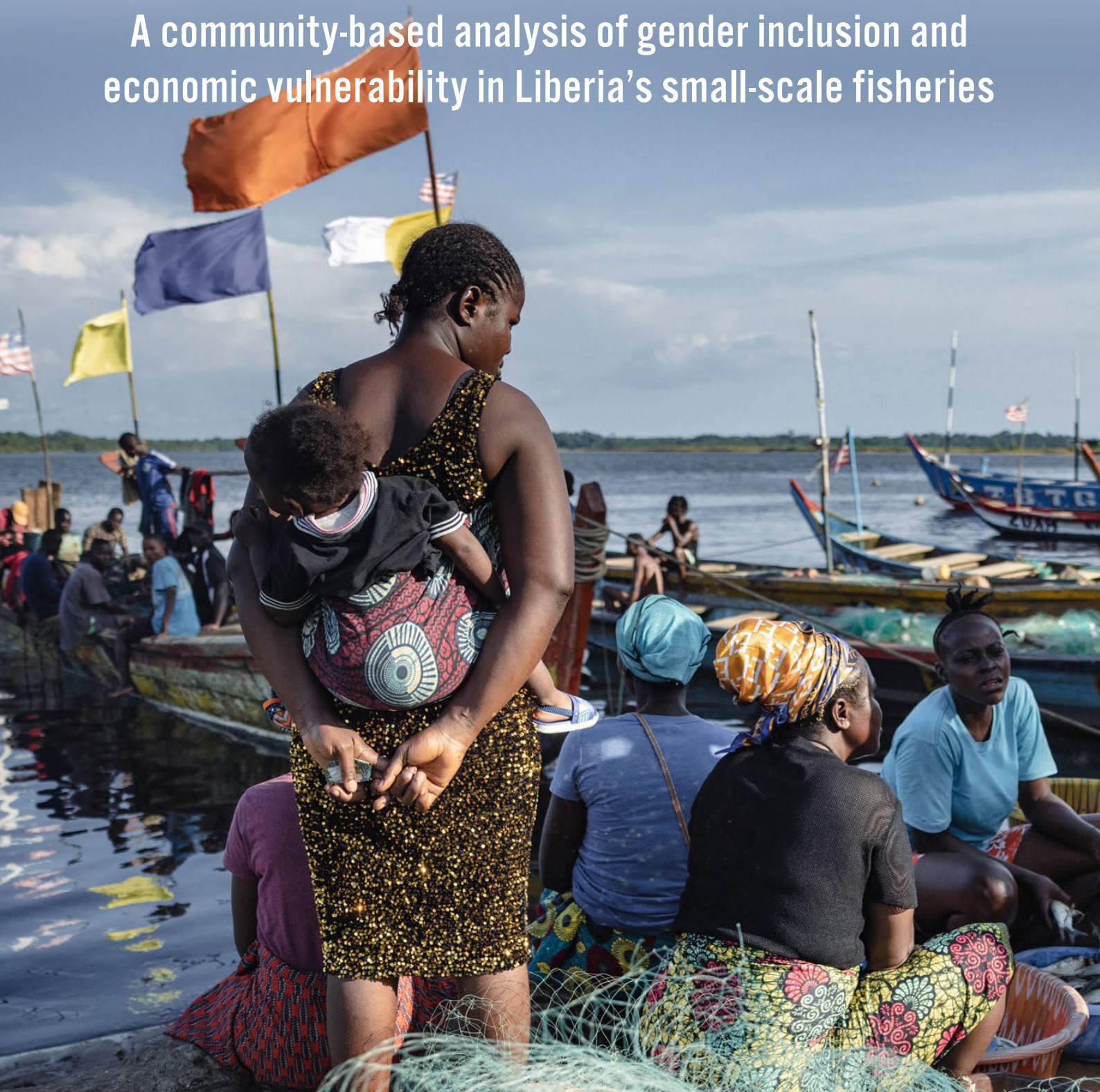


# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

A community-based analysis of gender inclusion and economic vulnerability in Liberia's small-scale fisheries



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### Acronyms

CMA: Collaborative Management Association  
CI: Conservation International  
EJF: Environmental Justice Foundation  
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
FGD: Focus group discussion  
LAFA: Liberia Artisanal Fishers Association

FTT: FAO-Thiaroye Processing Technique  
SWOT: Strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat  
SSF: Small-scale fisheries  
GDP: Gross Domestic Product  
NaFAA: National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority  
VSLA: Village Savings and Loans Association

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# Executive summary

Women play a significant role in small-scale fisheries (SSF). In West Africa, they make up more than 50% of the fisheries workforce and market 80% of all seafood along the fisheries supply and value chains. In Liberia, women are actively involved in the processing and trading of seafood, buying key fishing equipment, and financing fishing trips. Women play a crucial role in Liberia's SSF sector. However, women commonly experience extensive, harmful and regressive gender discrimination against them, across the seafood sector and throughout wider society. EJJF believes it is essential that all stakeholders promote the active participation of women and act against gender discrimination, wherever it manifests, in order to achieve equitable and sustainable fisheries management. Using information gathered from 14 communities in Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Grand Kru, and Margibi counties in Liberia, this study seeks to understand the gender roles and division in Liberia's SSF and identify the gender-based constraints to, and opportunities for, equitable participation in fisheries decision-making processes. It also seeks to identify marginalised groups and economically vulnerable groups in fishing communities in Liberia.

The study results show that though women are crucial in leading post-harvest activities, they have restricted access to fisheries assets and facilities in Liberia. The findings also reveal that women are under-represented in SSF decision-making processes due to limited formal structures, organisations, and laws to explicitly promote their active involvement in these processes. The study identified disadvantaged youths, people with mental illnesses, people prone to violent behaviour and people perceived to be witches and wizards as the most marginalised groups in fishing communities in Liberia. The elderly, people with disabilities, widows, disadvantaged youths, and people with terminal illnesses were identified as the most vulnerable economically. According to the respondents, these marginalised groups are excluded from community activities because they are perceived to incite conflicts, steal people's property, and undermine the progress of gatherings.

Based on the findings, the study recommends addressing gender inequalities, marginalisation and economic vulnerability in Liberia's SSF to promote the participation of women, marginalised and economically vulnerable groups and other stakeholders, which is considered vital to the management and growth of the sector.

## Key findings

The report findings show that mainstreaming of gender issues in the fishery sector is limited, and strategies to advance women's status in SSF are still a key development issue in Liberia. The findings also reveal that marginalised and economically vulnerable groups exist in fishing communities and that marginalised groups (including youths and elderly people) are excluded from decision-making processes relating to fisheries. Below is a summary of the study's key findings:

- Women and men have different roles in the fisheries sector. Men are actively engaged in fish harvesting, fishing gear maintenance, canoe construction and repairs, while women are primarily involved in fish processing, trading, financing fishing trips, and tending to domestic household chores. In the communities studied, women were seen as busier than men as they multitask to meet the daily domestic needs of their families (cooking, cleaning and childcare) and run their fish processing and trading activities.
- Traditional norms and beliefs influence women's and men's roles in SSF. These norms position men as "heads" and decision-makers and more fitting to conduct fishing activities at sea. Women are seen as "helpers" and "nurturers" and are more suited for post-harvesting activities and domestic chores.
- Men have more access to and control over fishing equipment (canoes, nets, outboard engines), while women have access to fish processing equipment (stoves, ovens). Both men and women fund fishing activities, and women mainly acquire money from limited informal micro-credit schemes and supplementary livelihood activities such as selling agricultural produce to support these activities.
- Women are less involved in decision-making processes than men. This varying level of involvement is partly because of their schedules, traditional beliefs, and limited laws and policies to support women's active participation in these processes.
- Men's needs and interests in SSF are centred around ownership, control over and management of fishing inputs and access to fish landing sites. In contrast, women's needs and interests relate to access to landed fish to sell, fish processing equipment, and credit and social services such as health and education for their children.

- Disadvantaged youths, people with mental illness, people prone to violent behaviour and people perceived to be witches and wizards are excluded from decision-making in the local fisheries. According to the respondents, these people are excluded from community activities because they are perceived to incite conflicts, steal people's property, and undermine the progress of gatherings.

- According to the respondents, many people in their communities can afford to take care of their daily needs and have successfully started and expanded business ventures that improved their living conditions. However, elderly people, people with disabilities, widows, disadvantaged youths, and people with terminal illnesses are economically vulnerable because they cannot fend for themselves, have poor health conditions, and have limited access to basic social services.

The report concludes that the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) and its partners must work to meet the needs and interests of women and marginalised and economically vulnerable groups and to address the constraints to their active participation in SSF decision-making processes in Liberia. They can achieve this by developing laws that are gender-inclusive; explicitly elaborating on how Liberia will promote gender equity in the fisheries sector to achieve equal and active participation of all relevant stakeholders; supporting social groupings, such as fishers groups, that serve as social safety nets for vulnerable individuals; and developing inclusive and informed context-based programs and strategies to enhance the active involvement of all community actors in all aspects of fisheries in Liberia.



# 1. Introduction

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) make a critical contribution to economic, food, and nutritional security in Africa<sup>1,2</sup>. Women play a crucial role in SSF, accounting for nearly 50% of the fisheries workforce in West Africa, and marketing roughly 80% of all seafood along the fisheries supply and value chains<sup>3,4</sup>. In Liberia, women make up 60% of the 33,000 people directly employed in the SSF<sup>5</sup>. The role of women in the SSF sector in many parts of the world, including Liberia, involves pre-financing fishing expeditions of small-scale boats (harvest sector), as well as processing and marketing the landed catch (post-harvest sector)<sup>6,7,8,9,10</sup>. While fisheries contribute about 3% of Liberia's GDP<sup>11</sup> and 1.3%<sup>12</sup> of Africa's GDP, the post-harvest sector accounts for around half of this figure<sup>13</sup>. Despite the significant participation and contribution of women in the fisheries sector, their contributions often go unnoticed and are not adequately considered in management and decision-making processes. Compared to men, women generally have limited access to crucial resources and opportunities<sup>14</sup>. This extensive gender discrimination against women across the fisheries sector and wider society must be addressed to achieve sustainable and equitable fisheries<sup>15,16,17,18</sup>.

As is commonplace in Africa, the fishing profession in Liberia is segregated by gender, where men are engaged in the harvesting and landing of fresh fish, while women are responsible for processing, trading the landed catch (via employment as fishmongers) and financing fishing voyages and key fishing inputs<sup>19,20</sup>. Despite women's central role in SSF and fishing communities, policy-makers usually fail to adequately consider their roles and contributions during policy formulation processes, resulting in the marginalisation of women from the public conversation around fisheries<sup>21,22</sup>. This marginalisation excludes women from technical and capacity-building programmes, community consultations, fisheries governance, and decision-making processes. It denies them the opportunities to raise their issues and concerns and to take part in seeking solutions for sustainable fisheries management.

In Liberia, the social groups in the SSF sector that experience some of the highest levels of marginalisation are those lacking critical fisheries assets such as boats, outboard engines, and fishing nets, as has also been reported in Ghana<sup>23</sup>. Many women who work in the fisheries sector are either temporary or long-term migrant fish traders with no access to secure land tenure<sup>24</sup>, which also adds to their marginalisation. Access to micro-credit and

savings schemes is limited in fishing communities, making it difficult for many fishers, processors and fishmongers to expand their fishing enterprises<sup>25</sup>. In smaller cities like Buchanan, commercial banks and other credit facilities such as BRAC provide loan facilities, but accessing loans is difficult. The high interest rates and collateral needed to access credit from these banks discourages those working in SSF from applying.

## Box: Liberia gender policy overview

Liberia's Gender Policy<sup>26</sup> reports the existence of gender inequality and the marginalisation of women in Liberia, which are heightened by socio-cultural perceptions and practices that consider men to be superior to women. The policy recognises that gender-assigned roles are ingrained in Liberian culture and reflected in communities, schools, and institutions, which reportedly create an excessive workload that causes women to lose out on the opportunity to participate in management and decision-making processes at all levels of Liberian society, among other opportunities.

The major challenges facing women in Liberia's rural communities include sexual and domestic violence, early and forced marriage, limited access to education, information and justice, and low economic capacities<sup>27,28,29</sup>. Liberia's 2019-2020 Demographic and Health Survey<sup>30</sup> showed that 60% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence, and 9% have experienced sexual violence. Women's limited access to information, capacity-building opportunities, and formal education is evidenced by the gap in the adult literacy rate: the literacy rate for men stands at 62.7%, while for women the literacy rate is 34.19%<sup>31</sup>. The low economic capacity of women is driven by disparities in levels of compensation of men and women across different employment sectors<sup>32</sup>.

## 1.1 Study objective

This study was conducted in selected fishing communities to understand gender dynamics and issues of economic vulnerability to inform interventions in Liberia's SSF sector. The report examines gender inclusion and economic vulnerability of fishers, women fishmongers, and fish processors/traders, provides a contemporary description of gender roles and division of labour in the fishing industry in Liberia, and analyses the needs and opportunities for gender mainstreaming. The analysis assessed the following key areas: (i) household information (to understand who does what), (ii) migration (to grasp what drives fishers' migration), (iii) access to and

control over crucial fisheries assets and resources (to understand power dynamics and marginalisation of vulnerable target social groups), (iv) gender participation in fisheries decision making, (v) cultural norms, beliefs and perceptions, (vi) needs and opportunities and (vii) economic vulnerability.

The aim of this research is to provide critical information to government authorities and key stakeholders on the importance of integrating women, and other socially or economically marginalised or vulnerable groups, into fisheries interventions and programmes. It is also intended to encourage the equitable participation of all SSF workers in decision-making processes in the sector.

## 2. Study sites, methodology and definitions

### 2.1 Study sites

The study was conducted in 12 communities in the Communities for Fisheries project locations of Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Grand Kru counties along the coast of Liberia, as indicated in Figure 1. The 14 communities included Kru town, Fanti<sup>33</sup> town and Uptown in Grand Cape Mount County; Marshall, Fanti Town, Floko's town, Boyce's Town and Kpakpacom town in Margibi County; Big and Small Fanti towns in Grand Bassa County; and Grand Cess, Picnic Cess, New Cess and Wedabo in Grand Kru County.

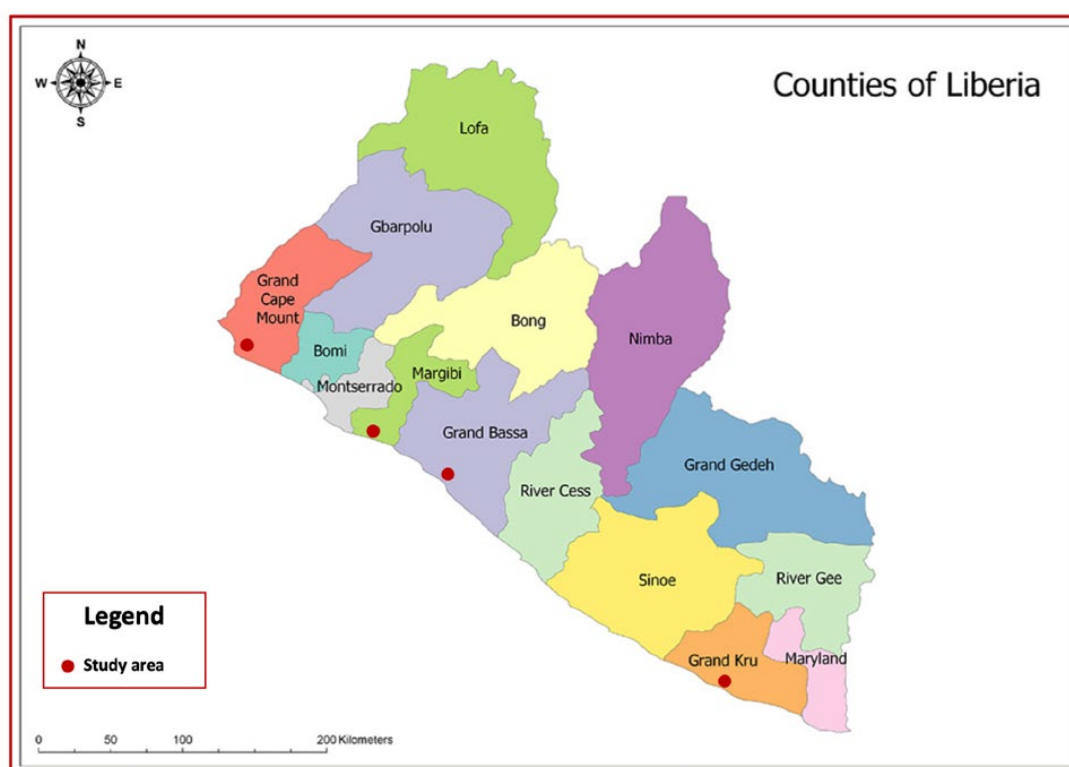


Figure 1: Map of Liberia showing study area (adapted from Mappr: <https://www.mappr.co/counties/counties-of-liberia/>).



## 2.2 Methods

Participants and study sites were selected based on the findings of a scoping trip. We collected primary data through focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews. Participants in the FGD comprised women fishmongers, women fish processors and fishermen, and primarily focused on individuals involved in fishing and related activities and those in key leadership positions. Eight FGDs were conducted in the 14 target communities. The women's and men's discussions were held separately, and each involved 10-15 participants and lasted for around two hours.

The key informant interviews focused on the Sea Chiefs, City Mayors, members of the Collaborative Management Association, and Paramount Chiefs in the study's target communities. The study interviewed five to eight key informants in each of the target communities. Primary data was collected from 3 November to 7 December 2021 and from 10 August to 11 September 2023 (see **Appendix I** for a complete list of sites and groups involved in the study). A questionnaire was developed and used as an interview guide during the group discussion and the key informant interviews (see **Appendix II**). A total of 138 respondents participated in the survey.

Primary data collection was supplemented by a review of the relevant literature on gender and marginalised groups in fisheries, gender dynamics and strategies for integration, and the constraints to, and

opportunities for, the equitable inclusion of women and marginalised and economically vulnerable groups in fisheries management and access to resources.

We used a gender analysis framework<sup>34</sup> to examine the gender dynamics in the Liberian SSF sector. The gender analysis considered issues relating to (i) men's and women's roles and responsibilities that could facilitate or thwart involvement in fisheries interventions and decision-making processes, (ii) migration in the fishing industry, (iii) gender status and the means by which women and men gain access to and control over critical fisheries assets, resources, opportunities and services, (iv) existing gender norms and beliefs that may influence the ability of women to take on key leadership roles and decision-making in fisheries, (v) gender needs and opportunities in Liberia's fishing industry, (vi) income and expenditure in the fishing industry across the different genders, and (vii) the laws, policies, and institutional practices that may contain implicit or explicit gender biases.

To determine the marginalised groups in the surveyed communities, we integrated questions (see **Appendix II**) that probed into discrimination and exclusion (social and economic) and community members' access to formal meetings, social gatherings, beaches and landing sites<sup>35</sup>. To identify economically vulnerable community members, we designed questions that examined community members' access to resources, their exposure and adaptive capacity to economic threats, and their membership of community-based associations that provide a social safety net<sup>36</sup>.



Focus group discussion, Sass Town, Grand Kru County.



## 2.3 Definitions

The following definitions were adopted for the purposes of this research:

### Gender analysis:

“the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men in their assigned gender roles”<sup>37</sup>.

### Economic vulnerability:

“the economic vulnerability category includes persons who are disadvantaged in the distribution of social goods and services such as income, housing, or healthcare”.<sup>38</sup> The term is used to refer to “the exposure of the economic development of a group of people to exogenous shocks, arising out of economic openness”<sup>39</sup>.

### Marginalisation:

“when a person or groups of people are less able to do things or access basic services or opportunities”<sup>40</sup>.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1 Men and women's roles in the SSF sector – who does what?

Gender is a socially constructed term characterising the roles and status of women and men<sup>41</sup>. It consists of norms, behaviours and roles linked to being a woman or a man and their relationships with each other<sup>42</sup>. Gender roles and relationships as a social concept vary by society and industry and can change over time<sup>43,44</sup>. The roles of women and men are deeply integrated but unequal, especially concerning the division of labour in the household and the SSF sector<sup>45</sup>. While men are actively engaged in fish harvesting, maintaining fishing gear, canoe construction and repairs, women are primarily involved in financing fishing voyages, purchasing and processing fresh fish, fish marketing, and taking care of the children and household chores<sup>46</sup> (see **Table 1**).

In Grand Bassa County, women respondents said they financed fishing voyages by providing money as informal credit to fishermen to buy food, fuel, and other fishing necessities, consistent with the findings of a previous study<sup>47</sup>. By providing the loans, the women are guaranteed complete access to the landed catch, as seen in other African contexts<sup>48, 49</sup>.

**Table 1: Dominant gender roles in the SSF sector**

Activity	Who does what?	
	Men	Women
Fishing	x	
Farming and livestock	x	x
Fish purchasing, processing, and marketing		x
Homecare and financing	x	x
Canoe and gear maintenance	x	
Financing fishing expeditions	x	x
Leading fishermen	x	
Leading fishmongers and processors		x

The study revealed that the roles and responsibilities of men and women in all 14 communities are defined by tradition. While the gendered division of labour is generally relatively fixed, according to respondents, it may be adapted depending on the circumstances, for example, during the peak fishing season when the landed catch is quite large. In such circumstances, respondents reported that all family members, including the children, work together to help the women in the household fetch firewood and water to process the fresh fish and sell the fish products thereafter.



Fishermen getting ready for a fishing trip, Grand Cess, Grand Kru County.

Women in all the communities visited undertake key roles in the household and the SSF. On top of purchasing, processing, and marketing the landed fish, women are involved in voluntary work such as coastal clean-ups and community development and are primarily responsible for childcare and household tasks. The study found that women often multitask, sometimes for several hours at a time, providing them with fewer opportunities for leisure compared to their male counterparts. While the male respondents reported taking time to rest after a fishing expedition, such opportunities are rare for women, according to the respondents interviewed. A lack of rest or leisure time outside of their unpaid and paid work presents a barrier to women's participation in decisions concerning their livelihoods.

### 3.2 Gender participation in fisheries decision-making

Liberia's fishery sector is characterised by a patriarchal culture, which gives men more decision powers, i.e. automatic leadership roles in communities. However, around 60% of Liberia's fisheries workforce are women<sup>50</sup>, who rely on fishing as a means of supporting themselves and their families. Any efforts to manage the country's fisheries industry will have a direct impact on these women's lives, making it essential for them to participate in fisheries decision-making processes.

The research results show that despite women's heavy dependence on fisheries for their livelihoods and their key role in the SSF sector, they are often excluded from decisions concerning fishery management.

Generally, it is men rather than women who are heavily involved and active in decision-making processes<sup>51</sup>. They determine fish prices at landing sites, the fishing seasons, and other key fisheries decisions<sup>52</sup>. The male participants admitted women are mostly not present at the meetings where they make the majority of these decisions. Women whom the fishermen consider to be "stakeholders" are canoe owners, and these are the women who are sometimes invited to their meetings. Before the start of the fishing season, women leaders are often invited to attend meetings to discuss the proposed prices for fish such as sardinella, barracuda, and mackerel. These meetings don't always result in agreement on the price of fish, as fishermen sometimes feel that the prices suggested by the women leaders are too low. Agreement is more likely to be reached on prices for species such as flat needlefish, and other species considered as low-value species, according to reports from fishers.

Fishermen, in their explanations, continually referenced that they do not include women in their meetings because they do not go to sea. Hence, they cannot be involved in making decisions on issues relating to activities on the sea.

At the community level, women do not usually participate in fishers meetings due to the traditional role given to men as decision-makers in the communities and the poor dissemination of meeting information. The Sea Chief heads all fishing activities and manages the beach and the fish landing site. The Sea Chief has a lot of influence and commands power in the fishing community, and this role can only be occupied by men<sup>53</sup>. Respondents further noted that

most fisheries projects and support to the SSF sector, such as distribution of outboard engines, life jackets and nets, target men (as they are the harvesters of fish), and the participation of women in planning, programming and management is largely limited.

The establishment of Collaborative Management Associations (CMAs), a community-level governance structure for fisheries management, in some communities has, however, improved the participation of women in leadership and decision-making in the SSF sector, as women are represented in the CMA leadership structure. In addition, the FAO improved fish smoking programmes and the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)<sup>54</sup> programme in fishing communities also target women.

This research highlighted a need to provide practical tools and information to promote and encourage gender integration in the fisheries sector.

As women take on key leadership roles in the fisheries sector, they may still be disproportionately burdened with multiple tasks, including household chores, especially in families with many children. They may be unable to make the required time commitment for performing such roles, presenting a barrier to their full participation in fisheries management.

### 3.3 Marginalised groups in fishing communities

The respondents described marginalised groups as people excluded from general community activities and decision-making processes. They explained that people who fall into this category are disadvantaged youths, people with mental illnesses, stigmatised individuals such as those seen as witches and wizards, and people prone to arrogance or violent behaviour. According to the respondents, these people are excluded from community activities because they are perceived to incite conflicts, steal people's property, and undermine the progress of gatherings. They were described as "inconsiderate", "controlling", and "abusive". Some of these people own canoes and are fishermen and fishmongers. However, they are not allowed to occupy key decision-making positions in the fisheries because of the perceptions held about them. Where fishermen are suspected to be wizards, other fishermen are afraid to go to sea with them because they believe they will be used as ritualistic sacrifices. Fishmongers are also scared to buy fish from their canoes because they claim that fish bought do not make good profits.

### Disadvantaged youths

Disadvantaged youths who live on the streets and depend on handouts, petty theft, and informal jobs are called "Zogos". Most struggle with violence, drug addiction, and a lack of access to basic social amenities. A 2019 survey<sup>55</sup> by the Liberian government found that 91% of Zogos are men, some of whom are former child soldiers or drug addicts ostracised by their families<sup>56,57</sup>. The survey also found an increase in the number of Zogos in Liberia's fishing communities, with some originally from these communities and others migrating for informal work opportunities in the fisheries.

While describing Zogos, a fisherman said that *"they are dangerous, but helpful to us and our women."* According to the respondents, the Zogos' roles in the fishing communities include hauling the canoes on shore when the fishermen land, toting the fish from the landing sites to the smoking sheds, cleaning the canoes, and sometimes forming part of fishing crews. These tasks are conducted under close surveillance by the fishermen and fishmonger to ensure that the Zogos do not steal some of the catch.

Some fishers explained that although the Zogos help them on the landing sites, they feel threatened by them because of their mood swings and frequent outbursts, which sometimes result in commotions and altercations, as reported in other parts of Liberia<sup>58</sup>.

### 3.4 Gender access to and control over fishery assets

Access to and control over critical fisheries equipment, and financial and other resources, is crucial for the survival of those involved in the SSF sector<sup>59</sup>. Most women face challenges in funding their private enterprises, despite dedicated efforts by development partners and national governments to create enabling environments and policy incentives to surmount restricted access to financial services through the Liberia National Gender Policy<sup>60</sup> and the National Financial Inclusion Strategy<sup>61</sup>.

#### Gender access to and control over fishing equipment (harvest activities)

In all the communities visited, men reported having more access than women to and control over fishing equipment such as traditional fishing canoes, nets, and outboard engines (Table 2). However, in the Liberian-dominated fishing communities, there has been an increase in the number of women who own



both paddle and motorised canoes. In Robertsport, respondents from Up Town and Kru Town mentioned that women own over 30 (17.5%) of the over 171 canoes on their beaches. In Buchanan, the male respondents mentioned that women own over 30% of the canoes in the Liberian fishing communities. In Marshall, five of the female respondents were canoe owners, while four of them mentioned that they are saving with the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) to purchase canoes at the end of the year.

In the Fanti communities, the respondents noted that only one or two women owned canoes in their different communities. According to a female respondent in Marshall, many women do not own canoes in Fanti communities because “*Fanti Canoes are big and*

*expensive.*” The respondents also mentioned that women and men sometimes join to purchase fishing equipment and, in such cases, will have equal access to and control over the asset through joint ownership. Overall, the findings show that though women in Liberian fishing communities have increased access to fishing equipment, men still have more access to and control over fishing assets than women in Liberia (see **Table 2**).

For other assets like fish drying sheds, ovens, tubs, and other fish processing materials, women appear to have full control over those assets in the communities. Respondents pointed to just one or two men owning drying sheds in their communities.



Woman fish processor with smoked fish, Buchanan, Grand Bassa County.



### **Gender access to and control over landed catch and income**

Female respondents complained that access to landed catch at the landing sites has become a challenge for them. According to the female respondents, fishmongers who do not own canoes and whose husbands do not own canoes or go fishing find it difficult to secure fish from the beaches because the fishermen prioritise their wives, sponsors, and regular customers. A fishmonger, while explaining

this, said that **“fishermen can act like they do not see us when they come from fishing. We can call out to them, but they can ignore us and sell to their regular customers.”** The fishermen also explained that they prioritise their wives, sponsors, and regular customers because they consider them their *“business partners”* and so would rather sell their catch to them because of the support they give them. Fishermen also reported that they try to serve as many fishmongers as they can once they have a good catch.



Women fishmongers waiting to buy fish, Grand Cess Beach, Grand Kru County.

The women also mentioned that the proliferation of fishmongers on the beaches contributed immensely to this challenge. According to the respondents, the competition for fish is high on the beaches as some women travel from Monrovia and other communities to purchase fish at their landing sites. To curtail this, the women in Up Town and Kru Town in Robertsport, with support from the fishermen, have banned fishmongers from external communities from purchasing fish at landing sites.

They explained that all fishmongers who travel to Robertsport to buy fish must first register with the women's group in the community they go to, and that they are required to buy fish from only the local fishmongers and not the fishermen.

This challenge has motivated more women to sponsor fishing expeditions and buy canoes so they can have full access to landed catch.





Women approaching a Kru canoe to buy fish, Grand Cess, Grand Kru County.

Recent reforms in the land sector under the Land Rights Act (LRA) of 2018<sup>62</sup> give women ownership rights over land. This has enabled women to own properties closer to landing sites, increasing their access to those landing sites and the daily catches by fishermen.

According to the respondents, the prices of landed catch are determined by the fishermen in the communities. They revealed they do not have a fixed price for most fish species at the landing sites. However, they determine the prices based on the species, sizes, and the availability or scarcity of fish at the landing sites. They also mentioned that the prices are sometimes set by the first fishermen who land their catch at the beaches and are negotiable by buyers. The women purchase and process the fish and take it to the local markets to sell. The market prices are determined by the women and calculated to account for their capital, transport fares, and other expenses.

Income generated from Fanti fishing canoes is controlled by the owner (investor) of the fishing

enterprise. The owner determines how the earnings will be distributed among the fishing crew. After any expenses are deducted, the profit goes to the investor (or owner of assets), who then gives an agreed percentage to the fishing crew. Income generated from Kru paddle canoes is distributed differently. Money generated from beach seine and hook-and-line fishing is solely for the fishing crew if the canoe owner, whether a man or woman, cannot go out to fish. This is because the crew consider themselves as the risk takers risking their lives on the sea to catch fish. The fishing crew sells the catch to the canoe owner for a negotiated price and shares the money among themselves. According to respondents, when the profits come to the household, the fisherman and his partner determine how they will use the income. Regarding access to and control over family income, men have the greatest say about how this is spent, according to respondents. Women's access to and control over the family income is for safe-keeping purposes, and they use such income only after consulting with the men.



**Table 2: Access to and control of assets in SSF sector**

Fisheries asset & other resource	Access	Control
Fishing equipment (canoes, nets, outboard engines, etc.)	Mostly men and few women	Mostly men
Processing equipment (tub, knife, bucket, baskets, smoking dryer or oven)	Women	Women
Access to formal credit from commercial banks	Neither men nor women	N/A
Access to other forms of finance (e.g. community credit clubs and microfinance institution such as BRAC and VSLAs)	Men and women	Community/ VSLA members
Customary land	Men and women	Men
Family income from sales	Women and men	Mostly men

### Access to credit and loan facilities

According to the respondents, both men and women in fishing communities generally have limited access to formal credit offered by commercial banks that require collateral, which most small-scale fishers lack<sup>63</sup> (see **Table 2**). They mentioned that the only formal credit facilities available to fishers are offered by BRAC and Access Bank, and these two options are only available in two of the four counties surveyed.

The respondents, however, noted that there are VSLAs in the communities, which they rely on for loans. The VSLAs are operated solely by women in most of the communities, with some men accessing the loan scheme through their wives who are members. Participants from Grand Kru also reported that 50 fishmongers in Grand Cess and 50 women in Sass Town received \$200 each as a grant from the Blue Oceans project<sup>64</sup>, a project implemented by Conservation International in four coastal counties in Liberia. The Blue Oceans project implemented by Conservation International is working to provide women access to finance in four coastal counties. Towards this end, Conservation International signed conservation agreements with womens' groups under the World Bank-financed Liberia Sustainable Management of Fisheries Project, providing the groups with small grants in the form of VSLAs. The loan grant provides seed funding to women fishmongers and their businesses, thus strengthening their fish value and supply chain. Over 85% of the loan recipients in Sass Town and Grand Kru are members of the VSLAs.

Men often rely on access to informal credit offered by women fishmongers and processors, in return for which the women have guaranteed access to the fish catch for a negotiated price. The Sea Chief of Kru Town in Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County, confirmed this when he said, ***“because of my wife’s participation in the VSLA, I can get a loan for my fishing activities. I have taken loans to buy two outboard engines, and I am planning to buy another canoe from the loan I will get from the women.”***



VSLA meeting, Marshall, Margibi County.

### 3.5 Cultural norms, beliefs, and perceptions

Fishing communities have local norms which guide fishing and associated activities. Most norms are similar and are practised in all of the target communities. These rules are usually passed on as oral traditions but often have evolved into traditional laws over time across the communities<sup>65</sup>. Below are some examples of local norms that are common in the communities surveyed:

- i. Fishing on Sunday is not allowed.
- ii. Fighting on the beach or at sea is prohibited. Repeated fighting may attract a ban from all fishing activities in the community.
- iii. Each fisher is mandated to provide support to other fishers who are involved in accidents or are stranded at sea.
- iv. Swimming at sea, especially on snapper grounds, is prohibited.
- v. Braiding hair is not allowed on the beach.
- vi. The transportation of corpses by canoe is not allowed.
- vii. Cleaning fish or fish processing is not permitted on the beach.
- viii. The turning over of tubs/baskets that carry fish is not allowed.
- ix. Cooking on the beach is strongly prohibited.

### 3.6 Migration in fishing communities

Migration refers to the process of moving, either across an international border (cross-border) or within a country (domestic), away from the person's habitual place of residence, regardless of the cause<sup>66</sup>. In Africa, men and women in the fishing industry migrate seasonally or for longer periods of time. Fishers sometimes migrate to other fishing communities or travel to neighbouring coastal counties<sup>67</sup>.

According to respondents, men migrate rarely, but when they do so, it tends to be seasonal, usually due to poor fish catch and to search for new fishing opportunities, as also reported in similar fisheries in Ghana<sup>68</sup>. These migrations are usually to other fishing communities within their counties, or other coastal counties based on reports of fish availability. According to the fishermen, they usually migrate between September and November and do not return to their fishing communities until March or April. Fishermen who have school-going children mentioned that they do not take their families along with them because the academic year in Liberia starts in September, around the same time they migrate. Fishers who do not have school-going children mentioned that they prefer to leave their children and wives behind because they are not certain of the distance they might need to travel in search of a good catch or the challenges they might encounter during the trip. Men may also leave their families behind in order to start new families in their new location.

Women, on the other hand, reported that they mostly travelled to distant communities to purchase and process fish, and to access markets to sell their fish products for higher prices. Women who migrate to purchase and process fish mentioned that they migrate in November and sometimes stay in the communities until March before returning to their home communities. While fishers reported migrating by sea using their canoes, women reported migrating using different modes of transport. In Grand Kru County, commercial motorbikes remain the most common mode of transportation within and outside the communities. Women use them to convey large quantities of fish and other goods to local markets. The respondents noted that motorbikes usually transport sellers and buyers to communities largely unreachable by motor vehicles.



Migrant fishers' makeshift tents, Sowie, Grand Cape Mount County.

### 3.7 Income generation options and expenditure

The men and women in all the communities studied have multiple sources from which they generate income. The men are involved in and generate income from fishing, coconut collection, palm and coconut oil production, and charcoal production. Men reported earning more income in April, May, August and September because of the harvest of fish species, such as caravel jack, sailfish and groupers, of high market value. Between January and March, fishing generates limited income, and men are involved in supplementary ventures such as charcoal production, harvesting oil palm, farming, and hunting, which earn them additional income. During the peak of the rainy season in June-September, fishermen reported that they generate the least income because they do not go fishing and other income-generating activities are substantially reduced.

Regarding expenditure, men use their income to contribute to feeding their families, as well as medication and daily household needs. Expenditure is highest during December due to purchases of gifts and clothing for family members and relatives for Christmas and New Year. The grade school academic calendar begins in September, and because of this, men make significant payments for school fees,

uniforms, and other schooling materials for their children during this period. Similar expenses are incurred in January and February when the academic year's second semester commences. In July, when the grade school's academic year closes, men spend money on the graduation ceremonies for their children. Based on reports from fishers interviewed, during the rainy season, April-October, men incur increased expenses on family health and medication. Fishermen also reported that, throughout the year, a significant portion of their income is saved for the purchase of land and construction of dwellings, especially in bigger cities and towns, to accommodate children as they pursue higher education.

Women, on the other hand, earn income from the sale of fish, palm and coconut oil, and farm produce such as cassava, fufu, gari, and assorted vegetables all year round. According to the women interviewed, they generate the highest revenue from their fishing enterprises between August and November, mainly because fishermen land more fish with high market value during these months. In January, women usually generate low income because the catch is poor, and fishermen do not land high-value fish species, resulting in fewer business transactions. Because of this, women get involved in other supplementary income generation activities such as palm and coconut



oil production and the sale of coconut, fufu, and gari. Interviews revealed that, similar to men, women use their income to feed and provide for their families/households. Women also make various expenditures throughout the year; from May to September, a portion of their earnings is used for school fees, medical bills, clothing, and other essentials, while in December, a part of their income is used to purchase Christmas gifts for children and family members. January is considered the most challenging month, with the lowest income compared to expenditure. Information received from the respondents shows that both men and women use their incomes equally to contribute to household needs.

### 3.8 Economic vulnerability (who and why)

Elderly people and people with disabilities, widows, disadvantaged youths, and people with terminal illnesses are considered the most economically vulnerable in the communities surveyed. According to the respondents, these people are vulnerable because they cannot fend for themselves, have poor health conditions, and have limited access to basic social services. The respondents explained that these people depend on their families for their well-being, while some rely on handouts from community members to meet their needs.

Community members support the people described as economically vulnerable by giving them fish, raw food materials, cooked food, and money. This, however, is done individually rather than jointly as a community. In Boyce Town, a fishing community in Margibi, the fishers collect money and fish every month to distribute to older adults and widows. In Korkorwein, Buchanan, the Town Chief explained that he prioritises economically vulnerable people by connecting them to NGOs, INGOs, churches, and humanitarian groups to obtain support for their children in school, and to provide food materials, health insurance, and stipends that will enable them to take care of themselves and their families.

According to the respondents, the living conditions of people in the communities surveyed ranged from “good” to “not good”. Many people in their communities can afford to take care of their daily needs and have successfully started and expanded business ventures that have improved their living conditions. The respondents stated that in the last five years (2018-2023), they have purchased canoes, started fishing businesses, enrolled their children in school and built houses. However, they cited the increase in

prices of nets, declining catch levels, coastal erosion, and rough seas in the rainy season as challenges, undermining the steps they have taken to improve their economic circumstances.

Respondents also reported that the economic conditions in their communities have improved over the last five years. They explained that the infrastructure in their communities has developed to some extent in recent years. They outlined increases in the numbers of businesses, population, schools, transport infrastructure, pipe-borne water, electricity (Robertsport only), and public latrines as signs of development they have observed in their communities.

### 3.9 Access to education in fishing communities

The respondents revealed that both male and female children are given equal opportunities to go to school in the fishing communities, and both parents usually decide to educate the children. However, it has been observed in fishing communities that more girls are enrolled in schools than boys. They attributed this to the boys’ desire to join the fisheries rather than pursue a formal education. Another reason cited is the proliferation of drug use in the communities. The respondents claimed that boys are more susceptible to drug addiction, which, they complained, is leading to an increasing number of boys dropping out of high school.

Some respondents mentioned encouraging their children to fish because it is a form of job security in case they do not get formal jobs after graduating from university. However, they admitted that fishing is time-consuming and encouraging a child to participate in fishing and going to school might adversely affect his formal education. The respondents also admitted that they sometimes formally educate their female children and ask their male children to assist them in fishing. This assures the parents that they have someone to continue the family’s traditions and primary livelihood activity.

Regarding learning opportunities for adults, the respondents reported that there are no adult literacy or vocational programmes in their communities. They mentioned that most fishers in their communities have limited formal education and lack supplementary livelihood skills to expand their livelihood activities.

### 3.10 Organization of fishermen and fishmongers in the SSF

Survey results show fishermen, fishmongers, and processors are organised in groups, associations and cooperatives based on their respective roles in the SSF sector. Fishermen are organised into formal and informal associations and cooperatives such as the Collaborative Management Associations (CMA), the Fishing Cooperatives, the Liberia Artisanal Fishers Association (LAFA), and the Fanti's Amanfu Fishing Association. The associations, according to the respondents, serve as a medium for the members to receive critical support from the government and its development partners.

The CMA is the direct medium through which NaFAA works with the various fishing communities and vice versa. The CMA leadership structure<sup>69</sup> consists of i) the National CMA Advisory Body, ii) the General Assembly, iii) The CMA Executives, iv) Working Sub – Committees, v) Associate Members and vi) External Members. The CMA Executives are elected by the community members, and the Working Sub-Committees members are appointed by the CMA Executives in consultation with the communities. To increase women's participation in the CMA at the community level, EJJ is working with communities to promote the active participation of women in CMA Executive positions and the Sub-Committees. Through continuous awareness-raising, capacity-building training, and the VSLA platform, women are recognised as key stakeholders in the newly formed and restructured CMAs and occupy 50-60% of the current CMA executive positions. The respondents also mentioned that women play key roles in the CMA sub-committees, for example, the Grand Bassa County CMA Community Science Sub-Committee is headed by a woman. CMAs currently exist in six of the nine coastal counties.

NaFAA established the Fishing Cooperatives to group fishers together and maximise long-term community benefits, as well as address the issues of fisheries mismanagement, livelihood insecurity, and poverty. The cooperatives also serve as a way for the government to provide support to communities. They have a formal structure with a Chairperson as the leader. During visits to communities, it was observed that the heads of the Fishing Cooperatives were predominantly male.

LAFA is a fisher advocacy group focused on protecting the rights of small-scale fishers. It is centralised in Montserrado County and works with local fishers to ensure that their concerns are addressed by the

government.<sup>70</sup> LAFA's current Executive Committee structure<sup>71</sup> consists of the President, Vice President for Administration, Vice President for Operation, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, Financial officer, Treasurer, and Chaplain. Only one of these positions, Treasurer, is occupied by a woman. However, according to LAFA's coordinator in Marshall, the organisation has a committee referred to as the "women wing", which is led by two women and designed to focus on women's concerns. According to LAFA's Secretary General, LAFA is working to ratify a revised copy of their constitution with EJJ's support and host a leadership election as most of their leadership positions are dormant. The association is centralised in Monrovia, with inadequate or no representation in the nine coastal counties.

Amanfu is the Fanti fishers' formalised structure across all fishing communities. It has a leadership structure, defined meeting days, and procedures for conflict resolution, which are guided by unwritten tribal customs and norms. According to the participants, Amanfu's members are only fishermen.

Women respondents reported that fishmongers and fish processors are organised into associations. The main women's groups are the Women's Fishmonger and Processors groups and the VSLAs<sup>72</sup>, which were present in all the communities visited. The women's groups are informal groups established by the women to discuss women's welfare and fisheries-related issues in their communities. In Robertsport, EJJ has worked with two communities (Up Town & Kru Town) to organise the women's groups into legal associations with by-laws approved by the Magisterial Court. The other groups, however, do not have regular meeting schedules or clear leadership structures.

The VSLA addresses the challenge of limited access to micro-finance and loans in communities and provides a platform for its members to meet regularly and enhance social learning, collaboration, and trust in their communities. These regular meetings and learning exchanges have increased women's participation in leadership processes, enabled them to achieve specific short- and long-term life goals and increased their resilience to adversities. At the time of the research, the VSLA intervention has only been introduced in 22 of the 114 fishing communities in Liberia.





Women mobilising to participate in a CMA leadership election, Buchanan, Grand Bassa County.

### 3.11 Policy and gender integration

The National Gender Policy of Liberia reflects Liberia's commitment to ensuring gender equality<sup>73</sup>. One of the national development priorities and general principles guiding fisheries sector policy is the fair treatment of men and women<sup>74</sup>. The national fisheries policy, however, is unclear on the action(s) required to ensure gender equality, and the same applies to the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority Law<sup>75</sup>. It is important to note that the establishment of VSLAs in the fishing communities visited with the support of the Communities for Fisheries project has triggered a 50% increase in women's participation in fisheries decision-making processes at the community level, while Collaborative Management Associations set up as co-management structures have also encouraged women and men's participation in fisheries management. The Director General of NaFAA is a woman, indicating some effort on the part of the government to raise the voices of women in the Liberian fishing industry.

### 3.12 Challenges, needs and supports

The research shows that men are seen as the lead decision-makers in Liberia's SSF. Women play a major role in the survival of small-scale, family-run fisheries enterprises in Liberia and are often the driving force of innovation, diversification, and the development of new markets. They play a crucial role in the sustainability of the Liberian economy and in the supply of food and nutrition security to the population<sup>76</sup>.

However, in spite of their contributions, the results of this research show they face numerous challenges, such as a lack of modern processing techniques and fish preservation facilities, modes of transportation, and working in hazardous conditions. The female respondents mentioned that they spend long hours smoking fish using techniques requiring a lot of time and energy, and ovens that emit smoke which is dangerous to their health. A lack of fish preservation facilities like cold storage, that provide an alternative to smoking the fish, are not common in the communities surveyed. Robertsport, the only location with three cold storage facilities, has had one destroyed by coastal erosion, one shut down due to technical faults, and one operating at limited capacity to serve local fishers.



The women also reported that they sometimes travel to markets using motorbikes on bad roads to sell their smoked and fresh fish. Respondents who sell fresh fish mentioned that they sometimes travel at night to deliver the fish to customers before it goes bad and they are unable to sell it fresh.

This research found that men's needs and interests are typically centred around (i) ownership, control over and management of fishing equipment and other fishing resources, including boats and fishing gear, and (ii) access to and control over fishing grounds and fish landing sites. Women's needs and interests, on the other hand, are normally centred around improving their livelihood options through small business initiatives, such as the sale of household merchandise and/or fish. Other concerns of women in the SSF sector include ensuring reliable access to fish to sell, securing access to credit, and other aspects related to social well-being, such as obtaining health services and education for their children.

The respondents also mentioned that some shared and significant challenges in their communities include the lack of adult literacy and vocational programmes, drug abuse, criminal activities, poor hygiene practices, coastal erosion, flooding due to tidal waves, and loss of lives and canoes at sea and in the estuary due to increased estuarine currents.

Despite the challenges, respondents indicated they have received support such as the distribution of

lifejackets, fishing nets and outboard engines to fishermen and the formation of Fishing Cooperatives by the government through NaFAA, the provision of improved smoking facilities and training on hygienic fish processing by the FAO, and the introduction of VSLAs and formation of CMAs by EJP's Communities for Fisheries project and financial grants by Conservation International. According to respondents, these support structures are inconsistent and do not cover everyone in the community.

### 3.13 Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis

A SWOT analysis was used to evaluate the relative gender-based strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for equal participation of women in fisheries decision-making processes and access to fishing inputs and related resources (Table 3). Results showed that some perceptions, like women not being seen as key stakeholders as they do not go out fishing, limit women's full participation in fisheries management processes. Women's participation in the fisheries mainly involves post-harvest value and supply chain, pre-financing fishing trips, and, in some cases, ownership of canoes. Women remain underrepresented in fisheries management decision-making and leadership roles at the community level. Both men and women in the fisheries have limited access to finance due to the relative absence of financial institutions in fishing communities.



CMA meeting, Marshall, Margibi County.

**Table 3: Outcomes of women SWOT analysis**

Strength	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection</li> <li>• Organised fishmongers' associations</li> <li>• Women manage their VSLAs and are able to access credit through their VSLAs</li> <li>• Some women own fishing inputs such as canoes, nets, etc.</li> <li>• Women have supplementary sources of income</li> <li>• Women's leadership is recognised among fishermen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing women's groups in the fishing communities are informal</li> <li>• Inadequate processing materials and facilities for women</li> <li>• Women have heavy workloads and busy schedules, with limited time to participate in meetings and fisheries management decision-making activities</li> <li>• Limited formal education rate amongst women and fishermen</li> <li>• Women have limited control on negotiating fish prices</li> <li>• Women and men have no access to formal credit facilities offered by commercial banks</li> <li>• Low participation of women fisheries management decision making</li> <li>• Women's ownership of fishing inputs are limited to the Kru canoes due to the high cost of Fanti canoes</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various fisheries interventions/programmes (VSLAs, CMA establishment, women capacity building programmes by UN FAO and other donor programmes) exist to support women's participation in fisheries management activities</li> <li>• Establishment of the VSLAs as a tool to organise women within communities</li> <li>• The current Director General of NaFAA is a woman, indicating a noticeable effort to raise women's voices in fisheries decision-making processes</li> <li>• Availability of informal credit and saving prospects for women in the fishing communities</li> <li>• The willingness of local and international actors to work with women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of fishing canoes and variation in fish catch</li> <li>• Climate change and effects on fisheries</li> <li>• High dependency on natural resources</li> <li>• Conflict between local and migrant fisher groups</li> <li>• Health risks associated with fish smoking and processing</li> <li>• Unhealthy fish processing methods</li> <li>• Travelling long distances by motorbikes and other modes of transport to buy and sell fish</li> <li>• Natural disasters</li> <li>• Unhygienic (open defecation) practices</li> </ul>



## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

Gender roles and gender-based division of labour are evident in Liberia's small-scale fisheries sector. Women play a crucial role in the sector by leading the post-harvest activities, e.g., processing and selling smoked and fresh fish, financing fishing expeditions and, in some cases, deciding the fish prices at landing sites. Men actively carry out fishing activities and repair fishing gear. Men have more ownership and access to fishing equipment than women in Liberia. The research shows that most canoes and fishing gear belong to men, with only a few women owning fishing canoes. Women were found to own more fish processing materials like smoking ovens and sheds. However, in some communities, women buy canoes with their husbands, thereby running a joint venture and managing their incomes.

There are supplementary sources of income for the men and women in fishing communities in Liberia, although these are limited. Fishermen engage in palm oil, coconut oil and charcoal production as alternative livelihood options when they are not actively fishing. Fishmongers and processors, on the other hand, augment their income by trading palm and coconut oil, vegetables, and fruits. Revenue generated by both genders is used primarily to cater to their household needs and educate their children.

No national laws in Liberia prohibit women from engaging in fishing activities. However, women do not participate in fishing activities at sea because of the nature of the profession, which is considered to be more suitable for men. Women in the communities sampled were responsible for the household work, fending for their children, preparing meals, and general housekeeping.





Despite the key role women play in the SSF sector, they have limited access to fisheries decision-making processes, to formal credit schemes and micro-loans to expand their businesses, and to modern processing techniques and fish preservation facilities. They are still working under hazardous conditions, including the health risks of inhalation of smoke from fish smoking. These are compounded by limited formal structures and organisations for women in SSF in the communities and limited fisheries policies and laws to explicitly provide a strategy to address challenges faced by women and enhance their roles in the fisheries sector.

These challenges threaten the livelihoods of women in fisheries as they depend heavily on fisheries to support their families. This research identified relatively few supplementary livelihood opportunities for fishers in their communities.

To address these challenges faced by women, economically vulnerable and marginalised groups, and promote their active participation in Liberia's small-scale fisheries sector, we recommend that the Liberian government and development partners:

1. Introduce sustainable saving and financing mechanisms like the VSLA to equip fishers with the money needed to expand their fishing and post-harvest businesses and increase their ownership of fishing equipment. This also provides financial resilience and social safety nets to support economically vulnerable individuals during periods of low fishing activities or environmental emergencies that impact their livelihoods.
2. Promote women's active participation and representation in decision-making processes and structures by developing inclusive and informed context-based programmes and strategies that motivate women to participate in elections and assume leadership positions. Quotas or other special considerations for women and other underrepresented groups in decision-making bodies could be considered as part of strategies for inclusion.
3. Consider women's schedules and activities: market days, time spent on fish smoking, and time spent on household chores when planning meetings and developing intervention programmes.
4. Support fisheries groups like CMAs to scale up to all coastal counties, Women Fishmonger and Processor groups to formalise their structures and LAFA to organise its members and county-level representation through training on leadership, conflict management, communications and team building. These groups and associations can serve as a platform for collective decision-making, representation and promoting sustainable fishing practices and conservation efforts to ensure the long-term viability of fisheries resources, as overfishing can disproportionately affect their livelihoods.
5. Develop laws that are gender-inclusive and explicitly elaborate on how gender equity will be promoted in the fisheries sector to achieve equal and active participation of all relevant stakeholders.
6. Implement and promote projects and activities aimed at building the capacity of women and marginalised groups and provide social interventions, such as cash transfers, food assistance and skills training for economically vulnerable groups in the SSF sector.
7. Create awareness about the importance of inclusivity in small-scale fisheries, especially women's roles in the fisheries sector, to educate all stakeholders about their important contributions to the sector through regular stakeholder dialogues and forums that bring together all relevant stakeholders to discuss issues, share experiences, and collaborate on solutions.
8. Celebrate and cultivate community champions, such as women and marginalised individuals who have made positive strides in fisheries management to inspire others and demonstrate the potential for change.
9. Provide support in the form of subsidies for fuel-efficient and hygienic processing technologies, such as the Ahotor and FAO-Thiaroye Processing Technique (FTT), to reduce the financial burden on fish processors, the exposure to high-level smoke and increase the value of the processed fish.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Study communities and interview breakdown

All fishmongers interviewed were women. All Sea Chiefs, Town Chiefs, Governors, and Religious Leaders interviewed were men.

Counties	Communities	Focus group discussions (participants per county)	Key informant interviews (per county)
Grand Cape Mount (Robertsport)	Kru town Up town Fanti Town	Fishermen - Five per community Fishmonger/processors -five per community	Sea Chiefs - 2 Governors - 2 Town Chiefs - 1 Religious Leaders - 1 Women Leaders - 1 NaFAA - 1 (Monrovia) LAFA - 2 (Monrovia and Marshall) CMA - 3 (Robertsport, Grand Bassa and Marshall)
Margibi (Marshall)	Kpakpahcom Floko town Marshall city Government Town Zorkpeh Town	Fishermen - three per community Fishmonger/processors -three per community	
Grand Bassa (Buchanan)	Small Fanti Town Big Fanti town	Fishermen - five per community Fishmonger/processors -five per community	
Grand Kru (Grand Cess)	Grand Cess Picnic Cess New Cess Wedabo	Fishermen - three per community Fishmonger/processors -three per community	

### Appendix II: Survey questionnaire

#### ANALYSIS OF THE EXTENT OF GENDER INCLUSION AND ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY IN THE LIBERIAN SMALL-SCALE FISHING SECTOR

#### Definitions

##### What is a gender analysis?

The European Commission defines a gender analysis as ‘the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men in their assigned gender roles’.

##### What is economic vulnerability?

In this research, economic vulnerability is defined as the exposure of the economic development of a group of people to exogenous shocks arising out of economic openness.’

**Marginalisation** is ‘when a person or groups of people are less able to do things or access basic services or opportunities.’

## QUESTIONS

DOMAIN 1: Household information (Who does what and why?)	
What are the specific roles of the men in the fisheries sector?	
What are the specific roles of the women in the fisheries sector?	
What are the specific roles of the men in the household?	
What are the specific roles of the women in the household?	
Who has more leisure time during the day? Men or women?	
DOMAIN 2: Migration in fishing communities	
How often do family members relocate to other communities to work?	
Do families migrate as a unit?	
What are the pull or push factors influencing the movement of individuals and families?	
How do they integrate into their new environment?	
How long do they stay?	
What are some of the activities they are engaged in within the destination communities apart from fishing?	



DOMAIN 3: Access to and control of assets/resources for livelihoods	
Do men, women and marginalised groups have equal access to, ownership of and control over resources upon which they depend for livelihoods and well-being?	
Do marginalised groups own resources and control it in the fisheries sector?	
Do you own any assets for fisheries and/or other livelihood activities? What are those assets?	
Who controls these assets, fisheries inputs (boats, nets) and/or processing equipment (smokers, drying racks)?	
Who controls the income from fisheries and other livelihood activities?	
Who controls the household resources?	
DOMAIN 4: Participation and decision-making	
Who makes decisions in the fisheries sector? (i.e. when to fish, how to sell and process fish, and how to manage fisheries)	
Are marginalised groups allowed to occupy key decision-making positions in fisheries management?	
Who is responsible for making decisions relative to the migration of family members? (i.e. where to go, how long to stay, who to go)	
Are women able to influence the decision to take a child for fishing activities or enrolled in school?	
Do women participate in fisheries management-related activities?	
Do women's and men's groups exist in this community? If yes, list groups. What type of activities are they engaged in?	

DOMAIN 5: Cultural norms, beliefs and perceptions	
What cultural norms and perceptions do people hold against marginalised groups in the sector?	
Are there any social norms, customs, and barriers for women in the fisheries sector and fisheries management?	
What are the norms, values, and practices that favour boys over girls, especially regarding access to education?	
What specific work do girls do in fisheries?	
What specific work do boys do in the fisheries sector?	
DOMAIN 6: Needs and opportunities	
What are the constraints faced by women and girls at the household level?	
How will you rate your living condition?	
Have there been any changes in your living condition?	
Do you own land or a house? If no, why?	
What are the differences in men's and women's opportunities to access education at all levels?	
DOMAIN 7: Economic vulnerability in the fishery sector (income and expenditure)	
What are the main sources of income for women in this community? Do women and men have alternative livelihoods? How much of your income is generated from fishing or fishing activities?	
Are you engaged in any economic (income-generating) activity apart from fishing?	

What are the main sources of income for men in this community?	
What do men spend their money on?	
What do women spend their money on?	
What time of the year do women generate more income? From what?	
What time of the year do men generate more income? From what?	
Do you think you get a good income from selling fish? What would help you to earn more?	
What time of the year do you generate less income?	
When do you spend more and less during the year?	
Do you receive support from the government in addition to your income? If yes, what type of government support do you receive?	
Do you have access to financial services such as loans? If yes, who provided it	
Have you joined an organisation, cooperative or other association for the protection of your fish trading/processing business interests and/or to facilitate the marketing of your produce?	
Did you receive support to organise into a cooperative or other association?	
What are your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) as women in fisheries?	
What type of support are you receiving from the government in this sector?	



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