LIBERIA

TOWARD WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: A GENDER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Prepared by the World Bank’s Gender and Development Group in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGAD)
**FOREWORD**

Liberia’s transition to sustained economic growth requires good, evidence-based understanding of the respective roles of women and men in the economy. As with almost all development issues in Liberia, up-to-date statistics and data to conduct quantitative and qualitative assessments of women’s economic situation are limited. To begin the process of building the knowledge base that will inform policy, the Ministry of Gender and Development, with the support of the World Bank, has engaged in an effort to compile and gather existing evidence to obtain the best possible snapshot of Liberian women’s economic profile.

The main message coming out of this preliminary review is that Liberian women play important economic roles in key sectors. Whether as agricultural producers in rural areas or as marketers, traders, and entrepreneurs in urban areas, women’s economic contribution is evident. They constitute 53 percent of the agriculture labor force, and through their informal networks, they facilitate the basic functioning of the economy by linking rural agricultural production to urban markets.

At the same time, the data emerging from recent surveys indicate that women’s economic roles could be expanded and enhanced by promoting their participation in emerging economic sectors and through their full access to productive assets and services. This is because a relatively larger number of women and girls are illiterate and have fewer marketable skills than men and boys; and because of women’s traditional exclusion from important economic sectors like mining, timber, or agricultural production for the export market.

As with all segments of society, these constraints reduce productive capacity and economic contribution. Liberian society has much to gain from investing in women’s and girls’ education, skills development, and economic empowerment. These are some of the challenges that lie ahead, and for which this Needs Assessment offers some analysis and preliminary recommendations.

The Needs Assessment arrives at a crucial moment, as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Process unfolds. We expect that as the key policy decisions about Liberia’s future development are being discussed, this report will inform the PRS deliberations. We hope the report will serve as a guide to the work of key PRSP stakeholders as they engage in dialogue about how to improve the lives of Liberian men and women.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a gender needs assessment of Liberia, with special focus on women’s economic empowerment. Women play an important role in Liberia’s economy. They were the backbone of the economy during the war; in the transition, they continue to be major players in key sectors such as agriculture and services. Increased access for women to key productive resources and their inclusion in the formal economy could mean significant social and economic gains for the country. This report describes the current status of women in the economy and analyzes the impediments to their full participation and contribution. Its findings and recommendations can contribute to the implementation of Liberia’s interim poverty reduction strategy (I-PRSP) by helping the government address gender issues as it attempts to revitalize the national economy, rehabilitate infrastructure, and provide basic services. The report also aims to provide a basis for a comprehensive strategic dialogue on the issue of women’s economic empowerment in the context of the full PRSP process.

The report is based on a review of secondary sources available in Liberia, including statistical reports and policy documents. Data limitations are severe in post-conflict Liberia; the lack of information disaggregated by gender is particularly problematic. This report uses the most recent information/indicator available for each of the areas covered. The main quantitative sources are the recently published Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS) (Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs/World Food Program, 2006), which makes extensive use of gender analysis at the household level, and the last available agricultural baseline survey (Ministry of Agriculture [MOA], 2002). The most recent civil service census (Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-information Services [LISGIS], 2005) is the main source of information for the gender analysis of public employment. Additional information was gathered from a variety of donor reports, including Liberia’s human development report (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2006); millennium development goals (MDGs) report (UNDP, 2004); country common assessment (UN, 2006); and joint needs assessment (UN/World Bank, 2004).

This report incorporates the results of six focus groups and the Small-Scale Gender and Agriculture Survey (SSGAS) conducted among 148 men and women of 15 rural communities in central, southeastern, and northwestern regions of Liberia by LISGIS and the World Bank (Ruiz Abril, 2007). In addition, the report benefits from extensive interviews in Liberia with government staff, technical staff of international and donor agencies, and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs).

KEY FINDINGS

Women are important economic agents in Liberia.

- Women are major players in the agricultural sector, where they constitute most small-holder producers and the majority of the agricultural labor force. They produce 60 percent of agricultural products and play a critical role in the production of food crops, as well as processing food and cash crops.
Rural women also work in trade. They carry out 80 percent of trading activities in rural areas and play a vital role in linking rural and urban markets through their informal networks.

In urban areas, women’s employment profile is characterized by self-employment in small-scale trade, often in the informal sector.

Only 2 percent of those in the formal sector are women.

Public employment is the primary channel through which women enter formal employment, but their participation in the public labor force is extremely low.

Women make up 15–20 percent of employees in infrastructure and reconstruction; their representation in public works schemes could be expanded to enhance the benefits to them and to the country’s economy.

Despite their important economic role, women have limited access to the inputs and services essential to carry out their productive functions; this situation hinders their productivity and ability to contribute to the economy. With the exception of microcredit in greater Monrovia, women have less access than men to productive inputs and services, including land, skills training, basic tools, and technology. This lack of access is notable in agricultural production, where most rural women are employed; it limits women’s economic opportunities in rural areas. Similarly, lack of access to training and to larger credit lines limits the ability of women to graduate to the formal sector in urban areas. Women also are severely handicapped in their access to formal labor markets by their lag in educational attainment. In Liberia, twice as many women as men are illiterate (62% versus 29%), and no national strategy is in place to address illiteracy. Girls who do go to school do not get far—only 25 percent get to secondary school. This situation will leave girls unprepared to compete in the future labor environment as the private sector develops in the country.

Women are absent from key sectors that will be important sources of employment in the near future. Women are absent from the activities that will lead economic recovery in the very short term, such as public works and infrastructure rehabilitation. In addition, the government of Liberia foresees that the male-dominated natural resource sector (timber, mining, and rubber) will be the main source of growth in the coming years (Government of Liberia [GOL], 2007b). Agriculture, where women predominate, will continue primarily as subsistence production until barriers to a market-oriented agricultural sector are removed (GOL, 2007b). Overall, gender segregation in the labor market causes a critical mismatch between women’s occupations and the country’s drivers of growth. Thus, far from decreasing, gender inequalities in the labor market in Liberia are likely to increase in the short and medium term.

Liberia’s institutional framework offers opportunities for the development of policies and programs to support women’s economic empowerment. The I-PRSP recognizes the importance of women’s economic contribution in Liberia as well as the gender-specific obstacles that women face, and proposes the implementation of policies and programs to support women’s productive roles in several areas. Liberia has recently launched an employment strategy that could help address these gender inequalities. However, the Liberia Employment Action Program (LEAP)—a multi-institutional effort
to set the foundations for a long-term employment policy—focuses on youth and has no explicit objective for women’s employment. The reform of the agricultural sector, currently under way, presents an opportunity to put women at the center of the recovery strategy for the rural economy. The Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGAD) has a women’s economic empowerment line of action in its action plan, but its capacity needs to be strengthened. Some institutions (including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Central Bank, the Ministry of Education, and several donor partners and CSOs) are working on various aspects of economic policy that are essential to boost women’s economic opportunities in the short and medium term. MOGAD needs to provide stronger leadership to harmonize institutional and policy efforts in the area of women’s economic empowerment.

This study concludes that the transition from relief to development offers an important opportunity to build on women’s roles and contributions in Liberia and to integrate them into poverty reduction and growth processes. The importance of women’s contribution to Liberia’s economy is undeniable, but women are severely limited in their access to key areas of the economy and to productive inputs and services. If barriers to women’s full participation in the economy are lifted, Liberia could benefit from improved capacity to reduce poverty and improve growth.

First, women are key players in agricultural production in Liberia: they are 53 percent of the agricultural labor force, responsible for 60 percent of agricultural production. Investing in female farmers is essential to increase rural productivity and revitalize the rural economy. Improving women’s access to land, credit, inputs, and extension services will contribute to rural growth. Studies in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Kenya show that more equal control of inputs and farm income by women and men can raise farm yields by as much as a fifth of current output (World Bank, 2001).

Second, women represent untapped potential and need access to training and education to realize it. More than half of the female population is illiterate and will be unprepared to participate and contribute to the country’s development.

Third, women’s economic role in rural Liberia goes beyond their contribution to food crop production. They are the main processors of agricultural products for domestic and commercial use. They are the primary traders and marketers of rural produce, responsible for 80 percent of trading in rural areas and actively participating in key farm-to-market networks. Capitalizing on such fundamental economic roles is essential to revitalize agriculture and reduce poverty in Liberia.

Fourth, Liberian women are dynamic entrepreneurs, 77 percent of women are self-employed in urban areas compared to 40 percent of men. Empowering them to create jobs by facilitating their graduation from the informal to the formal sector and by helping them move up from microcredit to the small and medium enterprise sector will provide significant economic gains and will boost the urban economy.
Fifth, Liberian women are currently absent from profitable sectors such as cash crop production, forestry, mining, and infrastructure, including public works. Promoting their participation in nontraditional areas of employment will result in increased economic opportunities for the women and will have a positive effect on household welfare and poverty reduction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report offers short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations to support the government of Liberia’s poverty reduction agenda by creating an environment that will encourage and enable women’s economic empowerment. The recommendations focus on (1) ensuring that women benefit from short-term opportunities arising from reconstruction; (2) providing women with support services to fully develop in the economic areas where they are present, and promoting their employment in new sectors and economic segments; (3) establishing conditions that will enable women to fully seize economic opportunities in the future, once the private sector develops in Liberia; and (4) strengthening the institutional framework for women’s economic advancement.

1. Ensure that women benefit from reconstruction opportunities and the reform process.

In the short term, the government and its donor partners need to guarantee that women benefit equally with men from the employment opportunities arising from reconstruction. This is particularly important in the case of public works, where women’s participation is very low. As this lack of participation may be due to cultural factors, program managers should be made aware of the changing roles of women and the need to improve their access to jobs. Another constraint may be that women lack appropriate skills. Vocational and skills training should be open to women, especially in nontraditional areas. Finally, lack of awareness among contractors and other intermediaries might be remedied by clear requirements and targets in construction contracts concerning women’s participation. This has worked quite well in similar programs in other countries; for example, in Ethiopia’s public works program. As a prerequisite, MOGAD and donors should help the Ministry of Public Works and the Liberian Agency for Community Empowerment build capacity to address gender issues in infrastructure. The World Bank has valuable experience in addressing gender issues in public works and road rehabilitation programs in other countries that it could transfer to its Liberian partners.

Government reforms in various sectors—the public sector in particular—can be articulated in a way that improves women’s economic opportunities and reduces gender inequalities. The analysis of the national census of civil servants reveals severe gender inequalities in access to public employment across sectors and positions. The reform of the civil service, currently in the planning stage, should be designed to include gender equality objectives. For example, if a right-sizing exercise were undertaken, it could include incentives to promote women’s participation in male-dominated ministries.
and other public sector institutions, and to improve the representation of women in technical and middle- and high-level management positions in the public sector.

2. ENSURE THAT WOMEN DEVELOP ALONG WITH THE COUNTRY.

In the short and medium term, the government of Liberia needs to ensure that women develop along with the country and that they are prepared to seize new economic opportunities as they come along.

The government and the donor community should support women in their role as agricultural producers by providing them with land, credit, agricultural extension, basic processing technologies, agribusiness support services and training, and infrastructure to get their produce to markets. These are priorities for the rural sector in general, and it is essential that the planning process for these priorities takes women’s role into account. Innovative interventions targeting female farmers, with high potential to offer rapid results and lessons (results-based initiatives [RBIs]), could be used in the design of sector strategies to support female farmers. Land reform deserves special attention; despite the new inheritance law, gender issues remain to be addressed to ensure equal access to land. This report recommends an assessment of land issues to review the complex dynamics that link gender and land reform in Liberia. The reform of the extension program currently under way should take gender issues into account. The program needs a strategy that follows international best practices in this area. Also, to support women as processors and rural entrepreneurs, the government could facilitate women’s access to processing technologies. The role of the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) will be crucial in providing such technologies and working with rural women in agribusiness development. Finally, the government needs to organize and promote the association of rural women. The government should support women’s networks, formalize them, and strengthen them by providing them with information and basic management skills and by facilitating their contact with chambers of commerce and the broader corporate sector. Overall, the Ministry of Agriculture has an important role to play in creating adequate institutional mechanisms to guarantee the proper integration of gender considerations in its new decentralized structure. The comprehensive review of the agricultural sector currently under way should include the development of guidelines to ensure that gender issues are considered in the reform of the sector.

Women should be included in economic areas where they are not yet present and where growth prospects are high. Cash crops such as rubber, coffee, cocoa, and palm oil are natural candidates for such inclusion, as women already play an invisible role in the sector and have the necessary skills to participate fully. The strategy should go further, opening the doors of the mining, logging, and furniture-making industries to women. Adequate training, including apprenticeships and vocational training, should be put in place, along with a strategy to increase the number of women accessing vocational training institutes. The strategy should include outreach mechanisms, scholarships, and guarantees of safe conditions for female students. Finally, sector agreements and public-private partnerships should be undertaken to pilot schemes for women’s participation in these sectors and to evaluate their performance. MOGAD has a
leading role to play in working with the Ministries of Education, Commerce, and Agriculture; the Mining Authority; and employers in the private sector to facilitate this process.

In the medium term, the Ministry of Commerce and its partners should ensure the graduation of women from microenterprises to the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector. Women predominate among petty traders, but experience in other countries shows that women lack the financial confidence, skills, and products to move from microenterprise to SME. A study of the obstacles women face in starting a business in Liberia should be conducted and a strategy built to help women overcome those obstacles. Improving access to credit and capacity building, including mentoring by other female entrepreneurs, and improving support services for working mothers (e.g., formal and informal child care arrangements) could be considered as bridging actions. Certain segments of the service sector—such as the care economy and hotel, restaurant, and tourism-related services—are underexploited in Liberia and are important niches of female SMEs in other countries. These sectors should be reviewed to identify opportunities, and women should be provided with the necessary skills to seize them. The Ministry of Commerce and the National Investment Commission, along with MOGAD, can facilitate this process.

3. PREPARE WOMEN FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

The government should build women’s capacity to compete in the private sector by addressing girls’ and women’s low education levels. Twice as many women as men are illiterate in Liberia, and only 25 percent of girls go on to secondary education. This is a clear impediment to women’s participation in a competitive labor market in the future, and it means that a large proportion of the population is unprepared to contribute to development, with a subsequent cost to Liberia’s society and economy. The government needs to design and implement a strategy to address female illiteracy. The Ministry of Education, supported by the donor community, should make this a priority for action in the short term. In the meantime, better coordination of NGOs and other service providers would be a starting point.

4. STRENGTHEN THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN’S ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT.

It is essential that the government initiate a comprehensive policy dialogue on the issue of women’s economic empowerment to determine the appropriate PRSP actions to promote women’s economic empowerment. Liberia’s new administration has the political will to improve women’s economic opportunities; the moment has come to translate political commitment into strategic policy actions. MOGAD and the Ministry of Finance should take the lead in engaging in a full policy dialogue with key partners.

- To begin, the government should establish a high-level working group on women’s economic empowerment in the context of LEAP, with representatives from the
institutions involved (MOGAD and the Ministries of Labor, Education, Agriculture, Public Works, and Commerce).

- MOGAD should advocate for the establishment of a gender/women’s employment objective across all six LEAP sector initiatives or a seventh initiative on women’s employment and economic empowerment. It should initiate a dialogue with other important stakeholders, such as private sector employers and commercial banks.

- MOGAD has undertaken some strategic actions in the area of women’s economic empowerment, but its work would have a greater impact if it were articulated around a strategy for women’s economic empowerment. The strategy should follow the process of policy dialogue and build on targeted analytical work (e.g., a women’s employment map; conditions for female entrepreneurship; feasibility studies for female employment in high-growth, emerging, and nontraditional sectors).

- Also, MOGAD should fully participate in decision-making forums for the preparation of the full PRSP. Donors should support the ministry technically to build its capacity in the area of gender and poverty/economic analysis and to maximize the impact of its participation in the PRSP process. Donors could write background papers and help MOGAD staff provide inputs to the strategy. Regular high-level dialogue between MOGAD and the Ministries of Finance and Planning would help ensure strong treatment of gender issues in the PRSP.

- Given the prominent role of agriculture and the rural sector, strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture’s (MOA’s) capacity for strategic planning and implementation is essential to achieve women’s economic empowerment. The MOA Department of Planning, supported by donor and government partners (e.g., MOGAD), should lead the development of an overall gender strategy for the agricultural sector. As a precondition, the ministry must improve its data collection and analytical capacity. At the same time, the MOA must create an adequate institutional structure to plan and implement such a strategy at the county level; for example, by training planning officers in county offices, including gender-related responsibilities in their job descriptions, and establishing adequate institutional incentives.

- Finally, Liberia needs to improve its statistical capacity for policy analysis and formulation. LlisGIS needs support and advice from donor partners and MOGAD to collect key gender-disaggregated data and design surveys to collect information for gender analysis. Line ministries, currently in the process of rebuilding their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, must strengthen their capabilities to monitor and evaluate gender issues in their sectors’ programs and policies. Liberia’s development partners, in collaboration with MOGAD, should facilitate targeted assistance from gender and M&E specialists.
1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents a gender needs assessment of Liberia, with special focus on women’s economic empowerment. Women play an important role in Liberia’s economy. They were the backbone of the economy during the war; in the transition, they continue to be major players in key sectors such as agriculture and services. This report provides information about the current status of women in the economy and analyzes the impediments to their full participation and contribution. Its findings and recommendations can contribute to the implementation of Liberia’s interim poverty reduction strategy (I-PRSP) by helping the government address gender issues as it attempts to revitalize the national economy, rehabilitate infrastructure, and provide basic services. The report also aims to provide a basis for a comprehensive strategic dialogue on the issue of women’s economic empowerment in the context of the full PRSP process.

The report is based on a review of secondary sources available in Liberia, including statistical reports and policy documents. Data limitations are severe in postconflict Liberia; the lack of information disaggregated by gender is particularly problematic. This report uses the most recent information/indicator available for each of the areas covered. The main quantitative sources are the recently published Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey (CFSNS) (Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs/World Food Program, 2006), which makes extensive use of gender analysis at the household level, and the last available agricultural baseline survey (MOA, 2002). The most recent civil service census (Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-information Services [LISGIS], 2005) is the main source of information for the gender analysis of public employment. Additional information was gathered from a variety of donor reports, including Liberia’s human development report (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2006); millennium development goals (MDGs) report (UNDP, 2004); country common assessment (UN, 2006); and joint needs assessment (UN/World Bank, 2004).

This report incorporates the results of six focus groups and the Small-Scale Gender and Agriculture Survey (SSGAS) conducted among 148 men and women of 15 rural communities in central, southeastern, and northwestern regions of Liberia by LISGIS and the World Bank (Ruiz Abril, 2007). In addition, the report benefits from extensive interviews in Liberia with government staff, technical staff of international and donor agencies, and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs).

Structure of the report. The following section, “Economic Profile of Women,” describes women’s economic roles in Liberia, analyzing their representation in the various economic sectors and future employment opportunities. “Impediments to Women’s Economic Participation and Contribution” assesses women’s access to the key inputs, productive assets, and services essential for economic advancement in the current economic context in Liberia. “Conclusions and Policy Recommendations” includes recommendations for women’s economic empowerment in the short, medium, and long

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1 The purpose of the survey was to complement gender information related to agriculture and rural development that already existed in the CFSNS. The small size of the sample limits the validity of the findings, but the survey suggests important trends that could be corroborated with larger samples.
term. Annex 1 is a policy action matrix for women’s economic empowerment; and Annex 2 suggests indicators to use in assessing women’s economic empowerment in Liberia.

2. ECONOMIC PROFILE OF WOMEN

The Liberian economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which contributed more than 50 percent of the aggregate gross domestic product (GDP) in 2005. Small-holder agriculture is the main generator of employment. However, lack of services and information for farmers on new technology and improved varieties, lack of markets, and lack of marketing mechanisms and transport infrastructure to the few existing markets will limit the sector’s recovery in the short term (Government of Liberia [GOL], 2007a). Export crops and agricultural products such as rubber, palm oil, coffee, and cocoa were important sources of growth before the war. Most of the rubber-tapping industry is organized around large, foreign-owned plantations, with a small proportion of Liberian small holders. Mining—especially of iron ore, diamonds, and gold—and logging also were leading income-generating sectors in prewar Liberia. The war destroyed most of the country’s infrastructure, and while UN sanctions on the logging industry have been lifted, those on the mining sector remain in place. The service sector is dominated by informal activity and lacks medium-sized private entrepreneurs that could boost formal employment. This section examines women’s participation in the key economic sectors in Liberia.

Agriculture and the Rural Economy

Women are major players in the agricultural sector in Liberia; they play a critical role in the production of food crops. Agriculture is the main economic activity in rural Liberia—it generates 90 percent of all rural employment. In 2001, women comprised 53 percent of those involved in farming (MOA, 2002) and were responsible for 60 percent of all agricultural production (MOA, 2006). Their main occupation is the production of food crops, where they contribute approximately 42.5 percent of labor compared with a 35.3 percent male involvement (Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs/World Food Program [CFSNS from here on], 2006).2 Women are responsible for planting, weeding, and harvesting, while men are in charge of brushing, felling, clearing, and fencing (MOA, 2002) (see figure 1). Women’s contribution to cash crops, while important, is considerably lower. They do 31.5 percent of the work, compared with 48.5 percent for men (CFSNS, 2006).3

Women also play a prominent role in processing agricultural produce. The results of the Small-Scale Gender and Agriculture Survey (SSGAS) (Ruiz Abril, 2007) show that women are engaged in processing activities in significantly higher numbers than men. According to the survey, the majority of the rural population is engaged in agricultural production. Men are more likely to focus exclusively on production (more than 50% of men work on agricultural production only, compared with less than 25% of women);

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2 The rest is produced by other members of the household or by all household members working together.
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women tend to combine agricultural production with processing or trading, or both. Fifty percent of women, compared with 25 percent of men, are engaged in agriprocessing activities (SSGAS, 2007). Policies to revitalize the rural economy—especially the design of agribusinesses strategies—must take women’s role in processing into account.

![Fig 1. Gender Division of Labor in Food Crops](image)

Note: Food crops = rice and cassava
Agricultural workers by type of work, 2001
Source: Author’s calculation from Agriculture Baseline Survey, MOA, 2001

Women are instrumental in rural and rural-to-urban trade; they bring rural produce to urban markets, facilitating the basic functioning of the economy. After agriculture, women are mostly likely to work in trading. Women comprise the vast majority (80%) of those involved in petty trade/small-scale business and sales of food in rural areas (see figure 2). In addition, women’s associations and informal networks are a primary channel for bringing agricultural produce to urban markets (e.g., through urban-based “market women,” who buy produce from rural women). In Liberia’s current context of depleted infrastructure and market breakdowns, these networks, although informal, play an important role in the basic functioning of the economy.
The Service Sector and the Urban Economy

The economic profile of women in urban areas is characterized by self-employment in small-scale trade, often in the informal sector. In 2006, the vast majority of women in greater Monrovia worked as market vendors and in petty trade (68% of the urban female labor force); a small proportion (13%) held clerical positions (CFSNS, 2006). About 80 percent of working women were self-employed (77% of all women), almost twice as many as the number of self-employed men (40% of men). Among those who had businesses, women were more likely than men to have informal arrangements (only 4% of women had a registered business, compared with 14% of men). Men predominated in clerical and professional jobs (25%); as skilled workers in manufacturing (25%); and as unskilled, casual, and contract workers (20%) (see figure 3). Overall, more men than women were employed (52% of men compared with 41% of women). Lack of work was the main cause of unemployment for both men and women, but while household responsibilities were not an obstacle to male employment, 13 percent of women reported that such responsibilities were an obstacle to finding a job. This suggests the need for support services for working women in urban areas.

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Note: Occupations of agricultural population, 2001
Source: Author’s calculation from Agriculture Baseline Survey 2001

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Data for this section are from the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey dataset. At the time of this writing, the urban section of the survey had not yet been published. It was scheduled to be published in 2007.
**Public Employment and Public Works**

Public employment is the main channel for women to enter formal employment, but their participation in the public sector labor force is extremely low. Women’s participation in the formal economy is marginal (2% [UN, 2006]) and heavily concentrated in the public sector. But within the public sector, women make up only 23.7 percent of total employees (LISGIS, 2005). They are concentrated in secretarial and clerical jobs (50.6% of all public female employment), teaching (16.4%), and caretaking (8.1%). Men far outnumber women in virtually all ministries. The highest gender gap is in “hard ministries” such as Lands, Mines, and Energy or Public Works, but women’s participation is also low in other areas, such as Agriculture, the Institute for Public Administration, and the Ministry of Education (less than 20% in the last). The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has a better balance—37 percent of its employees are women (see figure 4).

Women have limited representation in public sector jobs related to infrastructure and reconstruction. In the public sector, women are just 5 percent of engineers, 2 percent of mechanics, 4.7 percent of plumbers, 8 percent of masons, 3 percent of carpenters, and less than 1 percent of electricians. Only one of the 442 public drivers is a woman (LISGIS, 2005). However, the postconflict environment offers new opportunities for women in public employment, in areas previously dominated by men. For example, the I-PRSP has a 20 percent target for female police officers, and the government has established a fast-track program for illiterate young women to enter this profession.
Women have not fully benefited from casual labor opportunities in public works schemes. Rehabilitation of infrastructure through labor-intensive public works is a key objective of the government’s employment strategy (see box 1). The Ministry of Public Works and the Liberian Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) are responsible for the implementation of labor-intensive rehabilitation programs for roads and bridges as well as for community infrastructure (schools, health centers, water and sanitation facilities, etc.). In spite of small-scale—and, to a certain extent, symbolic—initiatives to include women in public works (e.g., in the rehabilitation of Monrovia’s streets), the Ministry of Public Works has estimated that the proportion of women employed as casual laborers in public works is less than 5 percent (more recent estimates are about 20%)\(^5\). Of 150 mechanics and heavy-duty equipment operators working for the ministry, only 5 are women. In community works managed by LACE, women are well represented on project management committees and participate in the selection of the works, but their participation in construction work is low. It appears that the use of private contractors (who are typically not required to include women when they hire local labor) might be limiting women’s participation in public works projects. If this trend is confirmed, it signals an important missed opportunity for women’s employment and economic empowerment, and an important gender inequality that the infrastructure sector should address in the near future.

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Box 1. Liberia’s Policy Framework for Women’s Economic Empowerment

**Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP).** Revitalization of the national economy is one of the four pillars of the I-PRSP that will guide the government’s action until July 2008. The pillar includes revitalization of agriculture, mining, and forestry; development of the private sector; job creation; and statistical capacity building. The I-PRSP recognizes women’s socioeconomic contribution as well as the gender-specific obstacles they face in fulfilling their productive roles. The strategy proposes the implementation of measures to facilitate women’s access to land, credit, and business development, and to promote female participation in nontraditional employment sectors.

**Liberian government employment strategy.** The Liberia Emergency Employment Program/Liberia Employment Action Program (LEEP/LEAP), launched in July 2006, provides for a phased approach to employment creation. It considers immediate job creation and simultaneously has implemented the foundation of a long-term employment program. The strategy includes six key initiatives; a specific ministry is responsible for each: (1) boosting employment in public works (Ministry of Public Works); (2) establishing skills training programs (Ministry of Youth and Sports); (3) facilitating the transition of the informal economy, and boosting microcredit and the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector (Ministry of Commerce and Industry); (4) collecting and analyzing labor statistics and labor market information (Ministry of Labor); (5) promoting social dialogue and strengthening labor administration (Ministry of Labor); and (6) boosting employment in the agricultural arena (Ministry of Agriculture).

Employment generation for youth is an important focus of the strategy, and most of the activities target youth. The strategy does not have an explicit focus on women’s employment, nor does it appear to account for the differing employment needs of young men and young women. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) are preparing a technical assistance program to help the government address gender issues in LEAP.

**Reform of the agricultural sector.** The reform of the agricultural sector presents an important opportunity to support women’s role in rural development and to promote their economic empowerment. The shift toward people-oriented participatory rural development and the decentralization of key services such as extension and research open the door to integrating women into the rural decision-making process in equal measure with their socioeconomic contribution. The gender awareness principle that will guide the reform presents an opportunity to ensure that gender issues are adequately integrated in the design and implementation. The emphasis on modernization of the sector and the creation of value chains will create opportunities for women’s economic empowerment in rural areas. It will be important, however, to include concrete mechanisms for implementing the gender focus of the reform and for monitoring and evaluating progress.

Source: I-PRSP, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Liberia Statement of Policy Intent for Agriculture

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**Household expenditure patterns**

As in other parts of the world, female earned income in Liberia is important to ensure family welfare. Female earned income is spent on household basic needs in higher proportions than male earned income. The 2006 Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey shows that female-headed households have significantly higher per capita food expenditures than male-headed households (522 Liberian dollars [LD] versus 487 LD) and a larger share of expenditures spent on food (69% versus 66%). Female-headed households spend more on bulgur wheat, oil/butter, condiments, and education, while male-headed households spend more on bush meat, alcohol and tobacco, transport,
agricultural and fishing tools, social events, and fines (CFSNS, 2006). Increasing income-generation opportunities for women will likely have a multiplier effect—ensuring food security in the short term, and improving educational outcomes and helping lift households out of poverty in the future.

**Women's employment and economic prospects—the missing link**

Because of a rigid division of labor by gender, Liberian women are absent from key sectors that will be important sources of employment in the near future. As mentioned above, women are currently absent from activities that will lead the economic recovery in the very short term, such as public works and infrastructure rehabilitation. The government foresees that the male-dominated natural resource sector (timber, mining, and rubber) will be the main source of growth in Liberia in the coming years (GOL, 2007b). Agriculture—where women predominate, especially in small-holder food production—will continue primarily as subsistence production until market constraints are removed (GOL, 2007b). Thus, gender segregation in the labor market is leading to a critical mismatch between women’s occupations and the country’s drivers of growth. This trend will severely limit women’s economic opportunities; far from decreasing, gender inequalities in the labor market are likely to increase in the short and medium term.
Box 2. Liberia’s Institutional Framework for Women’s Economic Empowerment

A number of strategic institutional actors are playing or could play an important role in women’s economic empowerment in Liberia.

Paramount among them is the **Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGAD)**, which is responsible for the advancement of women and for gender equality in Liberia. While it has not focused on economic empowerment in the past, the ministry could play an important role by leading the coalition of institutional actors and promoting dialogue with line ministries regarding specific initiatives to improve women’s economic opportunities. With the support of UNIFEM, the ministry has designed a three-year strategic plan in which women’s economic empowerment figures prominently; however, the ministry’s low technical capacity in economic analysis may hinder its ability to fully implement the plan. Gender focal points exist in almost all line ministries and counties. The capacity of the gender focal points to address gender issues is currently low; if they were properly trained or staffed, they could play an important role in monitoring sector actions and identifying new areas of work to support women’s economic empowerment.

The **Ministry of Finance**, in the context of its leading role in the PRSP process, will be the critical institution to help articulate sectoral policy issues related to women’s economic empowerment during the process of policy dialogue and formulation of a poverty reduction strategy.

The **Ministry of Agriculture**, through its functions of policy development and service provision for the rural sector, can play a key part in the design and implementation of policies and programs to support women farmers and facilitate their economic empowerment. The reform currently under way in this sector—toward a more decentralized and farmer-oriented system—presents an opportunity to fully integrate women in decision-making processes and ensure that their needs are met by the sector interventions. It will be important to ensure that the reform is designed with an explicit gender focus, taking into consideration women’s traditional roles in agriculture.

The **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** is responsible for regulating and facilitating the development of trade and industry in Liberia, and is one of the leading partners in the country’s employment strategy. The ministry has an important role to play in supporting women’s entrepreneurial activity and their graduation to the formal sector. The ministry is aware of the important role women play in the service and informal sectors, and of the need to support them; a more explicit and formal articulation of its strategy for female entrepreneurship could improve the impact of its work in the area of women’s economic empowerment.

The **Central Bank and the National Taskforce for Microfinance** are responsible for the development of the microcredit sector in Liberia. The recently created microcredit unit of the Central Bank has made targeting women one of its strategies to develop the sector. By providing credit services tailored to women entrepreneurs; both institutions will play key roles in improving women’s access to credit in rural areas and facilitating their transition from the informal to the formal sector in urban areas.

The **Ministry of Education** can facilitate women’s economic empowerment by addressing female illiteracy and improving education and vocational training for girls. Girls’ education is a sector priority and an important focus of the ministry’s work, but more emphasis is needed to improve female literacy and integrate gender issues into the reform of the vocational training system.

**Civil society organizations** provide important services for women, filling the gap in public sector services created during the war and the transition. They are important providers of literacy courses, skills training, and business support services, and of inputs and extension in rural areas. Their experience and lessons are valuable assets for gender policy development; they should actively participate in the policy dialogue regarding women’s economic empowerment.

The **donor community** has a key role to play in supporting the government and building the capacity of various ministries and institutions to address gender issues. The interagency donor thematic group coordinates gender-related activity in Liberia. Donors’ main areas of work are gender-based violence, gender and education, health, and governance. Actions on women’s economic empowerment have been scattered and isolated; high-level leadership and policy focus are needed in this area. Institutions that have a comparative advantage in the area of economics—such as the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), could take the lead in Liberia and contribute their experience in the area of women’s economic empowerment.
3. IMPEDIMENTS TO WOMEN’S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND CONTRIBUTION

This section analyzes obstacles to women’s economic empowerment in Liberia by reviewing women’s access to critical productive inputs and services such as land, credit, training, tools and technology, business support services, and infrastructure.

Land

In Liberia, women own significantly less land than men, and their tenure is insecure. This situation hinders the economic contribution of women farmers and increases their vulnerability to poverty. Access to land has been a complex issue in Liberia for centuries. Before the war, only a few elite men owned land. In 2006, only 56 percent of female-headed households and 16 percent of women (compared with 68 percent of male-headed households and 33 percent of men) owned land (CFSNS, 2006). The Small-Scale Gender and Agriculture Survey (SSGAS, 2007) shows that women tend to access land through their husbands and that they experience greater insecurity of tenure. According to the survey, 65 percent of men and women have access to land, but only 10 percent of women (compared with 44% of men) own the land they cultivate. This means that married women tend to cultivate their husbands’ land.

Lack of title to land is a problem throughout Liberia, but it is especially important for women. Only 11 percent of women, compared with 20 percent of men, own titles. Lack of title has important economic repercussions, as studies associate security of tenure with higher productive investments and improved productivity. Similarly, lack of ownership—and of title in particular—places women in a vulnerable position in an economic crisis, family conflict, or marital breakdown. This problem limits the effectiveness of poverty-reduction efforts, particularly in rural areas.

Legal, customary, and practical factors limit women’s access, ownership, and security of tenure.

- **Legal factors** – In the past, a woman who married under customary law (the most common system in rural areas) had no right to her husband’s property. The 2003 law on inheritance grants wives the right to a third of their husbands’ property, regardless of the regime under which they were married. In addition, the law gives both sons and daughters equal rights to inherit land. However, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the law is being enforced. And 32 percent of rural men and 28 percent of rural women interviewed for the SSGAS said they believed that the law did not allow women to own land.

- **Customary factors** – Community norms and arrangements restrict women’s access to land in Liberia, despite advances in legislation. Community leaders (mostly men) have the right to grant communal land to individuals on a yearly basis for cultivation; they also have the responsibility for settling land disputes. Women report that community leaders systematically favor men in the process of
granting land. The reason most commonly given is that “women are strangers to
the community and tradition forbids them to inherit land.” Traditionally, women
lose their informal right to land when they marry out of their community, which is
a common practice in Liberia. Thus, even if the law says women may inherit land,
tradition in many communities says they may not.

- **Practical factors** – The division of labor in agriculture also limits women’s access
to land. Men are responsible for clearing and felling the land at the beginning of
the agricultural cycle; these tasks are carried out in groups through communal
arrangements (*kuu*). The inability of female heads of households to participate in
the *kuu* hinders their ability to use the land productively. This lack of productive
capability is, in turn, cited by community leaders as a reason not to grant land to
these households. Another practical factor that limits women’s access to land
titles is their high rate of illiteracy and unfamiliarity with legal and administrative
matters, which put them at a disadvantage in the complicated procedure of
obtaining land titles.

**Credit**

**Women predominate among microcredit borrowers in urban areas. However, they lack access to medium and large credit lines, and to any type of financing in rural areas.** Women constitute the majority of microcredit borrowers in urban Liberia. Eighty-six percent of the clients of the two largest microcredit institutions (the Liberty Fund and LEAP, which together serve more than 5,000 clients in greater Monrovia) are women (UNDP, 2006). Women’s substantial participation in microcredit borrowing is the result of explicit targeting by credit institutions, coupled with women’s focus on microprojects and small businesses, and men’s lack of interest in small loans. However, the country’s demand for microcredit is much larger than the supply. The government has made full development of the microcredit sector a priority.

The situation in rural areas is particularly critical—credit facilities are virtually nonexistent, which leads to the use of traditional forms of community credit, such as borrowing from friends or from savings clubs, such as *susu* clubs. Only about half (53%) of rural households have access to credit; 38 percent borrow from friends and 12–56 percent, depending on the region, borrow from *susu* clubs (CFSNS, 2006).

When it comes to large commercial or public credit lines (e.g., a credit line from the National Investment Commission of US$5,000–$25,000), men are the main borrowers; women face serious obstacles in obtaining such loans. Collateral requirements, risk-
averseness, and lack of skills inhibit women’s ability to obtain major financing for their businesses. This is a limiting factor in their graduation from the informal sector to the formal sector and to the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector.
Training

Training services are scarce in Liberia, and women access them significantly less than men. Literacy training, skills training, and agricultural extension and business management training are essential to improve livelihoods, revitalize the economy, and achieve women’s economic empowerment. However, training services are in short supply throughout the country, especially in rural areas, and access to training is limited for women. According to the SSGAS survey (2007), only 11.5 percent of women and 20 percent of men had received any kind of training in the past 12 months.

Literacy

Women have a severe handicap in entrepreneurial activities because of their high illiteracy rate. Twenty-nine percent of Liberian men and 62 percent of women are illiterate. Access to literacy courses is limited, as adult literacy classes are scarce, scattered around the country, and implemented by an array of institutions. In addition to NGO and donor programs, the Ministry of Education has 200 centers that used to provide evening classes around the country. However, they are insufficient to meet the needs of the illiterate population, and they lack teachers and supplies. Liberia has no clear policy to tackle illiteracy; the education sector strategy, currently under preparation, does not address the issue.

Vocational and Skills Training

An effective system of vocational and skills training for women is not yet in place in Liberia. Vocational and skills training is a key factor for women’s economic empowerment in the short term. The reconstruction phase is creating job opportunities, but many are in traditionally male-dominated professions. In the past, vocational institutes provided training in masonry, plumbing, carpentry, metal work, horticulture, and agronomy to people between the ages of 15 and 35 years who possessed at least a sixth grade education. Although no data are available, it is presumed that girls’ significantly lower educational attainment (secondary enrollment rate of 25.6% [Ministry of Education, 1999, cited in UN/World Bank, 2004]) and the lack of scholarships to fund living expenses in the centers has resulted in low access to this training by girls and women. In addition, the quality of the training is not high. The reform of the service, currently under way, will have to improve the link between the labor market and the skills that are taught, including training in business development as part of the curriculum.

Some skills training is delivered by local and international NGOs, as well as by donors. However, most of the programs fail to promote women’s involvement in new economic niches and focus instead on traditional women’s work such as tailoring, tie-dye, and cake making, for which market opportunities are not buoyant.

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6 Similar problems have limited women’s use of vocational training facilities to less than 5 percent in countries, such as Ethiopia, with less complicated transitions (Ruiz Abril, 2005).
Agricultural extension

Inadequate agricultural extension services may limit women’s economic opportunities and agricultural productivity. Given the importance of women’s labor in agriculture, adequate extension services are essential to improve productivity and provide economic opportunities in rural areas. However, the extension system of the Ministry of Agriculture was severely damaged by the war and is not yet restored. Of the 103 extension agents, only 18 are home extension agents assigned to work with women farmers. All the agents are in Monrovia, as the training centers were destroyed during the conflict. No studies exist to assess the quality of the services received by women farmers in Liberia, but evidence from other African countries shows gender bias in extension services, with agents focusing exclusively on crop support services to male farmers. In the past, extension services for women in Liberia have focused on nutrition and food security, neglecting the commercial aspect of agriculture. Before the war, the focus of the extension program for women was “teaching housewives and girls in the communities appropriate methods of homemaking, food preservation, and nutrition” (United Nations Mission in Liberia [UNMIL], 2004).

Business training and support services

Business training and support services are virtually nonexistent in Liberia. In the SSGAS (2007), only 5 percent of men and 3 percent of women reported having used business support services in the past 12 months. NGOs and donors include business development training in some of their skills training programs; the government provides no such services, although the Ministry of Commerce and LEAP have plans to implement training and support programs. For women, basic business support through training, mentoring, and technical assistance is essential to improve the profitability of their businesses, help them create new ones, and facilitate their graduation to the formal sector.

Inputs, Technology, and Information

Women have limited access to the key inputs and technology that are vital for agricultural production and agribusiness development in rural areas. Seeds and tools are basic inputs for agricultural production. Information is essential for business development and marketing. Processing technologies are essential to create value chains and business opportunities in agriculture. Overall, and while the situation is difficult for both men and women, women tend to have less access to inputs, technology and information than men. Male-headed households have greater access than female-headed households to seeds (13% versus 8%) (CFSNS, 2006). And while access to tools and patterns of ownership may reflect the division by gender of labor in rural areas, women have significantly less access than men (18% for male-headed households versus 10% for female-headed households) (see details in figure 5). Regarding information, only 3 percent of men and women in rural areas have cell phones; men have greater access than women to radios (28% versus 15%). Storage capacity is almost nonexistent, which causes substantial postharvest losses (45% for cereals [MOA, 2006]) and severely constrains agribusiness opportunities for both men and women. Processing technologies, even the
most basic types, are lacking in Liberia. Small-scale processing devices could improve opportunities for women-owned agribusinesses and save women considerable time, as they spend long hours in arduous tasks in food processing for domestic and market use (e.g., palm oil production).

![Fig 5. Men and Women's Access to Tools](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cutlass</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoe</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ax</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish basket</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio/Tape</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish dryer</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish hook</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishnet</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shovel</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tap knife</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spade</td>
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<td>Canoe</td>
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Source: Author’s calculation from Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey, 2006

**Infrastructure and Access to Markets**

The destruction of roads and bridges during the war has had a major negative effect on economic recovery. It has especially damaged marketing activities, in which women are traditionally involved. Most of basic physical infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, training centers) was badly damaged during the conflict and is still in the process of being restored. While 81 percent of households in rural areas have access to weekly markets, people must walk, on average, two and a half hours to get to them; in some counties, people walk up to nine hours. Only 29 percent of rural households interviewed in the CFSNS (2006) reported having access to daily markets, but the government is building marketplaces around the country. Access to markets is especially crucial for women, who are responsible for produce marketing. Women did 80 percent of all trading in rural areas in 2001 (MoA, 2002), and according to the SSGAS (2007), women make almost twice as many trips to the market as men: 8.4 a month, on average, compared with 4.8.
4. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that the transition from relief to development offers an important opportunity to build on women’s roles and contributions in Liberia and to integrate them into poverty reduction and growth processes. The importance of women’s contribution to Liberia’s economy is undeniable, but they are severely limited in their access to key areas of the economy and to productive inputs and services. If barriers to women’s full participation in the economy are lifted, Liberia could benefit from improved capacity to reduce poverty and improve growth.

First, women are key players in agricultural production in Liberia—53 percent of the agricultural labor force, responsible for 60 percent of agricultural production. Investing in female farmers is essential to increase rural productivity and revitalize the rural economy. Improving women’s access to land, credit, inputs, and extension services will contribute to rural growth. Studies in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Kenya show that more equal control of inputs and farm income by women and men can raise farm yields by as much as a fifth of current output (World Bank, 2001).

Second, women represent untapped potential and need access to training and education to fully realize it. More than half of the female population is illiterate and will be unprepared to participate and contribute to the country’s development.

Third, women’s economic role in rural Liberia goes beyond their contribution to food crop production. They are the main processors of agricultural crops for domestic and commercial use. They are the primary traders and marketers of rural produce, responsible for 80 percent of trading in rural areas and actively participating in key farm-to-market networks. Capitalizing on such fundamental economic roles is essential to revitalize agriculture and reduce poverty in Liberia.

Fourth, Liberian women are dynamic entrepreneurs, 77 percent of women are self-employed in urban areas compared to 40 percent of men. Empowering them to create jobs by facilitating their graduation from the informal to the formal sector and helping them move up from microcredit to the small and medium-sized (SME) enterprise sector will provide significant economic gains and will boost the urban economy.

Fifth, Liberian women are currently absent from profitable sectors such as cash crop production, forestry, mining, and infrastructure, including public works. Promoting their participation in nontraditional areas of employment will result in increased economic opportunities for the women and will have a positive effect on household welfare and poverty reduction.

The arguments are persuasive for investing in women and creating an environment that will allow them to contribute and benefit from Liberia’s socioeconomic progress and sustained growth. The following section offers recommendations to support the government’s economic recovery and poverty reduction agenda by creating
an environment for women’s economic empowerment in Liberia. The recommendations directly support the I-PRSP medium-term priorities of revitalizing agriculture to ensure poverty reduction and rebuilding the nation’s road network; accelerating human resource development; strengthening the environment for private sector growth; and creating jobs. In addition, the recommendations suggest a longer term strategy to ensure the integration of women’s economic empowerment issues in the full PRSP.

The short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations focus on (1) ensuring that women benefit from short-term opportunities arising from reconstruction; (2) providing women with support services to fully develop in the economic areas where they are present and promoting their employment in new sectors and economic segments; (3) establishing conditions that will enable women to fully seize economic opportunities in the future, once Liberia’s private sector develops; and (4) strengthening the institutional framework for women’s economic advancement.

1. ENSURE THAT WOMEN BENEFIT FROM RECONSTRUCTION OPPORTUNITIES AND THE REFORM PROCESS.

In the short term, the government and its donor partners need to guarantee that women benefit equally with men from the employment opportunities arising from reconstruction. This is particularly important in the case of public works, where women’s participation is very low. As this lack of participation may be due to cultural factors, program managers should be made aware of the changing roles of women and the need to improve their access to jobs. Another constraint may be that women lack appropriate skills. Vocational and skills training should be open to women, especially in nontraditional areas. Finally, lack of awareness among contractors and other intermediaries might be remedied by clear requirements and targets in construction contracts concerning women’s participation. This has worked quite well in similar programs in other countries; for example, in Ethiopia’s public works program. As a prerequisite, MOGAD and donors should help the Ministry of Public Works and the Liberian Agency for Community Empowerment build capacity to address gender issues in infrastructure. The World Bank has valuable experience in addressing gender issues in public works and road rehabilitation programs in other countries that it could transfer to its Liberian partners.

Government reforms in various sectors—in the public sector in particular—can be articulated in a way that improves women’s economic opportunities and reduces gender inequalities. The analysis of the national census of civil servants reveals severe gender inequalities in access to public employment across sectors and positions. The reform of the public service, currently in the planning stage, should be designed to include gender equality objectives. For example, if a right-sizing exercise were undertaken, it could include incentives to promote women’s participation in male-dominated ministries and other public sector institutions, and to improve the representation of women in technical and middle- and high-level management positions in the public sector.
2. Ensure that women develop along with the country.

In the short and medium term, the government of Liberia needs to ensure that women develop along with the country and are prepared to seize new economic opportunities as they arise.

The government and the donor community should support women in their role as agricultural producers, processors, and marketers by providing them with land, credit, agricultural extension, basic processing technologies, agribusiness support services and training, and infrastructure to get their produce to market. These are priorities for the rural sector in general, and it is essential that the planning process for these priorities takes women’s role in agriculture into account. Innovative interventions targeting female farmers, with high potential to offer rapid results and lessons (results-based initiatives) could be used in the design of sector strategies to support female farmers.

- **Land reform** deserves special attention. Despite the new inheritance law, gender issues remain to be addressed to ensure equal access to land. Unfortunately, the government lacks adequate gender analysis of land issues on which to base its land reform policy. Preliminary data point to various factors that cause gender gaps in land ownership and limit women’s security of tenure, with subsequent consequences for poverty reduction and the rural economy. This report recommends an *assessment of land issues* to review the complex dynamics that link gender and land reform in Liberia. Using a representative sample complemented by qualitative information, the study should review the legal, cultural, and practical factors that limit women’s access to and ownership of land, paying special attention to existing legislation and customary regimes and arrangements, to design culturally acceptable mechanisms to enhance women’s access, ownership, and security of tenure.

- The **reform of the extension program** currently under way should take gender issues into account. The shift to participatory extension services is an opportunity to improve women’s participation in decision making and access to services, but a participatory focus does not guarantee gender awareness or alignment of the services to the needs of female farmers. The extension program needs a strategy that follows international best practices in this area.

- To support women as processors and rural entrepreneurs, the government could facilitate their **access to processing technologies**. The role of the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) will be fundamental in providing such technologies and working with rural women in agribusiness development. CARI has identified women as an important target group for its programs. As part of the overall effort to rebuild the institution’s technical capacity, CARI should engage in specific training and exchange of experiences with other countries in the area of gender and agricultural research.
Finally, the government should **support women’s networks**, which can facilitate the transition from isolated small-scale production to integrated market production. To a certain extent, this situation exists in an embryonic form—“market women” from urban areas informally contract with rural women to establish chains of produce from farm to market. The government should formalize and strengthen these networks by providing them with information and basic management skills and by facilitating their contact with chambers of commerce and the broader corporate sector. Integrated packages for rural women—which target them through capacity building and organization, training, microcredit, and business support—have been successful in other countries (e.g., Ethiopia’s Women’s Empowerment Initiative) in organizing women, creating networks, and graduating women to larger business enterprises.

The Ministry of Agriculture has an important role to play in facilitating these actions by creating adequate **institutional mechanisms** to guarantee the integration of gender considerations in the ministry’s new decentralized structure. The comprehensive review of the agricultural sector currently under way should develop guidelines to make sure that gender issues are considered in the reform of the sector.

**Women should be included in economic areas where they are not yet present and where growth prospects are high.** Cash crops such as rubber, coffee, cocoa, and palm oil are natural candidates for such inclusion, as women already play an invisible role in the sector and have the necessary skills to participate fully. The strategy should go further, opening the doors of the mining, logging, and furniture-making industries to women. Adequate training, including **apprenticeships and vocational training** should be put in place, along with a **strategy to increase the number of women accessing vocational training institutes**. The strategy should include outreach mechanisms, scholarships, and guarantees of safe conditions for female students. Finally, **sector agreements and public-private partnerships** should be undertaken to pilot schemes for women’s participation in these sectors and to evaluate their performance. MOGAD has a leading role to play in working with the Ministries of Education, Commerce, and Agriculture; the Mining Authority; and employers in the private sector to facilitate this process.

**In the medium term, the Ministry of Commerce and its partners should work to ensure the graduation of women from microenterprises to the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector.** Women predominate among petty traders, but experience in other countries shows that women lack the financial confidence, skills, and products to move from microenterprise to SME. A **study of the obstacles women face in starting a business in Liberia** should be conducted and a strategy built to help women overcome those obstacles. Improving access to credit and capacity building, including mentoring by other female entrepreneurs, and improving support services for working mothers (e.g., formal and informal child care arrangements) could be considered as bridging actions. Certain segments of the service sector—such as the care economy and hotel, restaurant, and
tourism-related services—are underexploited in Liberia and are important niches of female SMEs in other countries. These sectors should be reviewed to identify opportunities, and women should be provided with the necessary skills to seize them. The Ministry of Commerce and the National Investment Commission, along with MOGAD, can facilitate this process.

3. PREPARE WOMEN FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

The government should build women’s capacity to compete in the private sector by addressing girls’ and women’s low education levels. Twice as many women as men are illiterate in Liberia and only 25 percent of girls go on to secondary education. This is a clear impediment to women’s participation in a competitive labor market in the future, and it means that a large proportion of the population is unprepared to contribute to development, with a subsequent cost for Liberia’s society and economy. The government needs to design and implement a strategy to address female illiteracy. The Ministry of Education, supported by the donor community, should make this a priority for action in the short term. In the meantime, better coordination of NGOs and other service providers would be a starting point.

4. STRENGTHEN THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN’S ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT.

It is essential that the government initiate a comprehensive policy dialogue on the issue of women’s economic empowerment to determine the appropriate PRSP actions to promote women’s economic empowerment. Liberia’s new administration has the political will to improve women’s economic opportunities; the moment has come to translate political commitment into strategic policy actions. MOGAD and the Ministry of Finance should take the lead in engaging in a full policy dialogue with key partners.

- To begin, the government should establish a high-level working group on women’s economic empowerment in the context of LEAP, with representatives from the institutions involved (MOGAD and the Ministries of Labor, Education, Agriculture, Public Works, and Commerce).

- MOGAD could advocate for the establishment of a gender/women’s employment objective across all six LEAP sector initiatives or a seventh initiative on women’s employment and economic empowerment. It should initiate a dialogue with other important stakeholders, such as private sector employers and commercial banks.

- MOGAD has undertaken some strategic actions in the area of women’s economic empowerment, but its work would have a greater impact if it were articulated around a strategy for women’s economic empowerment. The strategy should follow the process of policy dialogue and build on targeted analytical work (e.g., a women’s employment map; conditions for female entrepreneurship; feasibility studies for female employment in high-growth, emerging, and nontraditional sectors).
Also, MOGAD should fully participate in decision-making forums for the preparation of the full PRSP. Donors should support the ministry technically to build its capacity in the area of gender and poverty/economic analysis and to maximize the impact of its participation in the PRSP process. Donors could write background papers and help MOGAD staff provide inputs to the strategy. Regular high-level dialogue between MOGAD and the Ministries of Finance and Planning would help ensure strong treatment of gender issues in the PRSP.

Given the prominent role of agriculture and the rural sector, strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture’s (MOA’s) capacity for strategic planning and implementation is essential to achieve women’s economic empowerment. The MOA Department of Planning, supported by donor and government partners (e.g., MOGAD) should lead the development of an overall gender strategy for the agricultural sector. As a precondition, the ministry must improve its data collection and analytical capacity. At the same time, the MOA must create an adequate institutional structure to plan and implement such a strategy at the county level; for example, by training planning officers in county offices, including gender-related responsibilities in their job descriptions, and establishing adequate institutional incentives.

Finally, Liberia needs to improve its statistical capacity for policy analysis and formulation. LISGIS needs support and advice from donor partners and MOGAD to collect key sex-disaggregated data and design surveys to collect information for gender analysis. Line ministries, currently in the process of rebuilding their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, must strengthen their capabilities to monitor and evaluate gender issues in their sectors’ programs and policies. Liberia’s development partners, in collaboration with MOGAD, should facilitate targeted assistance from gender and M&E specialists.
REFERENCES


### ANNEX 1. WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT ACTION MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Institution responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Agribusiness/food crops**   | - Design strategy to address gender issues in the agricultural sector, including in the areas of land, credit, extension services, skills training, business training and support services, marketing, provision of inputs and tools, processing technologies, literacy and numeracy, and infrastructure in rural areas  
- Implement results-based initiative  
- Conduct analysis of gender issues to inform land reform  
- Build gender capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture  
- Integrate gender issues in institutional reform of the Ministry of Agriculture                                                                 | Short to medium term | Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and Ministry of Gender and Development (MOGAD), with support from the World Bank (WB) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) |
| **Agribusiness/cash crops**   | (rubber cutting, palm oil, coffee, and cocoa) - Promote women’s employment through sector agreements, including public-private partnerships                                                                 | Short to medium term | MOGAD, MOA, private sector employers (owners of plantations)                                                                                                                                                        |
| **Forestry/timber**           | (timber processing and furniture making) - Build women’s skills through vocational training  
- Promote women’s employment through sector agreements, including public-private partnerships                                                                 | Medium term       | Forestry authority, MOGAD, private sector, Ministry of Education (MOE), NGOs providing skills training services                                                                                                   |
| **Mining**                    | - Build women’s skills in the sector through vocational training  
- Promote women’s employment through sector agreements, including public-private partnerships                                                                                                        | Medium term       | MOGAD, Mining Authority, private sector, MOE, NGOs providing skills training services                                                                                                                           |
| **Services**                  | - Small-scale retail and services  
- Medium-sized services (care economy, guesthouses, restaurants, and tourist services) - Transition female employment from informal to formal through credit, skills, and business training; business support services, etc.  
- Conduct a study of female employment in emerging segments (e.g., tourism, the care economy)                                                                                          | Short term        | Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), MOGAD, Central Bank (as head of Microfinance Taskforce); MOE (vocational training), private sector; university |
<p>|                               |                                                                                          | Medium to long term |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Institution responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Public works        | - Build the capacity of the Ministry of Public Works (MOPW) and the Liberian Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) to address gender issues  
|- Review operational procedures of Public Works and LACE programs to include gender criteria for contractors  
|- Conduct gender training and awareness raising for LACE contractors                                                                                                                                   | Short term         | MOPW, LACE, MOGAD                            |
| Cross-cutting actions | - Integrate gender issues in the reform of the vocational training system  
|- Design and implement strategy for female illiteracy  
|- Build capacity of Ministry of Gender for gender and economics analysis  
|- Improve data collection mechanisms for gender analysis in the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-information Services (LISGIS) and line ministries  
|- Initiate comprehensive process of policy dialogue on women’s economic empowerment  
|- Integrate gender issues in the Liberia Employment Action Program (LEAP)  
|- Conduct analytical work on gender and economics to inform the preparation of the full poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process                                                                 | Short to medium term | MOE with help from donors                    |
|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Short term         | MOE with help from donors                    |
|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Short term         | WB and other donors                           |
|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Short to medium term | LISGIS; line ministries; donors               |
|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Short term         | MOGAD, Ministry of Finance (MOF), line ministries, CSOs |
|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Short term         | MOGAD, LEAP                                  |
|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Short term         | MOGAD, MOF, line ministries with help from donors |
### ANNEX 2. SELECTED INDICATORS TO ASSESS WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN LIBERIA, DATA SOURCES, AND STATISTICAL NEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue under measurement</th>
<th>Indicator definition</th>
<th>Value male</th>
<th>Value female</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source for most recent indicator/Data need</th>
<th>Analytical and policy purpose</th>
<th>Source of information/Strategy to obtain the information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty and Food Security</td>
<td>% of men and women living below the poverty line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of male- and female-headed households living below the poverty line</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1- PRSP</td>
<td>Assess gender differences in vulnerability to poverty and food security to highlight gender inequalities in PRSP and other policy dialogue</td>
<td>Poverty profiles/assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of male- and female-headed households at risk of food insecurity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>CFSNS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Household survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWIQ welfare survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other national statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Key Services and Resources</td>
<td>% of men and women who own land</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>CFSNS</td>
<td>Assess gender inequalities in land ownership and security of land tenure to inform land reform process</td>
<td>Household survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of male- and female-headed households that own land</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>CFSNS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural census/survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of men and women who have land titles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average size of land owned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to credit and financial services</td>
<td>% of men and women among borrowers of formal financial institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assess men and women’s access to credit, sources of credit, and use of credit in micro or larger business activities to inform entrepreneurship strategy</td>
<td>Financial institutions records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of men and women among borrowers of informal sources of credit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ad hoc survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average size of credit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. To do a comprehensive analysis of women’s socioeconomic condition in Liberia, most of these indicators must be disaggregated between rural and urban areas.

2. The most common sources of data available in countries tend to be household-level data. This can provide some of the information necessary to feed the indicators in the table, but for others where specific intra-household dynamics are the focus of the analysis, individual (as opposed to household) surveys are needed, and ad hoc collection of such data may be required.

3. Data gap means absence of sex disaggregated information for the indicator under analysis. An aggregate value may exist, in cases such as unemployment, poverty, and HIV/AIDS prevalence, but a data gap exists for information on this indicator for men and women, or for female-headed and male-headed households.

4. All data for CFSNS are for rural populations only.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue under measurement¹</th>
<th>Indicator definition</th>
<th>Value male</th>
<th>Value female</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source for most recent indicator/Data need</th>
<th>Analytical and policy purpose</th>
<th>Source of information/Strategy to obtain the information²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to extension services</td>
<td>% of male and female beneficiaries of agricultural extension services by type of service (e.g., type of training/assistance)</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
<td>Data gap</td>
<td>Assess gender biases in extension services that deliver services along traditional roles of men and women</td>
<td>Agricultural survey/census Extension service records Ad hoc survey among extension beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Access to agricultural tools and technology | - % of male- and female-headed households that own relevant agricultural tools  
- % of men and women who own relevant agricultural tools  
- % of male- and female-headed households that own agro-processing technology  
- % of men and women who own agro-processing technology                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 18         | 10          | 2006 | CFSNS                                    | Data gap                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Agricultural survey/census Food Security Survey Ad hoc survey |
| Access to I&CT            | - % of male- and female-headed households that own mobile phones  
- % of men and women who own mobile phones  
- % of male- and female-headed households that own a radio  
- % of men and women who own a radio                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 28         | 15          | 2006 | CFSNS                                    | Data gap                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Food Security Survey Ad hoc survey                        |
| Labor Market              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |            |             |      | Data gap                                  | Compare men and women’s participation in labor market and compare women’s participation in labor market in Liberia with patterns in other countries to inform labor policy                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Labor statistics                                        |
| Total female/male labor force participation | TFLFP= women employed/total women economically active  
TMLFP=men employed/total men economically active                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | ----------- | ----------- |      | Data gap                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Labor statistics                                        |
| Work in the informal sector | Female employment in informal sector/total female employment  
Males employed in formal sector/ total male employment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | ----------- | ----------- |      | Data gap                                  | Assess whether women work mainly in the informal sector and compare it with men’s participation in the informal sector                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Labor statistics                                        |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue under measurement</th>
<th>Indicator definition</th>
<th>Value male</th>
<th>Value female</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source for most recent indicator/Data need</th>
<th>Analytical and policy purpose</th>
<th>Source of information/Strategy to obtain the information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men and women’s share of formal employment</td>
<td>Females employed in formal sector/total formal employment  Males employed in formal sector/total formal employment</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>UN CCA</td>
<td>Similar purpose to the previous indicator in the list because this indicator is available in Liberia</td>
<td>Labor statistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>Unemployed women/total unemployed Unemployed men/total unemployed</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
<td>Assess whether women are overrepresented among the unemployed to inform labor policy</td>
<td>Labor statistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force participation by sector</td>
<td>e.g., women employed in agriculture/ total women employed  men employed in agriculture/ total men employed</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
<td>Identify where men and women work across sectors to inform labor and sector policies</td>
<td>Labor statistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender distribution of sector employment - Agriculture - Industry - Public - Other Services</td>
<td>e.g., % of males and females employed in the agricultural sector = male or female employed in agriculture /total agricultural employment</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
<td>Assess gender gaps in labor market participation in each sector</td>
<td>Labor statistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other labor market indicators available in Liberia</td>
<td>Women’s share of wage employment in sectors other than agriculture</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Liberia MDGs Report</td>
<td>Assess where women work to inform labor and sector policies.</td>
<td>Labor statistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender division of labor in</td>
<td>Men and women’s labor contribution to:  - Food crop production</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>Liberia Gender Needs</td>
<td>Identify men and women’s role in the agriculture cycle to improve</td>
<td>Agriculture Census/survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue under measurement¹</td>
<td>Indicator definition</td>
<td>Value male</td>
<td>Value female</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Source for most recent indicator/ Data need</td>
<td>Analytical and policy purpose</td>
<td>Source of information/ Strategy to obtain the information²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture</td>
<td>- Cash crop production - Food crop processing and marketing - Cash crop processing and marketing</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>targeting of agriculture interventions and inform rural development policy</td>
<td>Food Security Survey (in the case of Liberia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>% of men and women among people starting new business in the micro business sector in the last 12 months</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data gap</td>
<td>Identify men and women’s entrepreneurship patterns, and whether they predominate in the micro or the SME sector to inform entrepreneurship strategy</td>
<td>Ad hoc survey for informal sector or business records for formal sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of men and women among people starting new business in the SME sector in the last 12 months</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data gap</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ad hoc survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income and Expenditure</td>
<td>Female earned income/total household income Male earned income/total household income</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>CFSNS</td>
<td>Identify men and women’s income and expenditure patterns to link them to impact in poverty reduction, economic growth, and/or food security strategies to inform PRSP and other policy dialogue</td>
<td>Intra-household survey Or Household survey comparing male and female headed households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion of male and female earned income spent in - education - health - food - alcohol and tobacco - productive assets</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>CFSNS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Food Security Survey (in the case of Liberia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>% of the population over 15 with no schooling</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>UNDP/WB Joint Assessment</td>
<td>Assess women’s basic skills to undertake productive activities</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g., % of boys and girls enrolled in primary school</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>UNDP/WB Joint Assess.</td>
<td>Assess women’s position to seize economic opportunities in the mid- and long term depending on the extent to which they are/will be educated</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Statistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Note: Issue under measurement
2. Note: Source of information/ Strategy to obtain the information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Issue under measurement</strong>&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th><strong>Indicator definition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Value male</strong></th>
<th><strong>Value female</strong></th>
<th><strong>Year</strong></th>
<th><strong>Source for most recent indicator/ Data need</strong></th>
<th><strong>Analytical and policy purpose</strong></th>
<th><strong>Source of information/Strategy to obtain the information</strong>&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drop out/Completion rate - primary - secondary</td>
<td>e.g., % of boys and girls who drop out of primary school or % of boys and girls who attain 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>35&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt; -</td>
<td>27 -</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>UNDP/WB Joint Assess. Data gap</td>
<td>Assess whether mainly boys attend VT classes and therefore women have lower opportunities to build their productive skills Assess whether enrolment patterns reflect traditional gender division of labor</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to vocational training (VT)</td>
<td>Men and women’s enrollment in vocational training institutes by type of course</td>
<td>---- -</td>
<td>---- -</td>
<td>Data gap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>5</sup> Completion rate