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GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ANALYSIS

Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water in Liberia Activity

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GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ANALYSIS

IMPROVED ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER IN LIBERIA ACTIVITY

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ACRONYMS

CHA	Community Health Assistants
CWC	Community WASH Committees
CWT	County WASH Team
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
GESI	Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion
KII	Key informant interviews
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
LGI	Local Government Institutions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RNCHSP	Revised National Community Health Services Policy
SBC	Social and Behavioral Change
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2012, the world halved the proportion of people without access to improved water sources, meeting the water component of Millennium Development Goal target 7. However, this fact hides the inequities that persist in water service access. Water security risks disproportionately affect women and other marginalized populations. Without safely managed water services, women and girls are vulnerable to abuse, attack, and poor health, affecting their ability to study, work and live in dignity. Improvements to access to water service can yield significant dividends to gender equity. Women and girls must be central in designing and implementing solutions for gender-responsive services.

This is especially true in Liberia. Despite abundant water resources, many communities in Liberia lack access to safe drinking water. Two devastating civil wars have decimated water infrastructure. In the wake of the 2014 Ebola outbreak, access to safe water needs to be elevated more than ever. Since these crises, the water resources management sector has significantly developed, with nearly 80% of Liberians now having access to a reliable source of clean water. However, there is still much room for improvement.¹

The goal of the Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water in Liberia Activity is to move Liberians in Montserrado and Margibi Counties to a basic level of water services by strengthening water sector governance, creating scalable models for equitable water service delivery, and mobilizing collaborative action to implement a vision where all Liberian access, use, and demand safe drinking water services. To comply with USAID ADS 205 and Liberia's Women Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018, the Activity aims to promote equitable water service delivery in the target counties of Montserrado and Margibi. A deeper understanding of how gender dynamics influence access, control, and ownership of water resources in target rural areas is critical to ensure a gender-responsive intervention.

As part of the project's approach to address gender- and social inclusion-specific challenges in water service delivery, the project conducted a gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) analysis. The analysis examines gender roles, power dynamics, and key issues related to the challenges and opportunities for women and other marginalized groups, in particular regarding access, use, and demand for safe drinking water services and participation in water sector governance. Moreover, the analysis also focuses on the system-level support, gaps, opportunities, and challenges for equitable water service delivery in a devolved governance structure.

The GESI analysis will help operationalize the project's commitment to gender equity, promote broad-based inclusion and participation, and advance empowerment opportunities. It highlights opportunities for integrating gender and social inclusion into relevant activities. The report identifies and analyses unequal power relations between genders and the link to unequal access to resources and opportunities.

The key findings are as follows:

The Government of Liberia has made considerable efforts to improve the realization of women's and girls' rights and advance gender equality. However, several structural barriers still hinder women's participation in public life and activities, and prevent them from reaching their full potential.

¹ Joint Monitoring Program, WHO-UNICEF, <https://washdata.org/data/household#!/lbr>

Laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices: While Liberia has national policies to deliver water services and existing standards for governing water service regulations, those policies are not gender inclusive, operationalized, or monitored. Although women's involvement in water service management is recognized at the community level, national and local policies insufficiently support this.

Cultural Norms and Beliefs: Liberia has deeply rooted traditional gender norms that shape the dynamics of social power relations and the larger structures of power in politics, economy, and religion, affecting the everyday lives of women and girls. Most rural communities believe that women are the primary users of water, but wealth and education are among the factors preventing women from being empowered as decision-makers in managing the water system.

Gender roles, responsibilities, and time use: The hours women spend on domestic and care work leave them with little personal time, negatively affecting their health and quality of life. Gender disparities in water management, responsibilities, and decision-making have been a focus of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the water sector in rural Montserrado and Margibi. However, gender mainstreaming remains difficult because women may be unwilling to play leadership roles.

Access to and control over assets and resources: Factors like gender norms that marginalize women's voices limit access and control over resources and assets. Gender-blind services are not tailored to the needs of women, disproportionately affecting women. Access to, and decisions over, household finances and agricultural resources favor men over women, although opportunities exist.

Patterns of power and decision-making: Findings show that women and children are the most susceptible to vulnerability and barriers to accessing safe water services. Water scarcity makes life more challenging for women and girls because they typically handle home duties, water collection, and family care. Women and girls are generally responsible for water at the household level, while more men take over water services management at the community level.

Increased risks of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV): Children and women are disproportionately affected by poor access to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services, and may experience increased health risks and SGBV. The topic is rarely acknowledged or recognized by men and water service providers, including development practitioners, due to a lack of awareness and taboos around SGBV. As a result, these considerations are not included in policies, bylaws, and feedback mechanisms, with little information on the scale of the issue.

Key recommendations: The Activity should adhere to some overarching best practices in project implementation. Gender mapping is a key starting point for designing gender-responsive interventions. The project activities should go beyond involving women and girls as beneficiaries of water services by recognizing that women play a critical role as consumers, influencers, household deciders, and keepers of traditional knowledge. The project must take the time to understand their preferences, needs, challenges, and experiences. Underlying gender inequality is power inequality that needs to be challenged and addressed. A community-first and system-strengthening approach will promote gender integration in water service delivery. The project must engage men as agents of change in ending violence and discrimination against women and girls in the water sector. Partnering with men as allies to establish positive gender attitudes is key to changing a culture that has historically reinforced SGBV. This will need to be considered in the formative research design to ensure that more data are collected to understand the more effective ways to get men at the community level involved in addressing the SGBV gaps in the water sector.

The study identifies two key areas of system change: discriminatory social norms, customs, values, and exclusionary practices (non-formal) and laws, policies, procedures, and services (formal).

- **Local government institutions (LGI) effectively plan, budget, and oversee water service delivery:** to achieve this objective of the project, stakeholder consultations should promote meaningful representation of diverse voices. The project can address policy barriers that result in inequitable water access through policy analysis with a GESI lens, work with national governments, and support citizen action centered on women's needs and experiences with water service. The sub-national water service delivery framework should reflect the priorities and concerns of women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- **Equitable and inclusive water service delivery improved and expanded:** a landscape analysis of existing community-managed water service delivery models and gaps in provision should reflect GESI-specific needs and priorities. Additionally, the project should identify specific incentives that would benefit poor and marginalized households, expand water services, and define preferential, inclusive access. Finally, support for social mobilization to lift barriers to women's participation in water resource planning, management, and governance will be critical.
- **Uptake and maintenance of key water use behaviors among households increased:** The project should disaggregate formative research on water use behaviors to better understand the differences and opportunities around existing social norms. Diverse stakeholder consultations can validate findings and recommend social and behavioral change (SBC) strategies. Innovative methods to encourage positive SBC can leverage women and youth as community change agents. Lasting behavioral change cannot be achieved by raising awareness among women and youth alone. It is crucial to work with males to address gender dynamics to change behavior regarding water use and acquire their support. The project will work with men within the community to serve as agents of change, including considerations of SGBV in bylaws regulating access to water services, and adequate consultation of both women and men in the siting and design of facilities. The Behavior Centered Design should maximize women, men, and youth participation at every implementation stage.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Geographically, Liberia is situated in the center of the Upper Guinea Rainforest Region along the West Coast of Africa. According to a recent gender study by the United Nations (UN) Women in 2021, Liberia had an estimated population of 5.05 million, 49.7% female and 50.3% male. Liberia comprises of 16 major ethnic groups, and over 20 indigenous languages are commonly used. The country borders Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, and its capital city is Monrovia. Administratively, the country is divided into 15 counties, with Montserrado, Nimba, and Bong having the highest concentration of females—50.8%, 50.2%, and 50.6%, respectively.² Yet, despite Liberia's abundant natural wealth—rich in iron ore, diamonds, gold, fertile soil, fisheries, and forestry—the country is among the world's poorest.

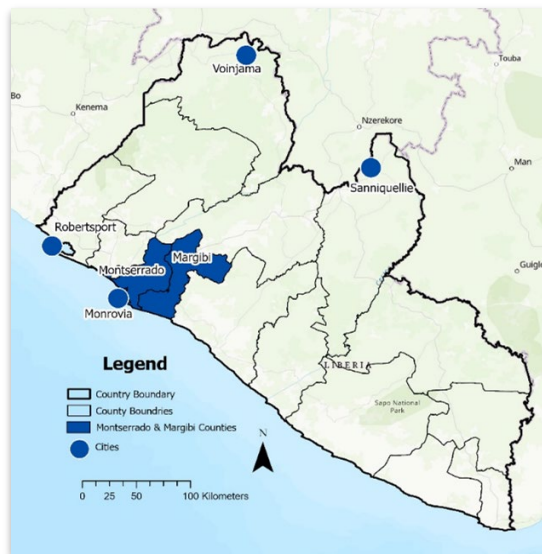


Figure SEQ Figure 1: Map of Liberia showing the target counties

Liberia experienced civil wars between 1989 and 2003. Social and economic inequalities, widespread corruption, and nepotism were the conflicts' main drivers. The first civil war (1989-1997) was one of Africa's most catastrophic conflicts, with more than 200,000 deaths and a million people displaced into refugee camps in neighboring countries. The civil wars suppressed economic activity and destroyed vital infrastructure in Liberia, including electricity lines, roads, water and sewage systems, and education centers.³

Women and girls suffered the worst consequences from the 14 years of wars and subsequent economic crises. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that during the civil war, 82 percent of the female population was subjected to multiple forms of violence, while 77 percent experienced sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The high incidences of sexual violence did not decrease after the end of the conflict, and abuse rates remain critically high while also affecting women's participation in the labor market to this day. During the early stages of post-war reconstruction, men often refused to leave their homes, fearing being mistaken for rebels of a different faction—and thus face reprisals. This increased women's burdens and vulnerability as they had to brave war zones in search of food and water.⁴ When the question is posed to most people (including those interviewed for this study) of what the link between gender, poverty, and water is, they will often cite the role of women in collecting water. This focus on domestic water supply is only one piece of a much bigger puzzle linking gender and water to natural disasters, food security, and even child marriage. Water collection labor needs to be considered from a gender- and child- perspective for many reasons. First, women and children are responsible for

² Letouze, Emmanuel; Spinardi, Anna Carolina; Ortiz, Sara; et al. (2021) "Liberia Country Gender Equality Profile: August 2021", UN Women, <https://datapopalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Report-UNW-liberia.pdf>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

water collection in many Sub-Saharan African countries. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa must leave their home to collect water, putting them at risk for various negative health outcomes. There is little research, however, quantifying who is most affected by long water collection times. The burden of water collection for women is particularly acute in Sub-Saharan Africa and rural Asia. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women bear the main responsibility for fetching water in 62% of households, compared to men (23%), girls (9%), and boys (6%). As a result of the time spent finding and carrying water (sometimes hours each day), women and girls have less time to improve their lives through education, work, and leisure.

Time spent collecting water has remained largely unaddressed and unexamined as part of global targets in improving access to water. Time spent collecting water has a variety of potential negative health impacts, especially for women and children. Over two-thirds of the population in sub-Saharan Africa report leaving their homes to collect water. Many rural water systems are often non-functional, exacerbating the difficulty of water collection and augmenting health problems. According to the research conducted by Graham et al. (2016), adult females were the primary collectors of water, specifically 46% in Liberia, across their data collection sample, closely followed by children (38%). This situation is even exacerbated in rural areas (66% of primary collectors are adult females, 24% children). While not the highest in West Africa, which according to this study was Cote d'Ivoire with 96% of water collectors being female, factors such as distance to water points, collection time, and gendered responsibilities are all issues that impact the landscape of water security. The literature and experience from multiple organizations working in water resources management in Liberia all support that addressing the provision of water sources in proximity to households have a high likelihood of responding to the challenges associated with water collection for uses that would improve domestic and personal hygiene.

However, it is essential not to limit the discussion of water and gender to the home sphere. Reducing time burdens associated with water collection shouldn't be the only goal; we should be aiming for women's inclusion in every aspect of water management. Looking beyond water for drinking, cooking, and washing, we see that women play a crucial but often unrecognized role in managing water for livelihoods and food security. In Liberia, over 33% of rural households are headed by women, according to the World Bank⁵. Women count for 46% of the agricultural labor force⁶. However, women are often marginalized from decision-making and lack access to land rights, credit, and agricultural extension services. Without access to technologies like pumps, or decision-making over how irrigation water is allocated, women cannot control water to increase agricultural productivity.

It is rare for conflict to develop entirely based on the lack of water resources. However, water insecurity can be a destabilizing risk factor for post-conflict countries with weaker institutions when compounded with existing and underlining problems. The factors affecting water availability in conflict and conflict-affected situations have a more significant impact on women because of social, economic, and political gender imbalances. Liberia is a conflict-affected West African country still facing immense water challenges from the ruins of the 14-year intermittent civil wars, heightened by the 2014 Ebola and 2020 COVID-19 epidemics. Women were instrumental in helping end Liberia's 14-year civil war yet have since been largely excluded from peace and

⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.HOU.FEMA.ZS?locations=LR>, accessed January 26, 2023

⁶ Letouze, Emmanuel; Spinardi, Anna Carolina; Ortiz, Sara; et al. (2021) "Liberia Country Gender Equality Profile: August 2021", UN Women, <https://datapopalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Report-UNW-liberia.pdf>

security efforts. Liberia’s water insecurity and land disputes are destabilizing risk factors and disproportionately impact women.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The GESI analysis consists of a systematic review of existing secondary data combined with primary data collection through key informant interviews (KII). Annex I provides the list of the literature consulted, while the list of KIIs interviewed is reflected in Annex II.

The research team consisted of the Senior GESI Adviser in the Winrock Home Office, with support from Abraham Clay, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Director. They conducted the GESI analysis from December 2022 – January 2023. The team adopted a mixed methods approach in gathering data on the existing situation related to GESI, observed gaps, and opportunities within a limited target sample.

Beginning with a review of the literature allowed the team to understand existing secondary data and gaps to be filled from primary sources. Before the primary data collection phase, the team carried out a literature review of key GESI considerations in Liberia. The desk review examined policy documents and reports from existing activities and projects to provide the background and framework for existing and recent efforts relevant to the strategic planning of the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy. This offered background context and insights that helped the team prepare for key informant interviews.

The team also included a review of all program documents to review GESI issues that served as a foundation to identify gaps in programming that could be GESI transformative.

Limitations: Sex-disaggregated data on women and water infrastructure is scarce and mostly outdated. The Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2019-2020 provides some reliable and updated indicators, primarily at the household level. At the macro level, there is a significant gap in information on women’s employment or participation in the water supply sector, their levels of representation in decision-making processes, and the design of concrete policies to advance women’s inclusion in the sector. Moreover, information on access and use of different facilities (roads, transportation, and public spaces) is also lacking, which is crucial to design more valuable gender-inclusive policies within this sector.

Furthermore, given resource constraints on the team, limited time, and limited number of staff in Liberia during start-up, and not yet having the project’s GESI Specialist onboarded, small group interviews and focus group discussions were not included in this methodology. More KIIs may have been useful, in particular with more women and representatives of marginalized groups. It is strongly recommended to carry out further semi-structured interviews with women and other groups within the target counties during the first year of implementation.

In Liberia, homosexuality is classified as a sexual offense under the Penal Code. Homosexuality is not accepted, and LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex) people suffer persecution, stigmatization, harassment, and violence.⁷ Given this background and very limited data regarding the LGBTQI+ community, the present GESI analysis has not included it in its considerations.

⁷ Ibid.

The GESI analysis is mostly focused on gender. It lacks data related to other marginalized groups that could be of interest to the project, such as people living with disabilities, youth, indigenous or ethnic groups, or migrant populations that could be relevant to the counties. This information did not appear in interviews with key informants and may require complementary research.

4.0 FINDINGS ACROSS USAID ADS 205 GENDER ANALYSIS DOMAINS

GESI analysis is a subset of socio-economic analysis. It is a social science tool used to identify, understand, and explain gaps between males and females in households, communities, and countries. It is also used to identify the relevance of gender norms and power relations in a specific context (e.g., country, geographic, cultural, institutional, economic, etc.). Such analysis typically involves examining:

- Differences in the status of women and men and their differential access to assets, resources, opportunities, and services;
- The influence of gender roles and norms on the division of time between paid employment, unpaid work (including subsistence production and care for family members), and volunteer activities;
- The influence of gender roles and norms on leadership roles and decision-making; constraints, opportunities, and entry points for narrowing gender gaps and empowering females; and
- Potential differential impacts of development policies and programs on males and females, including unintended or negative consequences.

There are different gender and social inclusion analysis frameworks, and a single framework has not been adopted as the standard USAID approach. Nevertheless, most GESI analysis frameworks involve collecting quantitative and qualitative information on similar issues, known as “domains” for GESI analysis at USAID. Findings gathered through primary and secondary data collection are described in detail below.

4.1 LAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

Recent democratic governments in Liberia have made considerable efforts to improve the realization of women's and girls' rights and advance gender equality. President George Weah's administration has shown commitment toward this goal by launching the five-year Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including the gender-specific targets identified therein. However, due to the country's long history of discrimination against women, several structural barriers still hinder women from reaching their full potential and impede their participation in all spheres of public life and activities. The Government of Liberia recognizes that to support rapid economic recovery, reconstruction, and development within the country, there is a critical link to improving water services for all citizens.

While Liberia has national policies in place to deliver water services and existing standards for governing the regulatory aspect of water services in Liberia, those policies and regulations are not gender inclusive, are not operationalized, and are not monitored. This is due to limited resources and a lack of coordination between national and county-level government institutions. Participants from the KIIs believe that LGIs have a limited understanding of the challenges and opportunities that water users face, and there are no strategies to remove their barriers to access and use of safe water services. The lack of policy and regulation implementation has resulted in poor service management and maintenance. LGIs that participated in the KIIs believe that the government needs to fund strategic plans for implementing these policies and regulations at the national level. Water laws and regulations must be enforced as there are competing users for water. This is especially important in a country evolving from conflict; water that used to be accessed by simply digging or drilling a well anywhere needs to be accounted for and equitably distributed to mitigate against conflict and support development. The importance of involving women in the management of water service has been recognized at the community level, and this needs to be reflected in national and local policies and bylaws to ensure that woman has the legal support to manage community water system within their community and are to be encouraged.

One of the challenges cited during the key informant interviews was the limited number of women holding government positions within the community, regional and national levels working on water security issues. As an example, a recent study of the Liberian National Community Health Assistant Program (implemented under the 2016-2021 Revised National Community Health Services Policy (RNCHSP)) showed a critical gender imbalance, with only 17% female Community Health Assistants (CHA).⁸ This study was designed to assess the gender

Water users are effective managers of the water system

“Our community borehole used to be managed by a man, and at that time, we used to experience a lot of problems with the borehole because he was too busy to manage it, which led to consistent breakdowns. The community later agreed to hand over the borehole management to the woman leader, and this handover aided in the improvement of consistency in the community's water system.” – Women Representative – Morris Farm, Todee District, Montserrado.

⁸ Sali Hafez, Bob Mwiinga Munyati, Katie Zeno, Catherine K Z Gbozee, Mbalu Jusu, Mantue S Reeves, C Sanford Wesseh, S Olsford Wiah, Mohammed AlKhalidi, Kristin Johnson, Marion Subah, Examining the gender imbalance in the National

responsiveness of the RNCHSP and its program implementation in five counties across Liberia to identify opportunities to improve gender equity in the program. It found that despite the Government of Liberia's intention to prioritize women in the recruitment and selection of CHAs, the planning and implementation of the RNCHSP were not gender responsive. Part of the challenges came from the role of community structures, such as Community Health Committees, in the nomination and selection of CHAs: while central to community ownership of the program, unfavorable gender norms hindered women's nomination to become CHAs. Cultural, social and religious perceptions and practices of gender created inequitable expectations that negatively influenced the recruitment of women CHAs. Another factor was the education requirement that posed a significant barrier to women's selection as CHAs, due to disparities in access to education for girls in Liberia. The inequitable gender balance of CHAs has impacted the accessibility, acceptability, and affordability of community healthcare services, particularly among women. It shows the challenges to implementing recognized institutional practices in the context of gender-biases cultural norms.

Gender Integration in planning and budgeting for Water Service Delivery in a decentralized Governance System

In spite of the Liberia Decentralization Act of 2018 recognition that the development planning processes shall be participatory, gender-sensitive, and inclusive of all citizens, residents, minorities, and marginalized communities under Chap 5 Sub Section 2(a), lack of political will, low awareness on gender-responsive budgeting amidst limited resources and limitations in generating and utilizing data for gender equality are some of the core factors that hamper policy implementation at the sub-national level. For example, budget allocation to gender departments and gender institutional strengthening and activities, are critical indicators of the county's commitment and prioritization of gender mainstreaming. There is a gender focal point—an employee of the Ministry of Gender at the county level—but without budgetary allocation, it will be difficult for any meaningful county-level gender mainstreaming interventions to take place. Institutional strengthening initiatives will need to work with the two target counties to develop and strengthen Gender Responsive Budgeting to ensure sustainable gender equity actions and transformative processes. Another important action will be engaging in Gender Advocacy to ensure gender mainstreaming and inclusion are prioritized in Montserrado and Margibi counties. The legislative caucus for water is an important entry point for advocacy for increased gender-based budgeting. There is also a need to strengthen gender data generation, assessment, reporting, and utilization. Challenges with gender statistics in Liberia include lack of data or limited data; limited disaggregated data; lack of metadata; lack of timely data; underutilization of data; data not consistently aligned to other data sources. Gender statistics can be used for advocacy and can provide the water sector actors with useful information to consider as they design water service delivery models.

Community Health Assistant Programme in Liberia: a qualitative analysis of policy and Programme implementation, *Health Policy and Planning*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czac075>

4.2 CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS

Liberia has traditional gender norms deeply rooted in the dynamics of social power relations. These norms are also connected to the larger structures of power in politics, economy, and religion, affecting the everyday lives of women and girls in numerous ways. During the primary data collection, rural male participants from the community stated that water use should be free and not be sold or bought. However, for the sustainability of the water system, female participants believed that collecting a small fee could keep the water system functional. Findings from the study show that male residents of Morris Farm in Todee District, Montserrado, were allowed to collect water from the water point without paying, with the understanding that their level of water consumption was low. Meanwhile, the female residents were responsible for paying to access the water system monthly.

God gave us water as a gift.

“Water is a gift from God, and if it must be provided free of charge, I agree that we must continue to save money so that it can be used for water system maintenance.” – Assistant Town Chief – Morris Farm, Todee District, Montserrado.

Most rural communities believe that women are the primary users of water, but they are not given the opportunity to lead decision-making regarding water system management. The study findings show that wealth and education gaps are critical factors affecting women’s involvement in water system management, as more men are financially secure and better educated than women within rural communities.

More generally, wealth and education gaps are also critical factors, as the median age for first marriage decreases with lower economic status and educational trajectory. This leads to a scenario in which girls and women’s lives are profoundly affected by the cultural norms that dictate their role in society. These norms also affect children and the relationship between spouses, as it is believed that it is the responsibility of women and children to access water for household use. Religion (predominantly Christianity) plays an important role in forming these cultural norms in Liberia, influencing the structure and type of relationships women have within their families and communities regarding water access and use. The notion that men are naturally more powerful than women, should be the breadwinners, and their wives should be responsible for household work has kept more women economically dependent on their husbands in the rural communities visited. Historically, indigenous communities of pre-war Liberia followed patrilocal types of marriage in which women could only access land and resources by inheriting from their husbands. The Americo-settler society also held very traditional ideas of gender roles.

Child marriage is a practice deeply rooted in traditional norms. Even though advances have been made due to political will and campaigns, it still affects Liberian girls throughout the country, especially in rural areas. In fact, according to Girls Not Brides, Liberia has the 20th highest prevalence of child marriage globally. Specifically, 36 percent of girls in Liberia are married before their 18th birthday, and 9 percent are married before the age of 15. By comparison, 5 percent of boys in Liberia are married before 18. Traditional gender norms play an important role in upholding child marriage, a major subject of gender-related inequality. In Liberia, child marriage is mostly mainly practiced by tribal groups. However, this tradition has become increasingly more common in other communities. Since the country’s economic downturn, some low-income families have resorted to marrying off their daughters as early as possible to ensure the provision of daily meals for their children.

4.3 GENDER ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USE

The number of hours women spend on domestic and care work leaves them with little personal time, negatively affecting their health and quality of life. In this regard, the demand for better facilities ranges from mobility to working conditions inside and outside the home. Research has found that deficiencies in access to public infrastructure and mobility services negatively affect women’s availability and care-related responsibilities. This situation reduces women’s ability to devote more time to market activities. Therefore, better infrastructure would reduce the gender gap in labor participation.

The health of women and their children, both during and after pregnancy, depends on having access to clean water. It can be risky for pregnant women to walk to collect water and handle large water containers. Also, drinking contaminated water can harm a mother’s and her children’s health. Women want safe water at home for various reasons, from preserving a healthy pregnancy to feeding a newborn. Due to their responsibility for providing water for their families, women often have to wait in lines, travel distances to gather water, or pay a fee to obtain water for their families. As confirmed by interviews, men may provide little or no assistance with household water collection. However, they use water that women have collected for personal use. The number of hours women spend on household domestic and care work leaves them with little to no personal time, negatively affecting their health and quality of life. While gender disparities in water management, responsibilities, and decision-making have been a focus of NGOs working in the water sector in rural Montserrado and Margibi, achieving gender mainstreaming in the community remains difficult. This challenge stems from many females being unwilling to play leadership roles due to the increased work on top of existing household work, and rural husbands not wanting to see their wives involved in public events.

Time, a hidden cost

“When water needs arise in the home, our women and children are the ones who pay with their time.” – CWC Member – Zinc Camp Community, Todee District, Montserrado.

Primarily, women contribute to the agricultural sector’s workforce through food crop production, marketing and trading, and agricultural labor. Women are mainly responsible for planting, weeding, and harvesting food, while men care for the brushing, feeling, clearing, and fencing. However, women have the additional responsibility of cooking, fetching water, and other domestic chores that constrain the available time required for completing agricultural work tasks, which in turn lowers their productivity and can ultimately affect their food security and their children’s food security. Additionally, 79 percent of women working in agriculture are self-employed, 17.3 percent are employed by a family member, and only 3.7 percent are employed by a non-family member. Women employed in agriculture have a higher percentage of being employed either by a family member or being self-employed (96.3 percent) than women in nonagricultural work (87 percent). According to the International Labor Organization, being self-employed or employed by a family member increases economic instability and leads to a “vulnerable employment” position. Another factor contributing to employment vulnerability is the lack of proper payments. More than half (56.8 percent) of women employed in agriculture are not paid for their work, a percentage much higher than those employed in nonagricultural work (16.8 percent).⁹

⁹ Letouze, Emmanuel; Spinardi, Anna Carolina; Ortiz, Sara; et al. (2021) “Liberia Country Gender Equality Profile: August 2021”, UN Women, <https://datapopalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Report-UNW-liberia.pdf>

4.4 ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER ASSETS AND RESOURCES

UN-Habitat published a paper in 2020 that assesses the state of urban policy in Liberia, with a diagnosis that basic infrastructure and services are inadequate and there is a lack of sustained economic opportunities.¹⁰ According to the document, by 2020, the SDG of providing safe, affordable, and sustainable access to transport systems, safe roads, and means of transport to vulnerable sectors such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities has not been met. Furthermore, the urban agenda lacks a gender perspective in its objectives and plans. Additionally, it does not consider women's participation a necessary element in its planning and implementation.

Access to public infrastructure and facilities has been shown to positively impact women and their households. Access to essential services supports their upward social mobility and reduces the gender gap. However, Liberia's infrastructure is in critical condition following the civil conflicts and health crises, which has placed the nation in a difficult situation. Liberia scored 14.53 on the Africa Infrastructure Development Index in 2020, a low score considering the polar extremes in scores: Seychelles scored 96.83 and Somalia 5.53. This complex scenario is burdened by the limited extent to which women are involved in infrastructure planning and the lack of gender-sensitive infrastructure policies at the national level. The nexus between women and public services in Liberia also encompasses involvement in so-called peace infrastructures.

Land ownership in Liberia is rather complicated due to the lack of organization and officiality of land titles and deeds. According to UN Women, it is estimated that less than 20 percent of the total land in the country is registered with a proper title. Of the 16 percent of women and men who own land, 76 percent of women and 78 percent of men do not have a title or deed of ownership. Even though urban men and women are less likely to own land, they are far more likely to have a title or deed (35 percent and 28 percent, respectively) than rural women (4 percent) and rural men (7 percent) who own land. Wealth is also a significant factor in the ownership of titles and deeds. In the highest wealth quintile, 83 percent of women and 52 percent of men who own land possess a deed or title, while for the lowest wealth quintile, only 2 percent of women and 5 percent of men do.¹¹

In 2018, the government developed the Lands Rights Act to respond to inequities in land access and governance that had historically disempowered communities. This act elevated the protection and provision of women's land rights to an equal status as men. Unfortunately, in practice, this act has substantial flaws that, in particular, prevent unmarried young women who move into their partner's community from having land rights. However, customary land rights still prevail largely in Liberian society, as opposed to statutory laws, which contain no specific provisions to protect women from discriminatory practices in the private and domestic spheres. One of these practices relates to the most common ways women acquire land: under family provisions or upon marriage.

¹⁰ Diagnosis Note For Liberia, Implementing The New Urban Agenda Through National Urban Policy, UN-Habitat 2020, https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/03/diagnosis_note_for_liberia_02022021-final_1.pdf

¹¹ Letouze, Emmanuel; Spinardi, Anna Carolina; Ortiz, Sara; et al. (2021) "Liberia Country Gender Equality Profile: August 2021", UN Women, <https://datapopalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Report-UNW-liberia.pdf>

Like other countries forming this region, Liberia is highly vulnerable to climate change because sea levels are expected to continue increasing in the upcoming years. Liberia's coastline hosts about 58 percent of the country's population and livelihoods. The country heavily depends on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries — economic activities frequently affected by environmental shocks. When employing a gender lens, it becomes clear that Liberian women are highly vulnerable to environmental hazards. One of the key challenges of climate variability for women is water stress. Liberian women and girls are primarily responsible for managing household water supplies, sanitation, and health. However, the lack of sex-disaggregated data on water stress and other climate change effects limits further analysis to identify the magnitude of this issue.

Example of Informal Women's Networks in Liberia

Several women's groups have been created to defend women's rights in agricultural and trade issues. The Rural Women Structure, an initiative established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UN Women, and World Food Program (WFP), is an example of groups that seek to articulate rural women farmers' concerns, analyze their accomplishments, and develop strategies to address the challenges they still face. Informal networks are also very important channels women use to trade their agricultural products in urban markets. Despite the challenges they still face related to land ownership, women continue to mobilize through civil society to improve their conditions in the agricultural sector and pressure the government to adopt fairer policies.

Considering that 70 percent of the workforce in Liberia derives a portion of their cash income from an agriculture-related activity, employment rates in this sector are a significant indicator. Over the last few years, women employed in agriculture have slightly decreased: 47.7 percent were employed in agriculture in 2010, down to 45.6 percent by 2020. This decrease in women's participation in agriculture corresponds to the trend of women increasingly transferring to the sales and services sector. A possible reason for this transition in women's employment trends is that women employed in agriculture (57 percent) are more likely than women employed in nonagricultural work (17 percent) not to receive payments. This translates to 74.9 percent of women earning cash payments for nonagricultural work, whereas only 22.6 percent of women working in agriculture earn cash payments.

Furthermore, the civil war and general search for economic opportunities sparked migration waves to urban cities, leading to overcrowding in Liberia's main cities. In conjunction with this migratory trend, there is also additional appeal for women to work in the sales and service sectors. These factors, combined with others, can place enormous stress on water and sanitation systems, with population trends moving towards an uptick in urban centers.

4.5 PATTERNS OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

While Liberian women are becoming more vocal in decision-making processes at the national level, much more limited gains are seen at the local level, with limited involvement of women in community-level decision-making. According to the 2021 study by UN Women¹², husbands have

¹² Ibid.

shown more open-minded attitudes towards their wives in decisions made in the household. Moreover, there has been a broader socialization of the importance of women being present for these decisions. Given that women have claimed additional space in the public sphere because of increased access to education and the opportunity to have their own cash earnings, their bargaining power in the household has also increased. These UN findings are mostly applicable in the urban area in Liberia. According to consulted informants, the gaps between men and women remain in rural areas as women are not motivated to take on leadership roles due to low capacity and cultural norms. Traditional cultural norms continue to limit the power of women as they aspire to become equal partners in household decision-making processes, but the positive trend is an opportunity for change in development projects.

During the civil wars, there was a significant shift in gender roles as women shouldered the responsibilities of being both the breadwinners and heads of households. War unintentionally served as a catalyst for transforming women's roles within the home, community, and even in the market, where women's empowerment initiatives began to thrive. As a result, women seized opportunities to expand their power in the public and private spheres. On a micro level, the trends related to women making personal decisions while married are mixed. Despite the positive trend in which wives are more involved in the domestic decision-making process, cultural norms still limit women's independence in deciding personal matters.

The agency of women and girls is still viewed as dependent on the degree of power offered to them by men and boys. International development partners have adopted an approach to engaging men and boys through dialogue groups to change this notion of women. This approach invites selected male participants to a series of dialogues discussing norms of masculinity, manhood, SGBV, and the broader concept of gender equality. By participating in these dialogue groups, men are encouraged to reflect on rigid gender norms and examine their personal beliefs and traditional ideas about household decision-making and the division of labor. They are also encouraged to support their wives' participation in decision-making and economic empowerment groups and ultimately treat them with greater respect.

While findings show that women and children are the most susceptible to vulnerability and barriers to accessing safe water services across communities, water scarcity makes life considerably tougher for them because they typically handle home duties, water collection, and family care. Women and girls are generally responsible for providing, managing, and using water at the household level, while more men take over water service management at the community level.

According to the DHS 2019-2020, of women who are currently married and have cash earnings, 26 percent reported that they decide how their personal earnings are used, 63 percent make decisions jointly with their husbands, and only 11 percent defer decision-making to their husbands. The difference between men and women who make decisions alone or jointly is slightly more in favor of men. At the household level, the difference between men and women who make decisions alone or jointly is slightly more in favor of men. Approximately 28 percent of married men between 15-49 reported making decisions independently for their personal earnings, whereas 57 percent reported making these decisions with their wives. What proves most interesting is that there has been an increase from 76 percent in 2007 to 89 percent in 2019 in the percentage of women with cash earnings who decide on how to use their personal earnings either independently or with their husbands. This is particularly important for the project's context; research suggests a positive correlation with a significant increase in women having more say in how the money they earn is spent. Since Liberia exhibits a culture in which men have traditionally managed decision-

making in their communities and households, this increase shows an improvement in how women's decision-making powers are conceived within a marriage. Furthermore, this improvement applies to women from all wealth and education categories, where at least 8 out of 10 women participate in making decisions about their personal earnings.

KIIs participants believe that to fight against poverty successfully, women must access economic opportunities and secure cash earnings, which empowers them to make decisions on their own earnings.

Gender-based violence continues to be one of Liberia's most widespread forms of abuse and inequality. Violence is also intertwined with deeply entrenched traditional gender norms, reinforcing female genital mutilation as a common practice among some ethnic groups in the country. Almost half of the female population between 15 - 49 years old have experienced physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner at some point in their lives. The legacy of this type of violence is primarily attributed to the context of the civil war, in which combatant groups committed violence against women. Twenty years have passed since the last civil war, and various stakeholders (government, international organizations, civil society, and women's groups) continue to create strategies and allocate efforts to fight this long-lasting problem. However, SGBV remains one of the major issues reinforcing gender inequality in Liberia. Poor access to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services disproportionately affects children and women. Research and anecdotal evidence throughout Africa and Liberia show that women are more likely to experience gender-based violence when they do not have adequate and safe WASH services¹³. Women who must leave their homes searching for water are at risk of various SGBV issues, including assaults during travel and "sextortion" (sexual extortion) when interacting with male water operators¹⁴. At home, women who fail to collect sufficient water for the household's needs may fall victims of domestic violence or sacrifice their own water and hygiene needs to avoid repercussions, further jeopardizing their health. Lack of safe access to sanitation also exacerbates the risks of SGBV.

Women's involvement in public infrastructure design is an important challenge in infrastructure and public infrastructure. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development states that public infrastructure is often designed and managed mainly by male engineers and planners who may not be fully aware of women's needs in low-income areas. In this sense, programs such as the City Development Strategy successfully illustrate how women's inclusion is essential to identify specific sectors' and communities' needs effectively. The program, which focused on providing water and sanitation to informal communities, prioritized women's voices in assessing current infrastructure and addressing existing deficiencies. Regarding specific needs in rural environments, investment in mobility infrastructure may help women increase their incomes, since it ensures access to markets where they can sell their products and establish workplaces.

¹³ Sommer, M., Ferron, S., Cavill, S., & House, S. (2015). Violence, gender and WASH: spurring action on a complex, under-documented and sensitive topic. *Environment and Urbanization*, 27(1), 105–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247814564528>

¹⁴ UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility (2017). Women and corruption in the water sector: Theories and experiences from Johannesburg and Bogotá. WGF Report No. 8. Stockholm: SIWI https://siwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/wgf-report-no-8_final-web-edited.pdf

4.6 CONSIDERATIONS ON WATER SUPPLY AND GENDER IN MARGIBI AND MONTSERRADO COUNTIES

During interviews, LGIs representatives believed that there are already policies in place to govern the water sector within the county, but the political will is not there to implement these policies. They also stated that there is a greater need for laws to guide water management at the community level and to build the capacity of community members to serve in Community WASH Committees (CWCs) for effective water management at the community level.

The KIIs confirmed that men are more knowledgeable on repair and equipment management in and out of the household. This has led them to take over water system management, leaving women with little or no decision-making power over water system operation and management. One of the significant gaps that have affected the poor quality and management of the water system is that most men who accept the role of managing and repairing the water system migrate to urban areas for improved livelihoods without leaving anyone to replace them.

Education gaps between men and women in the community have also contributed to women avoiding leadership roles due to low capacity and public facilities management skills. Findings also show that people with disabilities are not allowed to serve within the community due to being physically challenged, and the community members' perception is that they will not be able to manage the water system effectively.

According to the findings, most men within the communities do not believe that women should have the upper hand in leadership. Their idea is that women have a lot of responsibility at home and will not have time to serve in a leadership role. However, some community members support women being more involved in the operation and maintenance of water systems.

Women are urged to acquire repair skills for the water system.

“Sometimes, NGOs come and train one or two men in our community on how to repair the water system if there are problems. These men who got training left the community and relocated to another community in search of their livelihood. As a result, the water system gets damaged, and there is nobody to help with the repair. Since women are always available in the community, we have started encouraging them to learn how to repair the water system in the absence of the men.” – CWC Member – Zinc Camp Community, Todee District, Montserrado.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The project aims to move Liberians in Montserrado and Margibi Counties to a basic level of water services by strengthening water sector governance, creating scalable models for equitable water service delivery, and promoting and adopting key water use behaviors among the target households.

The Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water Activity in Liberia will collaborate with Liberian government institutions at the national, county, and local levels to implement a vision where all Liberians access, use, and demand safe, sustainable water services. The project will also collaborate with the private sector and civil society to address challenges preventing Liberia from achieving its goal of providing sustainable water for all.

The project has **three key objectives**:

- Local government institutions effectively plan, budget, and oversee water service delivery.
- Equitable and inclusive water service delivery improved and expanded.
- Uptake and maintenance of key water use behaviors among households increased.

The project's approach is to work with water sector actors to understand the complex dynamics impacting Liberia's water service delivery – and must dedicate specific attention to how women, youth, and other marginalized groups are affected within the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector. One facet of the project's approach is to prioritize the participation of women, youth, and other marginalized groups in water access and management decision-making, particularly at the local level, to remove barriers to safe water habits. The Activity will also support counties, districts, and communities to develop customized plans that increase social accountability, empower stakeholders, and work jointly with stakeholders to analyze data and find ways to adapt our successes and bring them to scale. Similarly, the customized plans will be community-led and reflect each community's unique circumstances and needs.

The project should adhere to some overarching best practices in the context of project implementation. These recommendations will support the increased participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes. They should specifically insist on addressing risks on health and sexual violence for women and children.

- **Conduct a GESI mapping to replicate other projects' success.** As an example, Cities Alliance, in partnership with the Federation of Liberian Urban Poor Savers, conducted gender mapping in the three communities of Clara Town, Doe Community, and Pipeline Community to investigate women's situation within their communities and the level of safety of public spaces. A series of gender mapping workshops, safety audit checklists, and community walks have been conducted through women's engagement. The participants answered questions such as: What neighborhood space do you use? Where do you go shopping? and Where do you feel unsafe? The gender mapping process provided input for designing and constructing water kiosks and improving public spaces. The GESI mapping should better understand how men can be used as agents of change by raising awareness of GBV issues within the community.
- **Activities should account for women and girls as more than just beneficiaries of water services and engage men as agents of change.** Women and girls are consumers, customers, influencers, professionals, household deciders, and keepers of traditional knowledge and solutions. Water activities that empower women to be change agents have

multiple benefits. Consider that women within communities are more than beneficiaries of water programming. They are also change agents, leaders, and professional members of the WASH workforce. However, men will also need to be engaged as they could be the perpetrators of domestic or sexual violence in the water sector, and they are essential as allies and protectors for women. When faced with risks men have never faced before, it engenders realizations that were previously not discussed or taboo, creating an enabling environment to address the root causes of violence.

- **By working to change discriminatory legal, social, and cultural norms, activities can enable women and girls to become water change agents.** Women and girls can become key actors in making water services more sustainable by reducing barriers to receiving water services, training, jobs, promotions, and leadership opportunities in their households, communities, and workplaces. This requires both community-level and policy change. A specific focus of GESI consideration in policy and bylaws should systematically address and monitor SGBV risks.
- **Participatory approaches are key.** Gender-related barriers to WASH vary widely by geographic, religious, legal, and cultural context, and whether multiple layers of vulnerability—such as disability or extreme poverty—exist. Programs must take the time to understand the preferences, needs, and experiences of women and girls and the specific barriers they face. The economic, health, educational, environmental, and social benefits of women’s water empowerment must be prioritized. Women will also gain access to platforms, support groups, and referral systems where they can more easily report and address SGBV concerns.
- **Integrate gender considerations into training modules,** rather than having a stand-alone module, to further promote exposure to gender issues in the context of technical capacity building. SGBV topics need to be covered in these trainings to raise awareness on the scale of the issue, in particular for men, and open honest conversations about how to best address causes.
- **Engage community leaders and other influential community members** to raise awareness of the importance of addressing GESI considerations in water management, and consider prevention and reporting of SGBV issues.
- **Consider the location, timing, and structure of meetings** as they may need to adapt to facilitate women’s participation, by considering gendered household chores (ex. taking care of children), health and specific female needs (ex. increased breaks with dignified and sex segregated toilets respectful of menstruation needs), and SGBV risks (ex. distance, overnight travel).

Support men to respect women for better leadership

Mr. Peter TogKpa, from MPW (Montserrat County WASH Coordinator), stated that some work was done by WaterAid to promote men to respect women and provide them the opportunity to serve in water management within their community. This type of gender-enabling work should be promoted as good practice for the project.

Objective 1: Local government institutions effectively plan, budget, and oversee water service delivery.

To address gaps and mitigate barriers to women’s equality in national and local government WASH policies, the following ideas are strongly recommended to integrate into proposed activities:

- Ensure that stakeholder consultations with LGIs, national government, and other actors ensure meaningful representation of women, youth, and marginalized groups to reflect diverse voices. The project technical team should strive to engage persons with disabilities (as well as organizations representing the interests of persons with disabilities) in important conversations around county-level water service delivery. Gender-related grievances related to the water sector should be captured using the project feedback system, which needs to be designed so it is accessible and actively seeks inputs from women, youth, and marginalized groups.
- Review existing policy analysis reports with a GESI lens. Research existing assessments to understand the full scope of legal, policy, or regulatory barriers that result in unequal access to water between women, men, boys, and girls.
- Work with national governments to resolve policy-related barriers to women’s and girls’ access to water services.
- Support social mobilization to increase the participation of women and girls in building accountability for inclusive water policies.
- Elevate women’s voices in policy-making discussions by supporting women’s organizations and facilitating other types of citizen action centered on women’s needs and experiences with water service.
- Provide technical support to the government to improve their regulatory regimes or enforcement of laws, policies, standards, and regulations that contribute to equal access to water service.
- Mentor and train women to assume leadership roles in the planning and management of water resources.
- Ensure the sub-national water service delivery framework reflects the priorities and concerns of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in target communities.
- Workshops and meetings that exchange findings on water service delivery should be explicit in their connection to GESI issues.
- Determine what needs/gaps in knowledge are linked to GESI amongst Community WASH Committees (CWCs), County WASH Team (CWT), and WASH coordinators to effectively respond within the capacity-building plan.

Investments in water needs to be increased by the government

Mr. Joseph Mulbah, Margibi CWT Coordinator from MPW stated that the government does not see the importance of water use within the community. This makes the allocation of funding to the water sector very challenging.”

Objective 2: Equitable and inclusive water service delivery improved and expanded.

- Determine if any water service providers in Margibi and rural Montserrado are run and/or operated by women.

- Ensure that landscape analysis of existing models of community-managed small-town water service delivery reflects GESI-specific needs and priorities.
- Map and analyze the gaps in safe drinking water service provision and the extent to which existing access to water service meets female-friendly requirements and reduce SGBV risks.
- Identify specific incentives that would benefit poor and marginalized households and expand access to water services and define what preferential, inclusive access would look like.
- Convene and support multi-stakeholder water user groups for collaborative water resource planning and management.
- Support social mobilization aimed at lifting barriers to women’s participation in water resource planning, management, and governance.

Objective 3: Uptake and maintenance of key water use behaviors among households increased.

- Ensure that formative research on water use behaviors is disaggregated by gender, age, and ability – to better understand the differences between counties around existing social norms and gain clarity on practical and strategic needs.
- Consult with a diverse range of stakeholders that include women, youth, and persons with disabilities to validate findings and seek recommendations on social and behavioral change (SBC) strategies, as people from these population groups will better understand needs and priorities.
- Determine innovative methods to encourage positive behavior changes that can leverage women and youth as change agents within the community and support their leadership in the rollout of SBC. SBC champions who are women and youth should be consulted in SBC and marketing activities, not simply trained unilaterally.
- Hold focus groups on what topics/themes would be both relevant and of interest to women (and, if possible, youth) on radio shows to maximize listenership from under-represented groups.
- Behavior Centered Design should include an intentional focus to maximize participation from women and youth at every stage of implementation; and accessibility, mobility, and engagement should be evaluated through a GESI lens.
- Target investments and increase sex-disaggregated data collection processes that seek to identify the differentiated impacts of water security on men and women and their inclusion in climate change mitigation and adaptation decision-making processes.

The perception of gender roles needs to be influenced by the project

“In Margibi, women predominate in both household water collection and use making them the most vulnerable if there is no water within the community. Water system management is considered to be a man's thing. The men in the community have a significant influence on decision-making.” – Jerry O. Varnie, Margibi County Superintendent.

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ANNEX 2: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED DURING THE LIBERIA GESI ANALYSIS

Redacted

ANNEX 3: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Government Officials

Interviews: National WASH Commission, Liberia Water and Sewer, Community WASH Committee, Ministry of Public Works

1. In your opinion, which groups in Montserrado and Margibi Counties are the most susceptible to vulnerability and barriers to access safe water services. What are the primary constraints that impact women and other marginalized groups from participating in water sector governance institutions?
2. Do you think LGIs and water service providers understand the challenges and opportunities facing water users and strategies of removing their barriers to access and use safe water services?
3. What policies do you find to be effective in water sector governance that take into consideration the needs of marginalized populations in Montserrado and Margibi Counties?
4. What does your institution see as the barrier from inclusion of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes?
5. Do you have any recommendations of organizations/institutions that could be identified for partnerships, to help incentivize participation and change behaviors to increase demand for safe water and access to basic water services?
6. Do you have experience of working with women's organizations and/or organizations representing persons with disabilities?
7. Are there recommendations or best practices you would like to offer that should be considered in the implementation of this activity that address constraints/opportunities not mentioned thus far?

Community Representatives

Interviews: Community WASH Committee, Women's Group Representative, Persons with Disabilities Networks

1. What is your role within your organization, and what does your organization do?
2. What are the roles that women play at the micro level (household and community) when it comes to accessing clean water?
3. What do people within your (district) understand to be the primary challenges when it comes to access and use clean water?
4. Are there differences when it comes to willingness to pay between men and women from the target communities?
5. What areas/themes do you think are the top priorities for capacity building for women and marginalized groups to increase participation in water sector governance?

6. How are people identified for decision-making positions/influence within water sector governance institutions? Do women and marginalized groups tend to have the same access to participate/influence decisions within water sector governance?
7. What are some of the social norms around use of basic water services that are specific to Liberian society, and how might these differ across segmented groups (women and other marginalized groups)?
8. What are some of the primary ways that women access information that could be utilized for social behavior change interventions to promote the uptake of positive water use behavior?

NGOs/Donors

Interviews: WaterAid, LEPDA

1. What is the primary mandate of your project or organization?
2. What are the ways that you carry out targeted outreach to women and/or other marginalized groups?
3. How do you encounter representatives from marginalized groups that you engage with? How does that change based on age or gender?
4. What have you seen as being the primary challenges associated with access to safe water services when it comes to engaging with women? What about other marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities?
5. What are the opportunities that your project has been able to identify in terms of incentives in partnerships, workshop participation or capacity building with engagement of marginalized groups?
6. Are there potential stakeholder partners that you would recommend our project engaging with? If yes, can you provide their names?
7. Approximately how long do people remain supported/connected/engaged with the support your organization provides?
8. What spoilers or harmful practices have you seen your organization (or others) when engaging with people from marginalized groups?