



Government
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CORRUPTION WATCH

NEWSLETTER

CSOs Partner to Strengthen Political

Governance in Liberia through Ireland Support



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Before now, citizens in most rural and urban communities would sit idle and watch their local and national leaders make decisions that affect their lives with little or no say whatsoever. This is one sad political reality in Liberia the Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability Project is working tooth and nail to rewrite.

The project, which is being implemented by a consortium of national civil society organizations including the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, and Center for

Democratic Governance (CDG) has already began a stream of different activities meant to ensure citizens are well-informed about corruption issues and can hold power-holders accountable.

With a value of about US\$1.5 million, funded by the Embassy of Ireland in Liberia for a period of three years, September 2024 to August 2027, the project is contributing to a more effective service delivery, equitable revenue sharing, and meaningful citizen participation in local decision-making processes at community, district, and county levels through its different activities.

At programs marking the official launch in Monrovia, on November 21, 2024, several national and local leaders converged and the project's goals, which are to strengthen political governance, bolster transparency and accountability, were unveiled. Other areas of focus including assessment of the national budget, especially allotments for health, education, county council and the county service centers as it relates to local impact in Margibi, Bong, and Grand Bassa counties were highlighted.

Anderson Miamen, Executive Director of CENTAL, expanded on the project's primary goals, which include increasing citizen demand for accountability, fostering public engagement in managing natural resources, and empowering citizen voices.

"This project seeks to empower citizens by fostering active dialogue between the government and local communities," Miamen noted. "We aim to strengthen participation in decision-making processes, particularly through the oversight of revenue sharing laws, ensuring equitable resource distribution."

With an ambitious target of reaching at least 10,000 citizens, the project emphasizes equal gender representation and outreach to marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, Miamen said.

Eddie Jarwolo, Executive Director of Naymote, stressed the significance of localizing governance efforts. "Localization is taking root globally, from Sweden to Ireland, and we're eager to strengthen the capacity of local institutions here in Liberia," Jarwolo said, acknowledging the collaboration with stakeholders like the Ministry of Internal Affairs and media representatives.

The Executive Chairperson

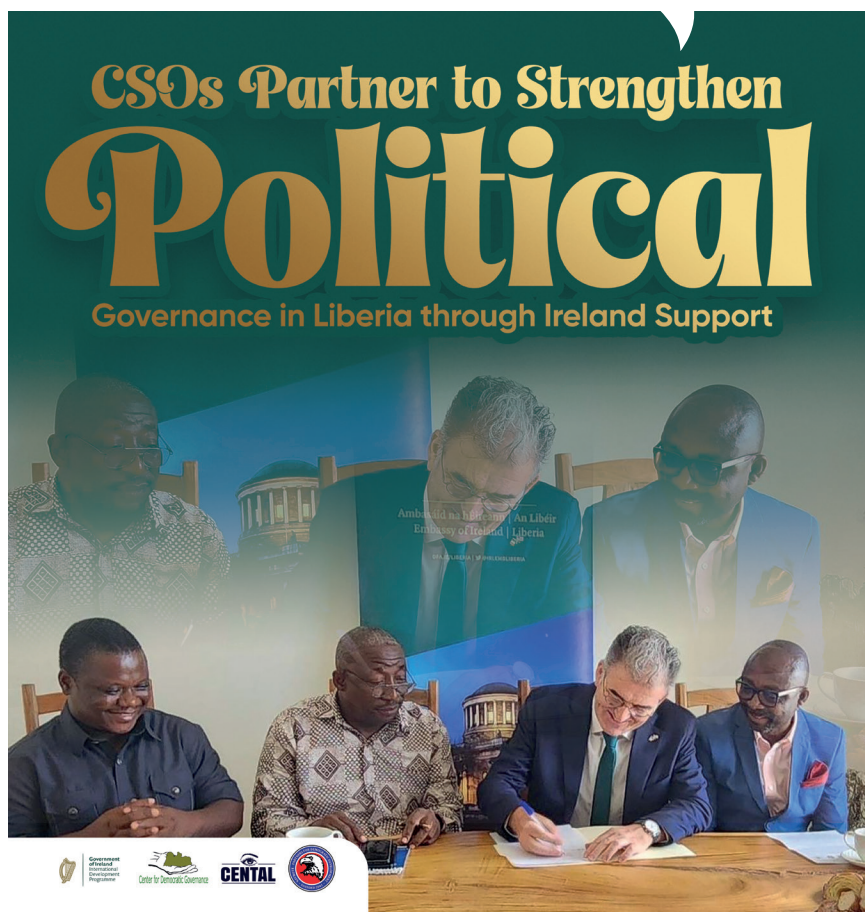


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of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) Cllr. Alexandra K. Zoe, in her remarks expressed gratitude to the Embassy of Ireland for its generous funding and support to Civil Society groups in Liberia and emphasized LACC general commitment to continue collaboration with these groups in the shared fight against corruption. "Together, we will build a stronger, more transparent Liberia." She said.

The Irish government's support for the initiative underscores its commitment to Liberia's development.

Irish Ambassador Gerard Considine praised the project, noting that accountable institutions and robust governance are essential for sustainable progress. "Institutions grounded in strong governance and adherence to the rule of law

are vital for achieving transformative development that benefits those furthest behind," said Ambassador Considine, who also announced a strategic 2024-2028 plan to reinforce political and economic cooperation in Liberia.

The ambassador emphasized that the initiative would focus on key areas, including gender equality, food security, climate action, and governance enhancement. He also acknowledged the role of the European Union and other national integrity institutions in these efforts, stating, "Ireland recognizes the importance of partnering with civil society to strengthen accountability in governance."

The project is engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including youth, women, minority groups, community-based organizations (CBOs), and poli-

cymakers from institutions such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Governance Commission, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Ambassador Considine expressed optimism for the involvement of various government agencies, highlighting how inclusive governance can drive equitable resource distribution and improved public services for all Liberians.

In closing, Considine called for unity in advancing Liberia's development objectives, especially in alignment with the government's draft development strategy, Arrest for Inclusive Development. "We look forward to working together to achieve our shared goals of transparent and accountable leadership," he said, reaffirming Ireland's commitment to Liberia's progress.



A Right Hand Salute to the Embassy of Ireland for Supporting Efforts to Strengthen Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia

On October 2024, the government and people of Ireland through its Embassy near Monrovia signed a landmark partnership agreement with three Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to enhance political governance and accountability in Liberia. The organizations are: the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, and the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL).

The project seeks to strengthen political accountability, transparency, and democratic governance in Liberia. To do this, the project will contribute to increasing demands for political accountability in the management of the country's resources, increasing citizens' voices in local decision-making processes by promoting dialogues between the government and local communities, and increasing CSOs oversight of equitable revenue-sharing between central and local government.

At the signing ceremony at the Embassy of Ireland in Monrovia, Gerard Considine, Ambassador of Ireland, said, "Strengthening governance and transparency underpins all of our efforts to deliver transformative change, inclusive economic development, and the realization of human rights in Liberia. Ireland recognizes the importance of partnership with civil society to support effective and accountable institutions. These three civil society organizations will seek to amplify all citizens' voices, promoting anti-corruption efforts and political accountability. Inclusive participation in local governance helps to influence the way resources are allocated and distributed equitably and ultimately to ensure the effective delivery of public services for Liberians".

Ever since the inception of the project, a variety of different activities have been implemented across three counties Grand Bassa, Margibi

and Bong Counties. From the conduct of a comprehensive political analysis that seeks to understand the power dynamics and challenges affecting the effective political governance and accountability to the development of a scorecard, community-led monitoring tools to evaluate quality of service at county service centers, to the variety of capacity building sessions organized to increase citizens' knowledge and understanding of the revenue sharing and other sections of the local government law, the project is moving to strengthen political governance and accountability in Liberia through active citizens participation.

While the project holds huge prospects and we are all gears to achieve results, we call up the brakes and pause in recognition of the Irish support. The consortium extends its profound thanks and appreciation to the government and people of Ireland through IRISH AID for the trust and confidence reposed in it to undertake such a monumental project especially at a time when major donors are winding down on support. Indeed, Ireland has stepped in at a crucial time where Liberia is in dire need of inclusive economic development and more accountable institutions.

It is our firm belief that the impact of this project will be felt not only through the strengthened partnerships and capacities amongst consortium members but as well through the lives that would be touched by the inclusion of everyone around development decision-making in Liberia beyond the lifespan of the project.

For this and many reasons, we would like to lift up our heads, raise our right hand and offer a salute to the government and people of Ireland for such landmark support to improve the civic space in Liberia and promote inclusive political governance and accountability in Liberia. Thank you ,Ireland, for the Support to Civil Society in Liberia.

PREFACE



By Anderson D. Miamen, on behalf of the Consortium

Since November 2024, the Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia (SPGAL) project, implemented by the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG), Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, and the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), has been deeply immersed in the conduct of varied activities aimed at ensuring that citizens hold their leaders to account – thanks to the generous support of the Embassy of Ireland in Monrovia through IRISH Aid.

The project is working tooth and nail to garner active citizens participation in the local governance process. It is also mobilizing stakeholder support. The national launch congregated a host of local and national leaders, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Governance Commission, the Liberia Anti-corruption Commission (LACC), and Civil Society actors. A community scorecard, a tool that holds service providers accountable, has been rolled out while a plethora of awareness raising campaigns on the Local Government Act

and other critical legal instruments have been carried out,

This newsletter seeks not only to communicate the different activities of consortium members but also to highlight success stories from those different activities to increase visibility, public acceptability, amongst many others. It also provides an opportunity for stakeholders including policymakers to learn more about the project, its activities, and impact on beneficiaries.

Based on the aforementioned, I would like to express on behalf of the consortium, my profound thanks and appreciation to our donor, the government and people of Ireland through IRISH Aid, our government partners, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Governance Commission (GC), and the Liberia Anti-corruption Commission (LACC), for the financial and technical support provided since the inception of the project. Also, special hats off to the local leaders and citizens of the project counties of Margibi, Grand Bassa and Bong for the continued support and cooperation.

CDG STRENGTHENS CSOS CAPACITY ON REVENUE SHARING

Despite its significance in boosting revenue to fund critical development initiatives in the counties, most local county officials, civil society actors and members of the media had little awareness of a law that allows counties to get shares of revenues collected from their territories as part of a revenue sharing agreement. To ensure an increased knowledge and understanding of the existence of the law so as to ensure it is implemented, the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG) conducted three separate training sessions for local officials, county council officials, civil society organizations and the media in Grand Bassa, Bong and Margibi Counties.

"I believe when this new law is put in use our communities will be impacted when our schools, health facilities and other development works are improved with the money that will be left behind in our county by the government," said Decontee King, a student of the Bassa High school in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, following the training.

Prior to the training, Decontee knew little about the existence of the revenue

sharing law which could lead to increased revenue to fund development projects in her beloved Grand Bassa County. "I learned during the training that the government has passed a new law that will allow a portion of the money raised by the government to remain in the county for development. This is good for our county", she continued.

The different training sessions which amongst other things sought to increase civil society organizations (CSOs) and community based organizations (CBOs) oversight on equitable revenue sharing between central and local government brought together diverse stakeholders totaling 98 participants from various CSOs/CBOs groups of the project counties.

Corsby M. Johnson, CDG's Project Officer, who facilitated the sessions said the training sessions also intend to contribute to building CSO/CBOs capacity on the Revenue Sharing Act that would lead to improved advocacy. He referenced the preamble of the Revenue Sharing Law of Liberia 2021 and Article 7 of the Liberian constitution mandating the Government of Liberia to manage the national economy in a manner that ensures maximum participation of the citizens and advance their general welfare and the economic development of Liberia.

Moreover, he said, chapter 4 of the Local Government Act (LGA) of 2018 speaks on fi-

nancing local government's calls for revenue sharing between the central and the local government as well as between local government and sub-local government units based on formulas to be recommended by the local Government Fiscal Board.

"However, you all need to know that before the enactment of the LGA, the central government had begun to transfer revenues to local governments through the Annual National Budget for development purposes but that, regrettably, such transfers lacked fiscal equity between local governments. Therefore, the principles of this act are based on equity, efficiency, predictability, transparency and accountability", he stressed.

The training grew from information sessions, to interactive forums where citizens voiced their concerns about the lack of detailed knowledge of the act, the slow pace of implementation from the central government and the benefits to their counties if implemented. The conversation deepened as the facilitator guided the group to explore specific issues.

Manyongo M. Kormah Secretary Compound One Youth Organization lamented "the main thing I am taking away is Chapter 8: Equalization Fund". He explained further "our people in most of the villages and towns are marginalized and deprived. This fund, if implemented well, will lift our people out of abject

poverty because it will provide basic social service to our people”.

‘This Act is good for the development of the counties but the implementation is the problem, The revenue sharing formulas for natural resource revenue seems good, However, I will use the counties service centers as an example, since the establishment of the centers in all the 15 counties, service deliveries are poor, the timeliness and reliability of fund disbursement remain an issue, even though 7.2 of the Revenue Sharing Law states that 40% of revenues generated from the operations

of the centers within local government shall remain at the centers it is yet to happen”, said Friday Edwin Crusoe, CSO coordinator Margibi County.

Following each of the trainings conducted, copies of the revenue sharing law were distributed amongst participants to ensure continuous familiarization and advocacy. For Aaron Sackie Fenlah, Chairman of the Bong County Council, the training was eye-opener and will be used as a platform to improve the oversight responsibilities of members of the council. “With the knowledge that we gained from the forum, we can now in-

form our people through radio and community engagements about the work the county council will be doing in the future.

With renewed passion and solidarity, the group left the sessions united. They got an improved understanding that social accountability wasn’t just a concept—it was a collaborative effort that began with them. Together, they promised to hold their local and central government accountable and ignite a movement rooted in transparency, trust, and transformation.



NAYMOTE MOVES TO INCREASE AWARENESS AROUND LOCAL GOVERNANCE



In Bong, Lofa, and Grand Bassa counties, community members' murmured with interest and anticipation. Local leaders, youth activists, women's groups, and community elders gathered with one goal; to better understand how the Local Government Act (LGA) of 2018 affects their daily lives. Most of them, for the first time, had the opportunity to engage directly with national leaders, and county authorities on a law intended to shape local leadership and service delivery.

Naymote Partners for Democratic Development, in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, organized and conducted six town hall meetings across

communities in Bong, Margibi, and Grand Bassa counties, bringing together a total of 213 participants.

These meetings provided a platform for citizens to voice concerns, ask hard questions, and receive clear clarifications of their rights and responsibilities under the LGA.

Hon. D. Emmanuel Wheinyue, Assistant Minister for Research and Development Planning at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, led discussions on the LGA and differentiated between central and local governance. He clarified the mandates of County Councils and the role of county service centers in ensuring accessible public

services. "Decentralization is not just a policy; it is about putting power where it belongs: in the hands of the people," he told the audience.

For Thomas H. Davis, Acting Superintendent of Grand Bassa County, the meeting was an eye-opener. "Many local authorities, including myself, lacked clarity on our roles under the Local Government Act. What we've learned today will strengthen our leadership and help us educate our communities," he said, his voice filled with cheerfulness.

One of the most significant moments came when a young woman from Margibi stood up and asked, "How can we, as citizens, make sure our leaders follow what this law says?" The question brought a discussion on citizen participation, accountability mechanisms, and how communities can use advocacy tools to track government actions.

Participants were given Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) booklets and a poster to take home, the aim is to ensure that the knowledge shared would go beyond the meetings. The commitment to learning was evident as many participants stayed long after the discussions had ended, in small groups, and continued debating the issues.

Madam Nancy T. Bryant,

Chairperson of the Grand Bassa County Council, reflected on the impact of the meeting:

“This is the first time we’ve fully understood our roles as County Council members. With this knowledge, we can now create an action plan and prioritize the development of our county. Thank you, Naymote, for empowering us.”

As the town hall meetings came to an end, the energy in the room was unmistakable; citizens felt empowered, informed, and ready to engage. With the Local Government Act now demystified, communities across Liberia are stepping forward to take an active role in governance, ensuring that transparency and accountability become the foundation of local leadership.



STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE THROUGH ENHANCED CAPACITY



In Bong, Lofa, and Margibi Counties, community members would fill their different meeting halls, with faces a mixed of interest and eagerness. Among them were members of the County Council, traditional leaders, civil society actors, and everyday citizens in search of answers. They gathered for an important discussion with one thing in common: a wish to understand the role of the County Councils and how they could better serve their communities.

Since the signing of the act into law, the County Councils have existed in name but its establishment and with operationalization were halted until 2023. Even in the face of its operationalization lies the challenge of limited public understanding of its roles and responsibilities. Many citizens know little about how the councils function, their powers, and how they could influence local governance decisions. To bridge this gap, Naymote Partners for Democratic Development in partnership with the County Council in Bong, Margibi, and Grand Bassa counties hosted a series of community-level advocacy engagements in the three project counties (Margibi, Bong, and Grand Bassa). A total of 170 participants; 112 men and 58 women; were empowered through these sessions, which focused on the roles, responsibilities, and operations of County Councils under the Local Government Act (LGA) of 2018.

During the meeting, a local teacher from Margibi stood up and asked, “We hear about the County Council, but what exactly do they do for us? Who do they answer to?” His question set the tone for an informative discussion, as the facilitators broke down the council’s role in budget development, decision-making, and service delivery.

Aaron Sackie Fenlah, Chairman of the Bong County Council, took the floor to share his perspective. “This support from Naymote Partners for Democratic Development is timely. Our communities needed to understand how the County Councils work. With these radio and community engagements, people can now ask us direct questions and understand how they can support our work in the county.”

The sessions also looked at another critical issue which is citizen engagement with the council. Many participants said they had never attended a meeting organized by the County Council in the past. Some did not know that they had the right to demand updates on projects at the county level and financial decisions. The realization flickered enthusiasm, with several pledging to start attending council meetings and encouraging their neighbors to follow them.

To spread the knowledge to more people, Naymote gave out Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) booklets and posters that explained the council’s duties and how citizens could hold them accountable. These materials have since become an important reference in communities, with citizens using them to stimulate discussions and debates about local governance.

At the end of the session, the energy in the room had shifted. What began as a meeting filled with uncertainty had changed into a space of empowerment. Participants left with a stronger understanding of their County Councils, their rights as citizens, and the ways they could participate in governance.

With continued advocacy and engagement, Naymote’s initiative is ensuring that County Councils move beyond being symbolic structures and become active, transparent institutions that truly serve the people. The road to stronger local governance in Liberia is long, but with informed and engaged citizens, the journey has begun.

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION: G-CLUB OUTREACH INSPIRES YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



The sun was barely up when a group of students gathered outside several High Schools in Bong County, chatting excitedly. Today was different. Instead of their usual lessons, they would be learning something that many of them had never discussed; how local governance works and why it should matter to them.

This was one of the several civic education sessions organized by Naymote Partners for Democratic Development as part of its Governance Club (G-Club) outreach. Over three days, 827 high school students (396 boys and 431 girls);

from four schools in Bong County, including Sumo Moyer Memorial Institute, St. Peter's Episcopal, William V. S. Tubman Gray, and Dolokelen Gboveh High School, took part in these engagements on the Local Government Act (LGA) of 2018.

For most of the students, this was the first time they learned about the concept of local governance in such detail. The sessions focused on breaking down the roles and responsibilities of the County Council, the importance of citizen participation, and how young people can take part.

"I used to think that only government officials had the

power to make decisions," said Rebecca, a twelfth-grade student at St. Peter's Episcopal High School. "But now I understand that we, as citizens, have a role too. If we don't hold our leaders accountable, who will?"

The joy among the students was profound. They asked hard questions, debated different parts of governance, and even shared personal experiences of challenges in their communities. One student from William V. S. Tubman Gray High School passionately expressed his frustration with local service delivery, stating, "We always hear that budgets

are allocated for schools and health centers, but where does the money go? How can we find out?"

These questions brought up discussions on social accountability and the power of civic engagement. Members of the G-Club encouraged their fellow students to take an active role in governance by participating in public meetings, asking questions, and using their voices to demand transparency.

The students walked away with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) booklets and posters on the Local Government Act, ensuring they could continue

discussing and sharing their fresh knowledge with their peers in the different communities.

The results of the outreach were instant. Most of the students formed groups and was discussing governance issues, while others began planning peer-learning sessions to spread awareness in their communities. The G-Club initiative, which had once been just an idea, was now developing into a movement; one that promised to create a generation of informed and engaged young citizens.

At the end of the sessions wrapped up, a young student stood up and shared his

thoughts. "I always thought politics and governance were for older people. But today, I've learned that if we don't get involved now, nothing will change. We are the future, and we need to take responsibility."

His words captured the essence of Naymote's mission which is to empower young people with the knowledge and confidence to actively engage in governance and advocate for accountability. With initiatives like the G-Club outreach, the future of Liberia's democracy looks brighter, one student at a time.



IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AROUND THE CORRUPTION CASE TRACKER



Before now, accessing information about allegations of corruption and their statuses in Liberia would require hours of surfing the internet. The need to have readily available, independent, up-to-date, and consolidated details about various corruption cases became blatant. The drawback presented by this dearth of data is that impunity flourished as persons accused of corruption moved

around freely without actions taken against them. With accusations in Liberia rising and falling like ‘Coca-Cola’ bubbles, it became difficult for civil society and citizens to persist in demanding accountability for past allegations of corruption. Also, LACC and other agencies or departments could hardly be monitored and engaged regarding the slow pace of investigations or outcome of cases since information on particular

cases eluded many.

As part of the Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia project, awareness around the tracker in different capacity building and other field activities became entrenched.

CENTAL developed the Corruption Case Tracker (CCT), as part of its National Integrity Building and Anti-corruption Program (NIBA) with support from the

Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia, as a groundbreaking online platform designed to enhance transparency and accountability in the handling of corruption cases, in part through making information about their nature, scope, location, timeline, and other details available and accessible to the public.

Since its official launch on October 9, 2024, the Tracker has endeavored to address information gap about corruption by offering a transparent and accessible platform that provides real-time updates on corruption cases, ensuring accountability from relevant authorities and empowering Liberians, the media, civil society and other stakeholders to monitor and meaningfully engage with the process.

“As citizens gain easy access to information about corruption cases, they become more engaged in the process of justice. They can monitor the progress of cases that matter to them and advocate for timely resolutions”, said Anderson D. Miamen, CENTAL’s Executive Director at the formal launch of the tracker in Monrovia.

The tracker, amongst many

others, seeks to enhance transparency and foster increased engagement by providing the public and stakeholders with real-time access to case details and updates. By doing so, citizens are expected to increase demand for accountability by holding government agencies responsible for investigating and prosecuting corruption cases. These efforts would lead to a strengthened collaboration among citizens, media, civil society, government agencies, and international organizations in addressing corruption in Liberia.

As timely investigations and resolutions of corruption cases are essential for maintaining public trust and ensuring that justice is served, the tracker is acting as a catalyst by highlighting cases that have been pending for extended periods and putting pressure on relevant authorities to expedite their investigation and conclusion.

By shining a light on delayed cases, the Tracker provides a platform where citizens are empowered to demand accountability from their leaders. They can see which cases

have stagnated and question why. This public scrutiny would incentivize authorities to act more swiftly and efficiently, knowing that their actions are under constant watch by the public. In this way, the Tracker fosters a sense of urgency in addressing corruption issues, ultimately leading to a more transparent and accountable society.

With just a click on the link or a search in Google: <https://cct.cental.org.lr>, anyone can have their fill and experience this remarkable technological and web-based platform.

Moreover, the Tracker’s user-friendly interface ensures that even those with limited technological literacy can access and understand the information. With just a few clicks, users can find detailed information about ongoing and concluded corruption cases, including the names of individuals involved, the nature of the allegations, and the current status of each case. This accessibility not only fosters a sense of empowerment among citizens but also encourages them to participate in the fight against corruption.



UNRAVELING LIBERIA'S GOVERNANCE CONSTRAINTS THROUGH RESEARCH

–A Look at Findings from the PEA



Liberia's governance constraints may be daunting. To know the true extent of the challenges and derive ways to resolve them will require research. This is one reason why, the Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia Project funded by the government and people of Ireland through the IRISH Aid has endeavored to utilize research to unravel Liberia's governance constraints and proffer ways to improve governance through a Political Economic Analysis (PEA).

The PEA was conducted to gain a nuanced understanding of the power dynamics, institutional arrangements, and structural challenges undermining effective political governance and accountability in Bong, Margibi, and Grand Bassa counties.

While the report is yet at the

validation stage, preliminary findings have yielded critical insights into systematic barriers to effective governance, particularly in three key sectors: county service centers, health, and education.

For instance, initial findings revealed a disconnect between the mandate and authority in the management of county service centers. "While County Service Centers have been established as decentralization focal points, the PEA revealed a critical disconnect between their mandated responsibilities and their actual decision-making authority. 60% of services provided by the county service center still require authorization from Monrovia, the report found. Also, the report revealed a very limited and untimely disbursement of allocated budgets for County Service Centers. In many cases,

it was reported that actual disbursements are less than the allocated budget, covering mostly administrative costs, and leaving minimal resources for service delivery.

In the health sector, the report found a fragmentation in the supply chain. This is to say, the report identified fractured medicine and supply chains, and the likely impact on the shortage of essential drug supply occasioned by the unforeseen challenges due to the withdrawal of USAID support. On top of these, lies the challenge of coordination.

At the county service centers (CSC) in the research counties Bong, Grand Bassa and Margibi, the report found that the issuance of birth certificates has been discontinued due to coordination challenges with the police and immigration. Generally, it was observed that there were very limited coordination mechanisms between ministries, agencies, and Commissions (MACs) delivering public services at the CSCs, leading to inadequate reporting and accountability.

Also, it was discovered that there exists weak financial oversight systems and the lack of adherence to public procurement laws, resulting in significant resource leakages. In Margibi, for example, the report referenced the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) indictment of the Margibi County Health Officer and eleven others for financial mismanagement.

The PEA identified that the

approvals of school operation licenses at the County Service Centers (CSCs) were still being completed in Monrovia. This is despite the fact that Public education is one of the most decentralized services in Liberia, but like public health, the education structure remains completely within the framework of the central ministry, linked through the country office, onto the district office. With no direct linkage to the local government administration. The report found that the Education office established at the county service center has only one role, and that is, the registration of new schools. Considering the infrequent nature of this service, the education desk at the CSC is usually partially active.

Overall, the PEA identified general interconnected challenges across the sectors in all three counties, including information asymmetry, in particular the lack of citizens' access to basic information about the budget allocations, service standards, and accountability mechanisms. Revenue-sharing implementation remains weak.

These findings are now being used to actively shape project implementation strategies, including setting the framework for high-level engagement with diverse stakeholders and state institutions to ensure effective delivery of public services in these sectors.

The project has strategically adapted its approach, including targeted advocacy

and information campaigns focusing on budget allocation transparency for specific local services, increasing citizens' understanding of their rights regarding essential service delivery standards and anti-corruption reporting, and strengthening community or local government structures such as county councils with oversight responsibilities.

While still in early stages, the PEA has transformed the project from a generic good governance initiative into a contextually-grounded intervention that addresses specific power dynamics and institutional challenges in each target county, positioning it to achieve more sustainable impact over time.



HOLDING SERVICE PROVIDERS ACCOUNTABLE: THE COMMUNITY APPROACH



In Liberia, it is seldom you find citizens driven mechanism that holds service providers accountable. The community scorecard for social accountability was designed to examine the effectiveness of citizens' access to social services in three counties: Bong, Bassa, and Margibi. The primary objective of the scorecard was to strengthen transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in the management of public resources and service delivery. The implementation included a review of health and educational policies to identify gaps and make recommen-

dations to make service delivery more responsive to the needs of citizens.

The social audit methodology employed by the consortium partners included Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), Key Informant Interviews (KIs), and working sessions. Participants included senior county officials, local government representatives, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and Commu-

nity-Based Organizations (CBOs). Other target groups included community leaders, women, and youth leaders from communities in the targeted counties. A total of 98 respondents (57 Males and 41 Females) participated in the KIs, FDGs, and working sessions.

The scorecard Findings

- Poor local government-community relations: The respondents describe the limited engagement between local authorities and community members, weak feedback mechanisms, and a lack

of accountability in service delivery as poor local government-community relations.

Community members often feel excluded from decision-making processes regarding health services, as consultations are infrequent or non-existent. The absence of clear communication on policies, budgets, and planned interventions fosters mistrust, while inconsistent responses to community concerns further strain relationships.

This disconnect results in service delivery gaps, including staff shortages, inadequate health infrastructure, and poor drug supply monitoring. Consequently, communities express frustration over unaddressed challenges, leading to decreased participation in governance and reduced accountability for local government actors.

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

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

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

decade, were common.

Weak oversight of development projects: irregularities or non-existent, contributing to incomplete development initiatives; Inclusivity and representation are limited: They also cite barriers to women's and youth participation in county sittings due to bottlenecks and limited information flow between senior county officials and communities, as well as between the local governments and citizens.

This is largely due to systemic obstacles and a lack of transparent communication between senior county officials, local governments, and citizens. As a result, women and youth who are already marginalized in governance struggle to contribute to decision-making processes, weakening accountability and limiting citizen involvement in local develop-

ment planning.

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

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

Revise current education framework: The recommendations in the report call for the Government of Liberia to

consider revising its current approach to education and implement comprehensive reforms focusing on teacher qualifications, curriculum improvements, rural school infrastructure, and anti-corruption measures.

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

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



ANTI-CORRUPTION OUTREACH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR MARGIBI, BONG AND GRAND BASSA COUNTIES SCHOOLS GAINS STEAM



A significant problem that has plagued Liberia for decades and has continued to embarrass and affect every sector of our democracy is the issue of corruption and accountability of public resources entrusted to the care of public servants.

Corruption has been rampant in our governance process, successive Liberian leaders have pledged to tackle, reduce, and even eradicate it. But the country is yet to reach the average score of 50/100 on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI). While the country has made some gains in some areas, especially in passing key anti-corruption laws and establishing anti-graft institutions, Liberia still entraps with corruption—making it difficult to minimize, or substantially deal with the issues of corruption by holding duty bearers account-

able.

High profile public officials appointed over the years, have been allegedly involved in acts of corruption and some are undergoing investigations by the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commissions (LACC). With the increasing wave of corruption in the Country, and help to improve accountability across every sector, it is important to create an environment where citizens are informed about their rights to hold public officials accountable for their actions and ensure political governance processes are strengthened and transparent.

The Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), a member of the consortium of civil society organizations (CSOs) which also includes the Naymote Partners for Democratic Development and Center for Demo-

cratic Governance (CDG) with support from the Embassy of Ireland had project team members conducting regular anti-corruption awareness and outreach in the three projects counties Grand Bassa, Margibi and Bong Counties.

The outreach activities targeted students, people living with disabilities, and community members. The activities estimated a target of 200 participants per county—that is, the total beneficial target was estimated at 600 participants in the three counties. To achieve this target, the team conducted outreach activities with four (4) schools and one community in Bong county including the N.V. Massaquoi, World Overcomer, St. Matthew and the Bong County Technical College, with a total of 333 people reached..

In Grand Bassa county, two (2) high schools were involved with the activities, and 266 students including 131 males and 135 females were reached. Aside from the outreach at schools, an active engagement was held with People Living with Disabilities (PWDs) at their headquarters.

“The system is always down at the service center, funds collected from the center are sent to the central government. Thanks to CENTAL for always reaching out to the pwd community,” said Jimmy Beyern, head of the Group of 77 in Grand Bassa Head of G-77, Bassa County.

During this meeting, the team was informed about budgetary

allotment made to the PWDs which has been in the tune of U\$5,000 for the last three years. According to the head of the group, Mr. Joseph Kortue “PWDs activities and their welfare is not being prioritized by the county”.

He expressed frustration over the inadequate support provided by the county authorities. He mentioned that other counties like Bong, Gbarpolu, and Bomi budgets for PWDs have improved significantly over time.

The team also advanced its activities to Margibi County and conducted Anti-Corruption Awareness in 4 schools, E. J Yancy, Lango Lippaye, St. Paul Lutheran and Kakata Community College reaching 305 students, 147 males and 158 females.

Additionally, two communities (Mandingo quarter and Buzzy Quarter) were engaged, reaching 36 participants, including 26 males and 10 females. Also, a meeting was held with County based Anti-Corruption Groups,

established during the last Anti-Corruption Advocacy training held in early 2025..

The outreach and awareness team distributed IEC materials to students, community dwellers, Teachers, and ordinary citizens. A total of 970 pieces of bumper stickers with Anti-Corruption messages and 250 project FAQs were distributed. Throughout the outreach, the team met a total of 904 students.



CENTAL CONDUCTS ANTI-CORRUPTION ADVOCACY DIALOGUES IN PROJECT COUNTIES



Dialogue and public-private partnerships are crucial in fighting corruption because they facilitate knowledge sharing, promote accountability, and build trust at the communities or local levels. By creating safe spaces for active and relevant discussion while encouraging open communication and collaboration, dialogues can help to identify vulnerabilities, implement preventative measures, and ensure effective monitoring of anti-corruption efforts.

As part of the activities under the Strengthening Political Governance and Accountability in Liberia (SPGAL) project funded by Embassy of Ireland, CENTAL hosted the first phase of the Anti-Corruption Dialogues in the Grand Bassa, Margibi, and Bong counties. From the 16th to 18th of December 2024, thirty (30) participants in each county gathered for the dialogue. These participants include local government authorities, civil society organizations, and persons with disabilities, media practitioners, sexual minorities, and ordinary citizens.

"All Citizens and civil society

must be involved in any development talk in the county. We have to do the right thing for civil society to be involved in the county council," said Peter Barnyou, Chairperson, County Council, Margibi County. For his part, Joseph Kortu, a member of the county council representing persons with disabilities in Grand Bassa County encouraged fellow participants to use the knowledge gained to increase advocacy for increased funds to support development projects.

The essence of the anti-corruption dialogue was aimed at enhancing active discussions on corruption and governance issues at the local level, strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs), community based organizations (CBOs), women, youth and media practitioners on anti-corruption advocacy, and soliciting feedback from local officials and citizens on governance and public service delivery. These efforts amongst many others, intend to strengthen the fight against corruption, promote accountability and espouse the need for

active citizens' engagements, especially with their local authorities.

With the intent of enhancing accountability and transparency within the local governance structure, this activity is helping to elevate anti-corruption discussions between citizens and officials of government at the sub-national level. As the dialogue continues take stance, comprehensive discussions on corruption, accountability and transparency within governance structures at the local government level are being fostered. Additionally, the dialogue is elevating key issues of anti-corruption and generating views that could shape policy decisions at the local government/ County Council level. When addressed, it will subsequently be fueled into national-level dialogues on anti-corruption.

During the engagement in the counties, eighty-nine (89) participants were reached. 45% of the participants were females while 55% constituted males. Similarly, age-wise, 52% of the beneficiaries were below or equal to 35, while 48% were below age 35. Inclusively, persons with disabilities amounted to eight (8).

As the dialogue continues to intensify in the counties, stakeholders continue to make more efforts by engaging their local authorities on accountability and governance issues. Assuredly, the essence of the dialogue continues to impact these stakeholders in their respective areas of advocacy.



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