

**FUNDING LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
WOMEN (FLOW) RESEARCH REPORT ON  
'Causes and Consequences of Violence Against  
Women' (VAW) in Liberia:**

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## **Acronyms:**

AU	African Union
CBOs:	Community Based Organizations
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of all forms Discrimination Against Women
CDG:	Center for Democratic Governance
CJS:	Criminal Justice System
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
FGM:	Female Genital Mutilation
FLOW:	Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women
GoL:	Government of Liberia
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
KII:	Key Informant Interview
LNP	Liberia National Police
MoGCSP:	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection
MoH:	Ministry of Health
MoJ:	Ministry of Justice
SAS:	Small Arms Survey
SEA;	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBCU:	Sexual and Gender Based Crimes Unit
SGBV:	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UN:	United Nations
UNMIL:	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UN Women:	United Nations Women
UPR:	Universal Periodic Review
VAW:	Violence Against Women
WACPS:	Women and Children Protection Section

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## **Executive Summary:**

In December 2016, Oxfam IBIS Liberia commissioned a research to identify the causes and consequences of violence against women in nine (9) counties in Liberia: Montserrado, Margibi, Gbarpolu, Rivercess, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, and River Gee. The Center for Democratic Governance (CDG) was contracted to administer the study. It is anticipated that the findings of the research will be used for national and regional advocacy as well as to develop programmes for intervention.

The overarching objective of the research is to conduct a national study on the 'Causes and Consequences of Violence Against Women (VAW) and gather evidence for advocacy towards the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and African Union (AU). The research is one component, reducing sexual and gender based violence against women and girls, of a grant awarded under the Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW) framework in Liberia with resources from the Dutch Government.

Four sets of data collection tools were used to generate information. The first was the desk review of policy documents and research work conducted by other organizations. The second was the administration of a survey that targeted a total of 1,200 persons (all of them 18 years and above) of which 56.9% were women and the remaining 43.1% men. Respondents were selected from households using random sampling methodology. The third tool was Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) targeting government institutions, CSOs, UN Agencies and donors. The fourth tool was Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) targeting women and men in separate discussion forums.

**Key Findings:** The key findings of this study are grouped under the following themes and categories:

**1) Legal Framework:** Findings on the legal framework are grouped into two categories: Regional and National. The regional framework deals with AU and ECOWAS while the national focuses on national laws and policies.

### ***1.1 Regional***

***1.1.1 AU:*** Liberia has acceded to the Maputo Protocol which calls for member states of the African Union to adopt and implement appropriate measures to ensure the protection of every woman's right to respect for her dignity and protection of women from all forms of violence, particularly sexual and verbal violence. Article five (5) specifically calls on member states to enact legislation to eliminate traditional harmful practices against women and girls.

***1.1.2 ECOWAS:*** ECOWAS has no existing protocol or convention on violence against women. However, there is a supplementary Act related to equality of rights between men and women for sustainable development in ECOWAS and chapter seven (7) deals specifically with Gender-Based Violence. The Act was endorsed by member states in Accra in 2015. Article 51 calls for the publication in the Official Gazette of each Member State within thirty (30) days of notification by the ECOWAS Commission.

## **2. National:**

**2.1 Enforcement of laws is weak:** Despite being signatories to several regional and international human rights instruments,<sup>1</sup> Liberia has not done enough to domesticate these instruments in order to facilitate enforcement in preventing violence against women.

**2.2 Unlike rape, there is no statute that outlaws domestic violence:** There is no law that criminalizes domestic violence. In the absence of such a law, law enforcement officers treat it largely as a crime under simple assault which goes with lesser punishment. Not only that, when a domestic violence case is reported to the police, the police tend to trivialize it. Women discussants in focus groups mentioned that when they make complaints to the police about physical violence, the police tend to ask them: “What did you do to the man”? This sends a message that women’s actions cause men to physically assault them.

**2.3. The use of a dual legal system:** Customary laws are used side by side statutory laws in dealing with sexual violence cases particularly in communities in the counties.

## **3. Institutional Framework:**

**3.1 Criminal Accountability is weak:** Despite the establishment of a specialized unit within the LNP to handle SGBV crimes and another specialized unit within the MoJ to prosecute SGBV cases, holding perpetrators accountable is weak. This is due mainly to limited capacity to gather and store evidence for prosecution. In the absence of forensic evidence, the court relies on witnesses and in many instances people are not willing to testify due mainly to social and family pressure.

## **4. Policy Framework:**

**4.1 Coordination is fragmented:** Even though there is a One Joint SGBV programme, officials of the MOGCSP mentioned that coordination in the implementation of the One Joint SGBV Programme was a challenge in terms of information sharing on which institution is doing what and in which location.

**5. Causes:** The following factors combined were identified as the causes of VAW:

**5.1 Economic Insecurity of Women:** In households where women depend largely on the income from men to manage the homes,<sup>2</sup> women are more likely to bear and accept the burden of violence for fear that if the men leave, they do not have the financial means to take care of the children.

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Maputo Protocol, and the ECOWAS Supplementary Act on promoting equality of rights between men and women for sustainable development.

<sup>2</sup> This information came from responses from Key Informant Interviews and corroborated by women focus group discussants.

**5.2 Uneven power relations:** Most of the decision-making structures at community level are dominated by men.<sup>3</sup> Some of the structures include Parents Teachers Association, District Development Committees, Council of Elders, This makes it difficult for women's issues including violence to be heard or addressed.

**5.3 Excessive intake of alcohol:** 78.9% of respondents irrespective of age, location and gender agreed that the excessive consumption of alcohol increases the risk level of violence against women in communities, particularly domestic violence. This finding is reinforced by the outcome of another study done in 2016 which stated that the intake of excessive alcohol by males increases the risk of them acting violently on women.<sup>4</sup>

**5.4 Traditional practices and beliefs:** The operations of most of the traditional practices are marked by a great deal of secrecy. Furthermore, the culture dictates that sexual relationship between men and women are not to be discussed in public and this places immense social pressure not to report cases of rape or domestic violence.

**5.5 Socialization of society:** Social acceptability of violence against women is widespread and is reinforced by the negative perception or interpretation society has developed about the dress code of women coupled with an increase in inter-generational sex.

**5.6 SGBV interventions have been largely women focused:** Initial SGBV interventions had been women focused leaving the men out who are the perpetrators of the act. The exclusion of men has sent an implicit message that giving voice to women will take away men's power.

**6. Consequences:** The consequences identified did not come from victims or survivors but rather from individuals who worked with them because survivors were not available for interview.

**6.1 Contraction of HIV/AIDS:** The contraction of HIV/AIDS by women and girls who are raped is usually an unintended consequence because in many instances they do not know the health status of the perpetrators.

**6.2 Economic Hardship:** Women who are subjected to violence including domestic violence and rape are more likely to experience economic hardship because they miss out on work.<sup>5</sup>

**6.3 Physical injury:** Physical injuries are usually associated with violence against women especially domestic violence. The injuries can be minor but in other instances they can lead to life deformation.

**6.4 Emotional stress on children:** Children who witness domestic violence experience some form of emotional stress and are more likely to see this as a normal behavior.

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<sup>3</sup> This finding emerged from women civil society organizations working VAW issues in the counties targeted for this study.

<sup>4</sup> <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

<sup>5</sup> Response from the survey and corroborated by information from Key Informant Interviews

**6.5 Trauma:** Women and girls who experience violence, notably rape tend to be a state of shock, denial and withdrawn.

**6.6 Stigma and social exclusion:** Women and girls who experience rape go through stigma and face social exclusion. These are two of the major reasons why they opt not to report an incident of rape.

## **7.0 Key Recommendations:**

### **7.1 For CSOs:**

**7.1.1 Hold government accountable:** As part of its advocacy role, CSOs are challenged to ask government the hard questions and to hold the government accountable in implementing treaties and protocols that it has ratified and to also call on the government to make public the Supplementary Act of ECOWAS on equal rights of women and men.

**7.1.2 Advocate for the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill:** CSOs should see the election year as an opportunity to advocate and lobby the legislature for the passage of the draft Domestic Violence Bill and make the bill an election issue and bring women on board.

**7.1.3 Design holistic and long-term programming:** In order to engender change, SGBV interventions need to be holistic, developed with the inputs from communities, driven by communities, inclusive of men, and consider incentives for women to report.

**7.1.4 Strengthen community solidarity:** Engender a social capital component in engagement with communities so that this value can be re-awakened and demonstrated because it is at the core of sustainable engagement on SGBV programmes.

**7.1.5 Organize media campaign:** Design a public campaign on the relationship between alcohol and VAW using multi-dimensional communication tool.

### **7.2 For UNMIL and International Partners:**

**7.2.1** In order to improve the quality of prosecution, provide the MoJ with forensic equipment and training to strengthen the government's capacity to present credible evidence in court thereby increasing the likelihood of more convictions.

### **7.3 For IBIS and other International Partners:**

**7.3.1** Develop an advocacy strategy to engage the AU and ECOWAS to pressurize the Government of Liberia to domesticate the protocols and conventions Liberia has signed in the prevention of violence against women.

**7.3.2** Strike a programmatic balance between prevention and dealing with some of the psychological consequences women and girls experience as a result of violence.

7.3.3 Work with CSOs partners to develop a basic legal literacy program to reach out to communities educating them on international and regional protocols as well as creating awareness on their steps on the referral path of SGBV.

7.3.4 Provide technical and financial resources for CSOs working on FGM to gain experience from other organizations in the region that have demonstrated success in working on this sensitive issue.

**7.4 For Government:**

7.4.1 As the lead government agency on SGBV, the MoGCSP should improve on the current coordination framework so that information sharing among institutions working on VAW can be strengthened.

7.4.2 Harmonize Customary and Statutory laws so that communities can avoid or limit the use of traditional practices to handle sexual violence cases.

7.4.3 Demonstrate political commitment in fighting violence against women by passing into law the Domestic Violence Act.

## 1.0 Background:

After nearly fourteen (14) years of peace, Violence Against Women (VAW) remains one of the most pressing human rights issues currently facing Liberian society. According to the United Nations Human Rights report of 2016, rape, which is a form of violence, is the second most serious reported crime in Liberia.<sup>6</sup> The United Nations (UN) defines Violence Against Women (VAW) “as any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual and mental harm, or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation liberty, whether occurring in private or public life”.<sup>7</sup>

This definition includes rape, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and domestic violence and raises broader issues around the protection and promotion of the fundamental rights of women. Furthermore, the UN Declaration on the elimination of violence against women states: “Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women” and “violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into subordinate position compared with men”.<sup>8</sup>

The inability to adequately provide security for women within Liberia, at the personal and community levels, significantly undermines the effectiveness of future socio-economic development. To create significant long-lasting change and sustainable development the government and organizations working to prevent violence against women in the country need to create mechanisms that are contextually specific in order to address the underlying causes that allow violence against women to permeate in society.

Perpetrators of VAW in Liberia are rarely held to account for their actions. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) statistical report of 2015 from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) revealed that only two per cent of all SGBV cases reported to GBV Response Actors (Health facilities, NGOs and LNP/WACPS) resulted in a conviction. While women experience other forms of violence including domestic, rape is given more visibility.

Prison data as of June 2016 showed that Courts convicted 34 individuals for rape in all of Liberia in 2015, out of over 803 reported cases that year. While many alleged perpetrators were arrested, prosecution rarely took place due to the combination of the following factors: inadequate documentation of rape cases to adduce strong evidence in court, slow pace at which cases are trial by the courts, institutional inadequacies of state agencies, deeply rooted societal norms, attitudes and behaviors towards women, and logistical constraints within the Liberian National Police (LNP). These combined factors have contributed immensely to a culture of impunity for SGBV, notably for rape, thereby increasing the risk for women and girls to be sexually abused.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LR/SGBV\\_ReportLiberia\\_October2016.docx](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LR/SGBV_ReportLiberia_October2016.docx)

<sup>7</sup> See: [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/)

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence\\_against\\_women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence_against_women)

This report is divided into six sections. The first section describes the methodology used to conduct the research and its limitations. The second section deals with desk review. Under this section, reports of past research on SGBV in Liberia were reviewed and key findings flagged. The third section provides an overview of the context. This includes an analysis of the legal, policy and institutional framework intended to deal with issues around SGBV. The fourth section focuses on the analysis of the data collected from the field and this includes a triangulation of information in order to verify and validate the reliability of the data. The fifth section deals with core recommendations intended to influence policy and design programmes that are comprehensive and responsive targeting different responders. The last section is the conclusion and it reinforces the core problems identified in the research as they relate to impunity and the protection of the rights of women.

## **2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

**2.1 Purpose:** According to the study's Term of Reference (ToR) the purpose of this research is to conduct a national study on the 'Causes and Consequences of Violence Against Women (VAW) and gather evidence for for advocacy towards the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and African Union (AU).

**2.2 Objectives:** In pursuit of the purpose, the research had the following objectives:

1. Coordinate and support the research work in collaboration with a Oxfam IBIS Liberia and Technical Committee (TC) of civil society and development organizations working on preventing gender-based violence and women's rights in Liberia
2. Conduct desk study and document the causes and consequences of Violence Against Women (VAW) in Liberia.
3. Facilitate the collection of primary data on the causes and consequences of Violence Against Women (VAW) in Liberia in nine (9) counties, including Montserrado, Margibi, Lofa, Nimba, Gbarpolu, RiverCess, Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, and RiverGee.
4. Develop research report outlining the causes and consequences of Violence Against Women (VAW) in Liberia and advance critical recommendations for advocacy and influencing policy decisions of ECOWAS and AU.
5. Develop fact sheets with summarized data that can be used for advocacy messaging
6. Produce a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research data base.

### **2.3 Scope of Work (SoW):**

The consultant provided leadership and managed the research process from the design of survey instruments to the administration of the research tools and the analysis and writing of the report as well as presenting the findings at a one-day validation. Other tasks performed by the consultant included:

- An in-depth review of relevant national and regional programme documentations
- Engagement with IBIS programme team, technical committee and civil society partners
- Conducted country context/situational analysis
- Developed quantitative and qualitative research instruments
- Conducted pre-testing of relevant research instruments
- Calculated sample universe and derive sample size
- Carried out collection of primary and secondary information and data
- Conducted data analysis and interpretations
- Developed draft research report and required annexes
- Facilitated a validation workshop of draft research report
- Developed final research report and required annexes
- Submitted two (2) versions of electronic and printed copies of final research report

**3.0 Methodology:** The research methodology comprised the following distinct yet inter-related actions.

**3.1 Design:**

Research data was gathered using the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. The quantitative tool was comprised of a desk review and a survey of 1,200 respondents, 683 females and 517 males (See annex A for survey questionnaire). Documents reviewed included the 1986 Constitution, statutes relevant to the topic under discussion, policy documents on SGBV, international and regional treaties and protocols, annual reports of key government institutions working on SGBV, programme documents, and previous research conducted by other institutions. The survey was administered in nine of the fifteen counties that were included in the Terms of Reference (ToR). Respondents for the survey were randomly selected from different households in selected districts per county. IBIS-Liberia had an opportunity to contribute to the development of the research instruments. The survey tool was pre-tested in the community during the training and feedback from the pre-testing was integrated into the final version of the survey.

Under the qualitative component, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held per county, one targeting all males and the other was all women discussants (See Annex B for FGD questions. Additional information was collected using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) targeting leaders of women’s led Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), UN Agencies, government institutions, and donors.

**3.2 Sample universe and deriving sampling size:**

The total sample size was a representative sample of males and females 18 years and above as reflected in the 2008 National Housing and Population Census Report. The number of sample size was determined by the application of this equation:  $N = (z * z * p(1-p)) / d$  where:

- N = Sample Size
- P=Proportion of population
- Z= Confidence level
- D= Standard Error

From the application of the above equation, the sample size was proportioned based on the population of each county which amounted to 1,200 total acceptable sample size. This proportion is considered as an acceptable sample per county with an error margin of + or – 5 (See table below)

**FINAL SAMPLE SIZE**

**TABLE:**

COUNTY NAME	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	ACCEPTABLE SIZE
Gbarpolu	22,433	19,271	41,704	38
Grand Gedeh	34,202	32,426	66,628	62

Lofa	62,945	75,243	138,188	129
Margibi	53,981	52,847	106,828	100
Montserrado	297,854	297,452	595,306	555
Nimba	106,112	117,518	223,630	208
River Cess	17,879	17,433	35,312	33
Sinoe	26,818	23,758	50,576	47
River Gee	15,124	14,794	29,918	28
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1,288,090</b>	<b>1200</b>

### 3.3 Training of Enumerators:

Data collectors were selected based on the following criteria: ability to speak the major local language in the county of assignment, completion of high, a university student, or completed university, and past experience in administering surveys and FGDs. There were 12 data collectors (6 men and 6 women) who went through a two day training held in Kakata, Margibi County. Topics that covered during the following included:

- Household sampling methodology;
- Community entry;
- Ethics and confidentiality in conducting research;
- Interviewing protocols, skills and techniques and review of the instruments;
- Use of Tablets to conduct survey;
- Testing and validation of survey.

### 3.4 Deployment of Enumerators:

A deployed plan was developed. The data collectors were grouped into two teams comprising six persons per team. One team administered the instruments in four counties and the other team managed another four counties. The two teams combined and administered the survey in Montserrado that had the largest sample size. The enumerators were monitored by a supervisor who called the data collectors two times a day to check on what was taking place in the field and to help deal with any emerging challenges.

**3.5 Limitations:** Due to the stigmatization of the survivors of SGBV and the reluctance of some survivors to report cases, the numbers contained in this report could be under-stated. To address this, the research counted on well documented secondary sources for additional information. Figures on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) could not be attained due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Respondents could not be asked if they underwent FGM but rather they were asked on their perception of traditional cultural practices.

### 3.6 Data Analysis:

The process used to analyze the information from the different research instruments was triangulation. For the FGDs, the analysis sought to identify patterns and trends in the responses provided by different categories of respondents but to also look for differences in the responses. This approach was similarly applied to the responses gathered from the KIIs. The data from the survey was processed in excel tables and extrapolated into graphs. Analysis of the responses in

the excel format looked for dominant views expressed by the respondents but significant differences of opinion were also sought disaggregated along location, age and gender lines.

## 4.0 Desk Review:

This desk review seeks to compile previously conducted research from other organizations regarding the issue of violence against women in Liberia. Data collected from other organizations have been analyzed to allow the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG) to make accurate and informed recommendations for appropriate intervention for the reduction of violence against women. As well, this review will provide context to some of the systematic issues that Liberia faces when attempting to address violence against women.

### 4.1 Victims of Violence:

Research from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) illustrates that women and girls of all ages are susceptible to violence.<sup>9</sup> Although, MoGCSP's data demonstrates that women and girls of various ages are more likely to experience different types of violence. Females under the age of 18 were more likely to experience rape and sexual assault than women over 18. In 274 out of 305 cases of rape of a female reported to MoGCSP the victim was under the age of 18. Similarly, girls under 18 represented 56 out of the 64 cases of sexual assault recorded. On the other hand, women above the age of 18 are more likely to experience physical forms of violence. 70 of the 88 cases of physical assault/domestic violence and 40 of the 43 cases of denial of resources involved women over the age of 18.<sup>10</sup> Data collected by the Ministry demonstrates that protection for women and girls needs to be addressed at all ages (See Table 1 below for details).

**TABLE 1: GBV INCIDENT BY AGE AND SEX**

GBV Incident by Age and Sex														
Age	0 - 5 yrs		6 - 12 yrs		13 - 17 yrs		18 - 25 yrs		> 25 yrs		Age Unknown		Total	
Violation/ Sex	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Child Abuse	1	-	5	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	10	-
Denial of Resources	1	-	-	-	2	-	11	-	25	-	4	-	43	-
Physical Assault/D. Violence	3	-	5	-	6	4	32	2	41	1	1	-	88	7
Emotional Abuse	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Gang Rape	1	-	4	-	10	1	5	-	2	-	-	-	22	1
Rape	25	-	66	-	184	1	19	-	8	-	3	-	305	1
Sexual Assault	18	-	18	-	20	-	4	-	3	-	1	-	64	-
Sodomy	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	49	-	98	-	225	6	72	2	79	1	11	-	534	10

<sup>9</sup> This is the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection third quarterly report of 2016

<sup>10</sup> ibid

In a study published by Small Arms Survey (SAS) in 2012 found that the highest incidents of sexual violence and domestic violence experienced by men and women occurred in the home.<sup>11</sup> According to the research, 57.7% of Gender Based Violence (GBV) occurs while the victim is at home. A neighbor's/friend's home was the second most reported location for victims to experience violence. The majority of the time the victim knows the perpetrator, with 77.5% of victims stating that they knew who their attacker was. Improving security for women at home can reduce the potential violence that women face. According to the report released by the SAS, some believe gender-based violence stems not only from cultural traditions predating the war, but also "cases are sometimes related to 'ritualistic practices' and beliefs that sexual intercourse with a virgin can lead to professional and financial success."<sup>12</sup>

#### **4.2 Feelings of Security:**

Perceptions of security by individuals within a community can greatly affect the day to day lives of women living in Liberia. The ability for actively participate in political, economic, and social events free from harm is essential for development. The SAS report highlights the feelings of security felt by men and women in their communities. Slightly more than 20 percent of female respondents reported feeling either 'Unsafe' or 'Very Unsafe' in their communities, while approximately 69% of women reported feeling either 'Safe' or 'Very Safe'. Beyond an individual's own safety, they often worry about the safety of those in their household. 61% of women and 62% of men worried that male and female members of their family might be the victim of a crime or violence.

However, when comparing worry about just males or just females, women were worried about most often, by 32% of women and 31% of men. Compared to just 6% by both genders worry only about males. While men and women had little variation between who they worried about, there was a larger variance between where people felt their family members were unsafe. 81.9% of women worried about family members while the family members were at home, while only 67.1% of men responded similarly. Although the concerns about family members out in public was similar between men and women, 9.2% for women and 7.5% for men, there was a variation between men and women on 'General security concerns', with concerns being reported by only 8.9% of women compared to the 25.4% of men. Understanding where people feel most insecure lends insights into the potential areas where victimization occurs. Similarly, expressed perceived insecurities provide the opportunity for organizations to create programming designed to target areas of greatest insecurity, in an attempt to reduce levels of stress and anxiety by individuals.

#### **4.3 Sexual Assault:**

Since the beginning of the civil war rape has been a prevalent form of violence experienced by Liberian women. One World Health Organization study found that, varying by country, between 61.4% - 77.4% of women had experienced rape at some point during or after the civil war (SAS). The fluidity and lack of adequate security mechanisms during the conflict increased the

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<sup>11</sup> The report: Liberia Armed Violence Assessment: Peace without Security can accessed at [www.smallarmssurvey.org/about-us/highlights/highlight-liberia-ib3.html](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/about-us/highlights/highlight-liberia-ib3.html)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

vulnerability for women to be victimized. Today, rape remains the most commonly reported form of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Liberia (MGCSP1). From July – September 2016 the MoGCSP received 305 reports of rape from 13 of the 15 counties in the country. Rape represented 57% of the total gender based violence incidents recorded during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. As mentioned above, rape and sexual assault are the most common forms of violence experienced by girls under the age of 18. Rape and sexual assault continues to be the most prolific form of violence that Liberian women and girls face.

#### **4.4 Physical Assault/Domestic Violence:**

Physical assault and domestic violence represented 16% of the cases reported to the MoGCSP. The complex familial nature of domestic violence means that incidents often go unreported. While some girls did experience physical assault and domestic violence, the majority of victims were women over 18. The report from SAS states that societal and cultural norms have accepted the normalization of domestic violence, allowing it to become a common occurrence in many Liberian households.

Research from Liberia’s 2013 Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS) illustrates the acceptability of domestic violence by the male and female populations.<sup>13</sup> Five hypothetical scenarios were proposed to respondents, who were then asked if the scenario was an acceptable reason for a man to commit violence against his wife. Of those surveyed, 43 percent of women agreed that it was acceptable for a man to beat his wife for at least one of the five scenarios, while only 23 percent of men supported violence against a wife. The Demographic and Health Survey demonstrates a correlation that education, economic status, age, and gender all play an important role in shaping perceptions about the acceptability of domestic violence. Older, wealthier, and higher educated individuals were less likely to share the view that men had a right to beat their wives. To reduce the levels of violence against women in the home and work places, organizations cannot rely solely on creating awareness on the seriousness of the matter but to develop interventions that would change the violent attitudes and behaviors of individuals and communities on domestic violence and its consequences on women’s peace and security.

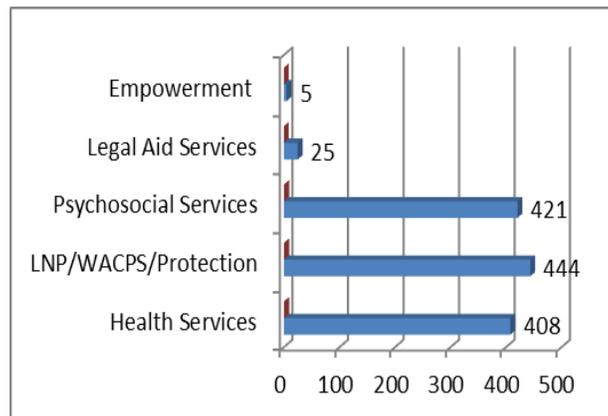
#### **4.5 Services Provided to Victims:**

Providing services to victims is essential for reducing the negative physical, emotional and mental consequences of experiencing violence. Accurately referring victims to services is pivotal to ensuring that victims have the information necessary to receive treatment. 77% of victims were referred to psychosocial services and 75% were referred to medical facilities. Fortunately, 65% of victims were able to receive medical treatment, with the most common form of treatment being STI combined with psychosocial counseling, at 18%. While medical and psychosocial services have reached a large percentage of victims, more resources need to be dedicated to improving the empowerment and access to legal aid services for victims (See Chart Below).

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<sup>13</sup> [dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr291-dhs-final-reports.cfm](https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr291-dhs-final-reports.cfm)

**CHART 1: SERVICES PROVIDED TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE:**



#### **4.6 Criminal Justice and the Government:**

The Criminal Justice System (CJS) still lacks the adequate ability to prosecute offenders of GBV. MGCSP reported that 12% of offenders were apprehended, with only 1% of total offenders being convicted (MoGCSP1). However, the capacity of the government to begin to process these cases has increased.

In the MoGCSp 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report of 2016, 88% of the cases reported were referred to the Liberian National Police (LNP). In contrast, only 68% of victims were referred to the LNP during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Even though referrals have increased, resources allocation need to be targeted at improving conviction rates to separate offenders from communities.

In 2006 the Gender Based Violence Interagency Task Force (GBVITF) produced the *National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender Based Violence in Liberia*. This \$15,225,000 project was created to mitigate the high levels of gender based violence that were prevalent throughout Liberia at the end of the civil war. Lasting five years, the program was a commitment by the Liberian government to implement strategies that increase security for women. The strategic goals for the program are as follows:

A system and outreach service in place for psycho-social support, including safe homes and economic empowerment for survivors of GBV, including SEA. 7 Gender Based Violence National Plan of Action:

- A strengthened health sector for effective and efficient response to GBV case management, diagnostic, documentation and reporting on clinical evidence.
- A strengthened criminal justice system where cases of Gender Based Violence are judiciously adjudicated without delay, and where due process is given to survivors and perpetrators of GBV.
- A well developed and integrated national protection system with the capacity to prevent and respond effectively and efficiently to GBV.

- A strengthened institutional framework for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the National GBV Plan of Action for the prevention and case management of GBV, including SEA.
- The Liberian Government's national plan for action demonstrates the recognition of the need for the improved security of women after the civil war. The five strategic goals are designed to strengthen multiple sectors necessary to reducing the causes and consequences of violence against women.

## 5. Legal, Institutional and Policy Framework:

### 5.1 International Legal Framework

Liberia has ratified several international human rights treaties and instruments<sup>14</sup> and is a party to 16 major protocols and conventions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)<sup>15</sup> and other regional human rights instruments.<sup>16</sup> By signing on to these regional and international instruments, Liberia has made a political commitment and is under obligation to protect, promote and respect the rights of all persons within its territorial boundaries without discrimination.

Domestic violence and rape are forms of gender-based violence and a manifestation of human rights violations that run counter to most of the instruments ratified by Liberia. As a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the “Maputo Protocol”, it is legally binding on Liberia to demonstrate its commitment and due care to combat gender-based violence and discrimination against women. As such, Liberia is under obligation to take all appropriate measures to prevent rape and mitigate the risk of individuals who are susceptible violence, notably women and girls. Under general human rights law, the failure of the state to protect the rights of its citizens and residents is a violation by omission and therefore in breach of human rights instruments that it has acceded to.

The ECOWAS supplementary Act on the Equality between men and women deals with a wide range of governance, political, and human rights issues facing women and Chapter Seven (7) specifically deals with VAW. Article 23 (a) and (b) of Chapter 7 contain strong languages on prevention of violence against women but also on punishment for perpetrators. Those provisions call on member States to:

- (a) adopt laws prohibiting all forms of gender-based violence, and ensure their enforcement;
- (b) ensure that the perpetrators of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation and all other forms of gender-based violence are brought before a court of competent jurisdiction and punished accordingly.

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<sup>14</sup> Some of those treaties include: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (2004), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (2004), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) (1993), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1984), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1990), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2012), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1976)

<sup>15</sup> In June 2016, Liberia ratified 16 ECOWAS protocols and conventions but none of the 16 included VAW even though Liberia has acceded in 2015 to a Supplementary Act of ECOWAS entitled of rights between men and women for sustainable development of ECOWAS Region.

<sup>16</sup> The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) (1982), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (2007), and the Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women in Africa (the “Maputo Protocol”) (2007).

Article 23 (2) of the same Chapter guarantees that Member States shall adopt laws on gender-based violence that provide for testing, treatment and care of victims of sexual offenses. This provision goes further to say that: Victims of sexual offences shall have access, in particular, to:

- (a) emergency medical care and treatment;
- (b) post-exposure treatment/prophylaxis in all health centers so as to reduce any risk of contracting HIV and other opportunistic infections;
- (c) treatment for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections;
- (d) justice, through the enforcement of criminal laws on gender-based violence and the provision of the appropriate remedies.

### **5.1.1 Implication of International Legal Frameworks**

International and regional human rights and governance frameworks broaden the accountability mechanisms for governments that accede or ratify those instruments. The accountability process can be horizontal, between member states and vertical wherein citizens can hold their government to account. The accession and ratification of international and regional protocols can be operationalized if the signed instruments are domesticated so that they do not come in conflict with the Constitution or other statutes. The main challenge is that most countries, including Liberia ratified numerous international and regional instruments but do not cultivate the political will to domesticate the instruments and without domestication implementation is difficult and holding them to account becomes a challenge.

### **5.2 National Legal Framework**

The Liberian Constitution of 1986 contains a number of fundamental human rights that may be violated by sexual and other forms of violence, including the right to life and security of person, the right to equality before the law and equal protection of the law, and the prohibition of torture or inhumane treatment.<sup>17</sup> The Constitution also prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of these and other rights on the basis of sex.<sup>18</sup>

The 2005 Rape Law of Liberia is progressive and it defines rape as “the intentional penetration however slight with the perpetrator’s penis of the victim’s vagina, anus, mouth, or other opening without the victim’s consent, or the intentional penetration with a foreign object or other body part of the victim’s vagina or anus without the victim’s consent.”<sup>19</sup> This definition makes the law gender-law neutral making provisions for both male and female victims and perpetrators. The law makes the age of consent as 18 and defines consent in a broad manner, providing that a

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<sup>17</sup> Article 11 paragraphs (a) and (c) and Article 21 paragraph (e)

<sup>18</sup> Article 11 paragraph (b)

<sup>19</sup> Section 14.70.1

person consents if he or she does so by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.<sup>20</sup>

The Penal Code also addresses rape, including Aggravated Involuntary Sodomy<sup>21</sup>, Involuntary Sodomy<sup>22</sup>, Corruption of Minors<sup>23</sup> and Sexual Abuse of a Ward.<sup>24</sup> The Act of 2008 amending Title 17 of the Judiciary Law of 1972 provides for the establishment of Criminal Court “E”, which has exclusive original jurisdiction over sexual offences in Montserrado County. The Act also provides for the creation of Sexual Crimes Divisions within the circuit courts of the remaining 14 counties of Liberia to deal exclusively with sexual crimes. These divisions are yet to be established.

The 2011 Children’s Law enshrines human rights and contains provisions for the protection of children from sexual violence. The Act further mandates the MOGCSP and the Ministry of Health (MoH) to take share responsibility for protecting children in vulnerable situations from sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. Liberia has no law on domestic violence. A draft Domestic Violence Bill of 2016 is under consideration by the national legislature. If passed in its current form, it will provide additional legal sanctions for sexual violence by explicitly criminalizing spousal rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by any close relative of the victim. The passage of the Bill is also stalled due to the sensitive nature of making Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) a human right violation.

### **5.2.1 Implication of National legal Framework**

The Constitution is the supreme law of the country. In addition to the Constitution, there are statutes that are created from time to time by the Legislature to respond to critical national issues or to domesticate a particular international convention or protocol signed by the Government. Any statute that is repugnant to the Constitution is considered unlawful. Sometimes, some of the statutes are not consistent with provisions of other statutes in addressing certain matters. For instance, the 2011 National Children’s Act sets the marriage age for all persons at 18, while the Domestic Relations Act sets the minimum marriage age at 21 for men and 18 for women. The Equal Rights of the Traditional Marriage Act of 1998 permits a girl to marry at age 16. With these inconsistencies, it makes it challenging for enforcement. In addition to this problem, most communities in the rural parts of the country subscribe to customary laws in resolving disputes including sexual violence, which often comes into conflict with the statutes.

### **5.3 Institutional Framework:**

The SGBV Crimes Unit (SGBVCU) operates under the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and oversees the prosecution of sexual offenses at Criminal Court “E” and at the regional justice and security hubs.<sup>25</sup> As of February 2017, the Unit was staffed with eight prosecutors, four Case Liaison officers (CLOs), two social

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<sup>20</sup> Section 14.70.3(b)(i).

<sup>21</sup> Section 14.72,

<sup>22</sup> Section 14.73

<sup>23</sup> Section 14.75

<sup>24</sup> Section 14.76

<sup>25</sup> The regional justice and security hubs are the Government’s efforts to decentralize access to justice and security services across the country. The first hub was established in Gbarnga in 2013 and covers Bong, Nimba and Lofa Counties and there are plans to establish four additional regional hubs covering the whole country.

workers, and several administrative and financial staff. The MoJ has assigned trained SGBV prosecutors in eight counties and established an SGBV sub-unit in the Gbarnga hub. The Women and Children Protection Sections (WACPS) of the LNP also operate under the supervision of the MoJ. The Sections are staffed by officers with limited training to handle cases of sexual violence. UNMIL has provided advisory support and assisted in the construction of victim/survivors friendly rooms in some areas but many LNP depots still lack such facilities.

There is a SGBV Unit within the MOGCSP with a mandate to monitor and report on cases of SGBV throughout the country. It shares information with the MoJ to recommend cases for prosecution. It also serves as the secretariat for the Gender-Based Violence Inter-agency Task Force, which brings together UN, government, and local and international NGOs to address pressing gender-based violence issues in the country. While the establishment of these bodies and mechanisms is a step in the right direction, most have not been able to effectively address SGBV including prevention and accountability largely due to weak coordination mechanism, lack of cooperation and information sharing by international NGOs with the SGBV Unit<sup>26</sup>, capacity constraints and the lack of resources.

### 5.3.1 Implication of Institutional Frameworks

The government of Liberia has made some efforts in establishing the institutional framework to respond to cases of VAW. Ongoing capacity strengthening programs are important in order for these institutions to function effectively. A strong legal framework cannot respond effectively to issues of VAW if the institutional framework is weak.

### 5.4 Policy Framework:

Since the ushering in of this government, several national policies have been formulated with the aim of addressing sexual violence. These include:

- The *National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (2009);
- The *National Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy* (2010), provide for access to quality health services for survivors of sexual violence and the establishment of a reporting mechanism to facilitate intra-governmental coordination in the management of SGBV cases;
- The *National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Management of Gender Based Violence in Liberia* (2011-2015);
- The National Gender Policy (2012);
- The Reconciliation Roadmap (2012), incorporating recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to enhance women's psychosocial recovery and economic empowerment as a form of redress for sexual violence;
- The Agenda for Transformation (2012), makes provisions to address gender-based violence and empower women in multiple sectors and to enhance the protection of children from violence and abuse;<sup>27</sup>
- The *National Human Rights Action Plan of Liberia* (2013), which incorporates recommendations in addressing SGBV; and
- The third Joint Programme of the Government of Liberia and the United Nations on SGBV and Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP), launched in 2016 and it ends in 2020.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview conducted with a Senior Staff of the Unit at the MOGSCP.

<sup>27</sup> See Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs: Agenda for Transformation (AfT); Steps toward Liberia Rising 2030, pages 119-122.

The programme serves as the national framework for driving the government's efforts in addressing issues of VAW. The programme has five distinct yet inter-related pillars. Pillar one addresses broad issues around prevention. Pillar two deals with the different layers of response. Pillar three highlights the need for institutional strengthening. Pillar four focuses on advocacy and social mobilization. The last pillar deals with coordination, building synergy and conducting joint monitoring.

#### **5.4.1 Implication of Policy Frameworks:**

Through these legal, policy and institutional frameworks, the government is demonstrating a commitment to address VAW. The laws and policies are strong. However, the reality on the grounds shows that there has been a steady increase of the problem over the past three years. In 2014, according to statistics provided by MOGCSP, 708 cases of rape, including gang rape, were reported to law enforcement officials, health care providers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In 2015, this number rose to 803.<sup>28</sup> These numbers could be higher because there are cases that are reported directly to the Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS) of the LNP that are not captured in the MOGCSP report.

The third quarter report of 2016 from the MoGCSP shows that there were a total of 534 SGBV cases from 13 of the 15 counties in the country. Of this number, 305 were rape cases, 88 domestic violence cases and 64 sexual assault cases. The full report for 2016 was not completed when the field work of the study was done.

At the beginning of the year 2016, there were 137 SGBV cases on the court's docket. At Criminal Court E, 14 sexual violence cases were prosecuted which resulted into 11 convictions.<sup>29</sup> This means that on the average, 3-4 cases are prosecuted per court term. During the same period, 114 rape cases from Montserrado County were documented by the SGBVCU there were 112 female victims and 2 male victims. Similarly, the Unit received a total number of 124 domestic violence cases from Montserrado County. Of this number, 96 complaints were transferred from the MOGCSP, 13 reported by WACPS, and 15 complaints reported by complainants themselves.

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<sup>28</sup> These figures were referenced in the United Nations Human Rights Report of 2016 with link: [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LR/SGBV\\_ReportLiberia\\_October2016.docx](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LR/SGBV_ReportLiberia_October2016.docx)

<sup>29</sup> See Annual Project Report from January to December 2016 of the SGBVCU

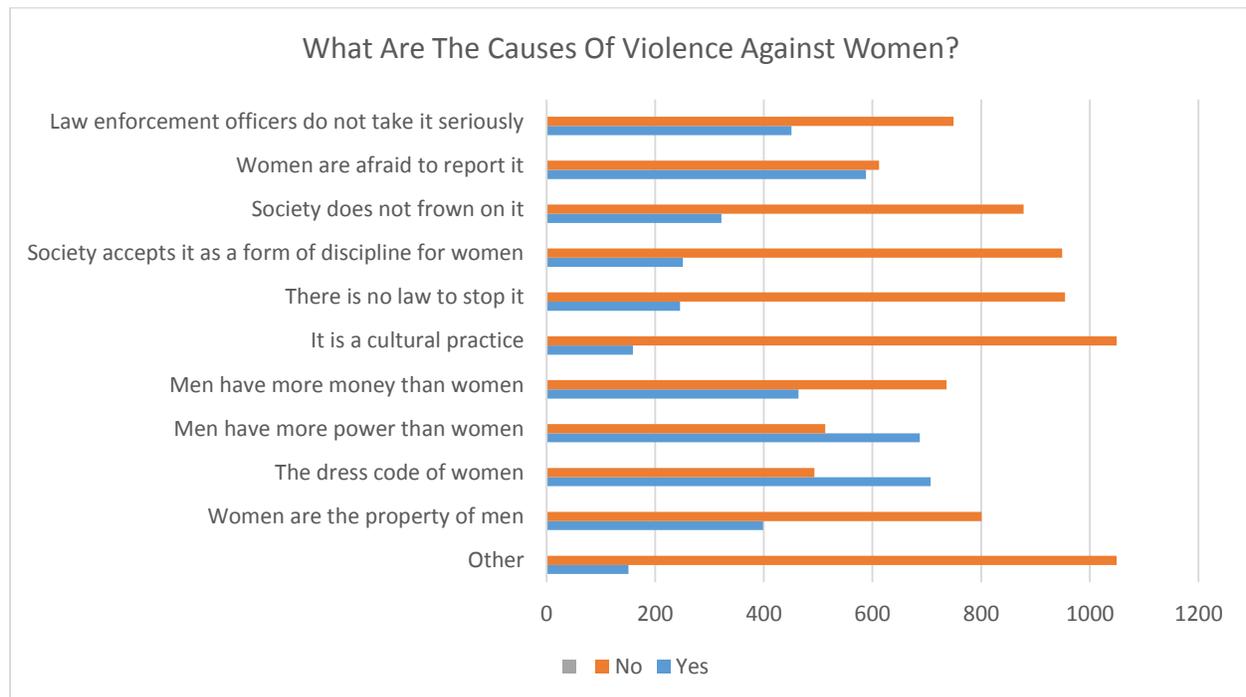
## 5. Key Findings Analysis:

5.1 Respondents were asked a fundamental question: What is Violence Against Women (VAW)? They had the option of selecting multiple answers. 92.6% chose domestic violence, 92% identified rape and 76% named sexual assault. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was not mentioned as violence against women. When disaggregated by gender, 94.3% of men selected rape as a form of violence against women as compared to women (90.3%). In the same vein, 93.3% of women named domestic violence as compared to 90.8% of men.

### 5.2 Causes of violence against women:

When asked to identify the causes of violence against women, 61.3% of the total respondents stated that men have more power (physical strength) than women, followed by 58.9% who said that the dress code of women entice men, while 57.3% mentioned men having more money than women and 56% said women are afraid to report. Interestingly, 86.7% of respondents said that the cause of violence against women is not attributed to cultural practices and 79.1% said it is not a form of discipline for women. 79.5% of respondents said there is law to stop violence against women (See graph below). In Focus Group Discussions, both men and women discussants identified three main causes of violence against women. They named the inability for women to earn income and share the cost of running of the home, women are afraid to report incidence of violence due to their socialization, and the lack of enforcement of the law by the government. For example, a woman discussant stated: *“My husband treat me badly and if I report him to anybody he will leave me with the children and we been together for long and if he leaves me, who will take care of the children”*?

**CHART 2: CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**



When disaggregated by gender, there are some slight differences in the responses. 63.1% of women as compared to 53.4% of men think that the dress code of women is a contributing factor. The idea that women are property of men was not identified as a major contributing factor. However, 68.4% of women as compared to men 42.5% said the power relations between men and women contribute to violence against women. At the same time, there was no significant difference between the responses of men and women that cultural practices were responsible.

However, more women, 50.4% unlike men, 47.3% said women are afraid to report cases of violence they experience. This assertion was confirmed in most of the focus group discussions held with women. They claimed that the fear to report is cultural based against the background that the relationship between a man and a woman is private and that issues emanating from that relationship is not for public consumption. In addition to these causes of violence, key informant interviewees also asserted that the exclusion of men from SGBV interventions was putting fear in them that the more women are empowered the less they (men) would lose power and control. Another cause of VAW is the practice of inter-generational sex and the gradual decline of social capital of one family protecting the children of another family.<sup>30</sup>

Respondents were asked how often they hear about violence in their communities<sup>31</sup>. The frequency of violence is generally high as reflected in the table below and occurring 388 times nearly every, followed by 184 times once a month, 174 times once a week, 97 times twice a week and so forth as detailed below in the table 2. The remaining 212 times violence is heard is spread among once every six months, once every six months, and two to three times a month.

**TABLE 2: FREQUENCY OF VIOLENCE HEARD IN COMMUNITIES:**

Counties	Nearly everyday	Once a week	Twice a week	Three times a week	Four times a week	Once a month	Twice a month
Of the total sample of 1,200	388 times	174 times	97 times	55 times	43times	184times	47 times

When respondents were asked what type of violence they often hear about, 43% of respondents named domestic violence as the most frequent type of violence taking place in communities, followed by 23% of respondents who said rape and 20% who identified verbal assaults. 75% of women discussants also identified domestic violence as the most frequent type of violence experienced in communities. According to them, women are beaten when they refuse to have sex with their male partners. The beating takes place when the male partners try to undress them because the women who refuse usually wear jeans trousers in bed as a form of protective mechanism.

These figures are reflective of data gathered from the Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberian National Police (LNP). For the year 2016, the WACPS recorded 1,457 SGBV

<sup>30</sup> These assertions were corroborated from three separate interviews conducted.

<sup>31</sup> Hear in this context means either from news report or discussed in the community

cases.<sup>32</sup> Of this number, 788 cases of domestic violence were recorded, 346 cases of persistent non-support, and 323 cases of rape. When the number of persistent non-support cases is included under domestic violence which is mostly done by the police, the number will increase to 1,134. Domestic violence and persistent non-support cases tend to be trivialized. A woman interviewed said that when cases of this category are reported to the police, the police would ask the woman: “What did you do to the man”? The assumption underpinning this question is that the woman caused the man to beat her which is a reflection of the socialization of the police and the society in which he or she lives.

During the period of 2016, the MoGCSP organized workshops and seminars to combat domestic violence. Despite this effort, the level of domestic violence remains high but it is not given equal visibility, attention and media coverage as done with rape. According to respondents, a wife is most likely to be the victim of beating, followed by a female partner and then a girlfriend. If reported, the issue is often treated as simple assault with a maximum imprisonment of six months. While rape is illegal, the Penal Code does not have a provision to deal with spousal rape.

The most likely victims/survivors of rape, according to the respondents are children under the age of 18 years. This reflects the number of cases prosecuted by the SGBCU. Of the 102 statutory rape cases prosecuted in 2016, 22 resulted into convictions. Unlike rape, the law does not prohibit sexual harassment even though it is considered by respondents to be the fourth most likely form of violence to occur and most probably taking place in schools and places of work.

### **5.3 Effectiveness of services provided when violence against women takes place:**

The police is perceived as making the effort to hear cases of violence against women. Of the 1,070 respondents who answered this question, 496 mentioned that the police is very effective, 346 said somehow effective in hearing cases of violence against women. Similarly, citizens (778 respondents) think that the police is effective in conducting investigation to gather evidence on cases of VAW. Furthermore, citizens have a high rating of the ability for the government to prosecute perpetrators of VAW with 322 saying the government is very effective, 381 mentioned somehow effective. There was no significant difference in the responses between males and females.

While it is true that the number of convictions of SGBV cases is low, under Liberia’s Criminal Procedure Law, the purpose of prosecution is not to convict but to ensure that the accused is accorded due process in a court of law. In addition, respondents think that counseling provided for survivors of violence is effective with 675 responses as compared to 290 persons who said counseling services are not effective at all and 166 who said it is not provided at all.

When asked if they had knowledge on how to seek justice when a family member experiences violence, particularly rape, 88% of respondents irrespective of gender said that they know the process in seeking redress. Respondents appear to know the procedures to follow when a member of their family experiences violence. However, there are others who asserted that most citizens do not have knowledge on the pathway of referral chain in the event of rape.<sup>33</sup> There are

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<sup>32</sup> This figure was gathered from the record and documentation unit of the WACPS

<sup>33</sup> This assertion was made by two women Key Informant Interviewees, one from the UN System and the other from a CSO that deals with women’s issues.

others who claim that they do know the referral path but due to distance and economic hardship, they do not use the path. 56.9% of women as compared to 43.1% of men said they know how to proceed in seeking justice when a family member is affected by violence.

When asked to respond to the statement that women feel safe from violence in their communities, the responses are mixed. Of the 1,200 respondents, 236 strongly agreed that they felt women were safe from violence and 316 agreed. 186 persons expressed an undecided view while 252 disagree that women are safe in communities followed by 210 persons who strongly disagreed. The responses between men and women are slightly different. 51.4% of men as opposed to 48.6% of women strongly agreed that women are safe from violence. On the other hand, more women 63.1% as compared to 36.9% of men are unsure if women are safe from violence. Furthermore, 63.3 % of women disagree while 62.8% of them strongly disagreed that women are safe from violence as opposed to 33.8% of men. This shows that women feel more at risk of violence than how men think.

5.4 A statement was made to respondents that women feel safe walking alone at night. In response to this statement, 68% of respondents disagreed with the statement while 20% are unsure and 12% agreed. Data at the LNP did not contain information on whether violence against women including rape took place at night when walking alone.

5.5 Historical periods favorable and not favorable in protecting the rights of women:

Two historical periods stood out as being favorable in protecting the rights of women and they include the period 2006-2011 with 578 responses and the period 2011 to present with 548 responses. When asked why they chose these periods, over 70% of respondents said that women were seen to be more equal to men, 65% of respondents said women had more economic opportunities, and 90% of respondents mentioned that the government did more to protect the rights of women. When disaggregated by gender, more women 61.3% than men (38.7%) asserted that these periods were more favorable because women were seen to be more equal to me. These responses could be attributed to the fact that country is governed by a Woman President and for a long time in the country's history, more women were holding senior positions in government.

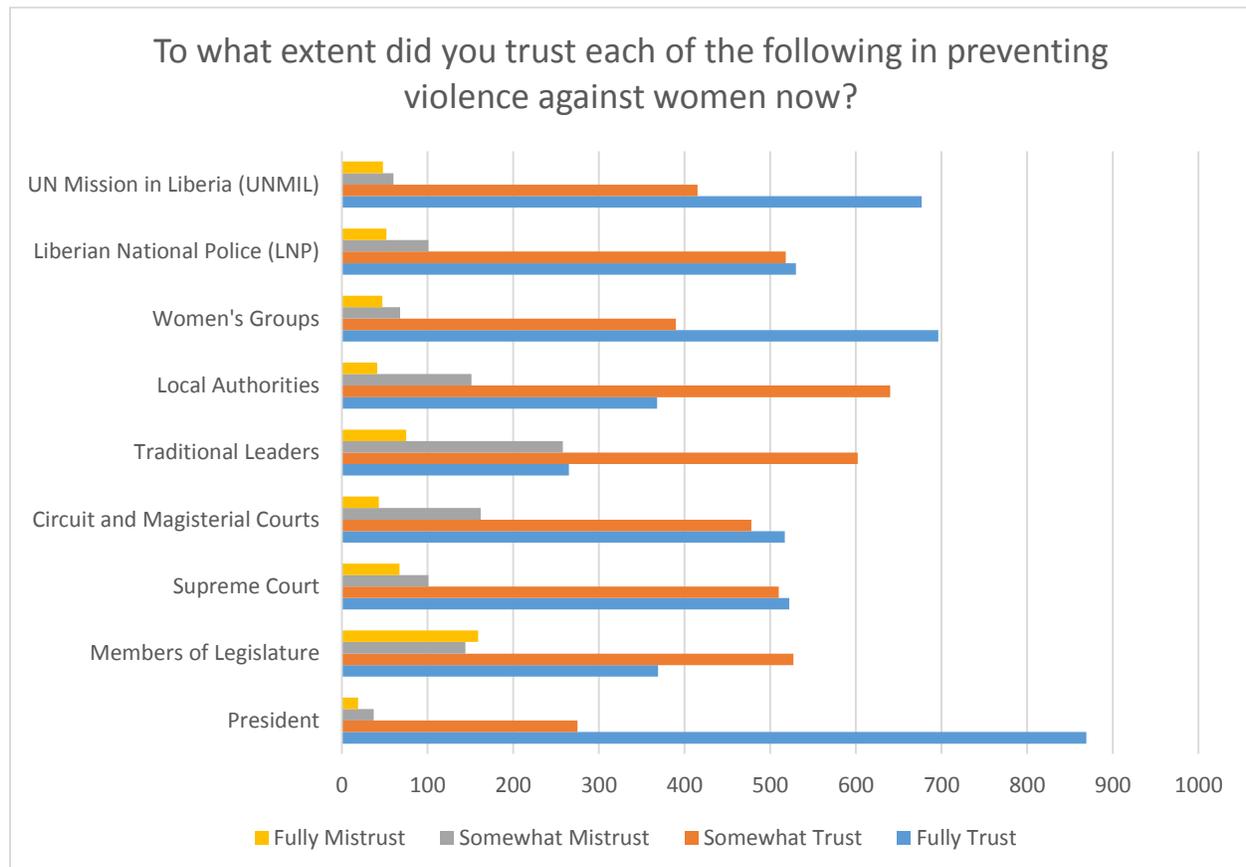
5.6 The extent to which respondents trust the following institutions in preventing violence against women: President, legislature, Courts, Traditional Leaders, Local Authorities, Women's Groups, Liberia National Police and UNMIL Mission.

On the overall, the level of trust in these institutions is somehow positive. The President enjoys a high level of trust, followed by women's groups and UNMIL. The police, which are one of the front liners in protecting women from violence, are not fully trusted (See chart below). This raises some doubt about their performance and level of professionalism. Women discussants from FGDs asserted that when a woman suffers an abuse she runs to the police station to report the case and she gets frustrated by the police asking her to pay money before they can do arrest.

Traditional leaders and local authorities equally do not fully enjoy the trust of citizens. Women in several focus group discussions, mentioned that most of the local authorities and traditional leaders who are men are involved in abusing women so it is difficult for them to attach seriousness to cases of violence that are brought to them. Furthermore, several key informant

interviewees reinforced this point when they said that most of the decision-making structures in the counties are dominated by men and this makes access to justice difficult.

**CHART 3: THE EXTENT RESPONDENTS TRUST EACH OF THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS IN PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NOW?**



When asked why they trust the above named institutions, 65% of respondents said the various institutions are working together to reduce violence against women, 25% respondents mentioned that the institutions were reaching out to the public through information campaign and 15% respondents said these institutions were providing services to survivors of VAW.

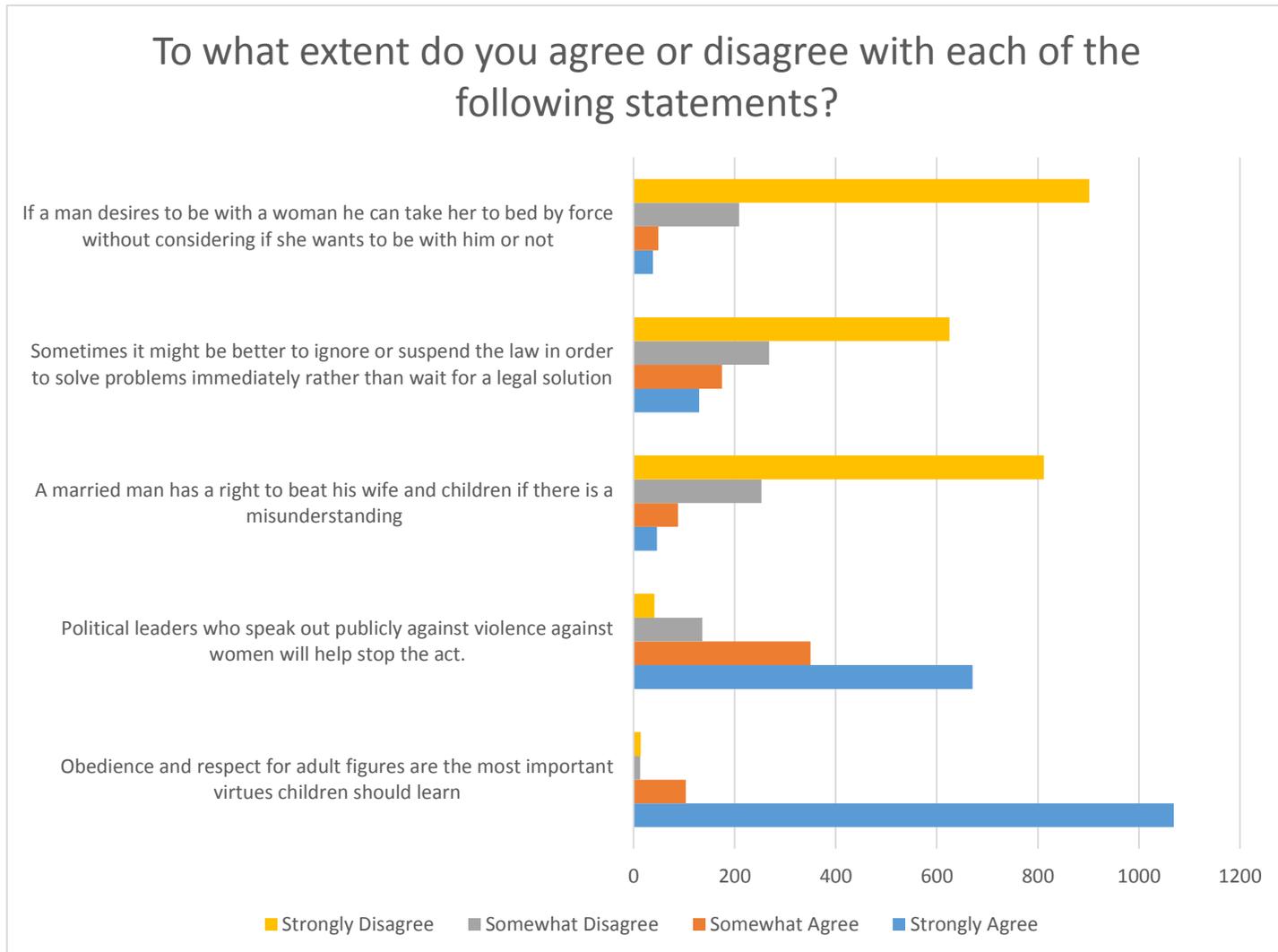
**5.7 Groups that have been supportive of speaking about violence against women:**

There were four groups named as being supportive about speaking on ending violence against women. 70.4% of the total respondents named the President of Liberia as being very supportive followed by UNMIL with 55.1%, women’s group 54% and then UNMIL 45.8%. The President is on her out and UNMIL is transitioning gradually and the process is expected to increase after the elections. It is good that ECOWAS is supportive of reducing violence against women but it has no legal enforcement capacity.

5.8 Attitudes and behaviors are greatly influenced by the value system of a society which underpins how a culture is formed and transmitted from one generation to the other. When asked if a married man the right to beat his wife and children if there is a misunderstanding,

respondents overwhelmingly said they disagree. Respondents strongly agree violence against women will stop if political leaders speak out publicly against the act. 90% of respondents (See chart below) mentioned that obedience and respect for adult figures are the most important virtues children should learn. Obedience can also be used as a form of control that adults exhibit over children and exploit it to their advantage and could have implication on sexual violence against minors.

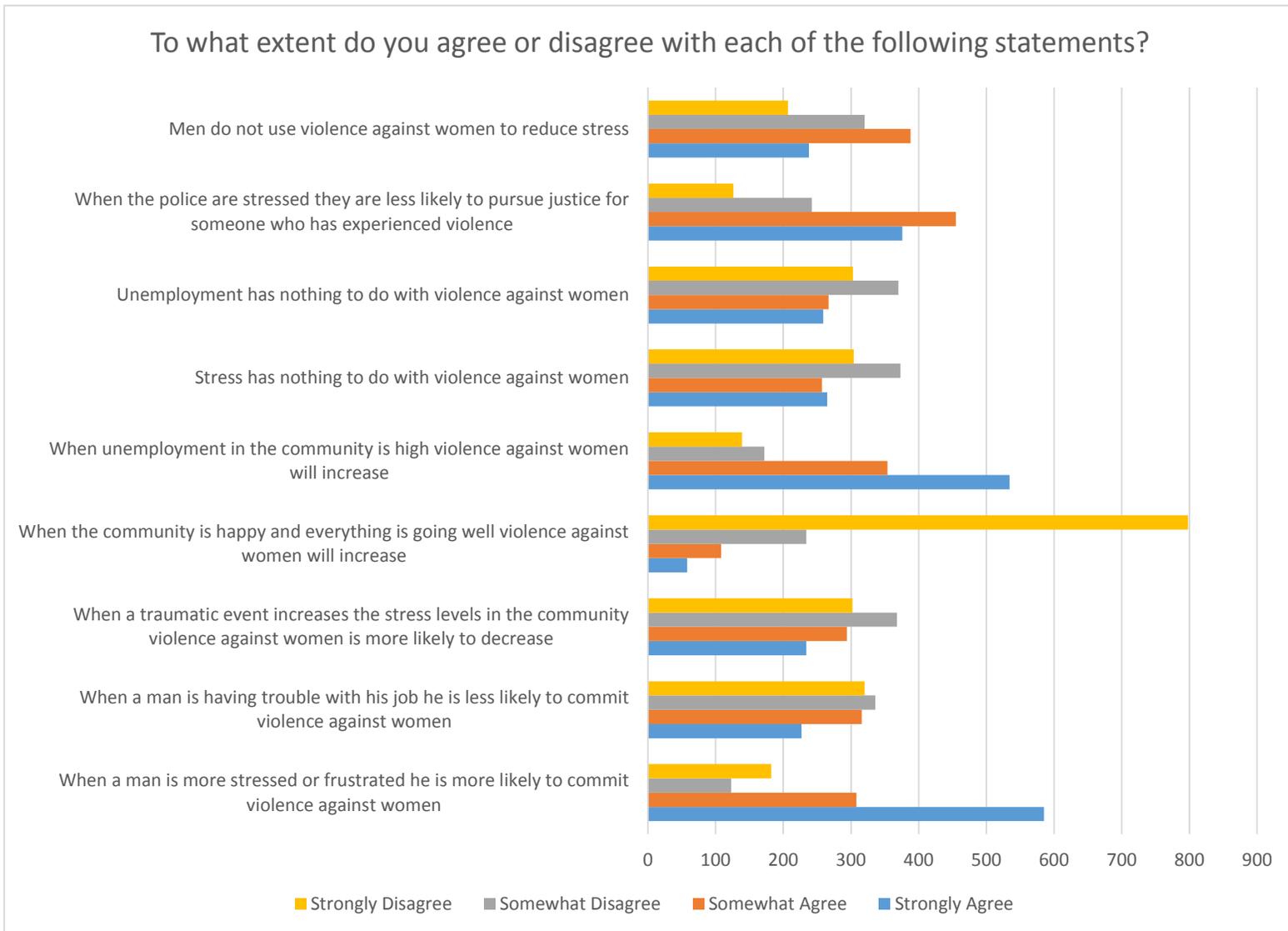
**Chart 4: Cultural beliefs influencing behaviors:**



**5.9 Conditions of men that lead to violent acts against women:**

Conditions can elevate the risk of violence against women. A woman is more likely to experience violence if her husband or partner is stressed or frustrated. This was the view of 48.8% of respondents. The second condition identified by respondents was unemployment among men. The third factor was a stressed police force is less likely to pursue justice for someone who had experienced violence.

**Chart 5: Conditions elevating risk of violence against women**



**5.10 Substance abuse among men:**

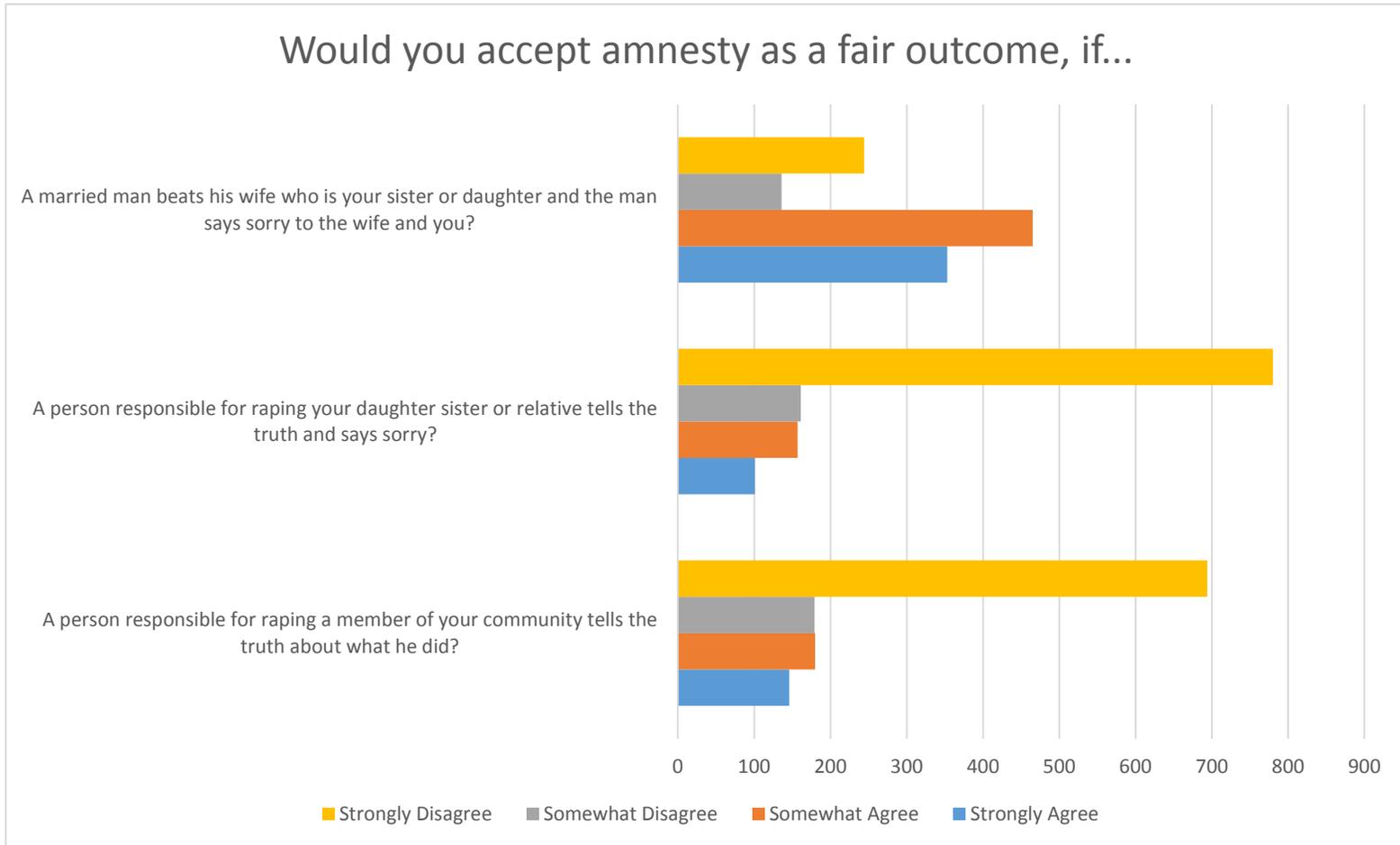
In addition to the above conditions, 78.9% of respondents strongly agreed that excessive consumption of alcohol increases the risk level of violence against women in communities. Results from focus group discussions and key informant interviews in most of the counties affirmed this statement. On the other hand, 38.2% of respondents strongly disagreed that men are more violent when not under the influence of alcohol and drugs as compared to 16.7% who agreed.

**5.11 Acceptance of an outcome of violence:**

In many instances, rape and other forms of violence against women are compromised due to many reasons. From the chart above, respondents overwhelmingly disagree that it is a fair outcome for a person who commits rape, admits his action and seeks forgiveness. On the other hand, the majority of respondents agree that they can forgive a married man who beats his wife who is their sister or daughter. This shows that individuals are more likely to reconcile with a

perpetrator of domestic violence as opposed to rape even though both acts constitute forms of violence.

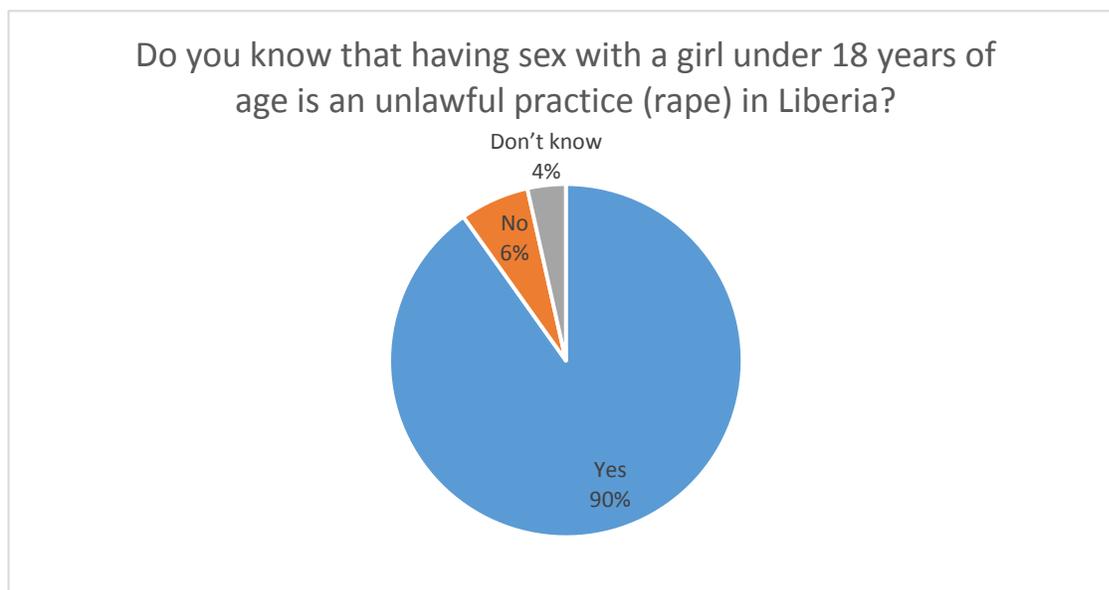
**Chart 6: Acceptance of an outcome of violence:**



**5.12: Knowledge if rape is a crime:**

There is no divergent view between males and females whether or not having sex with a girl less than 18 years is statutory rape (See chart 7 below). Respondents (90%) overwhelmingly acknowledge that sex with a girl under 18 years is a crime. When asked if having sex with a woman over 18 years of age without her consent is a crime, 91.2% said yes, 4.6% said they did not know while 4.2% said no. This demonstrates that citizens are knowledgeable that rape is a crime yet the practice remains pervasive and cuts across ethnic, religious and ethnic boundaries.

**Chart 7: Knowledge if rape is a crime:**



### 6.0 Consequences of Rape:

6.1 The majority of respondents 86.8% are aware that rape has other negative consequences on the lives of women. With the level of awareness in Monrovia it is not surprising that people living in the area do know that rape has side effects on women (See table below). With a few exceptions from two counties, the majority of respondents are aware that a teenage girl who have unwarranted pregnancy can have side effects. Similarly, 89.4% of all respondents think that a woman who is constantly beaten by her husband or partner experiences side effects.

**Table 3: Responses on negative effects on women who has been raped:**

COUNTY	Do you think a woman who is raped can experience other negative effects?							
	Total	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Don't know	Percent
Total	1199	100	1041	86.8	68	5.7	90	7.5
Grand Gedeh	62	100	59	94.9	2	3.4	1	1.7
Lofa	129	100	112	86.7	4	3.1	13	10.2
Margibi	100	100	95	95	4	4	1	1
Montserrado	555	100	473	85.2	39	6.9	44	7.9
Nimba	207	100	162	78.4	18	8.5	27	13.1
River Cess	33	100	33	100	0	0	0	0
Sinoe	47	100	44	93.5	2	4.3	1	2.2
River Gee	28	100	27	96.4	0	0	1	3.6
Gbarpolu	38	100	36	94.7	0	0	2	5.3

## 6.2 Consequences on FGM:

Of the total respondents, about half (53.9%) say they do not think that a girl who undergoes FGM can suffer other side effects (See table below). This is no surprise because when previously asked to describe the forms of violence against women, FGM was not mentioned. Moreover, the difference between the respondents who said yes (26.6%) and those who said no (19.6%) is not wide. Even in Montserrado where it is safe or prudent to talk about FGM, 58.7% said they do not think it has a side effect. The “Don’t Know” response could also be a way of evading the question so as not to proceed with any further discussion on the issue.

**Table 4: Views of respondents whether FGM can experience side effects:**

	Do you think a girl who undergoes FGM can suffer other side effects?							
	Total	Percent	Yes	Percent	No	Percent	Don't know	Percent
COUNTY								
Total	1198	100	318	26.6	235	19.6	645	53.9
Grand Gedeh	62	100	41	66.1	5	8.5	16	25.4
Lofa	129	100	54	42.2	40	31.3	34	26.6
Margibi	99	100	30	30	7	7	62	63
Montserrado	555	100	121	21.8	109	19.6	326	58.7
Nimba	207	100	35	17	53	25.5	119	57.5
River Cess	33	100	4	11.8	9	26.5	20	61.8
Sinoe	47	100	7	15.2	5	10.9	35	73.9
River Gee	28	100	19	67.9	4	14.3	5	17.9
Gbarpolu	38	100	7	18.4	3	7.9	28	73.7

## 6.3 Reaction of men when their loved ones experience rape:

Responses are mixed on the reactions of men when their loved ones are victims/survivors of rape. 42% of respondents said that the husbands are supportive and seek justice; husbands find it difficult but remain with their wives; 13.6% said the husbands leave or divorce their wives and 11.9% say the husband blames the wife.

## 6.4 Consequences on children:

When asked whether there was an effect on children who witness violence in the home, 42.8% of respondents said that children who witness violence against their mothers learn that it is an acceptable behavior. 37.8% said children who witness violence become violent and demonstrate behavioral problems. On the other hand, 7.6% of respondents say that it has no effect on children because they are too young and do not know what is happening while 1.3% said it has no effect on children because it is a cultural practice. There was no significant difference in the responses between men and women.

## 6.5 Economic consequences:

When asked on the economic consequences of violence against women, 90% of respondents stated that women miss time from work due to injury. 405 respondents said they are afraid to leave their homes which is also linked to shame, while 161 respondents mentioned that women take routes that are more time consuming but safer to go to work. 71 respondents said women

avoid the day time selling and sell at night. Disaggregating the responses by gender, 60.7% of women said they travel longer distances to go to work and 60.4% said they miss because of experience of violence while 67.8% said they get involved in commercial activities at night. When asked on the specific impact of rape, the responses are highlighted in the table below indicating that of the 1,198 respondents, 196 said no they do not miss work but on the level of the counties, 46.3% of respondents said yes, women do miss work, followed by Nimba 17.3%.

When the responses are disaggregated by gender, 60.8% of women surveyed said women who are raped miss work. This has financial implication if the woman is self-employed as the more days she misses, the more income she loses. This view was highlighted in focus group discussions with women discussants.

### **6.6 Social consequences:**

Outcomes of focus group discussions and key informant interviews revealed that women are stigmatized as a result of rape and experience social exclusion such as not attending community meetings. This action is not imposed on her but the environment makes it difficult for her to attend the meeting. Other focus group discussants mainly men said that women feel abandoned by the community and this makes them traumatized. Lastly, discussants irrespective of gender, overwhelmingly stated violence against women can lead to injury and sometimes death.

## 7.0 Conclusion:

The culture of violence against women particularly domestic violence, rape and female genital mutilation is deeply entrenched within the Liberian society and it cuts across age, geographical regions, and ethnic groupings. The practice existed prior to the Liberian civil conflict (1989-2003) but was heightened after the crisis when men were greatly exposed to violence and wherein women were subjected to rape and other forms of violence.

The war also had a devastating effect on community cohesion and solidarity wherein it took the efforts of an entire community to raise a child and wherein family members protected the members of another family. The nature of the conflict pushed families away from their core value of collectivity toward the focus of each family feeding and caring for itself. This does not mean that families did not share food and other household materials but the emphasis was on the protection of members of individual families.

This practice has had an influence on how families relate to one another in communities in terms of protecting the girl from violence notably rape. Citizens interviewed under this research pointed out that “rape is wrong when it happens to a member of their family but no one cares when it happens to the child of another family”.

The lack of strong community structures has also created a weakened environment for the collective protection of girls and women. This is further compounded by limited social sanctions in communities against individuals who perpetrate violence against women and broadened political voices at the national level in publicly condemning and shaming perpetrators of violence against women.

This research found out that men generally have the knowledge that rape is an unlawful act but the practice is pervasive. This means that all interventions must respond to the drivers and root causes of SGBV. Given the complicated nature of SGBV, its root causes should be conceived from a multi-dimensional framework and dealing with it from system approach rather the conventional cause and effect implementation modality. The system approach allows one to see and appreciate the inter-connectedness among the various factors contributing to SGBV. The metaphor is that: “If one part of the system is not functional, the entire system breaks down”. This means that interventions need to be comprehensive and responsive to different parts of the system.

There have been considerable efforts and investments made by the government and its development partners in responding to SGBV issues, this process needs to be owned and driven by communities because violence against women is a family and community matter. Donors have a role to play but not to be in the driving seat. It is also imperative upon the government to increase its coordinating role so that the efforts of different actors are synergized.

Laws and policies are good because they set the parameters for dealing legally with complicated matters but laws and policies by themselves do not bring about societal change. The AU has a protocol that specifically defines and addresses violence against women. Unlike the AU,

ECOWAS has no protocol or convention that specifically deals with violence against women. However, it has adopted a Supplementary Act on the equality of rights between women and men. At the same time, the sixteen protocols ratified in 2016 by the GoL has nothing to do with issues of violence against women.

The societal value that shields perpetrators through family and social pressure on victims and their families to compromise cases thereby condoning violence against women need to be called into question and challenged. The families and communities have an important role to play in this direction.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **Key Recommendations:**

#### **8.1 For CSOs:**

**8.1.1 Hold government accountable:** As part of its advocacy role, CSOs are challenged to ask government the hard questions and to hold the government accountable in implementing treaties and protocols that it has ratified and to also call on the government to make public the Supplementary Act of ECOWAS on equal rights of women and men.

**8.1.2 Advocate for the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill:** CSOs should see the election year as an opportunity to advocate and lobby the legislature for the passage of the draft Domestic Violence Bill and make the bill an election issue and bring women on board.

**8.1.3 Design holistic and long-term programming:** In order to engender change, SGBV interventions need to be holistic, developed with the inputs from communities, driven by communities, inclusive of men, and consider incentives for women to report.

**8.1.4 Strengthen community solidarity:** Engender a social capital component in engagement with communities so that this value can be re-awakened and demonstrated because it is at the core of sustainable engagement on SGBV programmes.

**8.1.5 Organize media campaign:** Design a public campaign on the relationship between alcohol and VAW using multi-dimensional communication tool.

#### **8.2 For UNMIL and International Partners:**

**8.2.1** In order to improve the quality of prosecution, provide the MoJ with forensic equipment and training to strengthen the government's capacity to present credible evidence in court thereby increasing the likelihood of more convictions.

**8.2.2** Provide technical and financial resources for CSOs working on FGM to gain experience from other organizations in the region that have demonstrated success in working on this sensitive issue.

### **8.3 For International Partners:**

8.3.1 Develop an advocacy strategy to engage the AU and ECOWAS to pressurize the Government of Liberia to domesticate the protocols and conventions Liberia has signed in the prevention of violence against women.

- Strike a programmatic balance between prevention and dealing with some of the psychological consequences women and girls experience as a result of violence.
- Work with CSOs partners to develop a basic legal literacy program to reach out to communities educating them on international and regional protocols as well as creating awareness on their steps on the referral path of SGBV.

### **8.4 For Government:**

8.4.1 As the lead government agency on SGBV, the MoGCSP should improve on the current coordination framework so that information sharing among institutions working on VAW can be strengthened.

8.4.2 Harmony customary and statutory laws so that communities can avoid or limit the use of customary practices to handle sexual violence cases.

8.4.3 Demonstrate political commitment in fighting violence against women by passing into law the Domestic Violence Act.

### **8.5 For ECOWAS:**

8.5.1 Adopt a protocol or convention that will specifically address issues of violence against women.

**List of Annexes:**

**Annex 1: Survey Tool:**

Interviewer name .....	Signature .....		
Supervisor name .....	Signature .....		

Interview start time	
----------------------	--

Interview end time	
--------------------	--

Location (Community or Town)	County
---------------------------------	--------

Date	
------	--

My name is ..... We are currently conducting a national survey that aims to investigate the opinions of Liberian society on the causes and consequences of violence against women. The goal of the study is to inform the public debate with updated and accurate information. All results will be analysed anonymously, to draw conclusions about the issue from different communities including men and women.

**Dem1. Age Group**

- |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |      |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 18-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65-69 | 70-74 | 75-79 | 80 + |
| 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10    | 11    | 12    | 13   |

**Dem2. Gender**

Male	
Female	

**Dem3.** What do you do for a living? (If homemaker, student, unemployed, disabled or retired please mark accordingly) **[Note to interviewer: Do NOT read the options. Listen to the interviewee’s response and mark accordingly]**

Student	
Housewife / Homemaker	
Agriculture / Farming / Fishing / Forestry	
Small business/petty trader	
Unskilled manual worker (e.g. cleaner, labourer, domestic help, unskilled manufacturing worker)	
Artisan or Trade man/woman (e.g. electrician, mechanic, skilled manufacturing worker)	
Security Services (police, army, private security)	
Mid-level professional (e.g. teacher, nurse, mid-level government officer)	
Upper-level professional (e.g. banker/finance, doctor, lawyer, engineer, accountant, professor, senior-level government officer)	
Can’t work due to disability	
Currently unemployed	
Currently retired	
Other	

**Dem4.** Who do you work for?

Self Employed	
Domestic Worker	
Privately owned business	
Non-Governmental Organization or civil society sector (including religious institutions)	
Government or Public Institution	
International organization	
Not applicable	

**Dem5.** What is your education background (highest level completed)? **[Note to interviewer: Do NOT read the options. Listen to the interviewee’s response and mark accordingly]**

No schooling	
Some primary schooling	
Primary school completed	
Elementary school or junior high school	
Secondary school / high school completed	
College qualifications, other than university (e.g. a diploma or degree from a community college)	
Some University completed	
University completed	
Master's degree completed	
Doctoral degree completed	

**Dem6.** What is your current marital status? Please choose one of the options

Single	
Living together but not married	
Married	
Divorced / Separated	
Widowed	

**Q1:** Which of these acts constitute violence against women? Select all that apply

- A. Rape ( )
- B. Beating ( )
- C. Sexual assault ( )
- D. Sexual harassment ( )
- E. Insults ( )
- F. Torture ( )
- G. Requesting a woman to confess ( )
- H. Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2:** What are the causes of violence against women? **Select all that apply**

- A. Women are the property of men ( )

- B. The dress code of women ( )
- C. Men have more power than women ( )
- D. Men have more money than women ( )
- E. It is a cultural practice ( )
- F. There is no law to stop it ( )
- G. Society accepts it as a form of discipline for women ( )
- H. Society does not frown on it ( )
- I. Women are afraid to report it ( )
- J. Law enforcement officers do not take it seriously ( )
- K. Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Q3:** How often do you hear about violence against women in this community?

Nearly every day	Once a week	Twice a week	Three times a week	Four times a week	Once a month	Twice a month	Once every two to three months	Once every six months	Once a year	Never
							times a week			

**Q4:** What is the most frequent type of violence that you hear about? Select the most frequent

- A. Rape ( )
- B. Domestic Violence ( )
- C. Verbal insults ( )
- D. Torture ( )
- E. Sexual assault ( )
- F. Sexual harassment ( )
- G. Female genital mutilation ( )
- H. Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5:** If it is rape, who is the most likely victim?

Under 18 years of age ( )

Young women aged 19-34 ( )

Women 35 and above ( )

**Q6:** If it is beating or domestic violence, who is the most likely victim?

Wife ( )

Partner ( )

Girlfriend ( )

**Q7:** If it is Female Genital Mutilation, who is most likely to go through the process?

Under 18 years of age ( )

Young women 18-34 years old ( )

Women 35 and above ( )

**Q8:** If the form of violence is rape, who is most likely to be the perpetrator?

- A. Husband ( )
- B. Father ( )
- C. Relatives of the father ( )
- D. Relatives of the mother ( )
- E. Boyfriend of the girl ( )
- F. Stranger ( )
- G. Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Q9.** How effective do you consider the provision of the following services by the government when violence against women takes place in your community?

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not provided at all
1. Hearing of the case by the police				
2. Investigation of the case by the police to gather evidence				
3. Prosecution for the perpetrators				
4. Ensuring punishment for the perpetrators				
5. Counselling				
6. Medical treatment				
7. Awareness campaign				

**Q10.** To what extent do you agree or disagree to this statement: (Referral Path)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree

1. When someone in your family experiences violence, you know how to proceed to seek justice					
--	--	--	--	--	--

**Q11.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the below statements:

<i>Statements</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Women feel safe from violence in this community					
Women are confident that the police can protect them from violence					
Women trust community institutions to protect them from violence					
Women feel safe walking alone at night					

**Q12.** Which period in the recent history of Liberia do you think has been favourable in protecting the rights of women?

The period before 1980	
The period from 1980 to 1989	
The period from 1990 to 2005	
The period from 2006 to 2011	
The period from 2011 to today	

**Q13.** Why do you think this period has been the most favourable period in protecting the rights of women? (Check all answers that apply)

- A. Women were seen more equally to men in society

- B. Women had more economic opportunities
- C. The government did more to protect women
- D. Peace
- E. Less disease, drought, or famine
- F. Less poverty
- G. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q14.** Which period in the recent history of Liberia do you think has been the most destructive for women?

The period before 1980	
The period from 1980 to 1989	
The period from 1990 to 2005	
The period from 2006 to 2011	
The period from 2011 to today	

**Q15:** Why do you think this period has been the most destructive for women? (Check all answers that apply)

- A. Women were seen less equally to men in society
- B. Women had less economic opportunities
- C. The government did less to protect women
- D. War/Conflict
- E. More disease, drought, or famine
- F. More poverty
- G. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q16.** To what extent did you **trust** each of the following in preventing violence against women five years ago?

	Fully Trust	Somewhat Trust	Somewhat Mistrust	Fully Mistrust
1. President				
2. Members of the Legislature				
3. Supreme Court				
4. Circuit and Magisterial Courts				
5. Traditional leaders				

6. Local Authorities				
7. Women's Groups				
8. Liberia National Police				
9. UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)				
10. Leaders of Christian Faith				
11. Leaders of Muslim Faith				
12. Traditional Societies				
13. Civil Society Organizations				
14. The health sector				
15. My neighbours				
16. The media				
17. Youth Leaders				
18. My family members				

**Q17.** To what extent do you **trust** each of the following in preventing violence against women now?

	Fully Trust	Somewhat Trust	Somewhat Mistrust	Fully Mistrust
1. President				
2. Members of the Legislature				
3. Supreme Court				
4. Circuit and Magisterial Courts				
5. Traditional leaders				
6. Local Authorities				
7. Women's Groups				
8. Liberia National Police				
9. UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)				
10. Leaders of Christian Faith				

11. Leaders of Muslim Faith				
12. Traditional Societies				
13. Civil Society Organizations				
14. The health sector				
15. My neighbours				
16. The media				
17. Youth Leaders				
18. My family members				

**Q18.** Why do you fully trust or somewhat trust the institutions mentioned above?

They are working in/with the government to reduce violence against women ( )

They are using informational campaigns to reduce violence against women ( )

They are providing services to victims of violence ( )

I have seen first-hand how they can help victims ( )

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q19.** Why do you mistrust or somewhat mistrust the institutions mentioned above?

They are only looking out for their own best interests ( )

They do not care about reducing violence against women ( )

They are corrupt ( )

They are ineffectual and cannot bring about significant change ( )

I have seen situations that demonstrate they should not be trusted ( )

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q20.** And to what extent has the trustworthiness of each of these, improved or worsened over the last few years in preventing violence against women?

	Improved greatly	Improved somewhat	No Change	Worsened somewhat	Worsened greatly
1. President					
2. The Legislature					

3. Supreme Court					
4. Circuit and Magisterial Courts					
5. Traditional leaders					
6. Local Authorities					
7. Women's Groups					
8. Liberia National Police					
9. UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)					
10. Leaders of Christian Faith					
11. Leaders of Muslim Faith					
12. Traditional Societies / fraternities					
13. Civil Society Organizations					
14. The health sector					
15. My neighbours					
16. Media					
17. Youth Leaders					
18. My family members					

**Q21.** To what extent do you feel that each of the following has been supportive in speaking about violence against women in your community?

	Very Supportive	Supportive	Somehow Supportive	Not Supportive
1. President				
2. Members of the Legislature				
3. Christian Leaders				
4. Muslim Leaders				
5. Women's Groups				
6. UNMIL				

7. ECOWAS				
8. African Union				
9. Traditional Leaders				
10. Family members or relatives				
11. Neighbours				
12. Police				
13. Civil Society				

**Q22.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. The Constitution of Liberia is helping to prevent violence against women					
2. The ECOWAS and African Union Protocols are helping to prevent violence against women					
3. Female circumcision is an acceptable cultural practice in Liberia					
4. Rape of women is an acceptable social practice in Liberia					
5. Beating of women is an acceptable practice of disciplining women in Liberia					
6. Human rights protection is a western practice					
7. Rape cases should be handled by traditional authorities or family members					
8. Rape cases should be handled by the courts					
9. The beating of women should be handled by family members					
10. The beating of women should be handled by the court					

11. The rape law is helping to prevent violence against women					
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**Q23.** Which of the following are you willing to do in order to change the current conditions of violence against women in the community where you live?

I am not willing to do anything, I would just stay focused on my own family	
I am willing to use political and social means of action, but definitely avoid any kind of violence	
I am willing to use all means of change available to me, including violence if necessary	

**Q24.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Obedience and respect for adult figures are the most important virtues children should learn				
2. Political leaders who speak out publicly against violence against women will help stop the act.				
3. A married man has a right to beat his wife and children if there is a misunderstanding				
4. Sometimes it might be better to ignore or suspend the law in order to solve problems immediately, rather than wait for a legal solution				
5. If a man desires to be with a woman, he can take her to bed by force without considering if she wants to be with him or not				

**Q25.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. When a man is more stressed or frustrated he is more likely to commit violence against women				
2. When a man is having trouble with his job he is less likely to commit violence against women				

3. When a traumatic event increases the stress levels in the community, violence against women is more likely to decrease				
4. When the community is happy and everything is going well, violence against women will increase				
5. When unemployment in the community is high, violence against women will increase				
6. Stress has nothing to do with violence against women				
7. Unemployment has nothing to do with violence against women				
8. When the police are stressed they are less likely to pursue justice for someone who has experienced violence				
9. Men do not use violence against women to reduce stress				

**Q26.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Alcohol and drugs increase the level of violence against women in the community				
2. A man is more likely to commit violence against women when he is under the influence of alcohol or drugs				
3. Alcohol and drugs have no effect on whether or not a woman will experience violence				
4. Removing alcohol and drugs from the community would increase violence against women				
5. Men are more violent when they are not under the influence of drugs or alcohol				
6. People are more likely to use alcohol or drugs when they are stressed.				
7. Unemployment causes people to use less alcohol or drugs				

**Q27.** Would you accept amnesty as a fair outcome, If:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1. A person responsible for raping a member of your community tells the truth about what he did?				
2. A person responsible for raping your daughter, sister, or relative tells the truth and says sorry?				
3. A married man beats his wife who is your sister or daughter and the man says sorry to the wife and you?				

**Q28.** Do you think a woman who is raped can experience other negative effects?

Yes ( )                      No ( )                      Don't know ( )

**Q29.** If yes, name some of the negative effects: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q30.** Do you think a teenaged girl who gets pregnant from unwanted sex can experience side effects?

Yes ( )                      No ( )                      Don't know ( )

**Q31.** If yes, what are some of the side effects? \_\_\_\_\_

**Q32.** Do you think a woman who is constantly beaten by her husband or partner can experience side effects?

Yes ( )                      No ( )                      Don't know ( )

**Q33.** If yes, what are some of the side effects?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q34.** Do you think a girl who undergoes FGM can suffer other side effects?

Yes ( )                      No ( )                      Don't Know ( )

**Q35.** If yes, name some of the side effects:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q36.** Do you know that having sex with a girl under 18 years of age is an unlawful practice (rape) in Liberia?

Yes ( )                      No ( )                      Don't know ( )

**Q37.** If yes, what do you think are the reasons why it is still taking place in your community? Select all that apply

- A. It is culturally acceptable to sleep with a child ( )
- B. It is socially acceptable to sleep with a child ( )
- C. It makes the man powerful in the community ( )
- D. Parents are too poor to meet the needs of their girl children ( )
- E. Parents are not finding the time to protect their girl children ( )
- F. Community members are not protecting children in the community ( )
- G. Men know that nothing will happen to them ( )

- H. Parents sending their children to spend time with family members ( )
- I. Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Q38.** Do you know that having sex with a woman over 18 years without her consent is rape?

- Yes ( )                      No ( )                      Don't know ( )

**Q39.** If yes, why is the practice common in your community? Select all that apply

- A. It is culturally acceptable ( )
- B. It is socially acceptable ( )
- C. Men have financial power over women ( )
- D. The dress code of women entice men ( )
- E. Community members are not protecting women in the community ( )
- F. Men know that nothing will happen to them ( )
- G. Rape is difficult to prove in court ( )
- H. No practice in community to name and shame men who engage in rape ( )
- I. Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Q40.** What happens to women socially after they are raped? ( )

- A. The victim is shown support from the entire community ( )
- B. The victim is shown support from some of the community ( )
- C. The victim is only shown support from close family members and friends ( )
- D. The victim is mocked and ridiculed ( )
- E. The victim is ostracized from their community ( )
- F. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q41.** How do husbands often react when their wives experience being raped?

- A. Husbands are supportive and actively seek justice ( )
- B. Husbands are supportive but do not actively seek justice ( )
- C. Husbands try to keep the wife from telling anyone or notifying the police ( )
- D. Husbands have difficulty but stay with their wife ( )
- E. Husbands criticize and blame their wife ( )
- F. Husbands abuse the wife ( )
- G. Husbands leave or divorce their wife ( )
- H. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q42.** How do families react to a family member being raped?

- A. Families are supportive and actively seek justice ( )
- B. Families are supportive but do not actively seek justice ( )
- C. Families try to keep the victim from telling anyone or notifying the police ( )
- D. Families criticize and blame the victim ( )
- E. Families abuse the victim ( )
- F. Families disown the victim ( )
- G. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q43.** What are the economic consequences of violence against women?

- A. Women are afraid to leave their homes ( )

- B. Women are forced to participate in the economy only during the daytime ( )
- C. Women miss time from work because they are victims of violence ( )
- D. Women must take routes that are more time consuming but safer to travel from home to work ( )
- E. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q44.** Do women who are victims of rape have to miss work? If yes, on average, how much?

Yes ( )      No ( )

- A. Part of the day ( )
- B. A full day ( )
- C. 2 days ( )
- D. 3 days ( )
- E. 4 – 6 days ( )
- F. A full week ( )
- G. 2 weeks ( )
- H. A month ( )
- I. More than 1 month ( )
- J. Less than a year ( )
- K. A year or more ( )

**Q45.** Do women who are victims of domestic violence have to miss work? If yes, how much?

Yes ( )      No ( )

- A. Part of the day ( )
- B. A full day ( )
- C. 2 days ( )
- D. 3 days ( )
- E. 4 – 6 days ( )
- F. A full week ( )
- G. 2 weeks ( )
- H. A month ( )
- I. More than 1 month ( )
- J. Less than a year ( )
- L. A year or more ( )

**Q46.** What effect does witnessing violence against women have on children?

- A. It has no effect on children, this is the culture ( )
- B. Children become more violent and have behavioural problems after seeing violence against women ( )
- C. Children learn that violence against women is acceptable behaviour ( )
- D. Children are often too young and don't understand what is happening ( )
- E. Other \_\_\_\_\_

***The survey is now finished. Thank you for your time!***

## Annex 2: Focus Group Discussion

### Instrument Focus Group Discussions

General Information	
Form Number: _____	Date of Interview: ___/___/___ (dd/mm/yy)
Name of Interviewer: _____	Community : _____
	County: _____
Source of Information	
Focus Group Discussions targeting both men and women	

No.	Questions	Response categories
<b>1.</b>	<b>Program Background</b>	
<b>1A</b>	Can you give me a brief background on your understanding of what violence against women is?	
<b>1B</b>	For women groups only, what has been your experience of violence in your home or community?	
<b>2</b>	<b>Causes of VAW</b>	

No.	Questions	Response categories
2A  2B  2C  3C	<p>From your perspective, what do you think are the underlying causes of VAW in Liberia?</p> <p>Despite laws, the level of awareness done and efforts by the government, INGOs and CSOs, why do you think this practice is widespread across the country?</p> <p>Is there any difference between different categories of women who experience violence (education level, income, age, marital status, or rural versus urban locations)?</p> <p>What are the challenges undermining the fight against VAW?</p>	
3	<b>Consequences of VAW</b>	
3A	How does violence affect women?	
4	<b>Voice</b>	
4A	How will you assess the extent to which the voices of women/men have been amplified in the fight against VAW?	
5	What services are available in this community/location for women who experience violence to access?	
6	<b>Strategies and Preventive Actions</b>	
6A  6B  6C	<p>In your view, are the strategies used by different actors working to prevent VAW working?</p> <p>How can the strategy be improved to make the response more effective (Policy, community engagement, advocacy)?</p> <p>Is there anything else you would like to add this issue that I did not ask?</p>	

**NB: ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO FURTHER PROBING DURING THE INTERVIEW**

## Annex 3: Key Informant Interview

### Instrument for Key Informant Interviews

General Information	
Form Number: _____	Date of Interview: ___/___/___ (dd/mm/yy)
Name of Interviewer: _____	Community : _____
Profession: _____	County: _____

No.	Questions	Response categories
<b>2.</b>	<b>Program Background</b>	
<b>1A</b>	Can you give me a brief background on the work of your institution in the fight against VAW?	
<b>2</b>	<b>Causes of VAW</b>	
<b>2A</b>	From your perspective, what do you think are the underlying causes of VAW in Liberia?	
<b>2B</b>	Despite laws, the level of awareness done and efforts by the government, INGOs and CSOs, why do you think this practice is widespread across the country?	
<b>2C</b>	Is there any difference between different categories of women who experience violence (education level, income, age, marital status, or rural versus urban locations)?	
<b>3C</b>	What are the challenges undermining the fight against VAW?	

No.	Questions	Response categories
3	<b>Consequences of VAW</b>	
3A	<p>How does violence affect women?</p> <p>Further probing: What are the economic consequences?</p> <p>What are the social consequences?</p> <p>What are the cultural consequences?</p> <p>What effect does VAW have on children?</p>	
4	<b>Voice</b>	
4A	How will you assess the extent to which the voices of women have been amplified in the fight against VAW?	
5	What services are available for women who experience violence to access?	
6	<b>Strategies and Preventive Actions</b>	
6A	In your view, are the strategies used by different actors working to prevent VAW working?	
6B	How can the strategy be improved to make the response more effective (Policy, community engagement, advocacy)?	
6C	Is there anything else you would like to add this issue that I did not ask?	

**NB: ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO FURTHER PROBING DURING THE INTERVIEW**