

LIBERIA PARTICIPATORY POVERTY ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT

LIBERIA INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS AND GEO-INFORMATION SERVICES
AUGUST, 2008



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CONTENTS

List of acronyms	iii
Foreword	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Executive summary.....	vi
Summary of the PPA design for Liberia.....	vii
1 Background.....	2
1.1 Conceptualising the PPA.....	3
1.2 The PPA process and methodology.....	3
2 Definition and characteristics of poverty.....	4
2.1 Definition of poverty	4
2.2 Conflict-induced poverty	5
2.3 Identifying the poor	5
2.4 Gender issues.....	6
2.5 Disabled.....	6
2.6 Housing and living conditions.....	6
2.7 Assets and other factors.....	6
2.8 Dynamics of poverty.....	7
3 Enhancing national security.....	8
3.1 Peace and security.....	8
4 Economic revitalisation.....	10
4.1 Asset ownership.....	10
4.2 Economic activities.....	10
4.3 Agricultural activities.....	10
4.4 Food insecurity.....	10
4.5 Shocks and vulnerability.....	11
4.6 Natural resources.....	11
4.7 Garbage.....	11
5 Promoting good governance.....	12
5.1 Governance and the rule of law.....	12
6 Infrastructure and basic social services.....	14
6.1 Education.....	14
6.2 Health.....	15
6.2.1 HIV/AIDS.....	16

6.3 Roads and housing.....	16
6.4 Water and sanitation.....	16

7 Findings and conclusion

7.1 Conclusion.....	18
7.2 Study limitation	18

Appendix: Participatory Poverty Assessment tables.....

Table 1	PPA descriptive statistics.....	19
Table 2	Basic PPA definitions of poverty.....	19
Table 3a	Perceived poverty at wartime.....	20
Table 3b	Perceived poverty at peacetime.....	20
Table 4	PPA classification of people.....	20
Table 5	Housing conditions.....	21
Table 6	Sources of livelihood.....	21
Table 7	Activities of recent returnees.....	21
Table 8	Poverty dynamics	22
Table 9	Gender.....	23
Table 10	Children.....	23
Table 11	Peace and security.....	23
Table 12	Good governance.....	25
Table 13	Types of assets owned by rural and urban dwellers.....	25
Table 14	Economic activities for survival.....	26
Table 15a	Problems affecting business activities in communities.....	26
Table 15b	Constraints on formal and informal businesses.....	26
Table 16	Saving methods.....	27
Table 17	Problems with agricultural production and ways to increase production.....	27
Table 18	Contributions of youth to household income	27
Table 19	Coping with inadequate income	27
Table 20	Meals consumed daily.....	28
Table 21	Physical conditions.....	28
Table 22	Social and economic shocks.....	28
Table 23	Natural resources and their uses.....	29
Table 24	Diminishing resources.....	29
Table 25	Garbage management and disposal.....	29
Table 26	Social facilities.....	30
Table 27	HIV/AIDS and malaria.....	31
Table 28	Health services and delivery by ranking.....	32
Table 29	Educational issues.....	33

ACRONYMS

CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaires
EA	Enumeration Area
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DVD	Digital Video Discs
FNS	Food and Nutrition Survey
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IPRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
JSAN	Joint Staff Advisory Note
LDHS	Liberia Demographic and Health Survey
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WFP	World Food Programme
WB	World Bank

FOREWORD

Progress towards the attainment of stable macroeconomic and social environments has been severely constrained by decades of political instability. In addition, availability of relevant data to inform and guide policy to address the potential underlying factors affecting Liberian society has been inadequate. In its efforts to overcome the effects of a protracted civil war, Liberia has now embarked on a process of identifying vital poverty indicators through the PPA and other surveys (CWIQ, LDHS, etc.) as targets for the attainment of socio-economic development. Though the recently democratically elected government, headed by Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, signals hope of rapid transformation, the problems are daunting. Maintaining sustainable peace is imperative for the development of post-war Liberia.

The implementation of this broad-based survey that elicits the direct perception of the people about basic socio-economic constraints is essential for the identification of the challenges that must be targeted in Liberia's pro-poor policy. The PPA survey, facilitated by LISGIS and collaborating partners, researched the perception of poverty based on direct information provided by the people themselves. Particular recognition is given to the UNDP Poverty Reduction Thematic Trust Fund (PR-TTF), through which the funding for this study was made possible. Results from the PPA complement the Poverty Diagnostic, as

well as verify and confirm the CWIQ (2007) and LDHS (2007). Essentially, the PPA data was used to reinforce and inform the four thematic areas of the PRS for planning and development of post-war Liberia.

This PPA report, produced through the collaborative effort of LISGIS, partners (UNDP, WFP, NRC/UNHCR, and WB) and poverty diagnostic focal persons of public agencies, provides a bottom-to-top update of current poverty issues, as well as attainable progress throughout the country. In so doing, special emphasis was given to the four critical segments of the PRS, post-war poverty definition, conflict-sensitive issues and numerous cross-cutting factors. This report focuses mainly on the provision of vital information that is useful for policy prescription, advocacy and planning.

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, I recommend this report to policymakers and development experts, as well as the general public. Its contents can be used to advocate change, and for public awareness and programmes in order to achieve an ideal society through socio-economic development.

T. Edward Liberty (PhD)
Director General of LISGIS

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The PPA report is a collaborative effort by Government of Liberia agencies and organisations such as UNDP, UNECA, WFP, NRC/UNHCR, and the World Bank. The report evolved from an administered questionnaire, the design of which was overseen by a technical committee, consisting of representatives of the aforementioned organisations, focal persons from public agencies and international consultants assisted by national consultants. For the purpose of the report, the questionnaire was administered by trained enumerators, mobilisers, note-takers, and monitors through focus-group discussions involving women, men, youth, marketers and the vulnerable in rural and urban settings.

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Dr. T. Edward Liberty

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Poverty alleviation strategies are built upon clear descriptions of a population's current vulnerabilities, the identification of existing political, social and economic factors that contribute to those vulnerabilities, and local perceptions of what it means to be poor. A country's level of poverty and the contributing factors can be gleaned from basic facts that are systematically collected and computed, such as a population's consumption level or level of education. Qualitative methods, such as focus-group discussions, compliment this quantitative approach. They ensure the validity of empirical findings by allowing diverse communities and community members the opportunity to articulate, in their own words, their perceptions of poverty and their particular development problems. By employing a perception analysis based on qualitative methods, this PPA provides a clearer picture of Liberia's poverty profile and related trends. The PPA exercise seeks to enhance the conceptualization of poverty both by the poor themselves and those delivering services to them through the public and private sectors. The consultative nature of the study serves to solidify dialogue, participation and accountability in the poverty reduction focused policy formulation process. It complements prior quantitative studies conducted in support of Liberia's PRS poverty diagnostics¹.

The primary participatory research method applied in the PPA was semi-structured interviewing of four community subgroups (i.e. children, women, men and the elderly) in three types of communities (i.e. rural, accessible urban communities and inaccessible urban communities) located in each of Liberia's 15 counties. The interviews were conducted from October through December 2007. A PPA team of 54 trained enumerators interviewed and recorded responses to questions organised around the four thematic pillars of the PRS:

- Enhancing national security
- Revitalizing the economy
- Strengthening governance and the rule of law
- Restoring infrastructure and basic services.

The PPA findings revealed variations in household perceptions of what constitutes poverty. For some, poverty was best represented by the lack of basic social

services, poor infrastructure and limited income. Other constitutive elements of poverty from some community discussions included the absence of good governance by most community leaders, dwindling economic opportunities and threatening environment.

Findings also suggested that poverty is a rural phenomenon², reflected in the substantial lack of basic necessities and limited income-generating opportunities. Consistent with the findings of the 2007 quantitative CWIQ³ study, the qualitative data showed that men were perceived to be poorer than women. Most Liberians were aware of the causes and prevalence of HIV in Liberia, and that they unanimously agreed that prevention depended on remaining committed to one faithful partner. Similarly, PPA respondents generally considered malaria prevalent and pervasive in many communities.

Peace and security

Disputes over land, including access to farmland, extra marital-affairs and embezzlement/mismanagement of community funds were the most significant sources of conflict among many households. Other conflict-inducing factors included failure to honour debt obligations, violence against children belonging to other families, and disputes over the use of public facilities. Overwhelmingly, most of the conflicts identified by respondents were intra-community (i.e. within a particular town/community).

Governance

With respect to good governance, the situational analysis depicted significant improvement in the practice of good governance at the central level. Evidence from the recent PPA survey indicated that two out of three respondents in some communities claimed their leadership was transparent and that it was accountable and committed to the development of their community. Discrimination was not perceived as a major factor affecting different groups of people in the community. More than two-thirds responded that there was no discrimination in the community. However, former combatants, people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and children were the groups most

¹ This PPA exercise was designed taking into account related studies such as the CWIQ and the LDHS. The report compares qualitative information that validates the quantitative figures reflected in many of the CWIQ findings.

² This finding also aligned with the CWIQ (2007) that estimates the rural poverty incidence at 67.7% compared to 55.1% (Urban). However, a slight difference emerged from the CWIQ (2007) in terms of households self identified as poor: male (59.5%) and female (62.5%).

³ Male poor (64.6%) and female poor (61.6%), CWIQ (2007).

likely to experience discrimination. There were mixed responses from households about the prevalence of physical abuse and domestic violence initiated by both men and women. Women and children were the most vulnerable to both physical and domestic violence.

The economy

The report found that almost two-thirds of the respondents believed that employment opportunities were gender neutral. Despite its importance as a source of employment, the study revealed that the lack of key inputs such as seeds, fertiliser, pesticides and tools undermined the productivity of agriculture and threatened food security⁴. Mirroring the incidence and perceptions of poverty, about two-thirds of households consumed cheap food and could not afford meals three times a day.

Furthermore, most communities experienced severe economic hardship due to unstable prices of basic commodities, natural disasters usually associated with floods, and limited market access due to the poor road network and transportation system.

The environment

Examining the use of key natural resources, the report indicated that most community members simply related rivers or lakes to fishing and irrigation; and mines for the extraction of diamonds and gold for export, ignoring any other potentially significant activity. The survey confirmed that these natural resources were poorly managed by the local inhabitants, evidenced by the use of rivers as waste disposal sites.

Education

The survey revealed a number of constraints to access to education and the quality of education. An outstanding problem affecting the educational system was that of teachers' low wages which had resulted in an exodus of qualified teachers to more lucrative professions. The gap created by the departure of these trained teachers was most often filled by unqualified teachers. Also, the PPA survey revealed that more than a third of girls dropped out from school before reaching seventh grade, mainly due to pregnancy or early marriage. The low quality of teachers, the high rate of teacher absenteeism, corruption, harassment of female students, and sale of grades were identified as potential reasons influencing drop-out rates.

The survey noted that in most rural communities, only primary schools were accessible, hence, pupils were often unable to continue their studies at senior high level. In addition to serious logistical problems affecting rural students, the survey further indicated the existence of poor sanitary conditions in most schools. As a result, students were exposed to diseases. Communities with access to public schools were constrained by inadequate classrooms and school buildings that were in poor condition. About a third of the communities surveyed disclosed that they did not have a school in their locality.

The absence of an adequate meal for students before or after school emerged as another serious problem in post-war Liberia. Most students did not eat breakfast before going to school; the PPA revealed that when students could afford a meal, it was usually stale.

Health

Analysis of health sector related issues indicates a state of virtual collapse, especially in the rural areas, due to the absence of health facilities in most localities. Where health facilities were available, they tended to be located far from most villages. Drug shortages and the limited number of professional doctors were also problems in many communities, particularly in rural Liberia. In the absence of health facilities, most community dwellers sought help from traditional healthcare providers when they were sick. Many childbearing respondents revealed that before delivery, they usually visited herbalists for consultation, and during delivery, they sought help from traditional birth attendants.

Poor water and sanitation systems were also a grave health concern for most communities. Sanitation and safe drinking water were lacking in most communities. The poor garbage disposal system posed serious health hazards to most communities, especially in urban areas. Most people expressed concern about the availability and quality of their water supply. The number of hand pumps was often inadequate to meet the needs of the people, and often water from the creeks was unsafe for drinking because of constant pollution. Toilets were very limited in most urban cities. The majority of communities only had access to pit latrines and only a few had access to public toilets. In the absence of toilets, communities resorted to alternatives, including beaches (for those people living along the coast), plastic bags and the bush (for those residing in the interior).

Summary of the PPA design for Liberia

Feature	PPA constituents/items
Number of counties selected	15
Projected period	10 days (it lasted for an extra 20 days)
Projected time (i.e. days) for each county	9 days/team, but some teams spent more than 15 days due to light delays, poor roads and vehicle malfunction
Training of survey enumerators	4 days (October 17-21, 2007)
Number of enumerators	Mobilisers, note takers, moderators (18 of each), and 3 monitors
Size of PPA survey team	58 and a driver

Source: PPA secretariat (2007)

Schedule of the PPA survey

County	Began	Ended (2007)
Montserrado	October 23	November 1
Bong	October 23	November 1
Bomi	October 23	November 1
Margibi	October 23	November 1
Gbrapolu	October 23	November 1
Cape Mount	October 23	November 1
Bassa	October 23	November 1
Lofa	October 23	November 1
Nimba	October 23	November 1
Grand Gedeh	October 28	November 12
Sinoe	October 30	November 9
Grand Kru	November 13	November 22
Rivergee	November 9	November 21
Rivercess	October 23	November 5
Maryland	October 26	November 13

Source: PPA secretariat (2007)

⁴ The CWIQ (2007) shows that 70% of those engaged in agricultural activities lack seeds and farming inputs



1

BACKGROUND

Historically, the lack of substantial demographic and socio-economic data has constrained Liberia's development planning process. Current policy and programming exercises are regularly forced to draw upon data that is decades old and often misleading. Consequently, several bold steps have been taken to gather the necessary information to better guide the planning process and implementation exercises that underpin the long-term national development agenda.

The Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), as the national repository of statistics, has been at the forefront of studies and surveys capturing various aspects of Liberia's population. In the past two years, a comprehensive Food and Nutrition Survey, a Demographic Health Survey, as well as a Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire survey, have been administered throughout the country. A national Human Development Report and an MDG Report have also been released. The information gleaned is already being used to inform plans and proposals of the government ministries, departments and agencies, the private sector and the development community.

Given overwhelming universal commitments to improving standards of living, as expressed in the MDGs, Liberia has focused its PRS priorities on the development of indicators and reaching targets to be achieved by 2015. Innovative approaches were used to gather as much data as possible prior to the March 2008 national census, so as to bolster this MDG-based PRS planning process. For example, Liberia's CWIQ was designed to include a consumption expenditure module. This model provided vital baseline data that helped capture expenditure data for better planning and public service delivery strategies.

Considerable efforts were made to gather the quantitative data needed to most accurately assess Liberia's poverty profile and trends. This PPA offers a contextualisation of the country's poverty crisis through qualitative assessments. Together, the results of the quantitative analysis and qualitative assessment will provide the best possible information upon which a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy can be developed. In the often complex area of poverty reduction, there is a need to tackle both the material requirements and perceptions thereof. It is against this background, that a PPA was designed to specifically document national perceptions of poverty and, in the process, to appropriately complement and contextualise the extensive quantitative data already gathered through surveys.

1.1 Conceptualising the PPA

Many of Liberia's post-war interventions aimed at poverty reduction have been based on estimates, best guesses and extrapolation. This presents a precarious situation given the multi-faceted dimensions of poverty that can be seen through national and global poverty trends. The PPA serves to solidify dialogue as a key ingredient in understanding poverty and all its perceptive dimensions, particularly those involving the people's interpretations. The PPA is focused on poor people's capacity to analyse their situations and to express their priorities themselves. It is in this connection that Liberia's PPA exercise has been undertaken with the aim of strengthening understanding of the extent of poverty throughout the country, by specifically assessing the perceptions of

poverty among the nation's poor. The PRS preparatory process, complemented by the PPA, presents the ideal opportunity to actively engage the nation's poor in both dissecting the aspects of poverty and identifying key policy priorities.

Undertaking a vital exercise such as a PPA during the preparatory stages of the PRS formulation process substantially enhances ongoing poverty diagnostic efforts. It bolsters government's pro-poor policy implementation efforts, as well as sharpens the conceptualisation and deepens the understanding of poverty by both the poor themselves, and those providing services to them. As an indirect consequence, participation, accountability and policy effectiveness are improved.

1.2 The PPA Process and Methodology

Experiences and lessons learned from the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Process, as well as subsequent recommendations contained in the Joint Staff Advisory Note, highlighted the urgent need to strengthen Liberia's poverty diagnostics and address data gaps. Liberia's PPA design allowed for a genuinely participatory PRS process through scientific sampling and poverty mapping. The findings contextualised complementary findings gathered from both the CWIQ and the DHS, and helped to more specifically identify the poor in Liberia, where they are physically concentrated, and what factors are perpetuating their condition.

A multi-stage approach to sampling was adopted. In each of Liberia's fifteen counties, three communities – an urban, a rural accessible, and a rural inaccessible community – were selected. Accessible urban areas were understood to be places that could easily be reached by cars, buses and public transportation. Inaccessible urban areas however were those areas that can only be reached by walking or were extremely difficult to get to by car, but were still in urban enumeration areas. Selections were based on mapped enumeration areas by LISGIS. The number of households in each community was taken into consideration to ensure standardisation across the country, as well as to guarantee adequate numbers of participants for the planned focus group consultations. PPA teams spent a minimum of two days in each community holding focus-group discussions with men, women, youth, physically challenged persons

and the elderly; each group had a minimum of ten participants.

Each of the PPA teams deployed to the counties consisted of three members: a mobiliser responsible for gathering the focus groups and making logistical arrangements, a facilitator charged with leading interviews and discussions, and a note-taker, whose task was to capture key points of the consultations. More than 60 field staff undertook intensive three-day training, including a step-by-step walk through of the PPA questionnaire, simulation exercises and tests for note-takers. A sample field test was conducted around Monrovia as an integral component of the training exercise, affording trainees opportunities to identify potential problems and assist in fine-tuning the methodological tools before deployment.

The PPA questionnaire, which contained nearly 70 questions, was structured around the four existing thematic pillars of the PRS, namely:

- Enhancing national security
- Economic revitalisation
- Governance and the rule of law
- Infrastructure and basic social services.

Questions relating to key cross-cutting themes, such as gender and human rights, were tailored for particular focus groups, as well as integrated throughout the questionnaire.



2

DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF POVERTY

2.1 Definition of poverty

Responses to the PPA highlighted four core issues that are perceived to be the constitutive elements of poverty in Liberia: necessities, peace and security, socio-economic infrastructure and limited job opportunities. Rankings of these constitutive elements varied by the category of the community, i.e.: rural, urban accessible or urban inaccessible. Consequently, while some households defined poverty as limited access to income and social services such as housing,

water, electricity and sanitation, other households defined poverty as a lack of social infrastructure such as markets, roads, schools and hospitals.

Essentially, when asked: What does it mean to be poor? the household responses confirmed the basic needs definition of poverty and demonstrated that where one lives (urban versus rural) influences the level of importance one assigns to specific basic needs. Most of the responses, in terms of rural and urban perspectives, are shown in the table below.

Perceptive definitions of poverty from the communities	
Rural definition (ranked in descending order of significance)	Urban definition (ranked in descending order of significance)
1. Lack of material things	1. Lack of job
2. Lack of roads	2. Low income
3. No market/access	3. High housing cost
4. Poor/no school and hospital	4. High medication and education cost
5. Limited/no income	4. High medication and education cost
6. No job	5. Poor access to market
7. Poor housing	6. Poor sanitation
8. Inadequate food	
9. Large family size	

In addition to limited job opportunities and inadequate food, most households cited lack of good roads, schools, hospitals and markets in their conception of poverty. Few considered as indicative of poverty, the lack of a child to render assistance, the lack of support from relatives, and inequitable distribution of returns from resources (see Table A above). Most of these definitions compliment poverty issues enumerated in the 2007 CWIQ survey.

2.2 Conflict-induced poverty

In general, empirical evidence from conflict environments typically affirms that civil conflict aggravates poverty; it is perceived to be more severe during wartime. Preliminary findings from the PPA, however, reveal that Liberians do not perceive any difference between war and peacetime in terms of living at different levels of poverty. Specifically, the PPA revealed that whether during war-time or peacetime, most of the households perceived that at least 70% of the population is likely to be poor while few believed that at most, 35% and 15% of the population are not-so-poor and better-off, respectively, during wartime. Only a few of the respondents perceived that the incidence of poverty is 20% lower during a period of peace.

One interpretation of this finding is that poverty is high in most communities during the immediate post-conflict period, due to the breakdown in social services and collapse of both formal and informal sectors. The PPA results support the 2007 CWIQ survey which estimates the post-war poverty incidence at 63.8%.

Unquestionably, tackling such pervasive post-conflict induced poverty requires a broad-based strategy that directly focuses on improving social infrastructure and services.

2.3 Identifying the poor

Poverty is multi-dimensional. As such, its impact on Liberians varies according to the different economic and non-economic activities citizens are engaged in. A person's occupation influences whether others perceive them as poor. The PPA shows that most of the poor are categorised as those who are illiterate or have little education, unskilled workers, the disabled, low-income earners, farmers, the elderly, returnees, widows and orphans. The not-so-poor were identified as skilled and educated people, house owners, market women, teachers, money changers and civil servants with low salaries. The better-off were grouped as government officials, business people, NGO workers, doctors, lawyers and associates of former warlords. In line with the PPA findings, the 2007 CWIQ survey identified the poor as people with high poverty incidence, which included crop farmers (71%), fishermen (74.3%), miners (71.2%), unemployed (69.3%) and the uneducated (72.6%). In fact, in relation to the question: What does it mean to be poor? most of the respondents revealed that their impoverished lives are driven by inaccessibility, inadequacy and inability to afford basic social services and necessities.

The categories of people in terms of poor, not-so-poor and better-off are depicted in Table B below.

Classification of people according to poverty status (i.e. ranking)					
Rural			Urban		
Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off	Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off
- Farmers*	- Teachers	- Relatives of former warlords	- Uneducated	- Traders	- Govt officials
- Disabled	- Farmers*	- Former warlords,	- Orphans/Youth	- Skilled workers	- Owners of big businesses
- Female-headed households	- Male-headed households	- Ex-combatants	- Unskilled workers	- NGOs and Govt employees	- NGO workers
- Hunters	- Canoe owners		- Disabled	- Elderly	- Lawyers
- Returnees	- Market women		- Returnees		- Doctors
			- Large family		

Source: PPA data survey (2007) * Farmers engaged in cash crop activities, such as rubber and palm oil, are less likely to be poor compared to those engaged in subsistence farming.

2.4 Gender issues

In terms of whether women are poorer than men, PPA respondents perceive that women have a lower poverty incidence⁵ (about 42%) compared to men (about 53%). Some reasons provided include:

- Women are not poor in Liberia because they can find jobs more easily than men.
- Women depend on men for a living.
- Women sell and do other businesses to feed the home.
- Women are always on the receiving end; they get money from men and from their own businesses.
- Women are not ashamed of doing work for people to earn money.
- Women are dependent on men to make their farms; they do a lot of farm work and are economically active.

In post-war Liberia, women are perceived to be proactive in decision making on issues in the home, community and at national level. Sixty percent of the respondents perceive women to be almost equally involved in decision making as their male counterparts. Specifically, while some women directly chair community meetings and provide services, others are involved in development planning, formulating projects, sanitation works, formulating principles and policy, and providing advisory assistance.

Conversely, women are perceived as being poorer than men due to the following factors:

- Some men have children by the women and leave them without any support.
- Some women do not have any work skills.
- Women lack education.
- Women's childcare responsibilities prevent them from finding employment, especially if they have many children.
- Widows are left with children to care for.

2.5 Disabled

Respondents also gave their perceptions of poverty within the context of disability. Based on responses from the PPA, most of the disabled lack access to adequate social amenities and are therefore trapped in poverty. The primary factors influencing poverty among

⁵ This is consistent with the CWIQ (2007) findings.

the disabled include lack of food, clothing, accessories for the handicapped (such as wheelchairs, glasses and crutches), education (including skills training), and medication, since they have limited income-generating opportunities.

2.6 Housing and living

conditions
One of the major social constraints facing many families in Liberia is limited access to housing in rural areas, and the high cost of rent for housing in urban settings. Unlike the better-off who reside in mud-block or concrete houses, PPA responses show that the poor and not-so-poor predominantly reside in thatch huts, mat houses and zinc houses that are often overcrowded and in a deplorable condition (i.e. leaking roofs, lack of flush toilets/bathrooms and broken walls). Approximately 50% of respondents acknowledged living in houses that were either destroyed, in a state of disrepair due to sea erosion, war, or the mismanagement of funds, thereby making renovation difficult. The high cost of land in the urban areas, poor access to land in rural areas, and unclear land ownership rights contribute to the housing shortage and limited home ownership in Liberia. Other reasons cited are limited income-generating opportunities and disability of the most dependent person in a household.

The PPA also indicated that those in poor households are predominantly involved in small-scale agricultural ventures, informal businesses and casual labour services for survival. By contrast, the not-so-poor are engaged in informal exchange or bartering, commercial farming and formal businesses. The better-off are normally engaged in viable businesses like running bars, restaurants and provision shops, sales/rent of assets, rearing of livestock, and offering professional services to private and public sectors.

2.7 Assets and other factors

Limited ownership of productive assets contributes to poverty in Liberia, particularly in the rural areas. Based on PPA responses, those classified as poor in terms of asset ownership were described as people with assets such as concrete beds, mat houses, old buckets, old radios, old cutlasses, a few livestock,

undeveloped land, old lamps, pots, fishing baskets and nets, as well as bamboo beds with blankets. The majority of the not-so-poor possessed assets similar to the poor, except in a few instances some owned televisions, DVDs, generators, phones, houses and cars. Respondents perceived that the better-off people tend to be (quality) educated and own assets like motorbikes and cars, sugarcane farms, hand mills, canoes and boats, mobile phones, shops, sawmills, decent concrete houses, cash-crop farms and video clubs. Overall, the distribution of assets indicates that the poor and not-so-poor are financially vulnerable since most of their assets are not easily convertible and thus cannot contribute to any viable investment.

In addition to the low quality of assets owned by many of the poor, respondents identified other factors such as large family size, low levels of education, the demise of the most dependable family members, high birth rates, and low income as influencing poverty. The survey indicates that family background and social networks play an important role in reducing poverty.

2.8 Dynamics of poverty

Poverty is perceived to be on the increase, as evidenced by unstable living conditions. At least one half of the PPA respondents had experienced deterioration in living conditions over the last twelve months. Many respondents perceive that, compared to the dry season (November–April), the rainy season (April–October) is an unfavourable period for the generation of an economic livelihood. The rainy season is often associated with poor road conditions, a decline in mining activities, and a slow-down in agricultural activities.

Furthermore, most respondents perceive themselves as vulnerable as they continually fall in and out of poverty due to unstable incomes and limited income-earning opportunities. At least one half of the PPA respondents acknowledged experiencing transitory bouts of poverty over the last three years. Factors accounting for this trend include unstable jobs, old age, unreliable income, unstable prices, poor harvest, and discrimination due to poor health. In addition, some respondents perceive that most of the households experience chronic, rather than episodic poverty⁶. Reasons cited for this trend include loss of both or

one of the parents, inadequate government support, limited education, illiteracy, lack of farming inputs, lack of access to credit, large family size, poor parental backgrounds, and failure to educate the children.

To cope with these challenges, PPA respondents indicated that they are engaged in multiple tasks for survival. While some relied on external support from friends or family who live abroad and internal assistance from friends and relatives as a means for survival, others outlined petty trading, casual labour, subsistent agricultural work, mining of gold/diamonds and rubber tapping.

Since static and dynamic poverty are highly entrenched and manifest differently in Liberia, PPA respondents articulated several anti-poverty preventive strategies. To this effect, respondents indicate the provision of education and vocational skills, broad-based income generating opportunities (e.g. credit, private/public sector employment and agricultural inputs) and social amenities as essential poverty-mitigation factors.

3

ENHANCING NATIONAL SECURITY

3.1 Peace and security

Enhancing peace and national security is relevant for pro-poor economic growth and social programmes. In relation to factors capable of keeping communities united, respondents outlined activities such as sporting events, community meetings, social clubs (e.g. ludo or checker clubs), and religious affiliations. Other activities that were cited as fostering unification and reconciliation in communities included graduation and death ceremonies.

Respondents reported diverse threats to peace and security in many parts of Liberia. These threats tend to make most of the communities uninhabitable for residential or economic purposes. Factors identified as undermining peace and security include armed robbery, mob justice, bewitching, mysterious disappearances and ritualistic killing. Other unsafe activities cited by respondents are poor road conditions, land conflict and lack of basic necessities such as electricity, water, clinics, and a clean environment. Police brutality and exposure to natural disasters such as flooding and sea erosion are also cited by respondents as sources of insecurity in the community. It is important to note that PPA respondents did not cite any subversive incidences relating to the use of guns or bullets in the community.

Various forms of disputes are prevalent among many households in the community. Preliminary results from the PPA reveal that a driving force behind conflict is land ownership or access to land for farming, extra-marital affairs, and the embezzlement or mismanagement of community funds. Other factors mentioned by respondents that cause conflicts were failure to honour debts and beating children belonging to other families. Disputes over

the use of public facilities are also cited as a source of conflict.

Most of the conflicts identified by respondents are internal, i.e. within a particular town or community. Findings from the PPA indicate that almost 75% of the community does not engage in conflict with other communities. However, responses point to key sources of inter-community conflict as unresolved land issues, long-inherited problems, discontentment during sporting activities, and unilateral decision making by local leaders in isolation from other community members.

Respondents perceive reconciliation as the medium for conflict resolution in most communities of Liberia. In relation to instruments used for resolving conflict, most respondents (more than two-thirds) admit to resorting to traditional and formal justice systems in resolving disputes. Very few respondents identified the use of dialogue and the church for addressing conflicts. Essentially, PPA respondents named key participants for resolving conflicts as elders and traditional heads, law enforcement officers and local leaders. Generally, the majority of respondents (more than three quarters) expressed contentment over adjudication verdicts. To improve the security situation, some respondents suggested improving access to credible justice systems as well as organised community security guards to assist the police.

⁶ This seems to align with the CWIQ (2007) which identified households experiencing difficulty in satisfying needs as: food 29.8%, school fees 38.5%, house rent 17.5%, utility bills 12.8%, health care 28.8%.

4

ECONOMIC REVITALISATION

4.1 Asset ownership

Ownership of assets by households in the communities is mixed. The PPA reveals that the most productive assets perceived to be owned by households in the communities, especially in the rural areas, are carpenter shops, sugar cane, steel mills, hand mills, land and livestock. The PPA finds that ownership of assets in urban areas includes generators, wheelbarrows, steel mills and hand mills. Like the PPA, the 2007 CWIQ survey shows that mobile phones (28%), radios (49.5%), television sets (6.2%) and personal computers (0.6%) are major communication assets owned by households. These assets are mostly owned separately by males and females.

4.2 Economic activities

Economic activities are diversified and include formal and informal ventures. Economic activities in the rural areas include subsistence farming, casual labour on plantations, gold and diamond mining, and fishing. The PPA shows that activities for survival in the urban areas mainly involve employment in the private and public sectors. Respondents from the survey cited few instances where some people survive by being self-employed, e.g. contractor services, money changing, tailoring and petty trade.

In terms of equal access to employment opportunities, the PPA reveals that both men and women are perceived as having almost equal opportunities in terms of employment. Specifically, almost two thirds of the respondents believed that employment opportunities are gender neutral.

Despite impressive economic growth, there are constraints associated with undertaking a business in the various communities. Respondents identified economic problems affecting them as the lack of capital, lack of space to construct market structures, lack of access to loans, and lack of good road networks to transport goods. Furthermore, the PPA indicates that most of the households save their funds with informal financial institutions such as susu and other financial clubs; only a few save money with banks.

4.3 Agricultural activities

Agriculture is the engine for growth in most developing countries. However, the agricultural sector in Liberia suffered serious setbacks as a result of the war. Preliminary findings from the PPA indicate that the major impediments lack of seeds, tools and other inputs such as fertilisers and pesticides. The most serious problems associated with agricultural production are the lack of farming tools and seeds.

This finding corroborates the 2007 CWIQ survey results that showed that 70% of those engaged in agricultural activities lack agricultural inputs. Suggestions for increasing the production or income of individuals in these communities include improving the soil condition by filling the land with good topsoil and augmenting the size of farms. Respondents suggest that the government assist with the provision of seeds, tools and loans to farmers. They also requested better farm-to-market roads to accelerate trade and boost investment.

5

CHILD HEALTH DAYS AND THEIR IMPACT ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

4.4 Food insecurity

The study investigated the quality of food to which households have access. It revealed that about two thirds of households consumed cheap food and cannot afford meals three times a day. Results show that most people are underweight because they under-consume (i.e. they eat only one meal a day) due to limited food for the entire household. Evidence on stunting and underweight children reveals that these trends are mostly caused by the lack of adequate income in families to purchase nutritious food⁷. Consequently, poverty leads to malnutrition, which in turn, contributes to further entrenchment of poverty and weakens the standard of living. As the PPA indicates, poor households are classified as those with access to (at most) one meal per day, while better-off households are those with at least two meals per day.

4.5 Shocks and vulnerability

Most of the households in post-war Liberia are perceived to be vulnerable to several shocks that tend to reduce their welfare. Preliminary findings from the PPA indicate that a number of shocks have affected people's lives in various communities over the past twelve months. The rural areas were perceived to experience shocks relating to (a) over-flowing rivers which caused massive migration to other locations, (b) heavy rainfall that led to bad road conditions, (c) sea erosion, and (d) house fires. The most common shock affecting the community is the rapid and continuous increase in prices for basic necessities. The poor condition of Monrovia's seaport and the rapid increases in the price of petroleum on the world market are some underlying reasons for broad price instability in the country.

While some respondents identified possible coping strategies such as migration, others sought assistance from the government and NGOs. The community, government and NGOs usually assist households in dealing with these shocks through measures like the provision of building materials such as zinc, cement, and nails; better roads and bridges; clearing of drains; depositing rocks on the sea shore; and enforcing the prohibition of sand mining from the beaches to avert erosion and flooding.

4.6 Natural resources

Liberia is endowed with enormous natural resources and its distribution is diversified across communities. Some areas have fertile swamp land and high forests with varieties of wide life; others are endowed with rivers or lakes and mines. In terms of usefulness as sources of income, the survey reveals that the swamp land is used for rice production, and the forests are used for hunting and farming. While rivers or lakes are used for fishing and irrigation purposes, the mines are used for extraction of diamonds and gold for export. The local inhabitants poorly manage these natural resources. The PPA survey shows that rivers are polluted as they serve as waste disposal sites. It is important to note that though the survey did not examine factors affecting wildlife, widespread hunting might possibly endanger their existence.

4.7 Garbage

Garbage disposal is a serious environmental challenge faced by many communities of Liberia. The PPA indicates that communities have designated locations in swamps for garbage disposal. However, in some cases, the garbage is burned or used as natural fertilisers when it decays. Since a clean environment contributes to a healthy society, respondents made suggestions for improving garbage disposal, including burying garbage and designating sites for garbage collection.



5.1 Governance and the rule of law

The PPA results point to improved public perceptions of government. Two out of three respondents in the community perceived that the government provides transparent leadership that is accountable and committed to community development. However, others thought that their leaders were insincere in the affairs of community work because they failed to regularly convene meetings, create awareness, and consult with community members about matters affecting the people. To enforce confidence in community leadership, respondents noted the importance of social interaction through activities such as festivities, sports and workshops.

Discrimination was not perceived as a major factor affecting different groups of people in the community. More than two thirds of respondents perceived that there is no discrimination in the community. However,

respondents pointed to instances of reported discrimination of ex-combatants, people infected by HIV, and children. Unlike children and people living with HIV/AIDS, ex-combatants are discriminated against due to their continued involvement in violence and criminal acts.

There were mixed responses from households about the prevalence of physical abuse and domestic violence initiated by both men and women. The forms of domestic violence most often identified were beatings, fighting and profanity. Respondents identified women and children as the most vulnerable to both physical and domestic violence. The major acts of abuse and violence against women are rape and verbal abuse. In cases relating to physical assaults and violence against women, justice is sought from local leaders, elders or police; few respondents expressed discontentment over the outcomes of the verdict.



⁷Based on the CWIQ (2007), these households are likely to fall below the food poverty line, hence they become food poor.



6

INFRASTRUCTURE AND BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

6.1 Education

Post-war Liberia is faced with the enormous challenge of providing adequate educational services. The lack of trained and qualified teachers, inadequate infrastructure, weak logistics, poor classroom conditions, unacceptable sanitary conditions, and lack of textbooks are hindering the progress of educating Liberia's children. These conditions contribute to high school dropout rates and under achievement among students. In some cases, there are large communities without schools and, where they exist, most of the classrooms are over-crowded.

There are many reasons why girls in particular, drop out of school before reaching seventh grade. About 72% of interviewees attribute girls' dropping out to teenage pregnancy or early marriage. Other interviewees strongly believe that this social problem is largely caused by peer pressure.

Early death of parents, especially those who were direct sources of financial support, as well as poverty are important determinants of girls dropping out of school. This situation became pronounced during the course of the civil unrest when some parents lost their lives. The 2007 CWIQ survey indicates that more than 13.6% of children under 18 years of age are brought up by both parents, compared to 15.3% whose fathers are absent.

There are several reasons why boys are motivated to remain in school. Organised sporting activities, the accessibility to qualified teachers, and access to free food on their school campuses are among the reasons boys stay in school. Moreover, the attractiveness of

school uniforms and cordial student-teacher relationships motivate boys to remain in school. The findings also revealed that access to bulgur wheat encourages boys to enroll in school.

Extra-curricula activities such as sports, press and quizzing clubs, as well as cordial student-teacher relationships also motivate girls to attend school. Many of those who send their female children to school are motivated by the belief that education is a key determinant for better job placement and job security. It is also seen as a means of guaranteeing a happy marriage. Others consider girls as the substance of the family; their education is seen as a form of social security. Gender competition is rapidly increasing, hence, educating girls is considered to be a means of enhancing their ability to compete with their male counterparts. This may be an apparent reference to the current female leadership in Liberia.

In general, education is perceived to enhance self-reliance and improve social conditions for those who are educated and their parents; 39% of parents believe they will rely on their educated children when they are elderly.

The poverty of many parents in rural Liberia, mainly due to the impact of the civil conflict, has hampered their ability to send their children to school and keep them there. Some students go to school without hot meals, a situation that may lead to poor school performance and drop out.

A critical problem that affects Liberia's educational system is that teachers are not paid sustainable

wages. This may be a key reason why some trained classroom teachers choose to change professions in pursuit of relatively higher wages. As a result, the gap created by the departure of these trained teachers is most often filled by unqualified teachers, or those who work several jobs and perform at a sub-standard level.

About a third of the communities covered in the survey disclosed that they do not have a school in their locality. Where public schools are unavailable, the few private schools that do operate charge higher tuition fees, which many parents cannot afford. In most of the country's rural communities, only primary schools are accessible, so often pupils cannot study at a senior high school level. The cost of uniforms and supplies, including textbooks, also makes it difficult for children to regularly attend school.

For those communities that have public schools, the condition of school facilities often hinders learning and highlights serious health issues. For example, the sanitary conditions in most schools are reported to be very poor with a lack of toilets and safe drinking water.

The lack of adequate libraries and laboratory equipment also interferes with the learning process and prevents innovation and the development of critical thinking skills among the students.

The lack of transport for students and teachers and a poor road network hinder the efficient provision of education. Some students who travel long distances to school are often unable to reach their school campuses during the rainy season due to flooding. Some teachers trek several days or weeks in pursuit of their pay cheques; this cuts into valuable teaching time. Low salaries and the perceived lack of morals, leads some teachers to exploit their students by taking bribes in exchange for promotion. This is a particular problem among female students.

Even when students are at school, the lack of regular or inadequate meals means they are unable to learn at their full potential. The absence of adequate meals for students before or after school remains a problem in post-war Liberia. Most students do not have access to breakfast before going to school. The few students who can afford breakfast, usually eat food (e.g. rice) leftover from the previous night. However, the type of meal depends on the sub-region. Those students from the southeastern region mostly eat cassava, while those

in Liberia's central and western belts predominantly eat rice. Some students also eat potatoes, plantains and bulgur wheat.

Children's attitudes towards education are influenced by a variety of academic, social, physical and nutritional factors. For instance, the poor quality of teachers coupled with the high level of absenteeism, contributes to some students feeling negative about school. Most students dislike the poor seating facilities in their schools. Both male and female students dislike bribery and corporal punishment. Students also dislike having to travel long distances to school. Harassment, mainly against female students, and the sale of grades are mentioned in the survey as factors which influence students' decisions to abandon school.

6.2 Health

The health sector is perceived by most respondents to be in a state of total collapse, especially in the rural areas. The absence of a clinic or hospital in most localities of Liberia is considered as being the most serious problem. However, where health facilities are available, they are far away from most villages, and therefore villagers have to carry their sick long distances.

Most communities lack sanitation services and safe drinking water. The inadequate garbage disposal system poses serious health hazards to most communities, especially in the urban areas.

Health problems are endemic in post-war Liberia. Mosquitoes, which cause malaria, are a major threat in many communities. Approximately 53% of respondents say there is no health facility in their community. Where health centres are established, about 24% of respondents disclose that there is a lack of trained medical practitioners.

In addition, shortages of drugs and the limited number of professional doctors are also problems in many communities, particularly in rural areas. Community dwellers obtain drugs from a variety of sources. About 55% of interviewees disclosed that they get drugs from the health centres they attend. Thirty-eight percent of respondents say that they obtained their drug supply from either a drug store or a hospital. One third of the respondents reveal that they normally purchase drugs, such as those to treat malaria, from drug peddlers. Only 12% responded that they seek traditional treatment through herbalists.

Many childbearing women revealed that before delivery, they usually visit herbalists for consultation; during delivery, they seek help from a traditional midwife. Thirty-nine percent of respondents disclose that malaria is preventable through using mosquito nets and by keeping the environment clean.

6.2.1 HIV/AIDS

Over 85% of respondents believe that there is no cure for HIV/AIDS. A large number of interviewees believe that remaining committed to one faithful partner is the best way to prevent the spread of HIV. Most people believe that HIV is transmitted through blood transfusions and sexual intercourse. Contaminated tools, such as razor blades and needles, are also considered to be some of the main ways HIV infection is spread. Condom use is one of the recognised ways of preventing the spread of HIV, although a few respondents complained that condoms do not provide enough sexual satisfaction.

Many of the respondents say they heard about HIV/AIDS through radio programmes, friends and workshops conducted in their communities. Other means of increased HIV/AIDS awareness are television, postal literature, billboards and video.

A large number of community dwellers (84%) feel sorry for people infected with HIV, although few interviewees feel that people living with HIV/AIDS should be counseled and cared for. Some friends and relatives are afraid to associate with them for fear of contracting the disease.

6.3 Roads and housing

The long civil conflict seriously destroyed the road network across country. Poor road conditions contribute to the high cost of living via high prices of commodities. The totally inadequate road network makes it difficult to transport the sick to hospitals, deliver farm products to markets, or ensure workers arrive at their places of work and students get to school. For many respondents, inaccessible roads hinder a variety of economic activities among various communities.

The poor state of housing is another social constraint affecting many households. Poor housing conditions, as described by many respondents, include leaking roofs (i.e. zinc, thatch, tarpaulin), lack of toilets, cracking/

broken walls, and lack of concrete floors. Poor housing conditions also influence the health of households. In the face of these problems, more than three quarters of respondents indicated that the government should reduce the prices of building materials and provide better paying jobs. Other respondents, particularly those in the rural areas, believe that housing issues can be remedied by sustained and directed NGO assistance through the provision of basic housing materials.

6.4 Water and sanitation

Access to improved water is the major concern for people living in Liberia. The main sources of water are dug wells, hand pumps and creeks. Most people are dissatisfied with these facilities because the hand pumps are inadequate and polluted creek water is unsafe for drinking. Most inhabitants in these communities living at the upper parts of the creeks habitually use creeks as toilets or bathe in them, making the water unsafe for drinking. Some respondents claim that they have no option but to use creeks in this way because they do not have toilets.

Toilets are very limited in most urban cities of Liberia. Most communities only have access to pit latrines, while others have limited public toilets. The public toilets are divided into two compartments: male and female. In instances where there are no public toilets, some people use beaches (those living along the coast) and others use the bush (those living in the interior). However, some respondents also indicated using plastic bags and hanging toilets along the riverbanks. Significantly fewer respondents indicated that they use flush toilets.



7

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Conclusion

The analysis of poverty contained in this paper is based on information from the PPA, which considered multi-dimensional poverty issues that relate to the PRS. The PPA was based on elicited responses to a qualitatively-based perception analysis. The PPA reveals that poverty is associated with a lack of basic social services, infrastructural services and limited income. Equally significant was the consideration of good governance as a constitutive element of what influences poverty. Ideas about good governance captured, included the slow pace in economic revitalisation and threatened environments.

The analysis supports the quantitative findings that poverty is indeed entrenched in the rural communities. This is manifested by the total absence of basic necessities and limited income-generating opportunities in the rural areas. This analysis confirms preliminary results from the 2007 CWIQ survey, which indicate that men are perceived to be poorer than women. A small amount of information emerged about HIV/AIDS, except that most Liberians are aware of the existence of the HIV epidemic and that it is caused by uncontrolled sharing of sharp objects (razor blades and needles), unsafe sex and blood transfusions. Respondents are unanimous that HIV infection can be prevented by remaining committed to one faithful partner. The PPA found that malaria was pervasive in many communities of Liberia, as it is in most sub-Saharan countries, but that mosquito nets and ensuring a clean environment are strategies that can be used to fight the disease.

Consistent with other developing countries, analysis and findings also indicate that frequent shocks cause

migration from natural disasters and increased cost of living associated with broader price instability in various communities. The low standard of living is also influenced by dilapidated roads, the lack of hospitals and drugs, the lack of trained teachers and inadequate school facilities.

One interpretation of the findings is that interviewees perceived the prospect of reverting to conflict as minimal because the conflict issues that were disclosed in the PPA process are not considered potential threats to peace.

7.2 Limitations

Collection and analysis of the PPA data were marked by various drawbacks, ranging from the lack of effective monitoring of the data collection exercise, to gaps in the data, and insufficient time for data cleaning. This inhibited the aspect of analysis involving the use of modern statistical and econometrics software (STATA, SPSS, MICROFITS etc.). Nevertheless, findings from the PPA data analysis are plausible, as evidenced by their relative consistency with other studies such as the LDHS and 2007 CWIQ.

PPA research is a continuous exercise that is useful for monitoring and evaluating the trend in socioeconomic status of society for policy formulation. Since the end of every study is likely to raise additional research questions, it is anticipated that future PPA data will be collected within a more organised framework, which will allow for the use of sophisticated statistic packages for effective analysis.

APPENDIX Participatory Poverty Assessment tables

Rankings of information in tables are in ascending order. Source of information for tables 2007 PPA survey data.

PPA descriptive statistics			
Description	Number	Survey team	Persons
County covered	15	Number of enumerators	54
Enumeration areas	18	Number of monitors	3
Focus groups	4		
Special focus groups	4		
Total number of communities surveyed	45		

Basic PPA definitions of poverty			
Rural definition (by ranking)	Urban definition (by ranking)	Ranking of factors that induce poverty (by ranking)	
1. Lack of material things	1. Lack of jobs	1. Lack of education	4. Single/no parent
2. Lack of roads	2. Low incomes	2. Lack of employment	5. Poor health
3. Lack of market	3. High cost for housing	3. Lack of money/income	6. Other (no child, laziness, bad governance, extra curricular activities, hobbies, war)
	4. High cost for medication and education		
5. Low income	5. Poor access to market		
6. Lack of job	6. Poor sanitation		
7. Poor housing			
8. Inadequate food			
9. Large family size			

Perceived poverty at wartime			
Distribution of poor communities during wartime			
Percentage of community perceived to be poor during wartime (range)	Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off
60-100%	70%	0	0
20-59%	25%	35%	15%
0-19%	5%	20%	65%

Distribution of poor community at peacetime			
Percentage of community perceived to be poor during peacetime (range)	Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off
60-100%	50%	2%	0%
20-59%	34%	78%	26%
0-19%	0%	20%	74%

PPA classification of of people					
Rural			Urban		
Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off	Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off
- Farmers	- Teachers	- Relatives of former warlords	- Uneducated	- Traders	- Govt. officials
- Disabled	- Farmers	- Former warlords,	- Orphans/youth	- Skilled workers	- Owners of big business
- Female-headed households	- Male-headed households	- Ex-combatants	- Unskilled workers	- NGOs and Govt. employees	- NGO workers
- Hunters	- Canoe owners		- Disabled	- Elderly	- Lawyers
- Returnees	- Market women		- Returnees		- Doctors
			- Large families		

Housing conditions					
Urban (Housing)Rural (Housing)			Rural (Housing)		
Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off	Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old zinc and mat houses • Old damaged and broken walls • Houses without floors • Large family in a single room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unplastered concrete houses - Dirt- brick houses - Zinc houses in good condition - Rented apartments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Own/rented decent concrete houses within fence - Fenced house with water and electricity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thatch huts with mats and sticks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decent mat houses with plastered floors - Mud-brick house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well plastered dirt-brick houses - Mud - house with zinc

Sources of livelihood					
Urban (Livelihood)			Rural (Livelihood)		
Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off	Poor	Not-so-poor	Better-off
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Casual work - Petty trade - Internal external help - Odd work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contracting services - Informal businesses - Employment services - Provisional businesses - Reliable external internal help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big businesses - Bars, shops and restaurants - Real estate - Professional service consultancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subsistence agricultural work - Mining - Petty trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farming - Rubber tapping - Livestock/animal husbandry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pit sawing - Large farming - Livestock - Teaching

Activities of recent returnees
<p>Ranking of activities/conditions of recent returnees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agricultural work 2. Business/petty trade 3. Casual job 4. Depend on/live with relatives 5. Other (employed, vocational, teaching, live/depend on friend)

Poverty dynamics		
Factors (responses)	Percentage	Reasons/Roles
Some households always remain poor.	About 56% of respondents perceived households to always remain poor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single parent - Poor planning - High dependency - Lack of job - Lack of support - No child - Ill health - Lack of farming tools - Poor background
Household threatened by poverty.	Almost 48% of respondents perceived households to be threatened by poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of employment - High cost of living - Lack of income - Bad government policy - War-induced impact - Lack of farming tools - Natural disaster - Mismanagement by community heads - Lack of social infrastructure - Limited credit opportunities - Poor medical conditions and old age - High dependency - Lack of education
Existence of better time during the last twelve months.	Approximately 62% indicated experiencing better time over the last twelve months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many associate better time with the dry season which is ideal for farming and economic activities.
Movement of household back and forth between poor and better-off during the past three years,	About 54% of respondents perceived back and forth movement in their living conditions over the last three years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unstable prices - Old age - Lack of permanent job - Lack of sustained and reliable support - Loss of dependable family members - Unexpected factors

Gender		
Factors (responses)	Percentage	Reasons/Roles
Women are perceived to participate in decision making	60%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct participation - Peace making - Advising - Head
Perception about equal access to employment by men and women	58%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equal educational opportunities - Strong women policy - High trust in women - Favouritism for women
Perception of poorer men compared to women	42% (women) and 53%(men)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get job easily - Depend on men - Highly business minded - Have lot of opportunities

Children	
a) Ranking of things that children dislike:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Killing 2. Sexual harassment 3. Deplorable school and untrained teachers 4. Bribery/stealing 5. Poor hygiene
b) Ranking of meal children eat before going to school:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cold food/stiff food 2. Cassava 3. Eat nothing 4. Wheat

Peace and security		
Factors (responses)	Percentages	Reasons/Roles
Existence of dispute/conflict in communities	Approximately 28% perceived that conflict is prevalent in communities.	Extra-marital affairs, land issues, beating other people's children, use of public facilities.
Satisfaction with conflict resolution method in communities	60% perceived transparent conflict resolution system.	High transparency in most of the verdicts.
(a) Things that make community unsafe: (by ranking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secret killings/armed robbery 2. Other (rape, fighting, wildlife, stealing, mob justice) 3. Nothing 4. Natural disasters 5. Diseases (malaria, tuberculosis) 	
(b) Other things that make community unsafe:	Overflowing river, lack of electricity, lack of good roads, harmful traditional practices, lack of safe drinking water, rising prices and lack of adequate medical facilities.	
(c) Impact of those things that make community unsafe:	Instilling fear, hindrance to free movement, hunger, increased criminal activities, loss of lives and property, decline in farming and hunting activities, downward trend in businesses.	
(d) Some ways community responds to unsafe conditions: (by ranking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment of community watch team 2. Report incident to community leader 3. Report incident to police 4. Nothing 5. Other (strengthen doors, windows, seek help from neighbours) 	
(e) Main causes of disputes/conflict in community: (by ranking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extramarital affairs 2. Land issues 3. Beating other people's children 4. Use of public facilities 5. Failure to honour debts 6. Nothing 	
(f) Physical abuse/domestic violence in community: (by ranking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beating wife/kids 2. Assaults 3. Sexual harassment 4. Fighting 5. Other (stealing, child abuse, profanity, murder) 	
(g) Victims of physical abuse: (by ranking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women 2. Youth and children 3. None 4. Men 5. Elderly 	
(h) Ways women seek justice when abused: (by ranking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through community leader (chief and elders) 2. Police 3. Court 	
(i) Community unifying factors: (by ranking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sporting activities, traditional festivities 2. Community group work 3. School activities 4. Group farming or ku for mutual co-existence 	

Good governance		
Factors (responses)	Percentage	Reasons/Roles
Honesty of community leaders	About 66% of community leaders are perceived to be honest in the discharge of their functions.	Tolerance, sensitisation, meetings, community work.
(a) Ranking of successful projects in communities:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hand pump 2. Rice production 3. School 4. Town hall 5. Toilet 6. Women centre 7. Market 8. Road 9. Other (guest house, worship building, clinic, sanitation) 		
(b) Ranking of the type of social groups discriminated against:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. None (no discrimination) 2. Ex-combatants 3. Youth 4. Disabled 5. Other (sick, old people, some ethnic groups, women) 		

Types of assets owned by rural and urban dwellers		
Type of assets (rural areas)	Type of assets (urban areas)	Type of assets (rural/urban) areas
Sugar mill (automated and hand mill)	Generator	Land
Livestock	Car	Radio
Farming tools	Motorbike	
Canoe	Real estates	
Power saw	Sewing machine	
Agricultural produce	television set	
Agricultural inputs	Wheel barrow	

Economic activities for survival		
Rural communities	Urban communities	Rural/Urban communities
Farming	Petty trading	Teaching
Fishing and hunting	Professional services in both public and private institutions	
Mining	Restaurant/cook shop	
Cutting wood	Casual labourer/contractual	
Charcoal production	Begging	
Rubber tapping	Commercial sex work	

Problems affecting business activities in communities	
Rural communities	Urban communities
Lack of farm-to-market roads	Rising prices
Poor road conditions (where roads exist)	Lack of capital and access to loans
High cost of transportation	High transportation cost
Lack of market structure	Armed robbery (insecurity)
Large family dependency syndrome	Harassment by some official inspectors and poor business policy

Constraints on formal and informal businesses
The most serious problems hindering both formal and informal businesses (by ranking)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of starting capital 2. Bad road conditions 3. High cost of transportation 4. Lack of access to loans/credit 5. Other (no land, no markets, armed robbery/theft)

Saving methods
Means of saving money (by ranking)
1. Susu club
2. With entrusted friend
3. At home
4. At the bank

Problems with agricultural production and ways to increase production		
Problems with agricultural production (by ranking)	The most serious agricultural problems (by ranking)	Some ways to increase production (by ranking)
1. Lack of farming tools	1) Bad roads	1) Provision of farming tools
2. No seeds	2) High transportation costs	2) Improvement in farm-to-market roads
3. No fertilisers	3) Lack of agricultural tools	3) Provision of loans
4. Inadequate training	4) Other (lack of market hall, low demand, lack of storage facilities)	4) Reduction in prices and taxes
5. Destruction of crops by animals		

Contributions of youth to household income		
Rural communities (by ranking)	Urban communities (by ranking)	Some effects (by ranking)
1. Help with farming	1. Cooking	1. Leads to school dropout
2. Dig gold	2. Cleaning	2. Leads to tardiness
3. Cooking	3. Petty trading	3. Limits study time
4. Home cleaning (sanitation)	4. Casual work/contractor	4. Irregularity in school attendance
5. Fishing		5. Leads to fatigue and hinders students' ability to study
6. Fetching water and cutting wood		

Coping with inadequate income
Coping strategy (by ranking)
1. Seeking assistance/begging
2. Reducing daily ration/consume cheap food
3. Subsistence farming
4. Other (credit, steal or seek contract)

Meals consumed daily	
Poor meals (once daily) (by ranking)	Better-off meals (three times daily) (by ranking)
1. Dry rice (boiled rice without soup/sauce)	1. Fish and meat
2. Cheap food (bulgur wheat mixed with rice)	2. High grade parboiled rice
3. Wild food (bush yams, palm cabbage)	3. Varieties of food

Physical conditions		
Factors (responses)	Percentage	Reasons/Roles
Existence of dehydrated and malnourished people in communities.	42% of communities affected.	Consume limited protein diet, hunger, sickness and poverty.
Most affected people: (by ranking)		
1. Children		
2. Women		
3. Elderly		
4. Poor		

Social and economic shocks		
Shocks		
(a) Major shocks affecting people in the last twelve months: (by ranking)	(b) Ways communities cope with shocks: (by ranking)	(c) Ways government or NGOs can help households deal with shocks: (by ranking)
1. Mysterious death	1. Cooperation/unity	1. Provide money, medicine and food
2. Floods	2. Live w	2. Provide housing
3. Storms	3. Migrate	3. Provide social Infrastructure
4. High price		4. Provide security
5. Other (erosion, burning of houses and stealing)		5. Provide farming tools and regulate prices
		6. Provide jobs

Natural resources and their uses		
Resources	Usage	Conservation
• River	Washing, fishing, drinking, transporting	Lacking proper conservation policy
• Forest	Timber, farming, hunting, charcoal	
• Swamp land	Farming and garbage disposal	
• Uplands	Building and farming	
• Gold/diamond	Commercial	
• Ocean	Fishing, swimming	
• Lake	Fishing, swimming and transport	
• Wildlife	Tourism, food	

Diminishing resources		
Factors (responses)	Percentage	Potential reasons
Whether natural resources are diminishing.	26% perceived that natural resources are diminishing.	Farming, logging, garbage disposal in swamps, rivers, bushes and beaches; fishing, mining, charcoal production, defecating in rivers and forests.

Garbage management and disposal		
Ways of garbage disposal/use (by ranking)	Effects of improper garbage disposal (by ranking)	Ways of improving garbage disposal (by ranking)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dispose of in bushes 2. Dump behind houses 3. Burning 4. Dispose of at dumping site 5. Dispose of in dug holes 6. Other (transform into fertiliser or filling holes) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poses health hazard 2. Breeds mosquitoes 3. Causes water borne diseases 4. Causes air borne diseases 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeping surroundings clean 2. Digging hole 3. Imposing fine 4. Using private sanitation 5. Privatisation of waste manage processes

Social facilities		
Factors (responses)	Percentages	Major reasons/Roles
Existence of separate toilet for males/females	1% perceived that there is separate toilet facilities for both males and females	Poor housing structure, limited toilet facilities.
By ranking		
a) Type of toilet accessible to communities (by ranking) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bush/forest 2. Private pit/community toilet 3. River 4. Flush toilet 5. Plastic bag 		
b) Conditions of housing in communities (by ranking) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dilapidated 2. Very bad 	Housing improvement methods: Assistance with building materials; reduction in prices of building materials; provision of jobs	
c) Three most serious social problems in communities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roads, hospitals, schools 2. Schools, hospitals, water 3. Schools, hospitals, jobs 4. Loans, agricultural, hospitals 5. Schools, hospitasl, agriculture 		

HIV/AIDS and malaria
<p>Problems related to health in communities (by ranking)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No clinic/hospital 2. Clinic/hospital far from town 3. No drugs 4. Lack of trained medical practitioner 5. Poor sanitation 6. High treatment cost 7. Other (lack of ambulance/waste management)
<p>HIV/AIDS</p> <p>a) Knowledge about HIV/AIDS (by ranking)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It kills 2. Untreatable 3. Contracted through sex/sharing of sharp objects 4. Avoidance is through being faithful 5. Use condom for prevention 6. No knowledge
<p>b) Perception about the sources of awareness of HIV/AIDS (by ranking)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Radio 2. Hospital/health workers 3. Awareness programme 4. Workshop 5. Friends 6. Other (television/schools)
<p>c) Perception of HIV prevention (by ranking)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faithfulness 2. Condoms 3. Careful use of blades 4. Other (test blood, abstinence)
<p>d) How do people feel about the use of condom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 23% perceived to feel bad 2. 48% perceived to feel good
<p>MALARIA</p> <p>a) Ways to prevent malaria (by ranking)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cleaning environment 2. Mosquito net 3. Nothing 4. Other (drugs, herbs, spray)
<p>b) Malaria treatment methods (by ranking)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Medication through hospitals 2. Purchasing drugs 3. Herbal medication

Health services and delivery				
When a community member is sick, what do you do? (by ranking)	How do you get drugs when sick? (by ranking)	Health services used before delivery (i.e. pre-natal care); (by ranking)	Health Services Used During Delivery; (by ranking)	Health Services Used After Delivery; (by ranking)
1. Take him/her to hospital	1. Hospital	1. Hospital	1. Hospital	1. Hospital
2. Take him/her to traditional herbalist	2. Drug store	2. Traditional herbs	2. Midwives	2. Mid wives
3. Carry him/her in wheelbarrow to nearby hospital	3. Street peddlers	3. Midwives	3. Traditional herbs	3. Traditional herbs
4. Home treatments by purchasing drugs from store or from street	4. Herbalists	4. Counselling	4. Counselling	4. Counselling
	5. Health practitioners/nurses			

Educational issues						
What are the problems related to education? (by ranking)	What encourages you to send your children to school? (by ranking)	What are the main reasons for girls dropping out of school before 7 th grade? (by ranking)	What are the main reasons for boys dropping out of school before 7 th grade? (by ranking)	What do children dislike about their school? (by ranking)	What are your children eating before and during school hours? (by ranking)	What do children like about their schools? (by ranking)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of building 2. Lack of adequately trained teachers 3. Lack of adequate facilities 4. Poverty 5. Bad road conditions 6. Low salary scale for teachers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education is a social responsibility 2. For the future 3. Opportunity for a better job 4. Happy marriage 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Earlier pregnancy/marriage 2. Financial constraints 3. Peer group pressure 4. Poverty 5. Death of parents 6. Lack of school in community 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of financial support 2. Early family responsibility 3. Peer group pressure 4. Poverty 5. Death of parent(s) and impact of drug use 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporal punishment 2. Lack of qualified teachers 3. Sexual harassment by teachers 4. Deplorable school building 5. Bribery 6. Lack of sanitary facilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Slept over food 2. Cassava 3. Eat nothing 4. Wheat 5. Plantains 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good teachers 2. Sports 3. Free food 4. Quizzing club 5. Press club





