Bringing Agenda 2030 to Life

LIBERIA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

National Commission for Justice, Peace and Caritas Liberia (NCJPC)

In partnership with CAFOD and University College London

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Executive Summary

This report considers four principles which underpin the transformative aspirations of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda: 'leave no-one behind'; 'tackling inequalities'; 'integrating the environment and development' and 'participation and dialogue'. To explore these principles on the ground, the report details eight case studies to provide examples that participants in the 'Bringing Agenda 2030 to Life' research felt particularly illustrated good policies, projects or processes. The aim of these case studies is to help guide future work and promote forms of transferable learning across sectors. They integrate not only some of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals but the four principles themselves.

Our research found an alignment of the Liberian development agenda with the principle of 'leave no-one behind' through national targets to reduce poverty and 'improve wellbeing'. At the same time, economic measures of 'wellbeing' need to be supported by work to reduce discrimination and stigma, and ensure that policies and programmes reach their intended beneficiaries. The report argues that guaranteeing that the educational, judicial and health systems are inclusive is an important part of this work.

Aligned with Agenda 2030 (and specifically SDG 10), our research found that tackling inequalities was an important focus of the Liberian development agenda. Participants emphasised that inequalities are related to wealth and access to resources, but further extend to social relationships, power and control at all levels of society, from the household to the county and national levels. Tackling inequalities in Liberia requires not only progressive laws, but work at the community level to build awareness of these laws, and role models to provide alternative examples that can help change attitudes.

Integrating the environment and development is an urgent challenge for Liberia, which is particularly prone to natural disasters and climate-related risks. Protecting the environment is a collective responsibility that requires work at multiple different scales – partnerships between the government and multilateral agencies encouraged by SDG 13 are a useful mechanism for raising funds, but work needs to simultaneously take account of local needs and ensure that key stakeholders are consulted. As in case study 7, unemployed youth and women can be employed to work on environmental projects, addressing multiple SDGs and leaving no-one behind at the same time as integrating the environment and development.

The Liberian government has made participation a key part of its agenda. In our research in Liberia, the transformative principle of participation and dialogue cut across all three of the other principles, helping to ensure that no particular individuals or groups were left behind, reducing inequalities through inclusive systems and consultation, and ensuring that local stakeholders were consulted about environmental and development projects and policies that affected their communities.

Photo By Shelagh Murphy

KEY FINDINGS

- **Creative programming and planning can ensure that the principle 'leave no-one behind' cuts across multiple SDGs at the same time,** as case study 1 shows.

- **Infrastructure is a key dimension of 'leaving no-one behind' in Liberia,** as case study 2 shows.

- **Leaving no-one behind in Liberia includes the principle of promoting participation and dialogue –** decisions should not be made on behalf of beneficiaries without their input.

- **Inequalities within Liberia's fifteen counties persist both as a result of unequal protections in law, but also through attitudes and discriminatory customs –** both need to be addressed for change to be sustainable, as case study 3 highlights.

- **Health, education and judicial systems all need to be inclusive, leaving no-one behind and tackling inequalities at the same time.** For the poorest, government need to provide additional support to access these systems, as case study 4 demonstrates.

- **The sustainability of environmental protection requires careful monitoring** of large companies and licenses issued for development, **as well as support for alternative local livelihoods** to decrease activities that contribute to degradation, as in case study 5.

- For the least developed countries, the SDGs encourage multilateral funding partnerships, but **consulting key stakeholders to ensure that livelihoods are not put at risk by environmental protection is key to the success of integrated approaches** to the environment and development, as in case study 6.

- **Protecting natural resources is a collective responsibility that requires government intervention and the work of communities themselves,** as in case study 7.

- **Meaningful participation and dialogue needs to be inclusive, with targeted efforts to reach those at risk of being left behind.** Case study 8 highlights how media can be a key tool to extend the reach of information and participation in decision–making, as well as accountability through engaging with law–makers.

- **The aspiration for the participation of the 'entire citizenry' in decision-making needs to be supported through democratic representation –** dialogue between elected representatives at the county level with their national counterparts, and devolved allocation of funds are two key ways to achieve better participation.

INTRODUCTION:
'Bringing Agenda 2030 to Life'

2015 marked a huge shift in development thinking, as the global focus moved on from the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets. This shift represented many years of collective thinking and inclusive conversations within the international community about the priorities of international development. It resulted in an ambitious agenda with an aspirational preamble and declaration: 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

This report, and the research behind it, seeks to bring that ambitious agenda to life. It aims to move beyond attention solely to individual goals and targets and to look more closely at the transformative principles that cut across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 'Bringing Agenda 2030 to life', we have focused on four key principles that we believe have the potential to shape how we do and think about development differently:

A commitment to **leave no-one behind:** ensuring that everyone reaches minimum standards; putting the most vulnerable groups at the centre of policy making and tackling the discrimination that different individuals and groups face.

Integrating the environment and development: encouraging development processes that support and restore our common home so that it can provide for the needs of both present and future generations.

Promoting people's participation and dialogue: ensuring that women and men are able to participate in ongoing dialogue and contribute to decision-making around development priorities, policies and programmes.

An emphasis on **tackling inequalities:** challenging inequalities in societies around how wealth, power, and opportunities are distributed, and addressing discrimination faced by certain groups.

These four principles cut across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but they are also strongly supported by Catholic Social teaching, giving Catholic organisations a strong mandate to engage. Soon before the agenda was agreed, Pope Francis published his Encyclical 'Laudato Si' – On care for our common home'. Laudato Si' questions the current models of development, and invites the global population to engage in a dialogue that re-defines progress and promotes development in ways that benefit all – particularly the poorest and most vulnerable – at the same time as respecting the environment and the earth's natural resources. This report discusses the ways in which Laudato Si' both affirms and challenges the 2030 Agenda, drawing on analysis already conducted by a group of Catholic development agencies[1].

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places a strong emphasis on adaptation to the diversity of national contexts. Therefore, this report explores local voices in bringing these four transformative principles to life. This report is part of an innovative advocacy-focused research partnership in four sub-Saharan African countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Zambia. In each of these four countries, twenty-five women and men were interviewed about their knowledge and experience of development, bringing together participants from different sectors: in Liberia this included government, civil society, education, national and international NGOs and media. The research aimed to gather a diversity of views to explore how the four principles were understood, and to discuss examples from each country that demonstrate what each principle means in practice. These twenty-five women and men indicate a cross-section of some of the views on the ground of how the 2030 Agenda can be translated at national and local levels.

The analysis in this report and the examples of good practice and policies already happening in Kenya comes from both the interviews and from the collective engagement of participants in a two-day participatory workshop. The findings of this research were analysed and compared with recent national development plans in each of the four countries, understanding how diverse perspectives could together contribute to the localisation of the 2030 Agenda.

An important objective of this research process was to foster dialogue around the implementation of sustainable development in each country, through a two-day participatory workshop delivered in each country. That dialogue is reflected in this report.

The examples presented in this report cut across both the individual SDGs and the four transformative principles. They represent forms of policies, practice or processes that are transferable, and that can provide learning across sectors, as Agenda 2030 encourages us to do. They can help to guide future directions for sustainable development, by building on the work that has already been done. These examples were identified by research participants and discussed during the workshop; the case studies presented here are those chosen by these participatory processes.

While participants felt that we could learn from these examples, they can also have problematic aspects and are not intended to be understood as 'ideal' or perfect examples. Moreover, we are not suggesting that these case studies are the only way in which the transformative principles could be translated into practice. What the case studies do reveal, however, are some specific forms of intentional actions that we can learn from. They offer integrated approaches that cut across different principles and different goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development simultaneously.

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[1] CAFOD (2018) Engaging in the 2030 Agenda through the lens of Laudato Si'

[2] While most inputs from participants in this report have been analysed and presented in a synthesised manner, the report contains some quotations which have been anonymised. We simply state whether the interviewee is female or male and which sector they represent.

The Sustainable Development Goals

Source: UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (2015).

Case Study Table: Connections Across Transformative Principles and SDGs

Case Study	Principles	SDGs
Case Study 1: WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Programme	• Leave No-One Behind; • Tackling Inequalities;	**SDG 2; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5; SDG 8**
Case Study 2: Road Connectivity	• Leave No-One Behind; • Tackling Inequalities;	**SDG 1; SDG 9; SDG 10**
Case Study 3: Enhancing Women's Rights to Land	• Tackling Inequalities;	**SDG 5; SDG 10**
Case Study 4: Expanding Higher Education through Free Tuition & Community Colleges	• Tackling Inequalities	**SDG 4; SDG 10**
Case Study 5: Illegal Sand Mining	• Integrating the Environment and Development;	**SDG 13**
Case Study 6: Coastal Defence	• Integrating the Environment and Development; • Participation and Dialogue	**SDG 13; SDG 14**
Case Study 7: Monrovia Beach Sanitation Project	• Integrating the Environment and Development; • Leave No-One Behind	**SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 6; SDG 14**
Case Study 8: Connecting Remote-Populations to Decision-Makers through Radio	• Participation and Dialogue;	**SDG 16**

Photo by Avel Chuklanov

PRINCIPLE 1:
Leave No-One Behind

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development builds on the Millennium Development Goals by aiming to complete what they did not achieve. Reaching the most marginalised or the 'furthest behind' is a key dimension to this work: none of the seventeen SDG goals or targets will be met unless they are met for each and every person. This represents a shift in previous ways of measuring development that tended to use national averages to suggest success. The specific focus on 'leaving no-one behind' reframes the values that shape how we do and measure development.

In his Encyclical Laudato Si', the Pope affirms this focus in the 2030 Agenda on leaving no-one behind by emphasising that preferential treatment for the poorest is an ethical imperative. Prioritising the most vulnerable members of society becomes the indicator of progress. For the Pope, this involves dialogue and a broad process that sees the poor not as victims, but as agents of change.

Understanding Leave No-One Behind: Liberian perspectives

National development agendas in Liberia align with the focus on leaving no-one behind in the 2030 Agenda. Liberia's recent Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023) has a focus on 'improving wellbeing', particularly for

'vulnerable' groups, and an explicit target in the first pillar to 'lift at least a million people out of poverty in the next six years'. Echoing this framing of 'vulnerability' in terms of poverty, our research participants understood vulnerable groups as those who live on less than $1 a day, or those who experience regular food insecurity. The following case study highlights how 'leave no-one behind' can cut across the SDGs, reducing hunger and food insecurity (SDG 2) through improving local livelihoods and employing local producers (SDG 8), at the same time as a targeted focus on gender disparities in schooling (SDG 4 & 5).
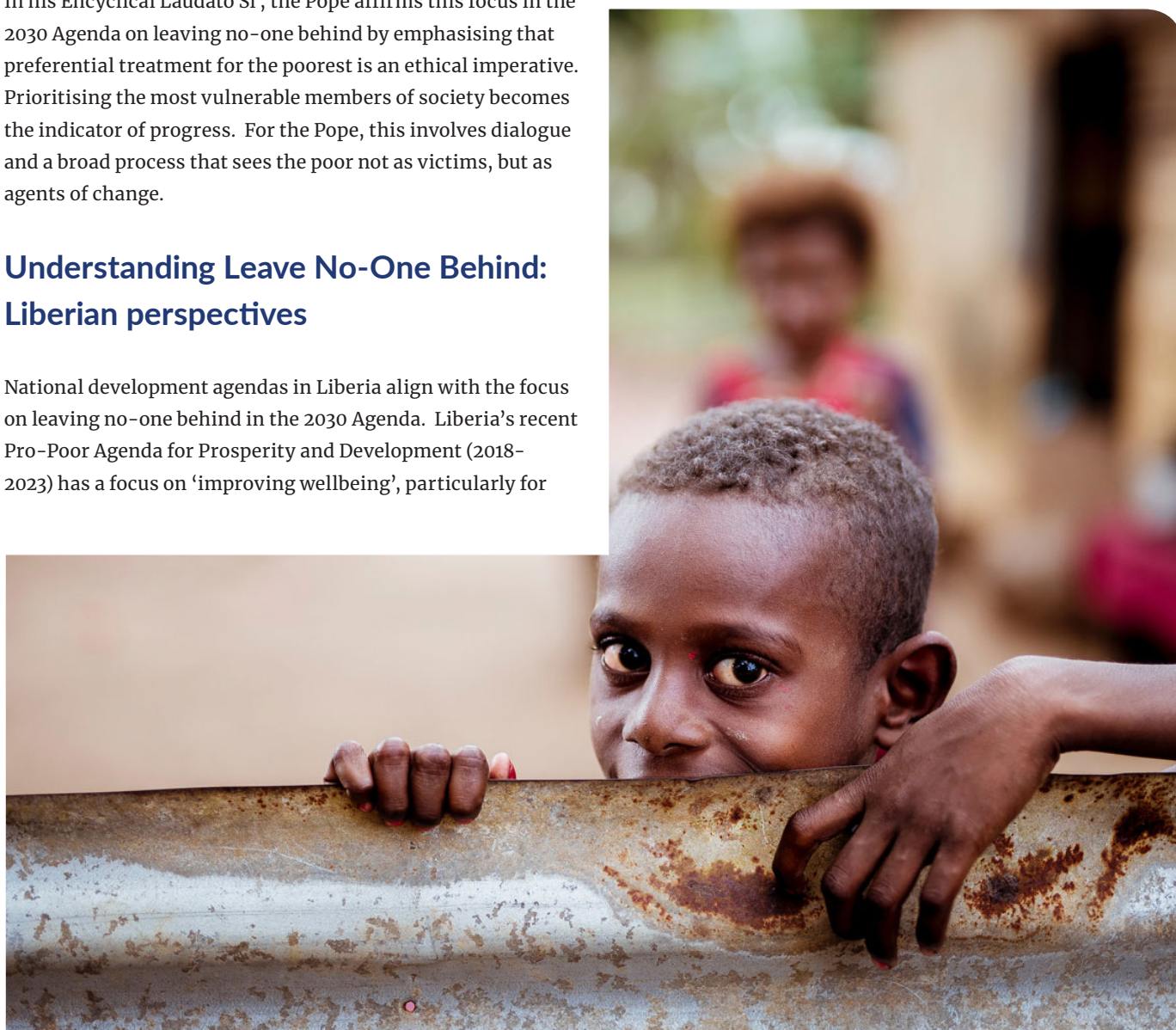
Photo By Ben White

Case Study 1:

WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Programme

SDG 2; SDG 3; SDG 4; SDG 5; SDG 8 // Leave No-One Behind; Tackling Inequalities

The Global Hunger Index (2017) ranks Liberia 112 out of 119 countries, and among seven countries suffering from hunger levels considered 'alarming'. Liberia's low agricultural output, exacerbated by years of conflict in the 1989-2003 civil war, and further affected by the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic in 2014, have resulted in a national food deficit. According to the 2010 Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS), 41 percent of the population is food-insecure, which particularly affects children's health and likelihood of suffering illness relating to malnutrition. In addition to health outcomes, counties with the highest levels of food insecurity and poverty have the lowest net school enrolment rates.

In response, the World Food Programme (WFP) has worked with the Liberian government to provide school meals since 2013 as a tool to encourage children attend school regularly and remain in schools. In 2017, the WFP and the Ministry of Education provided daily school meals to over 150,000 students in 577 rural public primary schools in nine counties.

A key aspect of this programme is the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, in which daily meals for 12 schools in 2017 were sourced by WFP from local smallholder farmers, including four women farmers groups. HGSF students received a daily food ration comprising of locally produced items such as roots and tubers, fresh vegetables and fruits, vegetable oil and protein sources food including fish.

Students of Ylamba Public School in Nimba County - John Monibah

According to a WFP representative at a meeting in Fanweh Town in Gbarpolu County, farming groups are given food for work and technical support for their agricultural activities, promoting local ownership of the programme and empowering local farmers to increase their income. These farmers will then be able to better support their families and send their own children to school.

The Liberian school feeding programme also has a particular focus on gender inequalities in schooling. In 2017, 6,458 adolescent girls attending primary school in grades 4-6 in 256 schools were provided with monthly take-home rations. These take-home rations were provided in schools with a disproportionate gender gap of more than 15% in favour of boys and encouraged more girls to enrol and attend with corresponding results in retention. The take-home rations address the opportunity costs of attending education and extended the total beneficiaries to the 25,842 food-insecure Liberian families of these adolescent girls.

WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Programme: What can we learn?

- *Thinking creatively about how to deliver projects by supporting local people ensures that multiple SDGs can be met at the same time*

- *Partnerships between international donors and government are important, but ultimately need to be sustainable at the national level*

- *There is a clear relationship between leaving no-one behind and tackling inequalities: thinking how to do both at the same time can extend the impact of initiatives*

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[3] Case Study Source: World Food Programme Operation Documents, Liberia Country Programme (2013-2018)

> *"Leave no-one behind means no discrimination "*
>
> Female, Government

Many research participants saw vulnerable groups as those who were both left behind economically, and who experienced higher levels of discrimination. They emphasised that groups who are left behind included 'Zogos' and 'Yana boys' as well as people with disabilities, drug addictions and the homeless are all subject to stereotypes and experience social stigma. These groups are all visible, often found begging on the streets, but at the same time invisible – they can be blamed for their own vulnerability and their needs ignored. This can be the case even in gaining access to pro-poor programmes, corruption and nepotism in the allocation of funds meant that in some cases there were barriers for the most marginalised in Liberia even in targeted programmes to address their needs.

In addressing individuals and groups who are left behind, our research participants emphasised the importance of inclusion in all sectors: in health systems (reducing the impact of epidemics such as Ebola), in the judicial systems (ensuring that equal rights are protected), and in educational systems, such as case study 1 aims to address. Education in particular – understood broadly in terms of enrolment in formal education, but also in terms of employment and skills – was seen in our research as one of the ways to assess who was left behind. Many participants noted Liberia's low literacy rates: at 61% for men but only 27% of women aged over 15. But education was also seen as a key tool – vocational training, sensitisation programmes and town hall or 'palaver hut' meetings in rural areas to accompany both laws and development programmes and teaching awareness of rights – were all seen as important ways to reach those who have been left behind.

> *"If you look around in our community, you'll find out that most of our physically challenged like the blind, and the cripple in most cases we see them, they don't get formal education. Most of them live by begging. And so whatever decision in usually that concerns them about their wellbeing, these people are not consulted. So, they are not part of the decision-making*

> *process in these community. Very seldom you find people considering them to get them involved in whatever issues that are affecting them".*
>
> Male, Education

Research participants emphasised that vulnerable groups were not only left behind in terms of socio-economic disadvantage, but further in terms of their lack of involvement in decision-making processes in the country, linking clearly to the principle of participation and dialogue. Our research made clear that when making decisions about those who are at risk of being left behind, it is important to include them in issues which affect them. Supporting networks and structures (such as parent-teacher associations or women's groups) were seen to be particularly important for bringing those left behind together and ensuring that their agency was respected in the ways that Laudato Si' encourages us to do.

> *"Men are the ones who have the power, they make decision, they have the money, and everything. They make the laws governing women."*
>
> Female, NGO

This exclusion from decision-making was linked to power, and access and control of financial resources. Women who were poor or who lived in rural areas were the most likely to be left behind. The following case study speaks to one of the ways in which the Liberian government is aiming to close the gap between urban and rural Liberians.

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[4] 'Zogos ' are young people considered to be drug addicts who are involved in petty theft

[5] 'Yana boys' are young people who are itinerant petty traders

[6] Education Policy and Data Center, Liberia National Educational Profile 2018

Case Study 2:

Road Connectivity

SDG 1; SDG 9; SDG 10 // Leave No-One Behind; Tackling Inequalities

In Liberia critical infrastructure – power, roads and bridges – were significantly damaged during more than 14 years of violence. By 2013, only about 6.9% of Liberia's entire road network and about 39% of the primary road network were paved. During the rainy season these unpaved roads deteriorate significantly, exacting huge toll on individuals and businesses. In 2016, according to the World Bank's Rural Access Index, only 41.9% of rural population lived within 2 kilometres of a road in good condition, meaning that 2.3 million people are not connected to good roads. Poverty is persistently high where rural accessibility is low, and the Ebola crisis revealed the vulnerability of the Liberian health and transport systems.

Recently completed road improvement projects and changes in poverty rates (Limi & Rao 2018, p. 21)

Both previous and current governments have given

continuity to the road connectivity campaign, with funding from the World Bank that has enabled improvements on the Monrovia–Buchanan corridor, the Monrovia–Gbarnga corridor, and the Gbarnga–Ganta–Guinea border, supporting cross–border trade.   These improvements have benefited more than 70,000 urban and 325,000 rural Liberians.

In the areas where these major road interventions were carried out, poverty declined over the last two years. Although causality is hard to prove, rural accessibility seems to be necessary to reduce poverty. Building roads help address left behind groups by providing them access to trade and markets, reducing financial insecurity. It also tackles inequalities by ensuring access to justice, education and health systems, reducing the risk and spread of epidemics such as Ebola, and extending the range of rights that rural populations are entitled to.

Road Connectivity : What can we learn?

- ◉ *Extending road networks can benefit a huge number of rural citizens, reducing poverty and providing access to a range of social and economic rights*

- ◉ *Leaving no–one behind means tackling inequalities between urban and rural populations, that ultimately will ensure that development opportunities are equally spread across the country.*

Leaving No-One Behind in Liberia: Summing Up

In addition to these two examples, in the participatory workshop our research participants discussed a range of empowerment programmes designed to help marginalised groups raise their own standard of living, such as national or international NGO micro-credit programmes or government cash transfers. While such small-scale empowerment initiatives are useful, they risk putting too much emphasis on left behind groups lifting themselves out of poverty. Small-scale interventions need to be accompanied by broader work to challenge social stigma and develop inclusive structures and systems. These examples highlight the importance of interventions at different scales and partnerships with a wider range of actors—government cannot achieve Agenda 2030 alone. As our research participants emphasised, ensuring that no-one is left behind is both an economic but also a social concern, that will help to reduce the likelihood of future conflict in the country.

The work in Liberia to 'leave no-one behind' needs to be done through programmatic interventions, but also through progressive laws and inclusive systems. Our research highlights that planning for 'leave no-one behind' needs to engage with the communities that policies and programmes are designed to benefit, in sensitive and informed ways that ensure that the priorities of left behind individuals and groups themselves are met. One way to do this from the start is through stakeholder analysis, as a male government official in our research stressed. Many participants felt that the shift in post-war Liberian development from top-down to bottom-up forms of development was an important one, that emphasised the importance of participation, linking to the fourth transformative principle of participation and dialogue. The links between leaving no-one behind and participation help ensure that those who are left behind would not be excluded from decision-making processes or the projects which were designed to support them.

Photo By   Adrianna Van Groningen

PRINCIPLE 2:
Tackling Inequalities

In the 2030 Agenda, tackling inequalities is both a cross-cutting principle and a specific goal (SDG 10). In a world in which inequalities both within and among countries are rising, and wealth, power and opportunities are not equally shared, tackling inequalities is a particularly pressing issue. In the 2030 Agenda, gender inequality 'remains a key challenge', requiring the removal of all barriers to equality between women and men, and for equal access to economic opportunities, political participation and decision-making and justice. Efforts on this key issue should be informed by data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, meeting SDG target 17.8.

Laudato Si' goes further to argue that these inequalities cannot be tackled without addressing the structural drivers of inequality, and the concentration of power in the hands of the most powerful. Making links to the principle of leave no-one behind, both Agenda 2030 and Laudato Si' emphasise that inequality affects us all, but affects the poorest and most vulnerable most severely.

Understanding Tackling Inequalities: Liberian Perspectives

"If you look at Liberian history, it is clear that one of the root causes of our crisis that lasted for almost fifteen years was the uneven distribution of state resources."

Male, Government

Aligned with the focus on tackling inequalities in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Liberian Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023) sees pervasive poverty, inequality and widespread deprivation as the greatest restraint to sustaining the peace and accelerating growth and sustainable development. It also argues that the fractured relationship between the state and the people must be addressed, and quotes the inequality adjusted Human

Development Index, on which Liberia ranks among the lowest ten countries, reflecting pervasive inequalities across political, social and economic dimensions.

"People should be treated the same under the law; justice to be served to all despite of status, ethnicity, religion and connection. Injustices lead to marginalization which in many cases lead to violence. Because when people are marginalized they fight for their rights."

Male, NGO

In our research, participants too made links between inequalities of wealth and income and inequalities of social status and power, and the gap between political elites and 'ordinary' citizens. For some participants in the research, while inequality was important, there was also seen to be a need to create a strong middle-class in the country, in a context of a 'gulf' between the richest and poorest members of society. Political will was seen as a key to ensuring that the wealth of the country was more equitably distributed.

"In Liberia, when you are poor you are poor. The rich people are the ones who can enjoy the country's resources."

Female, NGO

In both our research and in the Liberian Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023), gender emerged as a key inequality, aligned with the

focus on gender in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is also recognised in the PAPD – the Liberian government has made a commitment to reducing women's inequality in political, social and economic life through Pillar 1 of their Pro-Poor Agenda. Our research participants argued that although gender inequalities were improving, they persisted at all levels and within all sectors of society, from within households up to government. Our research emphasised the importance of female role models, as well as positive legal changes that promote gender equality and the reduction of gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence is of particular importance to Liberia in a context where rape and sexual violence was widespread during the years of civil war, and cases of sexual violence, including against children, continue to be high. In this context, research participants emphasised the importance of positive role models for gender equality, such as the former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and her ability to get gender onto the agenda, both through the passing of the Rape Law in 2005, but more generally through the positive effect that

her visibility had on beliefs about opportunities that should be available to women. One female government representative emphasised that the new law for 30% female representation was effective because "when you have women and men working together as equals or as team, we have realized that you will produce more good results. You will be able to look at things from different angles, because the women have their own eyes and the men have their own eyes."

For our female research participants in particular, property rights, voting rights and inheritance rights were all subject to challenges by patriarchal systems, in which "men are born with all the rights but for women, our rights are enacted laws", as one female media representative said. This case study explores how the Land Rights Act (2017) has opened space to challenge some of these discriminatory customs, and reduce the range of inequalities that result from the inequitable distribution of resources and ownership of property such as land.

Case Study 3:

Enhancing Women's Rights to Land

SDG 5; SDG 10 // Tackling Inequalities

In recent years, land rights have become an increasingly contested issue in Liberia. Many communities have risen up to fight against the maltreatment of rural community dwellers by concessions companies, tenure insecurity and weak and discriminatory land and natural resources management systems. Since 2009, with the setting up of the Land Commission, civil society organisations and pressure groups have been working towards the passing of a Land Rights Bill, which was finally passed into law by the House of Representatives in 2017 as the Land Rights Act with the support of several local and international rights groups. This Act defines and delineates the different categories of land ownership and rights recognised in Liberia. Article 3 of the Land Rights Act confirms, declares and ensures equal access and equal protection with respect to land ownership, use and management including ensuring that customary land and private land are given equal legal protection and that land ownership is provided for all Liberians, regardless of identity, custom, ethnicity, tribe, language and gender. The Land Rights Act is seen in

Liberia as a revolutionary one that transformed unequal relations between the government and the marginalized rural people in addressing inequalities around how wealth, power and opportunities are distributed, and the discrimination faced by certain groups.

In forty communities across Nimba, Lofa, Margibi and Bong counties, CAFOD and their implementing partners are working to ensure that every woman has access to the advice and support they need to secure land tenure. Development Educational Network – Liberia (DEN-L) provided training and awareness on women's land

rights that increased knowledge and provided financial support under the project while the Liberian Law Society provided the necessary legal aid and representation. These organisations together worked with women such as Krubah, who are often denied access and ownership to land because of discriminatory traditional customs, particularly after they become widows. In many communities, land

ownership is passed down to clans through the male family lines, and most of the time men control the decision making, distribution, management and use of land, leaving women relying on men to obtain a restricted portion for producing food to feed their family. Due to lack of money to pay for surveys and taxes to obtain legal titles, if a woman is left with a piece of land she often ends up losing it to a richer land-grabber, usually a man. With this support, Krubah has now surveyed her entire land and probated her land deed, and paid the first tax on it. She grows cassava and other small vegetables (potato, greens and pepper) and feeds her children with the harvest.

Krubah, a proud landowner with her title deed

Women's Land Rights Case Study: What can we learn?

- *Inequalities within Liberia's fifteen counties persist both as a result of unequal protections in law, but also through attitudes and discriminatory customs – both need to be addressed for change to be sustainable*

- *Progressive laws may require coalitions of iNGOs and NGOs to lobby the legislature, but once new legislation is in place, civil society need to raise public awareness and support vulnerable people to make use of it*

"There are lots of scholarships that are available in the country...but to even apply and be successful one has to spend. So there is this trouble between 'the have' and 'the have not'. Another issue we have in our country, in the communities that we have, is the issue of the legal process. People shy away from court action because maybe they don't know or maybe they are afraid of going to court because they don't have the money. And those who always have the money always come over those who haven't, because when you have money there is no justice for the poor."

Male, Education

For many of our research participants, un/equal access to different sectors including the justice system and formal education was both a marker of inequality and a way to challenge entrenched inequalities that had 'taken root' – with educational inequalities leading to inequalities within the labour market, and judicial inequalities leading to the entrenchment of power hierarchies within the country. The following case study discusses two of the key ways to expand education systems through free tuition, and the building of community colleges outside of Monrovia, extending opportunities to those within rural areas.

Case Study 4:

Expanding Higher Education through Free Tuition & Community Colleges

SDG 4; SDG 10 // Tackling Inequalities

Due to rising costs in Liberia, universities and colleges have been steadily increasing tuition and fees. In 2018, the campus of the University of Liberia became the source of violent student protests. To mitigate the crisis and provide a conducive learning environment, President George Weah declared free tuition for all public university undergraduate programs in Liberia. The declaration was made on the main campus of the University of Liberia on Capitol Hill. According to the president, the decision came about when students of the University of Liberia went to his office complaining that the administration of the University had increased the tuition. The president expressed shock that with the prohibitively high tuition cost only 12,000 students of a potential 20,000 would have successfully registered.

Bong Community College under construction

Although registration at public universities is now free, many students leaving high school still find it difficult to attend tertiary education because these institutions are located so far from their communities. Historically, higher education in Liberia centred around three major universities. Any person wishing to pursue higher learning after secondary education across Liberia's 15 counties would be forced to travel to Monrovia, Suakoko or Harper to attend one of these three institutions.

By early 2006, the University of Liberia was running only one semester per year with enrolment for more than 30,000 undergraduates in overcrowded classrooms, affected both by poor funding and by intermittent violent skirmishes in the country. Gradually, church-run universities started mushrooming to ease the pressure, but only in Monrovia.

With pressure being placed on the University of Liberia, the regime of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf encouraged the passage of legislation for the establishment of community colleges in various counties to grant 'Associate Degrees,' awarded after completing four full semesters or two years of studies. The establishment of community colleges in the different counties has helped to bridge the inequality gap in providing opportunity to access higher learning without coming to Monrovia. 15 of the 38 recognised and accredited tertiary learning institutions in the country are now found outside Montserrado County (where the capital Monrovia is located), with 8 counties now having their own newly established community colleges.

Expanding Higher Education Case Study: What can we learn?

- ◉ *Expanding higher education helps to ease the pressure on individual institutions, ensuring greater access for urban and rural populations alike*
- ◉ *For the poorest students, fees and costs associated with higher education can hinder enrolment and attendance, with the result that intergenerational inequality gaps widen*

Tackling Inequalities in Liberia: Summing Up

What we can learn from the case studies and research presented here is the importance of tackling more than one inequality at the same time. The Land Rights Act (2017) has had positive impacts not only on individual women, but further on entire rural communities that have been able to mobilise against injustices by concession companies, while the provision of community colleges extends access to higher education beyond the rural/urban divide that characterises many of Liberia's development issues. The ways in which these inequalities are linked highlights how tackling inequalities requires processes that challenge systems of unequal power. This means that programmes must be designed to work at multiple scales, tackling inequalities at the household, county and national levels.

Photo By   Adrianna Van Groningen

PRINCIPLE 3:

Integrating the Environment and Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for a new approach, where protecting the planet from degradation and tackling poverty and inequality must work together, balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development - social, economic and environmental. Agenda 2030 reaffirms that planet Earth and its ecosystems are our common home. The Pope describes this as 'integral ecology' and emphasises that everything is interconnected: 'we are faced with not two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental'. As Agenda 2030 argues, the complete range of development activities – including ending food security (SDG 2), access to water and sanitation (SDG 6), access to energy (SDG 7), building infrastructure (SDG 9), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) – must be met by sustainably managing our natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that the planet can support the needs of both present and future generations. Agenda 2030 highlights the need for a world in which consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources are sustainable – from rivers, lakes and aquifers to oceans and seas (SDG 14), and from air to land (SDG 15). In Laudato Si', this is understood as inter-generational justice: we need to recognise the impact of human activity on the planet, and protect the environment as our common good.

Within the 2030 Agenda, action on climate change (SDG 13) is singled out as an issue that demands decisive global action and the widest possible international cooperation. For the Pope, rich countries have an 'ecological debt' towards poor ones: climate change impacts the poorest communities the hardest. To act against climate change, we need greater political will, and to challenge powerful vested interests who work to conceal the impact of their activities.

Integrating the Environment and Development: Liberian Perspectives

The Liberian government, in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023), recognises the urgency of improving Liberia's preparedness to mitigate disaster and address climate-related risks. As the PAPD notes, Liberia's location and weather conditions make it particularly prone to natural disasters such as floods. The government has not yet developed a national environmental action plan, however, to integrate climate change into development planning, and need to set clear targets for their aim to improve management of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity by 2023.

In our research in Liberia, participants discussed a wide range of environmental issues that are related to sanitation, including poor latrines, rubbish systems and drainage, chemical spills, land and air pollution. They also noted a range of issues related to economic activity that lead to environmental degradation, such as charcoal and pit sawing that are both causes of deforestation, that in turn lead to less water absorption through trees and therefore contribute to the high levels of flooding in the country. So too, processes of sand mining were seen to lead to coastal erosion and flooding for those communities. In discussing these processes, participants emphasized that these activities are associated with the poorest members of society, and that in turn poor environmental conditions are associated with poor health outcomes. One of the key issues highlighted both by the Liberian government in the PAPD as well as by our research participants is the enforcement of policy, legal and institutional frameworks designed to sustainably manage natural resources in ways that do not negatively affect the poorest members of society.

Case Study 5:
Illegal Sand Mining

SDG 13 // Integrating the Environment and Development

Immediately following the years of civil war, many young men in Monrovia and its immediate environs turned to beach sand mining as means of income generation. The mining became unregulated and was being done at random, affecting already receding coastlines of Monrovia and other coastal cities such as the port city of Buchanan and Monrovia. Residents along the beaches in these cities were losing their homes especially during the rainy season when the tides are high. In 2012, the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy therefore declared all beach sand mining in Liberia illegal. They began issuing licenses to Chinese nationals, since ordinary Liberians lacked the capacity to do industrial level river sand mining to supply the growing demand for sand for the massive reconstructions that were taking place in Monrovia. The Chinese are using barges to mine sand from the St. Paul River, the Du River and other rivers around these cities. Liberians who were doing the beach mining are now doing illegal river sand mining especially around major bridges in and around Monrovia. This case study reveals the importance of both strong laws

and opportunities for alternative livelihoods to integrate environmental protection and development, particularly in cases where income-generating activities are depleting natural resources and contributing to climate-related floods.

Illegal Sand Mining Case Study: What can we learn?

- *Robust laws that prohibit activities which increase the risk of local populations to climate-related disasters such as floods are needed, but they are only the first step*
- *The sustainability of environmental protection requires careful monitoring both of large companies and licenses issued for development work, as well as support for alternative local livelihoods to decrease activities that contribute to environmental degradation*
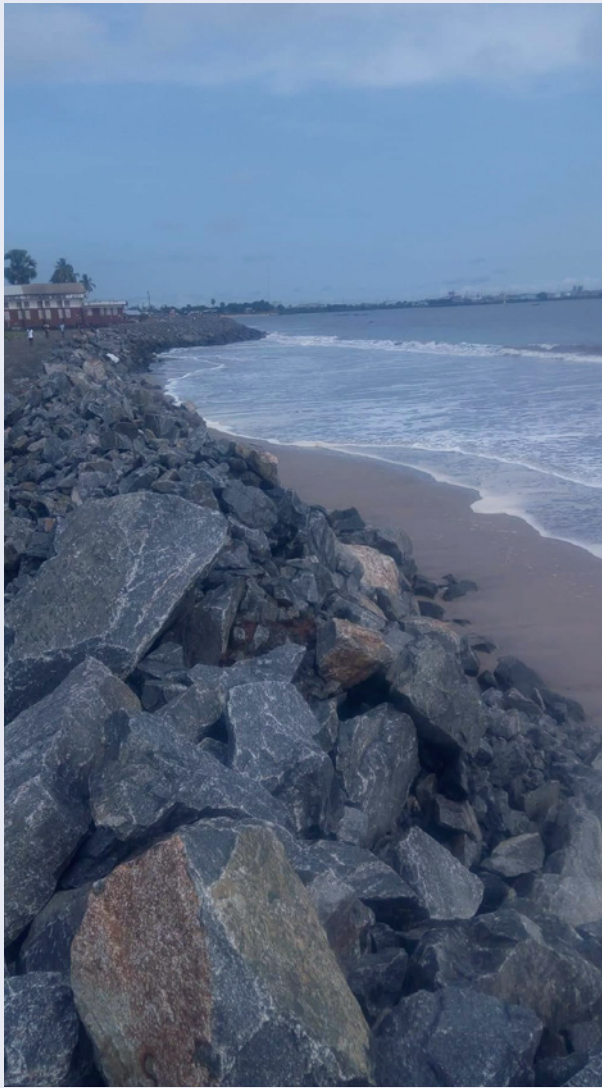
Case Study 6:
Coastal Defence

SDG 13; SDG 14 // Integrating the Environment and Development; Participation and Dialogue

In response to the issue of coastal vulnerability, which was identified in the National Adaptation Program of Action as a priority area, the coastal defence project was initiated in 2012 to support Buchanan and New Kru Town, two of the country's most vulnerable coastal communities. It is funded by the Global Environment Facility and the Government of Liberia, and implemented through UNDP.

The main intervention in New Kru Town is the construction of a coastal defence wall targeting a stretch of 1200m long shoreline. The community in New Kru Town is predominantly a fishing community, requiring continued

access to the sea for local fishermen. In the design of the coastal defence wall, the fishing community were consulted through their leadership in the Core Management Association. The project design therefore includes customized break waters which allow easy launching and landing of local fishing vessels. The project is also building drainage, constructing docking areas for fishing communities and improving waste management and beach restoration. This project integrates the environment and development by continuing to allow for local income-generating and subsistence activities, while also mitigating the effects of climate change and coastal vulnerability. The

consultation process through representatives ensures that this process has included dialogue with key stakeholders, ensuring that the environment and development activities are not in conflict, protecting the rights of small-scale fishermen, as in SDG 14.

Coastal Defence Case Study: What can we learn?

- *Funding partnerships for the least developed countries, as encouraged by SDG Target 13B, help ensure that the most vulnerable communities are protected from the effects of climate-change*
- *Consulting key stakeholders to ensure that livelihoods are not put at risk by environmental protection is key to the success of integrated approaches*

Building a coastal defence wall in New Kru town

In our research, participants emphasised, echoing the 2030 Agenda and Laudato Si', that protecting natural resources is a collective responsibility which requires both government intervention and the role of communities themselves. Participants made links to education systems and building awareness, which is part of the remit of Liberia's Environmental Protection Agency, linking the third principles of integrating the environment and development with the fourth principle of participation and dialogue.

"There are lots of scholarships that are available in the country...but to even apply and be successful one has to spend. So there is this trouble between 'the have' and 'the have not'. Another issue we have in our country, in the communities that we have, is the issue of the legal process. People shy away from court action because maybe they don't know or maybe they are afraid of going to court because they don't have the money. And those who always have the money always come over those who haven't, because when you have money there is no justice for the poor."

Male, Government

Monrovia Beach Sanitation Project

SDG 1; SDG 3; SDG 6; SDG 14 // Integrating the Environment and Development; Leave No-One Behind

In Liberia, especially in Monrovia, sanitation is a serious health issue that needs to draw government attention. Less than 75% of houses and homes in the city have toilets, contributing to both sanitation and waste disposal problems and the spread of diseases including malaria, diarrhoea, skin diseases and the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).

Beach workers resting after cleaning up for the day

The Monrovia beach sanitation project began in 2011 with support from the Bureau of Maritime Authority to provide employment opportunities for disadvantaged youths in Monrovia and its immediate environs, and to clean up the beaches of Monrovia. Payment for the beach cleaners was transferred in 2016 from the Bureau of Maritime Affairs to that of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The project addresses issues of sanitation and waste management by cleaning dump sites that block the community main drainage to the sea, and by monitoring open defecation by nearby residents as well as throwing garbage onto the

area. The communities along the beaches are particularly challenged by household wastes, human faeces and plastic and others washed on shore by the sea and river outlets. It currently employs 5,313 previously unemployed youths, with women constituting more than 75%, who work 3 hours per day from 8am to 11am. The minimum wage for ordinary sweepers is USD$70.00, with higher wages for those working to monitor the beaches and manage the project. This project cuts across the transformative principles of the 2030 Agenda, by employing unemployed youth and women – two groups who are at risk of being left behind – to work on environmental issues.

Monrovia Beach Sanitation Case Study: What can we learn?

- *Integrating the Environment and Development requires new and creative solutions to increasingly urgent problems – employing unemployed youth and women helps leave no-one behind at the same time as meeting SDGs around water and health*

- *Local workers at the community level can help support the sustainability of change by monitoring waste disposal and open defecation, and sensitising local communities about the risks and environmental degradation associated with poor sanitation*

- *These efforts need to be supported by provision of adequate water and sanitation facilities, increasing the number of households with access to toilets.*

Integrating the Environment and Development in Liberia: Summing Up

Each of these three case studies in different ways make clear the importance of partnerships between government and local communities for the sustainability of environmental protection. As our research participants emphasised, protecting the environment is a collective responsibility. The public awareness remit of Liberia's Environmental Protection Agency is one way in which this can be supported. Another is through the provision of alternative livelihoods for the poorest and unemployed in local communities that are most affected by climate change and environmental degradation, as in the case studies presented here. Continuing this work by developing their National Environmental Action Plan represents a key challenge for the Liberian government in the upcoming years.

Photo By   Angela Benito

PRINCIPLE 4:
Participation and Dialogue

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is defined as a document 'of the people, by the people and for the people' (UN 2015, 52). It was developed in a way that promoted participation, in much more inclusive ways than the Millennium Development Goals, involving national dialogues and thematic working groups as well as engagements with civil society and other stakeholders in many countries across the world. In the Agenda, the UN encourages member states to conduct 'regular and inclusive reviews of national progress' (UN, 2015, p. 79) that draws on key stakeholders such as civil society or the private sector, but that also pays particular attention to the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable. The targets for SDG 16 facilitate these inclusive processes, by encouraging governments to 'develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions' (target 16.6) and 'ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making' (target 16.7). It is these participatory processes that are believed to ensure the success of this ambitious and transformative agenda, because sustainable development is both enriched by, and depends upon, diverse perspectives. In Laudato Si', the Pope affirmed this importance, calling for new forms of dialogue that are based on open encounters in which there is a willingness to change and no individual or group is left behind, especially those who are most affected.

Understanding Participation and Dialogue: Liberian Perspectives

Pillar 4 of Liberia's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023) aligns with this emphasis in both the 2030 Agenda and Laudato Si' on promoting participation and dialogue. Pillar 4 of the PAPD argues that to build effective governance that is both accountable and transparent, policies and strategies are required that will ensure 'the

participation of the entire citizenry in decision making'. This Pillar particularly emphasises the empowerment of all groups, especially women, children and people with special needs, linking back to the principle of leaving no-one behind.

"In my community, men are the ones who influence decision making. They have a society that they go to and they believe in. They are the ones who will sit and make laws, and policies to govern how we live in the community, how we live in the state, whether it is affecting us women or not. So women really, really, really they do not have that voice, do not have that influence when it comes to decision making at all."

Female, NGO

In our research, some participants emphasised that the consultation process associated with developing the PAPD was itself a good example of participation and dialogue, particularly through the county level consultations. In the PAPD, the Liberian government emphasises that the implementation of the PAPD aims to take this process further, through the establishment of Technical Working

Photo By Avel Chuklanov

Groups, as well as medium-term targets to develop women community leaders for increased ownership of the change agenda. The PAPD emphasises that Liberia needs to foster the 'full participation of citizens in national affairs' and 'nurture inspirational leadership across all levels of society'.

As the following case study shows, one of the key ways to engage the citizenry and extend participation is through the use of media, particularly for remote populations who might otherwise be left out of this dialogue and access to information.

"In reality I think that's the rural people who are excluded. But some will argue that awareness is being carried out in these places but most of the decisions come from right here in Monrovia. The rural people are always not invited around the table for discussion. The 'Zogos' the underprivileged – they don't take part in decision making. Most of the time, it is the educated people who make the decisions for these people because they are the ones who sit around the table to discuss the issues and make the decisions. The best remedy is to invite the people, get to the people. In the same way as during elections these people can be reached, mechanisms can be put into place to reach these people."

Female, Media

Case Study 8:

Connecting Remote-Populations to Decision-Makers through Radio

SDG 16 // Participation and Dialogue

Presently there are over 80 radio stations in Liberia serving the population. In March 2016, research conducted by Mercy Corps and IREX found that community radio provided a critical source of information for the people living in Liberia, particularly in remote rural parts of the country. The findings estimate that 86% of the Liberian population listens to radio, and most preferred the local community stations to national radio stations for news and information. Despite the multiplicity of radio stations in Liberia, access remains a challenge. Radio broadcasts and contents are limited to particular geographic areas. Most radio stations in Monrovia hardly cover 50km radius leaving gaps that are filled by community radio stations which mainly deal with local county content.

One clear means of participation and dialogue through Liberia's radio stations is provided by Mr. John Kollie's Liberia Media Democratic Initiative (LMDI) and Korta Dorgba's Liberia Media Initiative (LMI). Topics recently discussed include educational matters or the dual currency issue. Most recently, the LMDI has been on the road to very rural communities to discuss on-going efforts aimed at reforming Liberia's electoral laws. The program brings together these locals and stakeholders, including county officials and lawmakers, to exchange ideas and receive questions. The programs are pre-recorded and later broadcast on national radio stations in and around the country.

Connecting Remote - Populations to Decision Makers through Radio: What can we learn?

◉ *Connecting local communities to lawmakers through face-to-face meetings broadcast on radio can help to extend the proportion of the population who are able to raise their concerns and interact directly with policy makers, potentially increasing the proportion who believe that decision-making is inclusive and responsive (SDG target 16.7).*

◉ *Access to information over radio is a crucial way to tackle inequalities and reach those at risk of being left behind, such as rural and remote communities*

Participants at a Dialogue Forum

"Men and women are able to influence decision making processes about development in my country because of their active participation in community leadership. National government starts from local leadership.."

Male, Community Based Organisation

 Our research participants emphasised that involving communities themselves is a good way for decisions to become binding and sustained. Some groups within communities, however, needed more enabling environments for their participation to be meaningful, particularly those who have been identified as 'left behind'. At the county level, our research participants highlighted that the County Development Fund, launched with the Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2009, was a good mechanism to ensure better dialogue between county and national planning processes and the allocation of annual funds.

Participation and Dialogue in Liberia Summing Up

In the Liberian context, the transformative principle of participation and dialogue cut across all three of the other principles, ensuring that no particular individuals or groups were left behind, reducing inequalities through inclusive systems and consultation, and ensuring that local stakeholders were consulted about environmental and development projects and policies that affected their communities. This principle of participation and dialogue was seen to be central to sustaining transparent and inclusive governance, as well as continuing to ensure that conflict was reduced and mediated.   As the case studies in this report highlight, meaningful participation requires that targeted efforts are made to include individuals and communities within these processes, whether through creative uses of radio and other forms of media, or through resources and awareness raising to challenge discrimination and extend the reach of information.

APPENDIX:

Research Participants

This list of participants is organised by date of participation in the study.

Name	Organisation and Role
Regina E. N. Johnson	**Secretary, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Academy**
Sam D. Walker	**School Capacity Lead, More than Me Academy**
Lamuel T. Richardson	**Head Pastor, Church of God of Prophecy**
Christiana T. Wayon	**Integration Officer, Action aid International**
Sam S. K. Wisseh	**Executive Director, Advocate Liberia Abroad for Development**
Wesley T. Johnson, Jr.	**Student, University of Liberia**
Numene B. Reeves	**Assistant Director for Planning, Development and Coordination, Ministry of Finance Planning Development**
Joseph J. B. Joboe	**Public Relations Officer, SOS Children Village of Liberia**
Alvin Y. Sonpon	**Editor and Newscaster, Restoration Radio**
Anna Wainde	**Secretary to the Lawmaker of Grand Kru County, House of the Senate**
Christiana Washington	**Station Program Coordinator, Radio Maria**
L. Emmanuel Fahnboein	**General Services Assistant, Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation**
Fatu Goddon Zinnah	**Administrative Assistant, Human Resources Department, Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation**
Frances B. Seydou	**Manager of Intersectoral Coordination, Environmental Protection Agency**
Barbara L. Ketter	**Pillar Specialist for Sustaining the Peace, Ministry of Finance Planning Development**
Josephine Ogbodu	**Executive Director, Media in Action for Development**
Z. Elijah Whapoe	**Manager of Planning and Policy, Environmental Protection Agency**
Saliho A. Donzo	**Assistant Director for Research, Ministry of Finance Planning Development**
Hawa D. Varney	**Director of Adolescent Girls Division, Ministry of Gender Development**
Sekou S. K. Konneh	**Cultural Analyst, Advocate Liberia Abroad for Development**
Rose G. Wreh	**Community Advocate, Community Women Advocacy /UNDP**
D. Nyandeh Sieh	**Executive Director, FOFI/National Civil Society Organization of Liberia**
Pekeleh Gbuapaye	**Media Relations Officer, Monrovia City Corporation**
Musuline Jones	**Customer Service Supervisor, Monrovia City Corporation**
Caroline Scotland	**Community Chairlady, Island Clinic Community**

Organisations Involved

National Commission of Justice, Peace and Caritas Liberia (NCJPC) is a not for profit, Non-Governmental Organization responsible for overseeing the design, delivery and evaluation of efforts of the Catholic Church in Liberia that promotes charity, social justice and development. NCJPC is guided by a philosophy translated through its core values which include upholding the sanctity and dignity of every human being and the sacredness of all creation, working for a just and peaceful society based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. NCJPC reaches out to the fifteen counties of Liberia because it is national in character and divided into two arms, the human rights and humanitarian arms that are administered and coordinated by a National Office with three Regional Offices representing the three jurisdictional dioceses into which the Catholic Church in Liberia is divided.

CAFOD. The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development is the official aid agency for the Catholic Church in England and Wales. CAFOD reaches out to people living in hard-to-reach places, in war zones and those who are discriminated against. CAFOD believes that if one of us is hurt, hungry or abandoned, we all are hurt, hungry and abandoned. No one should be beyond the love and support they need to live a dignified life. We are part of a global Church network with a local presence in 165 countries and territories. Together we make up one of the largest aid networks in the world. Because of our global reach and local presence, we have the potential to reach everyone.

The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU) conducts world-leading research and postgraduate teaching that helps to build the capacity of national governments, local authorities, NGOs, aid agencies and businesses working towards socially just and sustainable development in the global south. We are part of The Bartlett faculty, ranked the world's top institution for built environment subjects in the renowned QS World Ranking. The DPU has over 65 years of experience in academic teaching, research, policy advice and capacity building in the field of international development.

As part of its mission to build the capacity of professionals and institutions, the DPU undertakes a range of action-oriented work with partners in different parts of the world. Regular contact with policy and planning practice through capacity building and advisory work is viewed as an important part of challenging and developing the theoretical and methodological debates pursued in our teaching and research.

University College London. UCL is London's leading multidisciplinary university, with more than 13,000 staff and 42,000 students from 150 different countries. Founded in 1826 in the heart of London, UCL was founded to open up education to those who had previously been excluded from it. UCL's founding principles of academic excellence and research aimed at addressing real-world problems continue to inform our ethos to this day. UCL is consistently ranked amongst the top 10 universities in the world.

Research Team

Anthony Doe Nyenka, Sr, is a trained Social Worker in basic social works with a BSc in Economics. He has worked for the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission as a Field Officer in conducting and implementing project activities since 2012. For the project 'Bringing Agenda 2030 to Life', he served as a Research Consultant to lead the research.

Dr Charlotte Nussey was awarded her PhD at the Institute of Education, University College London in April 2019. She has worked as an international development researcher and advisor in several countries, with particular expertise in sub-Saharan Africa. Her current research interests include gender, education, violence and interconnected forms of development that cut across the sectors of the SDG goals.

Dr Andrea Rigon is a Lecturer at The Bartlett Development Planning Unit of University College London with a background in development studies and research, consultancy and project management experience in several countries. His research work focuses on how power relations affect the participation of different people and social groups in decision making processes that have an impact on their lives. Andrea is a co-founder of the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre, and is also the Chair of the Board of Catalytic Action, an NGO which creates learning and play spaces for women, men and children affected by conflict or disaster.

Diego Martinez-Schütt is Policy Analyst at the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development based in London. He leads CAFOD's international policy and advocacy work on SDGs, providing support to CAFOD partners in designing and implementing SDG strategies globally with particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa. Diego has a background in environmental and climate research and is the co-founder and Vice-chair of Carbon Market Watch, an NGO providing policy expertise on carbon policies across the world.

Photo By Perry Grone

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