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COMMUNITY SCORECARD FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2025

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CSO GOVERNANCE CONSORTIUM

STRENGTHENING POLITICAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN LIBERIA

This publication was prepared by Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), and the Center for Transparency and Accountability (CENTAL)

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CSC	County Service Center
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CSDF	County Social Development Funds
CENTAL	Center for Transparency and Accountability
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CDG	Center for Democratic Governance
CC	County Council
LGO	Local Government Officials
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GOL	Government of Liberia
LNB	Liberia National Budget
CA	County Authority
KII	Key Informant Interview
PS	Plenary Session
NAYMOTE	Naymote Partners for Democratic Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
IRISH AID	Irish Aid is the Government of Ireland's development cooperation program.

Executive Summary

This community scorecard for social accountability was designed to examine the effectiveness of citizens access to social services in three counties: Bong, Bassa and Margibi. The primary objective of the scorecard was to strengthen transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the management of public resources and service delivery. The implementation included a review of health and educational policies, , to identify gaps and make recommendations to make service delivery more responsive to the needs of citizens.

This report is released by Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), and the Center for Transparency and Accountability (CENTAL) under the banner of the CSO Governance Consortium with funding support from the Embassy of Ireland in Liberia.

The social audit methodology employed by the consortium partners included Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and working sessions. Participants included senior county officials, local government representatives, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Other target groups included community leaders, women and youth leaders, from communities in the targeted counties. A total of 98 respondents (57 Males and 41 Females) participated in the KIIs, FDGs, and working sessions.

The scorecard produced the following findings:

The respondents describe the limited engagement between local authorities and community members, weak feedback mechanisms, and a lack of accountability in service delivery as poor local government–community relations. Community members often feel excluded from decision-making processes regarding health services, as consultations are infrequent or non-existent. The absence of clear communication on policies, budgets, and planned interventions fosters mistrust, while inconsistent responses to community concerns further strain relationships. This disconnect results in service delivery gaps, including staff shortages, inadequate health infrastructure, and poor drug supply monitoring. Consequently, communities express frustration over unaddressed challenges, leading to decreased participation in governance and reduced accountability for local government actors.

Poor quality of education: participants consistently rated the quality of education as poor across the surveyed districts; persistent issues include insufficient focus on rural education, inadequate government engagement, and deteriorating infrastructure;

Poor quality of health services: reflecting systemic deficiencies in service delivery, staffing, and infrastructure;

Lack of transparency in budget allocation and project expenditure: was described as minimal. Examples of prolonged project delays, including construction projects pending for over a decade, were common;

Weak oversight of development projects: irregularities or non-existent, contributing to incomplete development initiatives;

Inclusivity and representation are limited: They also cite barriers to women's and youth participation in county sittings due to bottom-necks and limited information flow between senior county officials and communities, as well as between the local governments and citizens. This is largely due to systemic obstacles and a lack of transparent communication between senior county officials, local governments, and citizens. As a result, women and youth who are already marginalized in governance struggle to contribute to decision-making processes, weakening accountability and limiting citizen involvement in local development planning.

Respondents from the three scorecard locations highlighted poor infrastructure (public school facilities), unqualified teachers due to poor educational systems, low salaries, and ineffective reporting systems.

County Service Centers have weak institutional capacity: have graded the impact of the national budget allocation on service centers as very poor, stating that the lack of equipment and tools to run the center actively is a major concern. They also cite barriers to women's and youth participation in county sittings due to bottom-necks and limited information flow between senior county officials and communities, as well as between the local governments and citizens.

Recommendations: Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Revise current education framework: The recommendations in this report call for the Government of Liberia to consider revising its current approach to education and implement comprehensive reforms focusing on teacher qualifications, curriculum improvements, rural school infrastructure, and anti-corruption measures.

Strengthening Health Facility Infrastructure and Workforce Capacity: The government should also expand facility infrastructure, recruit health workers, establish efficient reporting systems, and ensure consistent utility supply.

Increase budget transparency: The recommendations also call for increasing budget transparency, enhancing participatory processes, and enforcing accountability through independent audits and public disclosures as well as increasing support to the county service centers in support of the decentralization process.

Introduction:

The scorecard is one of the major activities under the Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia project implemented by a consortium of three civil society organizations, including the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), and Naymote Partners for Democratic Development (NAYMOTE). The project locations include the following counties: Bong, Bassa and Margibi.

The first supports demand-side accountability with increased monitoring and oversight of the implementation of anti-corruption law and advances advocacy for the timely investigation and prosecution of corruption cases. The second deals with accountability and a robust tracking system for climate finance, as well as ensuring CSO oversight of the implementation

of the national adaptation plan through a gender-transformative approach. The third focuses on local governance, including monitoring of the revenue sharing law, capacity strengthening of County Councils, and oversight of public service delivery, including County Service Centers, health, and education. A cross-cutting theme is in the implementation of the project is sustained advocacy and gender mainstreaming.

The objective of the scorecard was three-fold:

- To monitor the quality of social services provided by the government, including the CSCs, health, and education.
- To hold service providers accountable for the services they provide.
- To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided through support from the national budget.

The community scorecard exercise is a participatory instrument that allowed community members and service providers to collectively assess the effectiveness of services that are provided and make recommendations for improvement.

The citizen scorecard was administered in three counties in Liberia, namely, Bong, Margibi and Grand Bassa.

A total of 98 respondents (57 Males and 41 Females) participated in the KIIs, FGDs, and working sessions

Participants were recruited from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, including social and health workers, teachers, farmers, community leaders, and key stakeholders. Each participant represented County councils, the county health team, the County education officer, teachers, the county authority, the county service center staffs and community residents.

1. Methodology

The scorecard was administered using a combination of tools and processes including desk review, stakeholders' dialogues, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

Desk Review:

At the inception of the social accountability scorecards, a desk review exercise was conducted with a view of understanding the different issues related to funds allocated to the county through the national budget that covers operations of the county council, county service centers, and the effectiveness of the county development plans for education and health. Monies allocated for development in these areas were found to be a core part of the desk review materials. The consortium partners also used an expected report from the ongoing County Development Agenda/Plan to gain additional insights into accountability issues. Additional documents reviewed included the National budget and the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development.

Stakeholders' Engagement:

The purpose of engaging these stakeholders was to collect feedback, assess current health service delivery, identify gaps in infrastructure and staffing, and create actionable recommendations to improve health services based on community and institutional perspectives. The stakeholders consulted and interviewed were local government officials,

health workers, county council members, teachers and public school administrators and community members.

KIIs targeted leaders from the County Council, including the Chairperson and Secretary, the County Service Center Coordinator, and local government officials, including the County Development Officer, Superintendent, and two District Commissioners. Specific questionnaires will address their perspectives on the following:

The scorecard through the desk review exercise answered specific questions through Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions that were validated through plenary or working sessions in each county.

Key Informant Interview

A set of questions was designed to gather comprehensive feedback on the effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities for improving health services in the community. See details of questions asked in annex 2 below. A total of 26 (15 male and 11 female) persons ranging from local government officials, health workers, county council members, teachers and public school administrators were interviewed for the Key Informant Interview.

Focus Group Discussion

FGDs engaged community-level stakeholders to gather insights on service delivery, participation in decision-making, and the impact of allocated funds for the counties. These sessions ensured representation from diverse groups, including women, youth, local CSOs, service providers, the leadership of local government actors, and representatives from community groups and marginalized populations. Seventy-Two (72) stakeholders were invited to attend Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions. Each FGD contained at most ten persons considering gender balance. Three FGDs were conducted in each targeted county. Each FGD was attended by community members and leaders, teachers and health workers from both supply and demand side. Participants were selected through random sampling methodology.

For the FGDs, three sessions were held in each targeted county, and participants were divided into three cohorts: an all-female respondent group, an all-youth respondent group, and a respondent group of mixed participants. This allowed the community scorecard to gather age—and gender-disaggregated information.

Please find the FGD questionnaires in Annex C.

The qualitative questions aimed to capture community experiences and insights into the execution of the national government's social responsibility commitments.

KoboCollect was used to collect, store, and analyze the data for the social accountability scorecard. During data collection, KoboCollect allowed for efficient gathering of responses through mobile devices, ensuring that all information was captured accurately and in real-time. Once the data was collected, it was stored securely, allowing for easy access and retrieval during the analysis phase. The tool facilitated the systematic coding of responses, helping to categorize and organize the data based on the social audit questions. A paper based questions was also use to generated open ended responses.

After the data was collected and stored in KoboCollect, it was further processed using the Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) approach. The stored data was analyzed using both content and thematic analysis techniques, where patterns and themes were identified and interpreted. KoboCollect's data management features enabled easy sorting and categorization of responses, allowing the research team to focus on key themes and patterns that emerged. This helped ensure that the analysis remained focused and that any deviations or significant insights were properly documented. The tool's data export capabilities also allowed the research team to compile the data into organized matrices or tables, supporting the drawing of conclusions and facilitating the sharing of findings with stakeholders.

The Community scorecard examined citizens' participation in the management and implementation of the effectiveness of the national budget in the county, operations of the county council, county service centers, and the effectiveness of the county development plan. It analyzed the implementation of the county development plan initiatives by the three targeted counties to determine the effectiveness of the existing plan and budget and explore potential policy recommendations that could address discrepancies associated with budget allocations in the counties.

Three officials from each of the three counties were targeted for the KIIs. In comparison, three officials from the local government in the targeted counties were also targeted to respond on behalf of their respective counties.

For the FGDs, three sessions were held in each targeted county, and participants were divided into three cohorts: an all-female respondent group, an all-youth respondent group, and a respondent group of mixed participants. This allowed the community scorecard to gather age—and gender-disaggregated information.

A total of 98 respondents (57 Males and 41 Females) participated in the KIIs, FGDs, and plenary sessions. The plenary sessions combined the participants from the KII and FGDs across the three project counties.

NAYMOTE, CENTAL, and CDG selected respondents for the FGDs through randomized sampling from communities, county officials, and senior county authorities. Representatives from Community-Based Organizations were also targeted to participate in the community scorecard.

2. Presentation of Key Findings, Discussions, and Analysis

2.1 Presentation of Key Findings, Discussions, and Analysis

The findings from the community scorecard considered the aggregated views of males and females, as well as responses from local government and senior county officials. This framework provided a triangulated analysis of the opinions of the different cohorts of respondents on the same issues.

1. Budget Allocations – Community Relations

Based on the outcome of the analysis, it was evident that the allocation of county budgets lacked transparency and inclusivity. Community members expressed frustration over being excluded from budget decision-making processes, especially relating to the county

development budget/plan, which led to a disconnect between their needs and government priorities.

This disconnect has strained community relations, with citizens perceiving budget allocations as biased toward urban areas or politically influential individuals. The absence of clear communication about budget decisions further erodes trust, leaving citizens feeling alienated from the governance process. Respondents further noted that poor oversight from the Government, underpayment of teachers, thus resulting in volunteer teachers in classrooms across the counties, the lack of teaching materials, poor educational facilities, and Lack of adequate supplies in school from the government, among others, as major factors to the many challenges faced by service providers. Citizens acknowledged the positive efforts of some council members in addressing community concerns, albeit these instances were often seen as the exception rather than the rule. Overall, the feedback revealed a need for more inclusive, transparent, and accountable representation from County Councils to improve community engagement and ensure that citizens' needs and concerns are effectively addressed.

2. Citizens' Perception of Involvement in County Development Plan

A significant number of citizens, constituting 79%, expressed dissatisfaction with their level of involvement in the county development planning process. Community members feel that development plans are imposed on them without meaningful consultations. This lack of participation has resulted in projects that do not address pressing local issues, such as health services, poor road networks, and under-resourced schools.

78% of the community respondents also noted that development plans often reflect the interests of elites rather than the broader population. The absence of community engagement not only undermines the relevance of these plans but also weakens citizens' sense of ownership over local development initiatives.

3. Citizens' concerns on health and Education

Health and education remain top priorities for communities, yet both sectors face significant challenges. In health, citizens raised concerns about the chronic shortage of medical staff, inadequate drug supplies, and poor infrastructure. Many health facilities lack basic amenities such as clean water and electricity, thereby compromising the quality of care. Furthermore, the long distances to health centers make access challenging for rural communities, although administrators at these health facilities say the opposite.

Unqualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and dilapidated school buildings hinder the quality of education services. Rural schools are particularly neglected, with some operating without adequate teaching materials. Citizens also criticized the lack of accountability in allocating and using resources for health and education, calling for improved oversight to ensure funds are used effectively. The respondents rated the health and education sectors in the surveyed counties as very poor. 69% of the respondents think these sectors need significant improvement and attention from the national government.

4. Services at County Service Centers

The County Service Centers were established to bring essential government services closer to citizens. However, their functionality is severely limited due to inadequate resources and infrastructure. Many centers lack the equipment needed to deliver essential services such as issuing birth certificates, business permits, and other official documents.

Citizens reported frequent delays and inefficiencies, which they attributed to underfinancing, poor management, and the level of the ministry responsible for the centers. The lack of funding for these centers further exacerbates their inefficiency, leaving many citizens frustrated with the quality of services provided. Strengthening these centers through adequate funding, staff training, and regular monitoring is crucial to improving service delivery. The respondents graded the service centers' efficiency as poor. Further, they noted that actions such as improving service delivery, enhancing communication and accessibility, increasing transparency, and ensuring that the centers are adequately staffed and equipped to meet the needs of the community should be taken to advance the center as a way of bringing the government closer to the people.

5. Participation of the County Council in the County Development Plan

According to the Local Government Act of 2018 (Sections 3.2(a) and 14.4.4(a), the county councils are intended to serve as a bridge between communities and local governments, ensuring that development plans reflect the people's needs. However, their participation in the planning process is often limited or symbolic and, at some point, does not involve consultations from communities. Members frequently lack the capacity and resources to engage effectively in development planning.

In Grand Bassa County, council members are excluded from critical decision-making processes and are not adequately informed about budget allocations and project implementation, thus resulting in 89% of the respondents rating its performance as poor. This undermines their ability to advocate for their communities and hold local governments accountable.

6. Information Flow

The flow of information between local governments and communities is a significant challenge. Citizens often feel uninformed about key decisions, including budget allocations, project timelines, and development priorities. This lack of information fuels mistrust and creates opportunities for misinformation and speculation.

Local governments have failed to establish effective communication channels, such as regular town hall meetings or public notices, to keep citizens informed. This information gap hinders citizens' ability to participate meaningfully in governance and holds their leaders accountable. Implementing transparent and accessible communication strategies is critical to addressing this issue.

Most respondents across the counties where the scorecard was administered agreed that the bulletins of county administration offices are usually empty.

7. Challenges in Implementing County Budget

The implementation of county budgets is fraught with challenges that hinder the delivery of critical services. Key issues include:

- Delayed Disbursements, which means funds are often released late, disrupting project timelines and creating inefficiencies.
- Corruption is still a significant factor. Citizens frequently raised concerns about the misuse of public funds, with little accountability for incomplete or abandoned projects.
- Lack of oversight from the national government. The weak monitoring mechanisms has contributed to poor implementation and minimal enforcement of project standards.

These challenges have left many development projects abandoned, unfinished or substandard, eroding public confidence in local governance. Strengthening accountability systems and ensuring timely fund disbursement are vital to improving budget implementation.

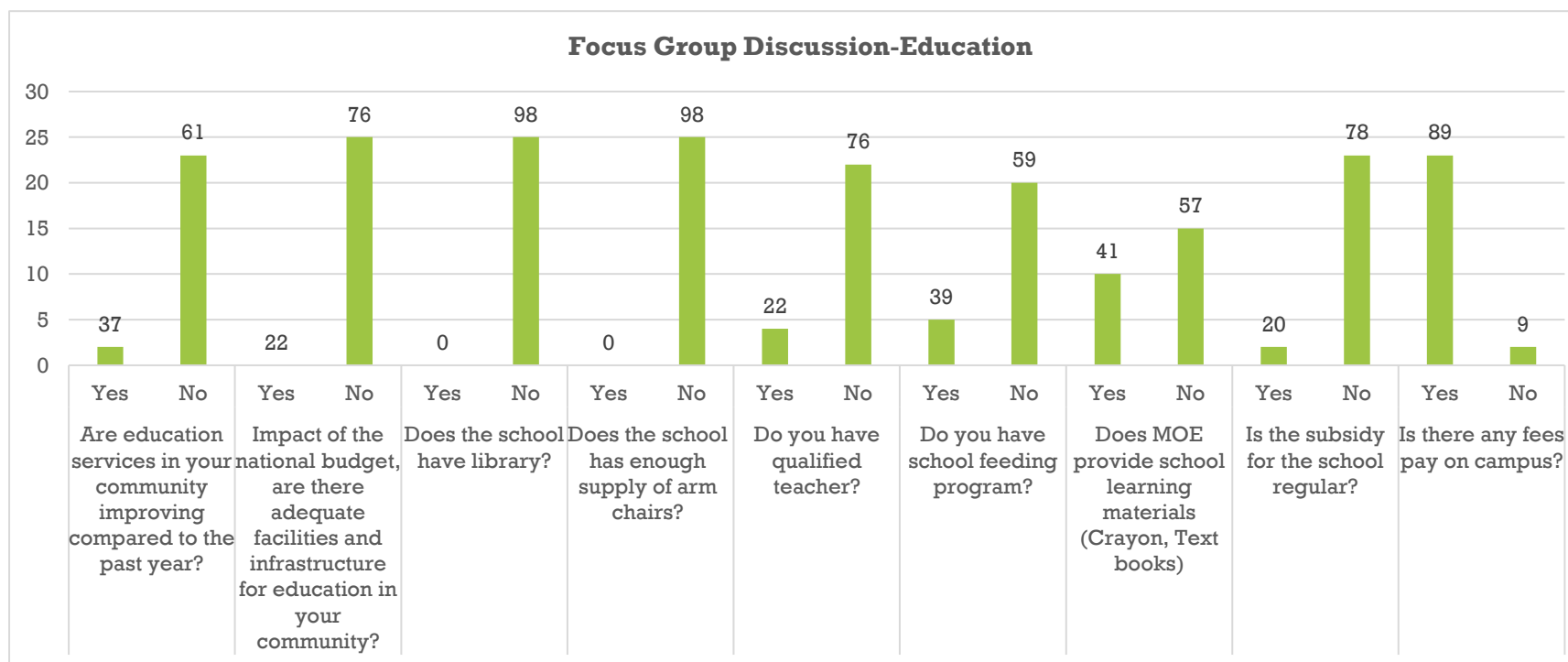
8. Uncomfortable Topics on communities' challenges

Gender-based violence and discrimination remain taboo subjects in many communities despite their prevalence. The respondents acknowledged that these uncomfortable topics require creating safe spaces for dialogue and ensuring that citizens feel empowered to voice their concerns without fear of backlash.

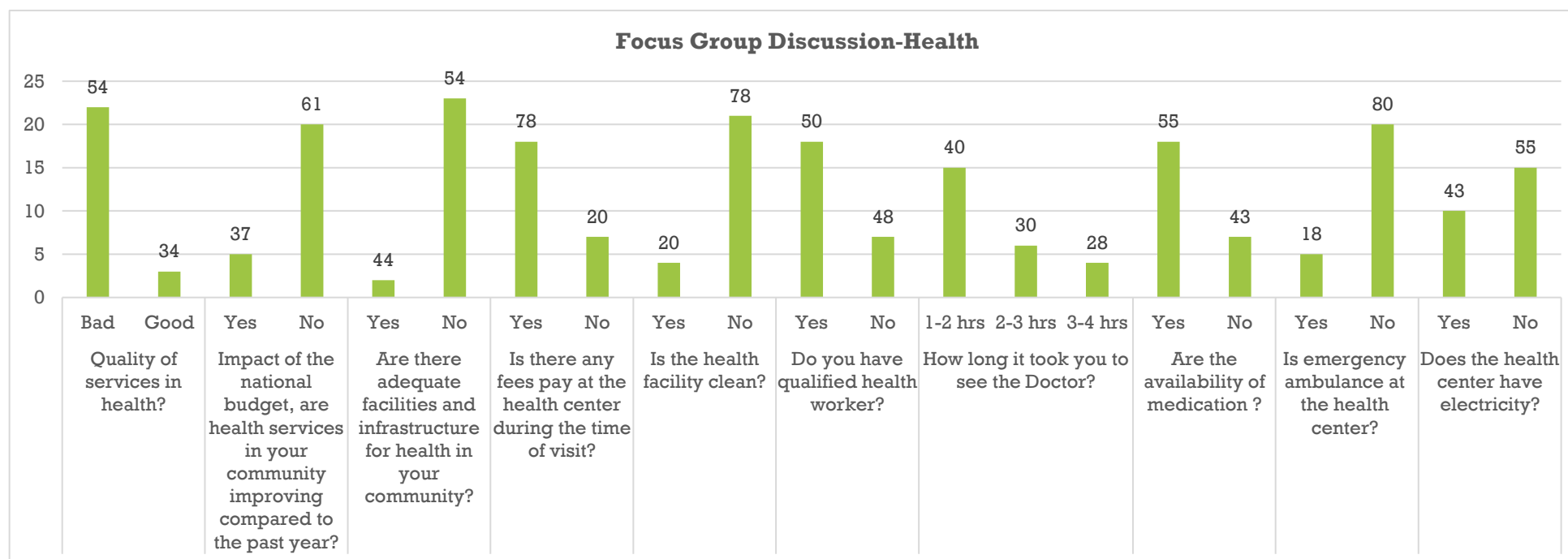
9. Women and Girls Issues

The Citizen Scorecard findings highlight several critical issues faced by women and girls in their communities. Low participation in local governance remains a major concern, as women believe they are often excluded from decision-making processes that directly impact their lives, particularly in health and education. The shortage of qualified teachers in public schools and professional nurses in health facilities further limits women and girls access to quality education and healthcare. Poor hygiene conditions in health facilities, along with the lack of ambulances for pregnant women, contribute to maternal health risks and increase anxiety among women. These issues emphasize the need for inclusive governance, improved public services, and targeted interventions to address gender-based disparities in health, education, and overall well-being.

Are education services in your community improving compared to the past year?		Impact of the national budget, are there adequate facilities and infrastructure for education in your community?		Does the school have a library?		Does the school have enough supply of armchairs?		Do you have a qualified teacher?		Do you have a school feeding program?		Does MOE provide school learning materials (Crayon, Textbooks)		Is the subsidy for the school regular?		Are there any fees paid on campus?	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
37	61	22	76	0	98	0	98	22	76	39	59	41	57	20	78	89	9



Quality of services in health?		Impact of the national budget, are health services in your community improving compared to the past year?		Are there adequate facilities and infrastructure for health in your community?		Are there any fees paid at the health center during the time of the visit?		Is the health facility clean?		Do you have a qualified health worker?		How long it took you to see the Doctor?			Is the availability of medication?		Is an emergency ambulance at the health center?		Does the health center have electricity?	
Bad	Good	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	1-2 hrs	2-3 hrs	3-4 hrs	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
54	44	37	61	44	54	78	20	20	78	50	48	40	30	28	55	43	18	80	43	55



Are there mechanisms in place to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of county development funds?		Do you believe the current County Development Plan aligns with the actual needs of the community?		Are the decisions and activities of the county council effectively communicated to community members?		Is the national budget helping with development in the county?	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
20	7	17	10	16	11	13	14

A detailed Findings from the Community Scorecard on Education, Health, and Governance as seen in chart above.

Education Services

The survey results indicate significant challenges in the education sector. While 37% of respondents believe that education services have improved compared to the past year, a majority (61%) disagree. This suggests that despite some progress, many communities still face persistent challenges.

Key findings include:

- **Infrastructure and Facilities:** Only 22% reported having adequate education infrastructure, while 76% noted inadequacies. Notably, 98% of respondents stated that their schools lack a library and armchairs, indicating poor learning conditions.
- **Teaching and Learning Materials:** While 22% reported having qualified teachers, 76% said they do not, which raises concerns about education quality. Additionally, 57% reported that the Ministry of Education does not provide school learning materials such as textbooks and crayons.
- **School Feeding Program and Subsidies:** 59% of respondents stated that their schools lack a feeding program, which could negatively impact student attendance and performance. Furthermore, 78% said that school subsidies are irregular, making financial planning for schools difficult.
- **Hidden Fees:** Despite public education being free, 89% of respondents reported paying fees at school, suggesting that informal costs remain a barrier to education access.

Health Services

Community feedback on healthcare services reveals concerns regarding service quality and accessibility.

Key findings include:

- **Perception of Healthcare Services:** 54% of respondents rated health service quality as poor, while 44% rated it positively. Although slightly more than half perceive services negatively, a significant proportion acknowledges some improvements.
- **Infrastructure and Accessibility:** Only 37% of respondents believe there are adequate health facilities, while 61% disagree, highlighting a need for further investment in infrastructure. Additionally, 78% reported paying fees during their health center visits, contradicting expectations of free or affordable healthcare.
- **Healthcare Workers and Cleanliness:** While 50% reported that their health facilities are clean, 48% disagreed, indicating inconsistent hygiene standards. Furthermore, 20% of respondents said they lack qualified health workers, raising concerns about the quality of care.
- **Availability of Services:** 55% of respondents stated that their health facility lacks an emergency ambulance, and 80% reported unreliable electricity, both of which affect the ability to provide critical care. Additionally, medication shortages remain an issue, with 43% stating that medications were unavailable during their visit.

- **Waiting Time:** Regarding waiting times, 40% reported seeing a doctor within 1-2 hours, while 30% waited 2-3 hours, and 28% waited 3-4 hours, indicating long delays in healthcare access.

Governance and Development

Findings on governance and county development funding reveal gaps in transparency and alignment with community needs.

- **Transparency and Accountability:** Only 20% believe there are mechanisms ensuring transparency and accountability in county development fund management, while 7% disagree, suggesting the need for stronger oversight.
- **County Development Plan Alignment:** 17% of respondents believe the County Development Plan reflects community needs, while 10% disagree, indicating a need for more participatory planning.
- **Communication of County Council Activities:** Only 16% of respondents believe county council decisions and activities are effectively communicated, while 11% do not, emphasizing the need for better information-sharing mechanisms.
- **National Budget and Local Development:** Only 13% of respondents feel the national budget is significantly contributing to county development, while 14% disagree, indicating dissatisfaction with budget allocations at the local level.

3. Challenges

The community scorecard encountered several challenges, especially at the field level. Challenges specifically included:

1. Initially, the Citizen Scorecard targeted senior concession and government officials to gather insights on governance and service delivery. However, a shift was made to engage more directly with community members, local leaders, and service users. This change ensured that the data collected reflected the lived experiences of those directly affected by governance and service delivery issues, rather than relying solely on official perspectives.

To address the challenges of access and responsiveness from senior officials, the process incorporated Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and working sessions with diverse stakeholders, including women, youth, and marginalized groups. This adjustment improved data quality by providing a more balanced, community-driven assessment of public services, governance, and local decision-making. However, the absence of direct engagement with some senior officials meant that some policy-level insights were limited. Nonetheless, the inclusion of grassroots voices strengthened the credibility and relevance of the findings, ensuring that the scorecard reflected both systemic challenges and community-level realities.

2. Another challenge faced during the scorecard process was the limited literacy and technical understanding of some community members, which affected their ability to fully engage with the assessment tools. Many respondents struggled to interpret complex governance and service delivery indicators, leading to potential gaps in data accuracy.

To address this, facilitators simplified the language of the scorecard questions to Liberian pidgin and employed participatory methods such as storytelling and probs to ensure better comprehension. While this adaptation improved community participation, it also meant that data collection took longer than anticipated. Despite these challenges, the inclusion of diverse voices ultimately enriched the findings, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective on local governance and service delivery issues.

4. Conclusion

Based on analysis from desk review exercises and interactions with participants, the consortium's overall assessment of the situation is that communities remain inadequately informed (including basic details such as the terms of the county development plan). Communities are also unclear about their substantive and procedural rights (necessary for reasonably informing their engagement in processes such as participatory mapping). They crucially lack access to independent and other technical legal advice to guide their engagement with the local authority, especially in negotiating social agreements. Coercion and intimidation are preventing the possibility of a genuinely 'free' community decision-making process, with undue pressure being exerted on communities by local government, concession company employees, and others.

The study concludes that while Liberia has several policies in place, such as the Revenue Sharing Law and the Local Government Act, the primary challenges in local governance are not necessarily due to inadequate policies but rather issues related to weak implementation, limited citizen engagement, and gaps in accountability mechanisms. The findings from the fieldwork indicate that citizens face challenges in accessing information on county council operations, budget allocations, and development decisions, which limit their ability to participate effectively in governance processes. Additionally, concerns about poor service delivery, lack of infrastructure, and barriers to women's and youth participation highlight the need for more inclusive and transparent governance structures.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-stakeholder approach that strengthens policy implementation, enhances civic engagement, and improves local government responsiveness. These actions, coupled with sustained collaboration between government, civil society, and communities, will create a more accountable governance framework that prioritizes citizen welfare and equitable development.

Recommendation

Strengthening Engagement Mechanisms Between Local Authorities and Community Stakeholders:

Strengthening engagement mechanisms between local authorities and community stakeholders is crucial to addressing the challenges identified in the Community Scorecard process and improving governance in Liberia. To improve governance and enhance local accountability, county authorities should formalize engagement mechanisms such as periodic consultative meetings, joint planning sessions, and public dialogues with community leaders. Establishing

structured feedback loops between citizens and local government officials will ensure that community voices are integrated into decision-making processes.

Prioritizing Inclusive Planning and Community Participation in Budgeting:

To rebuild trust, local governments must prioritize inclusive planning and establish mechanisms for communities to voice their needs during budget preparations. This includes organizing quarterly budget hearings where citizens, local organizations, and county council representatives discuss resource allocation. Local authorities should ensure that marginalized groups, including women and youth, have representation in these processes to reflect diverse community needs.

Strengthen the capacity of local governance structures:

Capacity-building initiatives and clear communication channels are essential to enhance the role of county councils in development planning.

Inclusive planning processes, such as town hall meetings and participatory budget forums during county development planning processes, are essential to bridge this gap.

The county authorities should integrate inclusive and diverse representation to facilitate meaningful community participation in decision-making processes.

Capacity-Building for County Councils on Development Planning and Oversight:

A County Council Training Program should be established to strengthen their role in governance and development planning. This program, facilitated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) in collaboration with civil society organizations, should focus on budget analysis, legislative oversight, and community engagement strategies. Additionally, County Council members should receive training on public financial management and policy implementation to effectively advocate for community priorities.

Ensuring Effective Implementation of the County Development Agenda:

For the County Development Agenda (CDA) to be effectively implemented, a Performance Tracking and Reporting System should be introduced. This system would involve setting clear targets and timelines for priority projects, with quarterly public reporting by county authorities to enhance accountability. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning should allocate earmarked funding to ensure that priority development projects outlined in the CDA are fully executed.

Strengthen oversight, monitoring, and reporting mechanisms within local government structures:

The consortium calls on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to develop an oversight monitoring, and reporting mechanism to ensure accountability and transparency. The Ministry of Internal

Affairs should establish a Local Government Oversight and Accountability Unit to develop a standardized monitoring and reporting framework for county governance. This unit should publish bi-annual reports on governance performance, including financial audits, service delivery assessments, and community feedback. Furthermore, an independent citizens' monitoring committee should be created to track project implementation and report findings through community scorecard assessments.

Reviewing the Revenue-Sharing Law and Local Government Act for Equitable Resource Distribution:

To promote fairness in resource allocation, the government should initiate county-level policy dialogues with local stakeholders to assess the impact of the Revenue-Sharing Law and Local Government Act. These dialogues should provide recommendations for revising allocation formulas to ensure underserved communities receive adequate resources. Additionally, publicly accessible budget dashboards should be developed for transparency in county expenditure and revenue distribution.

Tools Used

Annex A – Consent Form

Without expectation of compensation or other remuneration, now or in the future,

I, _____, agree that the purpose of this interview has been explained to me. I hereby give my consent to Naymote-Partners for Democratic Development, Center for Democratic Governance, CENTAL, to conduct it.

- ☐ I agree the interview may be audiotaped
- ☐ I agree for my photograph to be taken and used in the report
- ☐ I agree you may use direct quotes from the interview in the report

Please check ONE

☐ CSO Governance Consortium may attribute quotes to me by name in the report
OR

☐ CSO Governance Consortium may NOT attribute quotes to me by name in the report (If you check this box, we will say “an official...” or “an advocate...” without disclosing your name or position)

This consent is given in perpetuity.

Name: _____

Position/ Address: _____

Gender: _____

Signature: _____

Contact(s): _____

Date: _____

Witness (CSO Governance Consortium)

I certify that the information provided on this KII consent and release form is accurate and meets the interviewee's approval.

Date

Name & signature of Consortium Representative

Annex B - Questionnaire for Local Government Representatives

Hello, my name is (state your full name), and I work as an enumerator for the CSO governance consortium on the “Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia” Project. The CSO Governance Consortium is a collaborative project funded by the IRISH Embassy in Liberia through the Government of Ireland that supports CSOs in conducting stakeholders’ engagement forums to Increase demands for political accountability in the management of the country's resources, Increase citizens' voices in local decision-making processes by promoting dialogues between the government and local communities as well as Increase CSO oversight of equitable revenue-sharing between central and local government.

I am here to ask you a few questions about the local government’s relations with (name of county). We will also invite you to attend a plenary meeting with community stakeholders later. Your opinion is very important to us, and we value any information you can share with me. Before we begin, do you have any questions? Are you willing to continue with the assessment?

Yes [☐]; No [☐]

If yes, then please sign this Consent Form.

A. General Information

A1. Date of interview (DD-MM-YYYY)

A2. Name of County

A3. Name of City/Town/Community

A5. Name of Respondent.....

A6. Position of Respondent.....

A.7 Gender of Respondent.....

A9. Name/s of Researchers

B. Interview Questions

Key Questions

1. What challenges are faced in the allocation and utilization of funds for education and health?

2. Are funds for education and health sectors released on time?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Are you satisfied with the current utilization of funds for health and education?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Are there discrepancies between allocated funds and actual expenditures?

5. Is there a structured process to address delays in fund disbursement?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. How effectively are community needs prioritized in the County Development Plan?

7. Does the County Development Plan address both short-term and long-term priorities effectively?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Are stakeholders, such as community members and civil society, consulted during the development of the CDP?

9. What mechanisms are in place to evaluate the success of the CDP?

10. What steps are taken to ensure transparency in the disbursement and reporting of budgeted funds?

11. Are financial reports on allocated funds shared with the public?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. Are there independent audits conducted on county-level expenditures? If so, how often?

13. Are findings from audits or monitoring processes publicly disclosed?

14. How are communities involved in decision-making processes related to local government initiatives?

15. What platforms or forums exist for community members to provide feedback on service delivery?

16. Are marginalized groups adequately represented in decision-making platforms?

Yes ☐ No ☐

17. Are there any mechanisms for addressing grievances related to service delivery?

18. How accessible are grievance redress mechanisms to community members?

19. What is the usual response time for resolving complaints or issues raised by the public?

20. What recommendations would you make to improve the effectiveness of fund allocation, transparency, and community participation in development projects?

21. How does the county council ensure that community priorities are reflected in the County Development Plan?

22. Are the decisions and activities of the county council effectively communicated to community members?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank you!

Annex C – Questionnaire for Focus Group Discussion – Community

Hello, my name is (state your full name), and I work as an enumerator for the CSO governance consortium on the “Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia” Project. The CSO Governance Consortium is a collaborative project funded by the IRISH Embassy in Liberia through the Government of Ireland that supports CSOs in conducting stakeholders’ engagement forums to Increase demands for political accountability in the management of the country's resources, Increase citizens' voices in local decision-making processes by promoting dialogues between the government and local communities as well as Increase CSO oversight of equitable revenue-sharing between central and local government.

I am here to ask you a few questions about the local government’s relations with (name of county). We will also invite you to attend a plenary meeting with community stakeholders later. Your opinion is very important to us, and we value any information you can share with me. Before we begin, do you have any questions? Are you willing to continue with the assessment?

Yes [☐]; No [☐]

If yes, then please sign this Consent Form and the attendance form.

Key Questions

Education

1. How would you describe the current quality of services in education?
2. Are education services in your community improving compared to the past year?
Yes [☐] No [☐]
3. With the impact of the national budget, are there adequate facilities and infrastructure for education in your community?
Yes [☐] No [☐]
4. What are the most significant barriers to effective service delivery in education?
5. Are there mechanisms in place to report concerns about education services?
6. What recommendations would you make to improve education service delivery?

Health

1. How would you describe the current quality of services in health?
2. With the impact of the national budget, are health services in your community improving compared to the past year?
Yes [☐] No [☐]

3. Are there adequate facilities and infrastructure for health in your community?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. What are the most significant barriers to effective service delivery in health?

5. Are there mechanisms in place to report concerns about health services?

6. What recommendations would you make to improve health service delivery?

County Service Center/Local Government Relations on the National Budget

1. Are you aware of the funds allocated for development projects in your community?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. If yes, how do you perceive the use of these funds?

3. Have you seen any noticeable impact of development funds in your community?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Are community members informed about how funds are being spent on local projects?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. How do you participate in decision-making regarding local development initiatives?

6. What opportunities exist for community members to voice their opinions on service delivery?

7. Are marginalized groups, such as women and youth, adequately included in these discussions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. How transparent are local authorities in sharing information about budget allocations and expenditures?

9. Are there regular audits or reviews of local development projects in your community?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10. Is there regular monitoring of projects to ensure they meet community needs?

11. What recommendations would you make to improve accountability and transparency in local government?

12. How can community participation in planning and decision-making be enhanced?

13. In your opinion, what role should local leaders and government officials play in improving services?

14. How does the county council ensure that community priorities are reflected in the County Development Plan?

15. Are the decisions and activities of the county council effectively communicated to community members?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. Where the community involved in the decision of the county council member appointments?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank you

Annex D – Questionnaire for KII – County Officials

Hello, my name is (state your full name), and I work as an enumerator for the CSO governance consortium on the “Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia” Project. The CSO Governance Consortium is a collaborative project funded by the IRISH Embassy in Liberia through the Government of Ireland that supports CSOs to conduct stakeholders’ engagement forums with the aim to Increase demands for political accountability in the management of the country's resources, Increase citizens' voices in local decision-making processes by promoting dialogues between the government and local communities as well as Increase CSO oversight of equitable revenue-sharing between central and local government.

I am here to ask you a few questions about the local government’s relations with (name of county). We will also invite you to attend a plenary meeting with community stakeholders later. Your opinion is very important to us, and we value any information you can share with me. Before we begin, do you have any questions? Are you willing to continue with the assessment?

Yes [☐]; No [☐]

If yes, then please sign this Consent Form and the attendance form.

Key Questions

1. How are funds allocated to health and education projects prioritized at the county level?
2. Are there mechanisms in place to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of county development funds?

Yes [☐] No [☐]

3. How often does the county council engage with community members to gather input for development plans?
4. Do you believe the current County Development Plan aligns with the actual needs of the community?

Yes [☐] No [☐]

5. What specific challenges do you face in implementing and monitoring county development initiatives?

6. How does the county council ensure that community priorities are reflected in the County Development Plan?

7. Are the decisions and activities of the county council effectively communicated to community members?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. What would you say the percentage of funds allotted for the County have been receive from the national budget for FY2024 so far?

9. Is there any bureaucracy in receiving the funds for the county from Ministry of Internal Affairs or Ministry of Finance? Please Explain

10. Is the national budget helping with development in the county?

Yes ☐ No ☐ To Some Extent ☐

See Annex F & Annex G to determine from the list of respondents which interviews (KIIs, FGD) they participated in.

Annex E – Total Number of Respondents per County

No.	County	Number of Persons Reached	Total
3.	Margibi	30	30
4.	Grand Bassa	30	30
5.	Bong	38	38
Grand Total		98	98