are not fully fulfilled." People with disabilities' perspectives are not reflected in national policies, and there is a scarcity of data on them. Families of disabled people face challenges in improving their life chances due to above-average rates of illiteracy, unemployment, and underemployment, as well as below-average occupational mobility, nutritional status, and immunization coverage. Persons with

disabilities face social, cultural, and economic barriers that are reflected in their lack of access to information and resources, as well as their social marginalization

Liberia has taken legislative and policy steps that demonstrate its commitment to advancing the rights of people with disabilities. These steps, in terms of legally binding international commitments, are as follows:

- Signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)<sup>3</sup> in 2012 but has yet to ratify the Optional Protocol. The CRPD is the world's first legally binding international treaty aimed at protecting the human rights of people with disabilities.
- Signing and ratifying other treaties that advance people's rights, including those of people with disabilities, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women – all of which make some reference to protecting people with disabilities' rights to fair treatment, appropriate care, inclusion, and full participation in society.

A Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been drafted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. It was made available for public comment in April 2014, and once completed, it is expected to become part of Liberia's policy framework for advancing disability rights. The CRPD Toolkit for Africa and the Accountability Framework for Africa, both of which are part of the Common African Position for Post-2015 Development, are also important upcoming tools in 2014. There is still the need for reforms in education to establish an inclusive education bureau and to amend Article 4.4.1 C), iv, which partially or conditionally from free and compulsory school attendance if it is the best interest of the child, especially those with disabilities. The national health policy plan needs to be reviewed in order to include essential medical, rehabilitation and habilitation services for persons with disabilities through community-based disability inclusive approaches and strategies. The labor law also needs to be reviewed to allow reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and to set up a permanent desk to deal with disability issues with the participation of representatives of Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Education (MoE), NCD, and NUOD.

## **1.2 Cultural Norms and Beliefs**

In Liberia, cultural norms and beliefs about gender and social inclusion influence how disabled women, men, girls, and boys' access and use health products. Cultural norms and beliefs, in particular, significantly limit women's and girls' access to education, healthcare services, such as family planning and maternal health and employment opportunities. Focusing on providing educational and health resources to young women/girls and men/boys especially PwDs is critical to changing cultural norms and potentially lowering gender inequality and ensuring social inclusion in Liberia.

## **1.3 Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use**

Generally, women spend approximately four times as many hours on household activities compared to their spouses, yet men typically have the final say when making decisions regarding household affairs.

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

This includes the time women and girls spend accessing health services for themselves and others and is considered a primary responsibility for women and girls to attend to whenever a family member is sick.<sup>4</sup> In terms of productive labor, binary gender systems define specific roles and responsibilities for men and women, as well as married women and single women. Women's labor is undervalued in comparison to men's, particularly in rural areas dominated by agriculture. Because men have more labor-intensive jobs, the community provides them with more social capital, priming them to be highly regarded for leadership and decision-making positions in the community<sup>5</sup>. It is widely assumed that men are the primary income earners in a household and that men make decisions about how that income is spent. As a result, women frequently rely on a spouse or a male member of the family to generate income for household expenses such as healthcare. Female-headed households (FHH) are common in Liberia, but they face economic and social disadvantages when compared to male-headed households (MHH). This is primarily because of marital status.

Traditional gender roles continue to relegate women and girls to unpaid household duties such as cooking, cleaning, and child rearing, resulting in an imbalance in power and decision-making within the household. Married women are not legally recognized as household heads in the same way that men are, and many women and girls continue to face sexual harassment and exploitation<sup>6</sup>.

#### **1.4 Access to and Control Over Assets and Resources**

There are gendered dimensions to access to opportunities and resources, education, and healthcare services. For Liberia, there is not recent statistics on gender access to and control over resources. For example, improving women's access, ownership, and control over land will potentially contribute to greater investments in the land and increased productivity and welfare. Women have a disadvantage in access, ownership, and control over land resources. Women are reported to produce over half of the output in food crops. Their access to cash crops, however, is quite limited. There is also a certain degree of gender specialization in agricultural field activities, with men dominating seemingly all tasks in the major cash crops.

#### **1.5 Patterns of Power and Decision-Making**

Women's and youth participation in community decision-making is hampered, preventing them from fully participating in and benefiting from inclusive national economic development. Women are frequently denied the right to speak in public, so they do not attend community meetings. Even when women do not attend or participate in community meetings, they are still actively influencing men "behind the scenes" in some cases. While this demonstrates one type of power that women may possess, this passive approach deprives women of their potential voice and agency as community leaders and perpetuates the silencing of women's opinions.

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Household Size and Composition Around the World 2017 – Data Booklet (ST/ESA/SER.A/405). (2017).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Waite, Victoria et al (2018). USAID. Women's Wage Employment in Developing Countries: Regulatory Barriers and Opportunities.

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1 Gender Equality, Social Inclusion in Liberia

Gender equality, social inclusion and women’s empowerment are key component of achieving the sustainable development goals. Gender disparities and imbalances are common in every sphere of life in Liberia. In most cases, women are disproportionately and unfairly represented. This leads to a variety of social problems that can be associated with gender inequality and imbalance such as unequal gender and power relations, lack of access to basic services, economic disempowerment, low participation in decision making, lack of access to legal and judicial services as well as vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.<sup>7</sup> Achieving gender equality and social inclusion can be done only by improving well-being for both women and men and creating a more socially just and sustainable society. Enabling women and girls to fully participate in society and becoming economically empowered also makes strong economic sense. On another hand, people with disabilities tend to be marginalised and excluded from education, skills training, and income-generating opportunities. Because they have a limited voice in politics and society, their issues are not included in national policies, especially in poverty reduction initiatives causing their living conditions to continue to deteriorate in a “vicious cycle”. By taking into consideration the concerns, experiences and needs of disabled women/girls, men/boys, including those who are particularly marginalised and/or vulnerable, the AIFO programming will be able to achieve its goals. This include, ensuring that men, women, and youths with disabilities (PwDs) are aware of their rights and are empowered to engage in meaningful employment and self-employment initiatives.

Table 1 below presents Liberia gender development index from 2000 to 2019. The data shows that Liberia still lags in achieving gender equality. There are gender gaps between men and women in many areas including access to education, employment, healthcare, finance, etc.

**Table 1: Liberia Gender Development Index<sup>8</sup>**

Year	Gender Development Index (GDI)	Gender Gap
2000	0.775	-0.110
2005	0.792	-0.077
2010	0.858	-0.070
2011	0.867	-0.067
2012	0.884	-0.058
2013	0.875	-0.058
2014	0.898	-0.051

<sup>7</sup> Liberia National Gender Policy (2000).

[http://www.africanchildforum.org/clar/policy%20per%20country/liberia/liberia\\_gender\\_2009\\_en.pdf](http://www.africanchildforum.org/clar/policy%20per%20country/liberia/liberia_gender_2009_en.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> For as many countries as data of reasonable quality allow, GII reflects gender-based disadvantage in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market. It demonstrates the loss of potential human development as a result of gender disparities in these dimensions. It ranges from 0, where men and women perform equally, to 1, where one gender performs the worst in all measured dimensions. The association-sensitive inequality measure proposed by Seth (2009) is used to compute GII values, which implies that the index is based on the general mean of different orders—the first aggregation is by a geometric mean across dimensions, which is then aggregated by a harmonic mean across genders.

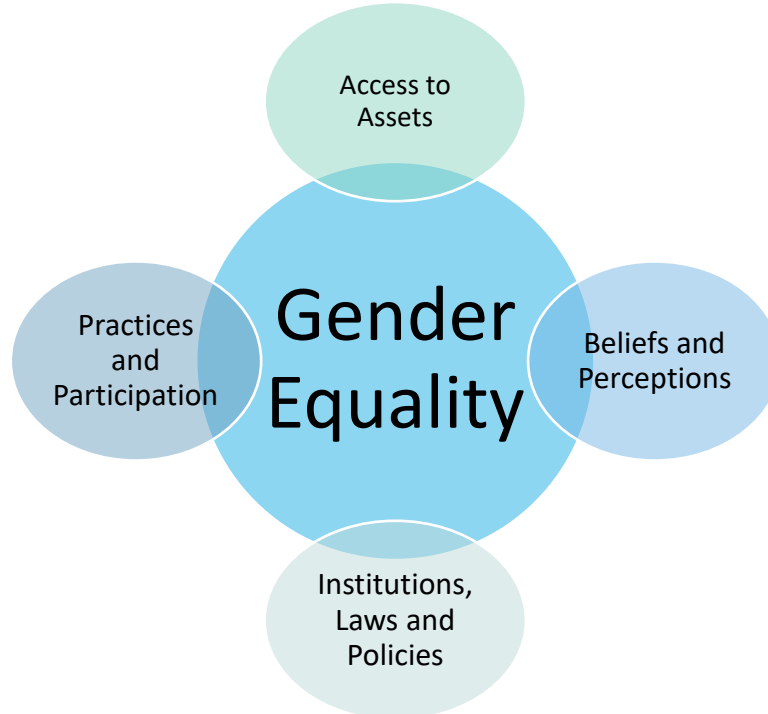
2015	0.877	-0.063
2016	0.877	-0.065
2017	0.889	-0.057
2018	0.895	-0.054
2019	0.890	-0.056

Source: UNDP Gender Development Index, 2022

## 2.2. Gender Analysis Frameworks

The gender analysis research draws on the Harvard Analytical Framework (sometimes called Gender Roles Framework) by Overholt et. al., (1985) which focuses on gender relations and factors affecting men and women based on their gender at individual, subnational, and national levels. At the individual level, family influence and household dynamics are important factors affecting gender equality, at both subnational and national levels, access to assets, beliefs and perspectives, practices and participation and institutions, laws and policies affect gender equality and women empowerment.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Adopted from Overholt et. al., (1985)

**Access to Assets:** Information on gender relations that affect access to resources needed for a person to be a productive member of communities and nations. Intangible assets include knowledge, education, and information, as well as tangible assets like land, capital, and tools.

**Practices and Participation:** The norms that influence men and women's behavior also structure the type of activities they engage in and their roles and responsibilities. This dimension of the framework captures information on men and women's different roles, the timing and place where their activities occur, their capacity to participate in different types of economic, political, and social activities, and their decision-making.

**Beliefs and Perceptions:** It is based on a cultural belief system or norms about what it means to be a man or woman in a particular society. These beliefs influence men and women's behavior, clothing, participation, and decision-making abilities. They also help or hinder men's and women's access to education, services, and economic opportunities.

**Institutions, Laws, Policies and Regulations:** This dimension focuses on information about men's and women's different formal and informal rights, as well as how policies and rules governing institutions, such as the health system, affect them differently.

### **3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

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The methodological approach adopted for the gender analysis research encompassed a systematic desk and literature reviews of relevant documents related to the project including the project proposal, interim project report, monitoring protocol, log frame and protocol as well as primary research in three counties (Montserrado, Bomi and Nimba counties) including focus group discussion (FGD) with selected representatives of organisations of disabled people, key informant interview (KII) with selected individuals from government, INGOs, CSOs and development partners. The research also employed a semi-structured survey interview for selected participants from the three project locations. The research design sought to provide clear data on the relationship between gender roles and relations, disability inclusion and empowerment of people living with disabilities in order to inform AIFO Liberia programming. In this section of the report, the discussion of the methodological approach is followed by analysis of the data.

#### **3.1. Desk and Literature Review**

The research consultant conducted an extensive desk review of the VOICE project and a literature review of secondary data sources. The goal of this desk and literature reviews was to have an in-depth understanding of AIFO's intervention in enhancing the capacity of Civil Society Organisations and promoting and empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring that people with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights in Liberia. More specifically, the purpose of the desk review was to understand gender gaps that exist in participation in project activities by both disabled men and women (deaf and HOH persons) and to also identify the major gender equality, social inclusion, and disabled women'



## **3.2 Field Research**

In addition to the desk and literature review conducted during this study, field research was conducted in the three project locations to gather both qualitative and quantitative data regarding gender constraints face by disabled women in accessing services offer by under the VOICE project in particular and, in general, on gender and disability-based constraints face by disabled women and men in Liberia. The field research adopted semi-structured survey interview, focus group discussion and key informant interview.

### **3.2.1 Semi-structured Survey Interview**

Determining if disabled women/girls and men/boys face any challenge in accessing the training services provided under the VOIVCE project, a semi-structured survey interview were conducted with a randomly selected sample of project participants in each of the project locations. Semi-structured survey interview questionnaire (Appendix F) was developed and used in conducting survey interviews. All the participants (interviewees) have all participated in VOICE project technical and livelihood training facilitated by Williette Safehouse (WSH), Oscar Romero School for the Deaf (ORS) and AIFO Liberia. The semi-structured interview questionnaire was developed based on the overall goal of the gender analysis research and the desk review.

### **3.2.2 Key Informant Interview (KIIs)**

Qualitative data were collected through interviews with national and local level key informants (KIs) involved in Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion policy and programme, identified in consultation with AIFO VOICE project staff. Key informants were sampled purposely to generate a diverse sample of participants, to ensure that data derived from the KIIs were as rich as possible, and to ensure the inclusion of gender balanced range of organisations, government institutions and other stakeholders.

KIs comprised national level representatives from government, UN agencies, local NGOs, International NGOs (INGOs), development partners, and Civil Society Organisation (CSOs). Potential informants with special knowledge of or professional responsibility for gender equality and disability inclusion were identified such as gender focus persons within different government institutions and development partner organisations, NGO representatives working on gender and disability inclusion.

A guide for key informant interview-Stakeholders (Annex D) and guide for key informant interview—Partner Organisation (Annex E) were developed for the KIIs, informed by the gender analysis framework, the analysis plan, and the term of reference of the research. The 4 KIIs conducted by the consultant sought to elicit informant’s views and perspectives on the gender equality and disability inclusion dimensions of policies and programmes in Liberia to validate and enrich the desk review gender analysis research findings. Of these KIIs, 1 was gender focused interviews which enabled a more in-depth exploration of the gender issues and constraints impacting the effectiveness gender equality and disability inclusion programmes and policies in the country, and how gender and disability considerations could be better addressed in the design and implementation of programmes and policies for ensuring a more gender-equal and inclusive society for all. Many of the gender and disability inclusion issues emerging from the desk review were confirmed by KIIs data collected and analysed in Montserrado and Bomi counties.

As described above, the data collection methods and the informants targeted through this evaluation limited to an extent the depth of the gender and disability specific data gathered and analysed. The finding presented here are based on a review of the secondary data and gender analysis of the data collected from national and local level informants.

### 3.2.3 Focus Group Discussions (FDGs)

To obtain data on the perspectives and knowledge of people living with disabilities (PWDs) on gender and disability constraints they face in their everyday lives, focus group discussion (FGD) meetings were held. The adoption of focus group discussion as an approach was based on the recognition of the inexpensive nature of a FGD as a rapid appraisal technique that aids in gathering wealth of qualitative information of people’ experiences, feelings, and preferences. The research study conducted one (1) focus group discussion meeting in each of the three counties (Montserrado, Bomi and Nimba counties). The FGD meetings were held with representatives from disabled people organisations, the National Union of Organisation of the Disabled (NUOD) and the National Commission on Disability (NCD). These interviews provided additional qualitative data based on firsthand experience on issues of gender equality and disability inclusion of women/girls and men/boys living with disabilities within the three counties.

A guide for conducting focus group discussion (FGD) meeting (Annex G) was developed for the focus group discussion, informed by AIFO DASU research conducted in 2018 and the desk review report and analysis plan. The FGD meetings held with representatives of organisations / commission of people living with disabilities aimed to gather their views and perspectives of gender and disability constraints face by PWDs in Liberia. The data collection tools (semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion and key informant interviews) and persons consulted and interviewed are summarized in Table 2 below. Annex H provides a detailed list of interviewees.

**Table 2: Summary of Primary Data Collection Methods and Tools**

Technique	Stakeholders	Purpose	# of Persons Consulted
<b>Semi-structured Interviews</b>	AIFO VOICE project participants in Montserrado, Bomi and Nimba counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gather data on gender-based constraints faced by disabled women in accessing services offer under the VOICE project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24 (16 Male 8 Female)</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Group Discussions</b>	Representatives of disabled people organisation: NCD (Bomi, Montserrado and Nimba), NUOD (Bomi, Montserrado and Nimba counties), CAB (Bomi, Montserrado and Nimba counties), Life is Good (Nimba county), G-77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To capture disabled people opinions, perceptions, knowledge and experience regarding gender and disability constraints, and the benefits and opportunities with AIFO programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 men</li> <li>6 women</li> </ul>

<b>Key Informant Interviews</b>	AIFO partners under the VOICE project  External Stakeholders (government, CSOs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify recent development in gender and disability inclusion and potential opportunities for</li> <li>To validate results from desk review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 AIFO Liberia partners' staff (2 Male, 1 Female)</li> <li>1 UNDP staff (1 Male)</li> <li>1 Ministry of Justice staff (1 male)</li> </ul>
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The field research was conducted over a period of 21 days from May 18, 2022—June 5, 2022. During the fieldwork period, the team assessed 3 project locations (counties). The research team consisted of two (female) enumerators, two (male) sign language interpreters, and one (male) consultant with support from AIFO Liberia staff in Bomi, Montserrado and Nimba counties.

**Table 3: Field Research Schedule**

Date	Activity	Location (County)
May 20, 2022	Travel to Bomi County	Bomi County
May 20, 2022	Data collection: Focus group discussion and Semi-structured survey interviews	Bomi County
May 31, 2022	Travel to Ganta, Nimba county	Nimba County
June 1, 2022	Data collection: Focus group discussion and semi-structured survey interviews	Nimba County
June 2022	Data collection: Focus group discussion, semi-structured survey interview and key informant interviews	Montserrado County

The methodology for the gender analysis consisted of three basic activities in each county: semi-structured survey interviews comprising of selected participants in the technical and livelihood skills training provided under the VOICE project; one focus group discussion with representatives (both male and female) of the disabled community; key informant interview with AIFO partners and external stakeholders. During the fieldwork, participants exhibited positive response in all of the counties. There was, however, challenges encountered in all Bomi and Nimba counties regarding project participants clearly expressing themselves in responding to the questions asked during the semi-structured survey interviews.

**Table 4: Number of Research Participants**

	Montserrado	Bomi	Nimba	Overall Total
Number of FGD	1	1	1	3
Number of KIIs	3	1	1	5
Number of Semi-structured Interviews	10	10	4	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>

The focus group discussion explored the gendered distribution of workloads within households, gender and political participations in national and subnational politics, women involvement in decision making, gender-based violence, disability inclusion and women empowerment. The in-depth key informant interviews with partners and external stakeholders aimed to evaluate their level of commitment to support gender equality and disability inclusion, their support for participation in AIFO Liberia programs.

Data collection for both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research via semi-structured interviews was conducted with participants who are deaf and hard of hearing (HOH) with the support of a sign language interpreter. Interviews and focus group discussion with participants in Bomi, Montserrado and Nimba counties were conducted at Oscar Romero School for the Deaf, Williette SafeHouse and AIFO Liberia Regional Office respectively. For the focus group discussions, simultaneous interpretation from English to sign language and back was done (at meetings with deaf or hard of hearing (HOH) participants) enabling the recording of data in English via written notes during focus group discussion meetings.

### **3.2.4 Limitations of the Gender Analysis Research**

The main limitations of this research relate to the sample size and scope of the research. The sample size of research participants (key informants) that were part of the project means that the data does not give a representative view of the experiences of the potential research pool of research participants, though this is a limitation of most qualitative research. The data collected contained enough replication of narratives to conclude that the variation of experiences described by research participants reflected the experiences of people in similar circumstances.

A further aspect of research scope that limited the data that was able to be collected relates to the research methods that were feasible within the timeframe available for the fieldwork. When asked directly during the survey interviews, most participants were unable to answer the questions. This was due mainly to the participants education level and inability to communicate properly in sign language. Some of the project participants that were interviewed haven't been to school before and didn't know sign language before the training. It was observed that sign language training that was provided prior to the technical skill training was not adequately sufficient to enable some of the participants—especially those who have never been to school—to effectively communicate or express themselves in sign language. The research is also limited to the project counties namely: Bomi, Montserrado and Nimba counties, and focuses on gender equality within the domain of disability inclusion.

In addition to gender equality and women's economic empowerment, social inclusion – the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity – was considered a key component of this research, there is also a lack of available data in Liberia regarding disadvantaged and marginalized groups including people with disabilities (PwDs). This was a significant limitation in both the literature review and the field research. Because there were few key informants who were familiar with and/or recognised disadvantaged and marginalized groups, the findings in this area are limited.

### 3.2.4 Protection of Informant Information

The research team obtained free and prior informed consent from all research participants. This included the following procedures during semi-structured survey interviews, focus group discussion meetings and key informant interviews.

- Explanation of the purpose of the research, how long the interview/FDG would take and the procedures of digital data collection.
- A description of any risks to the person participating
- A description of any expected benefits to the person participating in the research, to their community, to AIFO Liberia, as a result of their participation
- A statement describing whether the data will be anonymous or stored confidentially
- Contact details for the person to get in touch with is he/she had questions or concerns regarding the research
- A statement that participation is voluntary that refusal to participate will involve no penalty, and that the participants may stop participating at any time during the interview/FDG.

### 3.2.5 Data Analysis

KIIs and FGDs were digitally recorded with participants' consent. All interviews were conducted in English (translated into sign language through a professional sign language interpreter where required) and were transcribed verbatim after the collection and all identifying information removed. The transcribed KIIs and FGDs material was cleaned and then analysed.

The data analysis plan formulated included gender consideration for analysis drawn from the EU guide on Gender Mainstreaming<sup>9</sup>, USAID Gender Analysis Guide<sup>10</sup>, and the research conceptual framework, as well as issue identified through the desk review. Gender-based constraints affecting disabled women participation in the VOICE project was firstly analysed followed by analysis of general issues relating to gender inequality and disability inclusion in Liberia.

## 4. KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

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### 4.1 Gender Characteristics of Research Participants (Semi-structured Survey Interviewees)

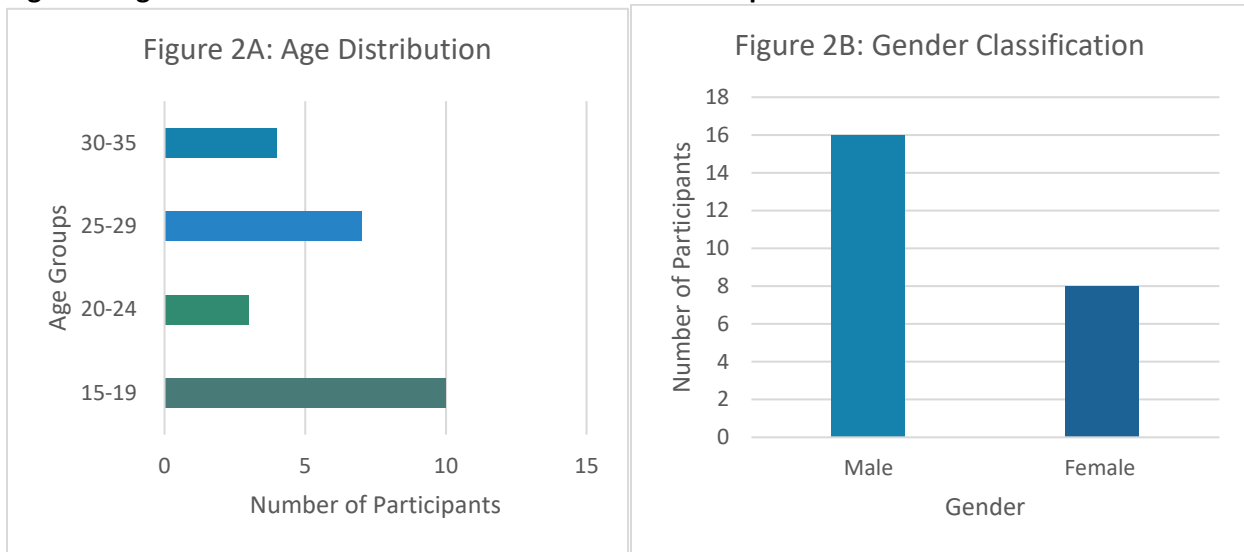
As displayed in the table below, the evaluation covered three project areas (counties) including Montserrado, Nimba and Bomi counties. In each of these counties, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected project participants. In Bomi County, ten (10) project participants were interviewed. The research also interviewed ten (10) participants in Montserrado and four (4) participants in Nimba County.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equal\\_consolidated/data/document/gendermain\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal_consolidated/data/document/gendermain_en.pdf)

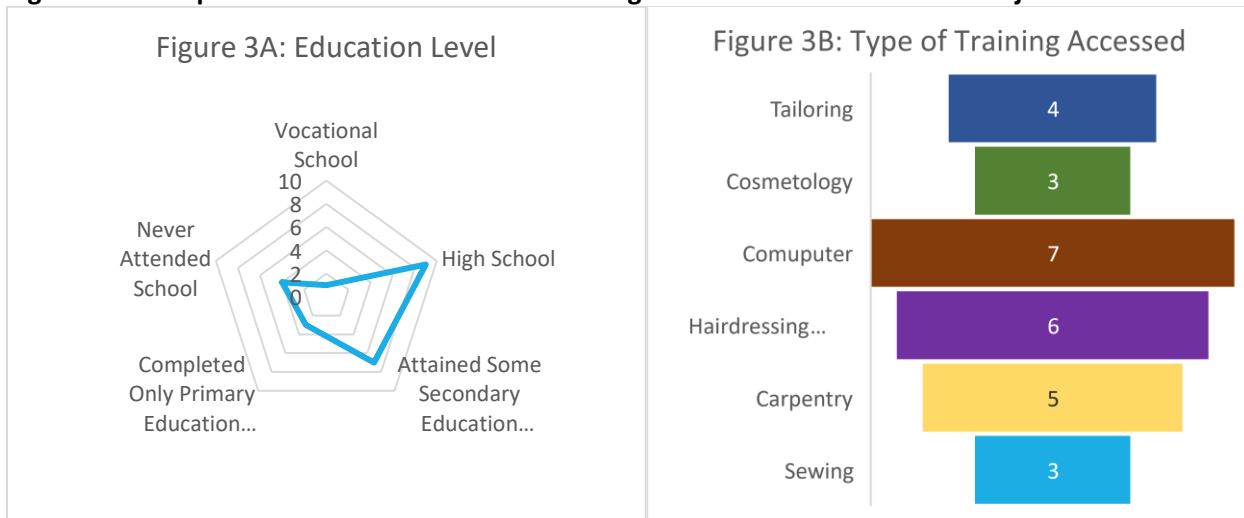
<sup>10</sup> [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDACP506.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACP506.pdf)

**Figure 2: Age Distribution and Gender Classification of Participants**



Based on the data collected during the semi-structured interviews conducted in the three project locations, 16 (67%) of the total participants were male while 8 (33%) of the participants were female. Semi-structured interview participants ages range from 15 years to 35 years. Based on Figure 2A above, ages of participants are distributed as follows: participants between the age of 15-29 years were 10 (41.5%), participants of ages 20-24 years were 3 (12.5%), participants between the ages of 25-29 were 7 (29%) while participants in the age range of 30-35 years were 4 (17%). Most of the participants were in the age range of 15-19 years followed by age range of 25-29 years.

**Figure 3: Participants Educational Level and Training Accessed under the VOICE Project**



**Note:** Some participants accessed more than one type of training.

Participants for the semi-structured interviews were deaf and hard of hearing (HOH) persons from the age of 15 to 35 years. The VOICE project provides technical/livelihood training to participants in the areas of tailoring, hairdressing/barbing, computer usage, carpentry and sewing in an effort to empower participants (disabled youths) to find meaning employment and self-employment opportunities and

become productive citizens. According to Figure 3A below, 4 (17%) of the participants had never been to school; 3 (12.5%) of the participants had completed only primary school; 7 (29%) of them attained some secondary education level; 9 (37.5%) of the participants had completed high school; only 1 (4%) participant had completed vocational school.

The data above also shows the types of training accessed by participants under the VOICE project. The computer training was accessed by 7 (29%) of the total participants, followed by hairdressing/barbing which had 6 (25%) of the participants. Carpentry training was accessed by 5 (21%) of the participants. Tailoring, sewing, and cosmetology were accessed by 4 (17%), 3 (12.5%) and 3 (12.5%) of the participants respectively.

#### **4.1.1 Results and Analysis for Semi-structured Interviews**

The key findings from the semi-structured interviews are important point in understanding constraints based on gender roles and relations faced by project participants in accessing training services under the VOICE project. In order for the VOICE project to achieve successful results in promoting the rights of people living with disabilities while empowering them, it is vital to undertake actions aimed at improving the gender relations at the household level and to seek to actualize a greater level of empowerment for disabled women and girls more broadly.

The literature demonstrates a strong link between women's empowerment and successful achievement of development goals.<sup>11</sup> In the case of improving disabled women technical and livelihood skills, the relationship between women's empowerment and education is very clear: if disabled women/girls are empowered with demand-driven technical and livelihood skills required to seek meaningful employment and self-employment and are given access to opportunities and resources, only then gender equality and women empowerment within the domain of disability inclusion will be achieved. Stereotype, beliefs, and cultural practices considered PwDs as cursed and are the leading forces for their exclusion from becoming productive persons in society.

*Key Findings 1: Participants motivations for accessing the trainings under the VOICE project were to improve their technical skills to become employable or self-employable.*

Both disabled women/girls and men/boys in all counties expressed that the motivations for their participation in the technical training offer under the VOICE project was gain employability skills. Many of them had completed at least secondary education level. This means that given the low chance of them acquiring college or higher education, having technical skills to engage in meaningful employment and self-employment initiatives is crucial for their empowerment and inclusion in society.

The technical trainings were provided with the assistance of a sign language interpreters along with training facilitators. There is not commercial training service provider that offer technical skill training for

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<sup>11</sup> Naila Kabeer (2005) Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal 1, Gender & Development, 13:1, 13-24

deaf and hard of hearing (HOH) persons as a regular training service thus the training under VOICE project was of vital importance to participants.

*“I decided to join VOICE project training in order to gain skills in tailoring to be able to open my own tailor shop in the future”*

(Female Semi-structured Survey Interviewee, Montserrado County)

*Key Findings 2: In relation to challenges encountered by participants based on their gender, participants expressed haven't experience any form of gender-based constraints*



Interview with AIFO VOICE Project participant

In all of the counties, participants clearly expressed not experiencing any form of constraints based on gender roles and relations. This is mainly due to the initial effort made by AIFO Liberia during the project design and inception stage to ensure that both disabled women/girls and men/boys have equal access to the trainings provided under the VOICE project.

However, many participants expressed experiencing challenge in commuting to and from training venue, citing insufficient transportation stipend/allowance as a main challenge faced during the training program. Additionally, at one location, facilitator/interpreter inability/refusal to respond to questions



asked by participants during the training sections were cited as another challenge. Participants also cited experiencing difficulty in understanding interpreter during the trainings.

*“I didn’t experience any challenge due to my gender. But the interpreter/facilitator couldn’t respond to my questions whenever I asked them”*

(Male Semi-structured Survey Interviewee, Montserrado County)

*“No, I didn’t experience any challenge due to my gender but the transportation I received was not enough to transport me from my house to the training venue for the entire training duration”*

(Female Semi-structured Survey Interviewee, Montserrado County)

*Key Findings 3: Recognition of the potential wider impact that the VOICE project could have on programming, and policy making if replicated or expanded to other counties in Liberia*

Disabled women/girls and men/boys have been stigmatised and marginalised in Liberia. Disabled people lack accessibility and access to opportunities (education, health, employment, etc), access to and control over resources (credit, land etc) and are excluded from decision making and political leadership at the national and subnational levels. With AIFO Liberia interest in people living with disabilities and the VOICE project overall goal of strengthening disabled people organisation to effectively advocate for their rights while at the same time empowering people with disability through the provision of advocacy training, technical and livelihood skills, disabled women/girls and men/boys would have a clear understanding of their rights under the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and can advocate for their rights and become empowered. Participants recognised that if this project can be replicated or expanded to other counties in Liberia, it would have a wider impact in ensuring gender equality and disability inclusion in Liberia.

*“Yes, it should be extended in other counties. It will help other disabled people to gain skills and knowledge for employment”*

(Female Semi-structured Survey Interviewee, Montserrado County)

#### **4.1.2 Recommendations for AIFO Liberia Programming**

The below are recommendations for improving the VOICE project and other related projects currently being implemented by AIFO Liberia or to be included in future programming.

##### **#1 Maintain gender balance in the selection of project participants by:**

- Continuing to mainstream gender during all stages of program or project formulation and implementation

- Providing intensive long-term sign language training to potential project participants who are deaf or hard of hearing (HOH) tailored to their needs to ensure that participants gain skills and can clearly communicate using sign language.
- Ensuring that project locations are close to participants or by providing adequate means of transportation for project participants during project implementation.
- Developing and implementing empowerment projects that support disabled women entrepreneurs with linkages to business development services and seed funding to start up or expand their business ventures
- Expanding the implementation of the VOICE project activities or other similar projects to other counties and cities within Liberia to reach greater impact.
- Continuing the implementation of disability-focused projects by supporting people with disabilities especially disabled women to become empowered.

## 4.2 Results and Analysis from FGDs and KIs

The findings of the gender analysis resulting from the focus group discussions and key informant interviews are presented below. A general descriptive analysis; a review of key gender related issues and advances and gender-related challenges; and recommendations for future programming are presented.

*Key Findings I: Women/girls (especially those with disabilities) face challenges in accessing healthcare, education and employment which reflect and are reinforced by inequitable gender norms and cultural*

Gaps in women and girls' access to education, healthcare and employment exist against a backdrop of larger societal gender inequalities, including a lack of value placed on girl's education and earning potential relative to their male siblings and peers, systematic and structural barriers to girl's schooling, sexual abuse, gender-based violence (GBV), and harmful traditional practices affecting girls. Women and girls with disabilities frequently face a number of barriers to obtaining sexual and reproductive healthcare and participating in family life. These include not only physical barriers such as a lack of access to premises and transportation, but also financial barriers, communication difficulties, and negative attitudes among health workers. An inaccessible society can add additional barriers and challenges to disabled women's ability to care for their children and other family members. Often, society views women with disabilities as incapable of having children and, as a result, incapable of fulfilling their roles as mothers and family members. As a result, women with disabilities are not seen as marriage material and, in many cases, are hidden away, increasing their vulnerability to a life of poverty.

The UN Gender Inequality Index ranks Liberia 176th out of 189 countries in 20xx. In Liberia, girls' access, retention, and completion of secondary school are hampered by poverty, discriminatory social and gender norms, a lack of sexual health and reproductive rights, and high levels of sexual and gender-based violence. There are significant educational disparities due to gender, rural-urban location, and income inequality, with poor rural girls and women being the most disadvantaged. Girls are not only denied the right to an education, but they are also severely limited in their ability to improve their life chances and assert their other human rights, including the right to a sustainable livelihood.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is common and frequently perceived as a private, family matter. According to the Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-2020, 60% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence, while 9% have experienced sexual violence. Only 42% of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence have ever sought help. Women's participation in political processes is still limited, and people with disabilities are frequently impoverished.

Gender inequalities persist once women have entered the workforce. Women work primarily in the agricultural or in the informal sector in Liberia where women make up 54% of the employment in the service sector. Formal or higher paid wage jobs are often monopolised by men (FGD), where women are most often pushed into lower wage-earning roles. Access to education, and health care is critical to women's awareness and exercise of their rights, including the right to vote. As previously stated, women's access to education in Liberia continues to lag behind that of men, particularly at higher levels of education. Women continue to face barriers to education, information, employment, and decision-making, and both men and women are unaware of the importance of gender equality.

Disabled women are even more marginalised and left behind. In addition to other gender constraints affecting women in general, disabled women/girls suffers inaccessibility to public facilities, schools, hospitals etc and are often excluded from access to these services and opportunities.

### *Key Findings II: Women lack decision making power and leadership role in household, community and in politics*

There has been some level of achievement in gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia. This is evident from the election of Liberia's first female president in 2005 and 2011 which also paved the way for more women participation in leadership at the national legislature and in other governmental roles (KII UN Staff). However, there is still a huge challenge in giving women the opportunity to take up more leadership roles in government. Overall, women lack equal decision-making power at all levels, from the household to the community to the national level. Even when women are present at the table, they may not have a voice. Men are regarded as "household heads," making it more difficult for women to exercise decision-making power at home. Men make decisions in the political process as well, as women in rural areas are afraid of voting differently than their husbands, limiting their free expression and participation in democracy. Men are given the right to speak frequently in community and political meetings, at the expense of women's time, and women's concerns are ignored. In Liberia, only five parliamentary seats have been reserved for women in as required by the Equal Representation and Participation Act passed in 2016. In healthcare and education leadership, women lack leadership opportunities. In the health sector, women are mainly nurses and physician assistants. In education, women lack leadership role as principals, or presidents for education institutions (KII UNDP).

Women do not make decisions about their own healthcare, major household purchases, or visits to family. On a micro level, the trends regarding married women making personal decisions are mixed. Most women who are currently married and have cash earnings decide how to spend their personal earnings, and most

women make decisions jointly with their husbands, with few leaving decision-making to their husbands. The difference between men and women who make decisions alone or jointly favors men slightly more.

Previous research<sup>12</sup> indicates that unmarried women have more liberty than married women, particularly when it comes to making personal decisions such as their own healthcare. As previously stated, education and employment are also important factors in women's empowerment. Significant number of women with decision making power are women who have completed at least senior high school or higher education. The link between micro decision-making and economic empowerment is clear such that as a woman's economic assets and income-earning capacity grow, so does her confidence and self-esteem, increasing the likelihood that she will participate more in private and public decision-making.

Women who run for political office or participate in political life often face prejudices and gender inequalities within decision-making bodies and political parties. The political system reinforces gender dynamics centered on male privilege, granting men greater access to power and leadership positions. Women who seek leadership positions in political parties or decision-making bodies frequently do so through patriarchal attitudes and political positions that maintain gender inequalities, rather than through feminist or women-centered platforms.

*Key Findings III: Women face constraints in accessing finance and financial services for starting or expanding existing businesses*

Women (especially disabled women) who are entrepreneurs lack access to finance and financial inclusion. Women entrepreneurs who are desirous of starting a new business venture or to expand one usually face challenge in accessing finance. Their male counterpart is more likely to access loan and other capital for starting or expanding their business than women. The most significant challenges faced by female informal workers, such as market sellers and street vendors, are a lack of access to credit and banking services, a lack of financial literacy and business training and poor sanitation in marketplaces. Loan terms and interest rates are often rigid for women entrepreneurs, requiring them to make available large value collaterals which in many cases, they lack.

Women in Liberia are dynamic entrepreneurs, with informal businesses predominating in small-scale retail and trade; they are also more likely to be self-employed. The Liberian socioeconomic context presents numerous challenges for female entrepreneurs, ranging from high illiteracy and women's exclusion from household decision-making to a lack of asset ownership and access to formal financial services and credits. While general literacy is important for women's economic inclusion, financial literacy and access to business information are equally important.

Women's access to finance is critical for economic empowerment, but despite significant progress, around 80<sup>13</sup> percent of the Liberian population remains unbanked. Women are less likely than men to have a bank account and borrow money from a formal financial institution is more difficult for them. Over the years,

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<sup>12</sup> UN Women 2021 Liberia Country Gender Profile. <https://datapopalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Report-UNW-liberia.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> UN Women report 2017.

there have been many efforts to increase women's access to financial opportunities by assisting communities in establishing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to assist women in saving money and accessing small loans to improve their livelihoods but there is still lot of effort needed to ensure improved access to finance and financial services for women.

Equal access and control over economic and financial resources for women is critical for achieving gender equality and empowerment, as well as equitable and sustainable economic growth and development. Gender equality in economic and financial resource distribution has a positive multiplier effect on a variety of key development goals, including poverty reduction and child welfare.

*Key Findings IV: Norms, belief, religion, ethnicity deepen gender inequality and exclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace/society/community*

Generally, cultural norms and belief and ethnic ideology and beliefs restrict women and girls' role in the society and further deepen gender inequalities. In most rural communities in Liberia girls are less likely to go to school than boys are. Gender norms, the often-unspoken rules that govern the characteristics and behaviors that are valued and acceptable for men, women, and gender minorities, are what hold the gender system together. Institutions contain norms that define who hold leadership positions, whose contributions are valued, and whose needs are met. Restrictive gender norms thus reproduce and underpin power hierarchies, both between and among men and women, boys and girls, and gender minorities with women always being at the tail of the scale. Norms can however be altered.

The space for disability inclusion is still small in Liberia and is a huge challenge. Persons with disabilities do not have many opportunities and are usually excluded from society mainly due to social barriers that society has created against them. For example, society see disable people are seen as liability. Society sometimes considers a visually impaired person as someone who cannot perform to their full potential and thereby discriminate against them. In many instances, society feels that women place is in the kitchen which limits their opportunities compare to their male counterpart.

The implementation of policy around gender equality and disability inclusion has been a serious challenge in Liberia both in government and private institutions. The act that established the national commission on disability (NCD) in 2005 states that for one hundred persons employed four percent should be persons with disabilities. However, the implementation of this policy in government has been a serious challenge. People with disabilities also face challenges in accessibility. Many government structures/buildings do not have ramps and are inaccessible to persons with disabilities. (KII, UNDP)

For far too long, women and girls with disabilities have been invisible to advocates for both women's and disability rights, increasing their vulnerability. Women and girls with disabilities (W&GWD) are more likely to face "double discrimination," such as gender-based violence, abuse, and marginalization. As a result, in comparison to men with disabilities and women without disabilities, women with disabilities frequently face additional disadvantages.

*Key Findings V: Women are not involved in community consultations regarding resources allocations and management*

The fact that men are frequently the primary beneficiaries of women's economic activity emphasizes the importance of addressing systemic gender inequalities in economic opportunities. Husbands have decision-making authority over any income generated by their wives' agricultural or business activities, including the sale of businesses or land. Even when women retain control of their businesses or agricultural income, they face enormous challenges, particularly when trying to raise working capital for expanding or diversifying their business so that they can access markets other than their local community market. (FGD, Bomi County)

When both men and women are present in community meetings, workshops or other events, women are usually less likely to speak up or contribute to decisions for social and cultural reasons. When male community leaders choose participants, most of them are usually men, even when the leaders are explicitly asked to invite women to events/meetings. When women do attend community events, they frequently have a dual role of preparing food for the participants, and as a result, they can spend much of the meeting moving in and out, missing out on the opportunity to fully participate. (FGD, Nimba county)

Information about programs, events or community meetings or other activities in communities are typically directed first to community leaders, chiefs, or committee chairs, who are usually men. As a result, women and youth are frequently reliant on these men to disseminate information through communication channels such as church announcements. This reliance, combined with the relatively low literacy levels of women, especially rural women, means that information does not always reach marginalized members of communities, including many women, in deciding resource allocation and management and other important decisions at the community levels.

*Key Findings VI: Gender and disability-related institutions exist to support disabled women's full participation in society but still lag behind in ensuring closing the gender gap and fully empowering women*

There are many institutions that exist for the support of women full participation in leadership and decision making. However, effort around promoting gender equality and empowerment of women is still moving on a slow pace in Liberia. (KII, UNDP)

Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but also a prerequisite for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Over the last few years, in Liberia there has been progress in establishment of institutions that support gender equality and women empowerment including ensuring that more girls are attending school, fewer girls are forced to marry young, more women are serving in parliament and positions of leadership, and laws are being reformed to advance gender equality. Despite these gains, many challenges remain: discriminatory laws and social norms persist, women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of political leadership, and many women and girls aged 15 to 49 are still being physical or sexual violented by an intimate partner.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented huge challenges to the progress made regarding gender equality and disability inclusion and possessed the potential to reverse the limited progress made in gender equality and women's rights. The coronavirus outbreak exacerbates already-existing inequalities for women and girls in all areas, from health and the economy to security and social protection. Women play a disproportionate role in the virus response, including frontline healthcare workers and domestic caregivers. As a result of school closures and the increased needs of the elderly, women's unpaid care work has increased significantly. Women are also disproportionately affected by the economic consequences of COVID-19 because they work in insecure labor markets. In Liberia almost 74%<sup>14</sup> of women work in the informal economy, putting them at a higher risk of falling into poverty.

#### **4.2.1 Recommendations for AIFO Liberia**

The following presents programming opportunities regarding advocacy, awareness, training, services, products related to improving access to education, healthcare services, employment opportunities and ensuring social inclusion for disabled women in Liberia. The recommendations are arranged according to the various findings above.

***#1: Improve disabled women and girls' access to healthcare, education, employment opportunities, and build the resilience of GBV survivors by:***

- Providing training and support (with access to credit/grant, business advisory services) to disabled women entrepreneurs who would like to start or grow their business
- Establishing vocational training programs for girls (especially disabled girls) who are not in school as a means of providing education about entrepreneurship, soft skill, financial literacy and other employability skill trainings.
- Empowering women (particularly disabled women) through education and awareness building to have a voice in consultation to speak about education, health and social issues affecting them at local and national levels.
- Supporting women's economic empowerment programs to enable women to negotiate and make decisions about their lives and businesses.
- Increasing women access to finance and financial services by ensuring they have access to loans, saving groups and cooperatives through linkages to village savings and loan associations, banks, and other non-bank financial institutions.
- Providing more opportunities for women to access education including sign language education via the provision of technical and vocational skills training as well as sign language training to disabled women throughout Liberia.
- Providing technical assistance to women-run small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the form of business advisory via linkages to business development service providers to ensure that disabled women entrepreneurs have the business acumen and business management skill to successfully manage and run their own enterprises.
- Creating alternative livelihood activities for GBV survivors through the provision of technical and soft skill training and financial support for sustained and improved livelihood.

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<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-global-economy/case-studies/liberia/>

***#II Improve women decision-making and leadership role in household, community, and politics by:***

- Engaging in activities that advocate for women' rights and (disabled women) participation in decision-making and political processes by promoting women involvement in politics and decision-making at the household, community, and national level.
- Mainstreaming gender and disability in program and project related activities to ensure that disabled women/girls are involved at all levels of program/project implementation.
- Promoting advocacy activities in ensuring reform in gender equality laws to support more women in leadership and decision-making roles at national level.
- Engaging disabled men through awareness and training to support women autonomy and involvement in decision-making in households and at community levels.

***#III Improve access to finance and financial services, and enhance disabled women' entrepreneurial ability by:***

- Providing financial support (mainly in the form of soft loans and seed fundings) and financial literacy training to disabled women entrepreneurs to enhance their financial management skills, improve financial inclusion and access to finance
- Linking disabled women entrepreneurs with business development services, advisory, microfinance institutions, cooperatives and saving clubs in creating a financial ecosystem to support continued access to finance and financial services for disabled women entrepreneurs to scale up their business ventures for improved livelihoods.

***#IV Influence changes in norms, belief, religion and ethnic-based perspectives and attitudes that deepens gender inequality and exclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace/society/community by:***

- Creating awareness on the importance of empowering women and girls in society.
- Creating awareness on the rights and inclusion of people living with disabilities (especially disabled women/girls) as a fundamental human right.
- Promoting women and girls' empowerment including disabled women and girls through various aspects of project and program implementation
- Promoting advocacy around accessibility of disabled people within both public and private institutions for ensuring social inclusion.

***#V Improve women involvement in community consultations in resource allocation and management by:***

- Providing training and awareness to disabled men regarding their roles in supporting women empowerment and participation in community consultations regarding issues that affect them.



- Strengthening disabled women’ ability to speak out and participate in civil related matters through education and skill training.

***#VI Enhance accountability in the implementation of gender equality laws and strengthen the capacity of gender equality and disability inclusion-support institutions by:***

- Improving advocacy on gender equality and women empowerment through support to CSOs to engage in advocacy around gender equality and empowerment of disabled women in Liberia
- Advocating for improvement in the implementation of gender equality and disability inclusion laws to increase disabled women empowerment and access to healthcare, education, employment etc.
- Supporting women participation in leadership and decision making at national and subnational levels through all level of project/program implementation.

**APPENDIX A: LIST OF GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES**

<b>Name of Government Ministries</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Website</b>
Ministry of Agriculture	The Ministerial Complex, Tubman Boulevard, 1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia	<a href="https://www.moa.gov.lr/">https://www.moa.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Commerce and Industry	The Ministerial Complex, Tubman Boulevard, 1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia	<a href="https://www.moci.gov.lr/">https://www.moci.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Defense	UN Drive, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://mod.gov.lr/">https://mod.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Education	The Ministerial Complex, Tubman Boulevard, 1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia	<a href="http://www.moeliberia.com/">http://www.moeliberia.com/</a>
Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	Broad Street, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/">https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Capitol Hill, Monrovia Republic of Liberia	<a href="https://www.mofa.gov.lr/public2/index.php">https://www.mofa.gov.lr/public2/index.php</a>
Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection	The Ministerial Complex, Tubman Boulevard, 1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia	<a href="https://mogcsp.gov.lr/">https://mogcsp.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Health	Congo Town Boulevard, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="http://moh.gov.lr/">http://moh.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Information, Cultural and Tourism	Camp Johnson Road, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.micat.gov.lr/">https://www.micat.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Executive Ground, Capitol Hill, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.mia.gov.lr/">https://www.mia.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Labor	The Ministerial Complex, Tubman Boulevard, 1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia	<a href="http://www.mol.gov/">http://www.mol.gov/</a>

Ministry of Justice	16 <sup>th</sup> Street, Sinkor, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="http://www.moj.gov.lr/">http://www.moj.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy	Camp Johnson Road, Monrovia, Liberia	
Ministry of Post and Telecommunications	The Ministerial Complex, Tubman Boulevard, 1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia	<a href="https://mopt.gov.lr/">https://mopt.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Public Works	Lynch Street, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.mpw.gov.lr/">https://www.mpw.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Transport	Warren and Carey Street, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.mot.gov.lr/">https://www.mot.gov.lr/</a>
Ministry of Youth & Sports	SKD Sport Complex, Monrovia, Liberia	

## APPENDIX B: LIST OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

<b>Agencies and Units</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Website</b>
Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation	King Sao Bosso St, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.lwsc.gov.lr/">https://www.lwsc.gov.lr/</a>
Liberia Electricity Corporation	West Point, Waterside, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="http://lecliberia.com/">http://lecliberia.com/</a>
National Port Authority	Bushrod Island, Monrovia	<a href="https://npa.gov.lr/index.php/operations/freeport-of-monrovia">https://npa.gov.lr/index.php/operations/freeport-of-monrovia</a>
Liberia Petroleum Refining	Clara Town, Monrovia, Liberia	
Internal Audit Agency	Congo Town, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://iaa.gov.lr/">https://iaa.gov.lr/</a>
Civil Service Agency	The Ministerial Complex, Tubman Boulevard, 1000 Monrovia, 10 Liberia	<a href="https://csa.gov.lr/">https://csa.gov.lr/</a>
Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services	Executive Mansion Ground, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.lisgis.net/cgi-sys/suspendedpage.cgi">https://www.lisgis.net/cgi-sys/suspendedpage.cgi</a>
Financial Intelligence Unit	Old Congo Town Back Road Behind Ministry of Health, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.fiuliberia.gov.lr/">https://www.fiuliberia.gov.lr/</a>
Liberia Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative	Executive Mansion Ground	<a href="https://www.leiti.org.lr/">https://www.leiti.org.lr/</a>
National Security Agency	Caldwell, Montserrado, Liberia	<a href="https://www.nsa.gov.lr/web/web/">https://www.nsa.gov.lr/web/web/</a>
Liberia Investment Commission	Sekou Toure Ave, Monrovia, Liberia	<a href="https://www.investliberia.gov.lr/">https://www.investliberia.gov.lr/</a>

## APPENDIX C: LIST OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

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Business Development Services Providers	Contact	Email	Website
Agency for Economic Development & Empowerment			
GUSCEMAN Inc.	+231777527159	guscemaninc@gmail.com	
Pace consulting	+231886687305 +231777255973	info@paceconsultant.com pml2000@yahoo.com	www.paceconsultant.com
Top Consulting Incorporated (TCI)	+231886840274 +231776738334	topconsultinginc@yahoo.com	
Devin Corporation			
Business Start-Up Center Monrovia	+231880817411 +231886527715	williamdennis@bscmonrovia.com	www.bscmonrovia.com

## **APPENDIX D: GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW—STAKEHOLDER (GOVERNMENT, MEDIA, NGOs, CSOs)**

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### **Guide to key informant interview—Gender equity and inclusion**

#### **Introduction and verbal consent for interview—READ THE STATEMENT**

##### **Introduction**

Introduce yourself. Explain that the purpose of the interview is to collect the views and perspectives of stakeholders on gender gaps and disability issues in the implementation of policies and programmes in public/private/non-governmental institutions. Ensure participant has a copy of the information sheet. Obtain informed consent. Ensure key aspects from the information sheet are well-understood, primarily: (1) that the discussion will last a maximum of 45- 60 minutes; (2) that the content of the interview will remain confidential; (3) that the participant’s name will not be used when reporting the findings; (4) that quotations will be anonymised; and (5) a voice recorder will be used, only to ensure that all the information from the interview is captured, and only if they agree to being recorded.

This gender analysis research is being conducted by AIFO Liberia as part of an EU-funded inclusion and disability project. The interview will take 30-45 minutes during which I will ask you to comment on gender differences on people’s experience in accessing opportunities, accessing, and having control of resources, inclusion in decision-making and political participation and leadership. I will ask you to comment on gaps in the current gender response in this sector and how EU and AIFO can reinforce their efforts to address gender inequities, disability and inclusion and women empowerment in their future work.

You can stop the interview at any time. I will take all necessary procedures to make your personal information confidential. Your identify and organizational affiliation will remain confidential. Only the researchers and AIFO will have access to your name and affiliation and the data will be stored safely. In every report and articles about this research project, your identity will be protected as much as possible.

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Post title of the participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer of the Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Male  Female

Department/Unit/Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of months/years working in this position: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please briefly describe your current position and your work, current and previous, related to gender equality, disability, inclusion, and women empowerment.

2. In your experience, in Liberia, how do you think gender and disability have an impact on Liberia's developmental efforts as a country? Probe for:
  - I. Gender issues faced by women/girls, men/boys with disabilities
    - i. at family/household level
    - ii. in the community
    - iii. within the health/education/development system and employment related.
    - iv. Challenges faced by people with disabilities in their in their everyday life
  
3. Do other dimensions like norms, belief, religion, ethnicity deepen gender inequality and exclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace/society/community? At the policy level how does gender equality and disability play a role in policies related to women empowerment and inclusion in Liberia?
 

Probe for:

  - Division of roles/services between disabled male and female
  - Remuneration
  - Career progression
  - Work environment and safety any focus in disability/inclusion policy on gender issues related to other genders (apart from male/ female, eg. transgender) and any suggestions on how these can be included
  
4. At the programme level how does gender and disability play a role in in the design and implementation of programmes in Liberia?
 

Probe for:

  - Disabled female and male have access to services offered by health / education / other system and take up of services by communities
  - Access to training
  - Work environment and safety
  - Mobility
  - Remuneration
  - Senior/leadership/supervisory roles
  - Career progression
  - Overcoming potentially prohibitive cultural norms
  
5. Have any specific policy measures been put in place to ensure that national/institutional policies and programmes are responsive/address issues related to gender equality and disability and inclusion?
  
6. If programmes related to gender inequality and disability and inclusion in Liberia were to be made truly gender transformative and inclusive, what would you suggest should happen to achieve this?
  
7. If there are any issues identified in the desk review around gender equality, disability and inclusion for Liberia, refer to these and ask if anything has been done to address them.
 

Probe for:

  - I. Anticipated barriers, challenges and suggested solutions in implementing these suggestions
  - II. Equal pay
  - III. Equal access to training
  - IV. Equal access to promotion opportunities

- V. Access to and control over resources
- VI. Participation in decision-making and political processes and leadership
- V. Overcoming cultural norms/barriers

8. With regards to community level programme being planned and implemented in Liberia, what are the measures being put in place to make programmes responsive to gender and disability concerns?
  - What would be your suggestions to make them more gender responsive and inclusive?
  - Anticipated barriers, challenges and suggested solutions in implementing these suggestions
9. Which key gender and disability informed stakeholders would you recommend we meet while we are in conducting this research in Liberia?
10. Are there any key gender and disability related documents that we should review for this study?

#### Closure

1. Ask if the participant would like to add further comments
2. Bring the meeting to a close by summarising the main points
3. Thank the participant for his/her time and active participation

## APPENDIX E: GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW—PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

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### Guide to key informant interview—Gender equity, disability inclusion study

**Potential informants:** Informants with a special knowledge/work area of gender and disability inclusion – including gender focal persons/heads with different partner organisations (Selected DPOs / NCD / NUOD/Oscar Romero School/Williette Safehouse) working on gender equality and disability inclusion.

### Introduction and verbal consent for interview—READ THE STATEMENT

This gender analysis research is being conducted by AIFO Liberia as part of an EU-funded inclusion and disability project. The interview will take 30-45 minutes during which I will ask you to comment on gender differences on people’s experience in accessing opportunities, accessing, and having control of resources, inclusion in decision-making and political participation and leadership. I will ask you to comment on gaps in the current gender response in this sector and how EU and AIFO can reinforce their efforts to address gender inequities, disability and inclusion and women empowerment in their future work.

You can stop the interview at any time. I will take all necessary procedures to make your personal information confidential. Your identify and organizational affiliation will remain confidential. Only the researchers and AIFO will have access to your name and affiliation and the data will be stored safely. In every report and articles about this research project, your identity will be protected as much as possible.

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Post title of the participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer of the Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Male  Female

Department/Unit/Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of months/years working in this position: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please briefly describe your current position and your work, current and previous, related to gender, disability, inclusion, and women empowerment.
2. In your experience, in Liberia, how do you think gender and disability impact on Liberia’s developmental efforts as a country? Probe for:
  - I. Gender issues faced by women with disabilities
    - i. at family/household level ii. in the community
    - iii. within the health/education system and at workplace



iv. Challenges faced by people with disabilities in their work due to these issues

**Part I: Recent developments and challenges in gender equality, disability, inclusion, and women empowerment in the private and public sphere in Liberia.**

1. Can you please describe the differences between disabled men and women regarding access to goods, services, resources, opportunities, and participation in the community, public and private life?
2. What are the gender-related laws/policies that explain the exclusion from public life and influence of disabled women, men, girls and boys and other minorities?
3. What are the social and institutional norms that influence their access to health, education, employment, and other basic services?
  - a. Are there geographic differences in these standards?
4. Do you have any national or subnational statistics relevant to the issues you recommend? Please specify examples of documents, studies?

Specific gaps or issues (preferences, constraints, and opportunities) identified, ask for related details for the following domains of gender analysis.

- I. Access to employment and other opportunities
- II. Decision making and power in economic activities and entrepreneurship (productive decisions, autonomy, and productive decisions)
- III. Control over productive resources (ownership of goods, rights, rights over goods, access, and decision on credit)
- IV. Control in the use of income
- V. Social capital and community leadership [belonging to groups, speaking in public]
- VI. Human capital
- VII. Use of time (satisfaction and leisure)
- VIII. Knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions-norms.
- IX. Rights and statute

**Part II: How are developments and gaps being addressed in policy implementation and programming?**

1. Are there organisations, ministries or projects that deal with obstacles to gender equality and women's empowerment in the area of social and political participation? what kind of activities and what is the focus of the program in this area?
2. How gender roles and norms influence the division of time between paid and unpaid work (including subsistence production and care for family members) and voluntary activities, how does this influence the participation of disabled women and men in social and political life in Liberia?
3. Does gender-based violence play a role in restricting access to voice and participation for any subpopulation of people with disabilities? For people with HIVs, Tuberculosis, Epilepsy, Leprosy? How is this being handled?
4. Do stigma and discrimination play a role that restricts access to social and political participation for each of these groups? What grievance mechanisms exist? Are they used? Are complaints resolved?
5. Do you have any program (national and subnational) relevant to the questions posed above? Representation? Influence on public services? civil participation?

6. Are there lessons to be learned by AIFO and EU and other investments in this sector?

**Part III: Opportunities for AIFO/Liberia to collaborate with DPOs, CSOs, NGOs, the private sector and other donors to advance Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and People with Disabilities and fully reflect in its strategic plans and implementation of programs**

- I. Are there specific gender-related challenges among people with disabilities (PWDs) that AIFO Liberia has a comparative advantage in addressing? Answering this question will help AIFO prioritize resources and maximize impact.
- II. Do you have any recommendations for addressing gender inequities among PWDs in democracy and governance that you would like AIFO to put in its plan?
- III. Do you think gender-based violence play a role in limiting access to social and political participation for any subpopulation of PWDs? What about stigma and discrimination? Access to justice? What role can AIFO and EU and their partners play in addressing these challenges?
- IV. What trends do you see that can shape the future direction of disability, inclusion and gender equity programming in Liberia for democracy, economic empowerment and governance that can fully advance gender equality for PWDs and women's empowerment?

**Interviewer's Notes**

- Can this informant provide any help in organizing focus group discussions with key groups?
- Did they suggest any program reports or documents that we can review?
- Is there anyone they believe we should speak to in order to gain a better sense of the challenges in the area of disability and gender equality?

## APPENDIX F: SURVEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

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Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I was hired by AIFO Liberia to conduct gender analysis research on the VOICE project currently being implemented by AIFO Liberia with funding from EU and in partnership with Williette Safehouse and NOUD. This survey questionnaire is intended to collect information from selected participants of the VOICE project to determine gender gaps in accessing services offered by the project. The survey will take between 30-45 minutes.

Name of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation and location (county): \_\_\_\_\_

Role in the project (coordinator, partner, subgrantee, participants?): \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: Male  Female .

Q1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?

1. No, no difficulty  2. Yes, some difficulty  3. Yes, a lot of difficulty  4. Cannot do it at all

Q2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?

1. No, no difficulty  2. Yes, some difficulty  3. Yes, a lot of difficulty  4. Cannot do it at all

Q3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?

1. No, no difficulty  2. Yes, some difficulty  3. Yes, a lot of difficulty  4. Cannot do it at all

Q4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?

1. No, no difficulty  2. Yes, some difficulty  3. Yes, a lot of difficulty  4. Cannot do it at all

Note: Disability is determined, according to the WG-SS, as anyone having at least 'a lot of difficulty' on at least one of the six questions.

Q5. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Q6. Marital Status: Single  Married  Divorced  Separated

Q7. Family Size

1.  Micro (1-3)
2.  Small (4-6)
3.  Medium (7-9)
4.  Large (10>)

Q8. Education level? High School  Vocational School  Undergraduate  Graduate

Q9. What is your source of income? Family support  Employed  Self-employed  Charity

Q10. If employed or self-employed, what is your monthly income?

- < 5000 LD
- 5001-10000 LD
- 10001-15000 LD
- 15001-20000 LD
- 20000>

Q11. Are you a breadwinner in your family? Yes  No  Sometimes

Q12. Did you vote in the last presidential/legislative elections? Yes  No

Q13. Why did you participate in the VOICE project? (Discussion can be triggered by citing some of the motivation under Q16 of the survey questionnaire)

Q14. Have you participated in other disability projects that were EU-funded or implemented by AIFO? If so, how does the VOICE project compare to those? Please explain your views.

Q15. Were there any challenges that you had to face in participating in the VOICE project due to your gender? Please explain. How did you overcome them?

Q16. What kind of assistance/support did you receive from your organisation (DPO/NOUD) at the application/signing up stage as well as the implementation phase of the project? How would you assess your experience with them for the VOICE project also considering any prior experience you have had with them from other projects?

Q17. What were the main outcomes (direct results) you expected from the project? To what extent have these been achieved? Why?

Q18. What were the expected impacts on your organisation/family from participating in the project? To what extent have these been achieved? Why?

Q19. Do you think that the VOICE project can have wider impacts on society, other programming and policy making? Why?

Q20. Overall, what do you think are the three most important achievements of the VOICE project? Please explain. Why?

Q21. Overall, what do you think are the three most important failures of the VOICE project? Please explain why.

## APPENDIX G: GUIDE FOR CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD)

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Hi everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I was hired by AIFO Liberia to conduct gender analysis research on the VOICE project. The overall goal of this focus group meeting is to bring together 12 participants (two each) from each partner organizations and sub-grantees to discuss key challenges affecting people with disabilities (PWDs) in Liberia. This focus group meeting is part of a process of collecting data to be used for the gender analysis. As we are all aware, VOICE project aimed at enhancing the capacity of civil society organisations, to promote and empower persons with disabilities and to ensure that people with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights in Liberia. Can you each kindly introduce yourself? Thanks.

### **How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household (for example, roles in decision-making and different access to and control over resources and services) affect the work to be undertaken?**

1. Do disabled men's and women's different roles within the household influence how decisions are made, e.g., who within the household will seek health, employment, education and when they will seek them?
2. Do differences in disabled men's and women's position within the community influence their participation in leadership positions and in community activities at subnational and national levels.
3. Do disabled men's and women's roles within the community lead to gender inequalities in access to opportunities, access to and control over resources, participation in decision making and political process?
4. Do cultural norms about "acceptable" behavior for disabled men limit their knowledge and positive involvement in the Liberian society?
5. Do perceived differences in disabled men's and women's knowledge, decision-making processes, and behaviors influence how society see and behave towards them?
6. Do disabled boys/men and girls/women have access to education, employment, goods, services, health, resources? How does this affect disabled men's and women's vulnerability to stigma and poverty?
7. Do inequalities in disabled men's and women's access to household income create differences in vulnerability to poverty and their ability to access basic services?
8. Are there different obstacles that disabled men and women face when seeking access to opportunities, resources, participation in decision making and political processes in rural areas?
9. Do disabled women's and men's differential access to productive resources and land rights affect their ability to cope with the adverse effects of poverty?

### **How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?**

1. Will promoting disabled men's participation in the project undermine or support women's empowerment and autonomy?
2. How have similar projects in the past affected gender dynamics within the household and community?
3. Will disabled women's expanded knowledge in advocacy, livelihood and skill trainings intensify their gender gap? Will disabled men's participate in advocacy, livelihood and technical skill training affect intensify gender gap in access to project services?
4. Will income-generating activities for disabled women impact the household's power dynamics and allocation of resources? Could there be any unintended negative consequences?