



GLA-2 Narrative Report Template Gender technical partners

1. BASIC INFORMATION:

Name of GLA-2 gender technical partner:	Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment
Country:	Liberia
Name and title of person writing report:	Salome G. Gofan, Executive Director
Start and end date of project & period of reporting:	January 1, December 30, 2021
Deadline (see contract):	
Date of submission:	July 22, 2022
The name and role of the person approving the report for the local partner organisation – this person must be duly authorised:	Salome G. Gofan, Executive Director

2. PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Please fill in the following table with the planned activities that were agreed upon in the Special Services Agreement and workstreams document.

Please note: we do not yet require a progress report related to your chosen contextualised GLA indicators, as we are still awaiting guidance on this from the GLA PMEL group. However, it is likely that you will be requested to provide further data and reporting linking to the indicators during the country reporting process (March 2022). We will keep you informed once we know more about the format this will take.

	Planned activities/tasks and results (see special services agreement and workstreams document) <i>For example: Activity 1. To provide overall technical advice in the field of gender to the partner groups of the Green Livelihoods Alliance 'Forests for a Just Future' programme in (11 days)</i>	Results (what happened? Where? When? How? With Whom? What were the results/outcomes? How many 'days' did you spend on the activity as compared to in the SSA)
	Activity 1. Conduct Feminist Analysis and gender differential impact of land grab for monoculture tree plantation / PA Expansion in Liberia - Case of Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe	Activity 1. False solution to economic recovery and job creation after 14 years of war leaves many forests dependent communities devastated as government unilaterally signed numerous concession agreements with Oil palm companies across Liberia. These monoculture trees expansion has resulted to rising land grab resulting to deforestation as concessionaires expand oil palm plantation covering thousands of hectares of

forests land. The land which once serve the livelihood of the indigenous people that are largely agriculture dependant have been covered by monocultures trees depriving communities of their rich natural ecosystem, livelihood, income with rising human rights violations including Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), Rape, and other violence against and girls occurring at immeasurable rate across the concession areas. The depletion of natural resources (e.g.: NTFP), deterioration of water bodies including water pollution due to chemicals use and the displacement of communities including loss of sacred sites are among the many other violations.

While these impacts are felt by the larger community as a unit, there are immeasurable gender differential impacts which are felt by women, girls, youth, and people with disabilities. As a traditional assigned role women and girls bear more domestic burdens such as fetching water, firewood, medicines which have links to the forest and natural resources.

For example, in Sinoe County Golden Verolium (GVL) 65-year contract with the government cover 2600 kilometre of land for oil palm plantation. With just less than two decade into the investment the gender implications are already visible as women, girls, boys, and people with disability face immeasurable challenges at many fronts.

However, research data documenting the gender

differential impact of land grab in Liberia were unavailable and undermine the authenticity of advocacy.

With the support of the GLA, RICCE facilitated a gender differential impact of land grab in the Southwestern Region of Liberia occupied by the Golden Verolium company covering Sinoe and Grand Kru Counties.

The research finding is attached as an annex to this report.

Activity 2.

RICCE in collaboration with the Civil Society Organizations Oil Palm Working Group (CSO-OPWG), other GLA partners' and women groups from concession affected communities in Bomi, Cape Mount and Sinoe Counties organized and hosted a day long joint advocacy engagement with the House standing Committees on Forestry, Agriculture and Concession on July 15, 2022 at D' Calabage hall located in Congo Town, Monrovia Liberia. At the joint advocacy meeting with lawmakers RICCE along with GLA partners, community women leaders and the OPWG made presentations on the prevailing gender inequality in forest governance including the increasing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment of women and girls and people with disability in concession areas and the situation of exploitation of communities occurring across the concession

areas.

The objective of the meeting was to highlight the gross violation of community rights and the prevailing gender inequality within natural resource governance and make recommendations for immediate intervention to restoration including the showcase of the Community Based Monitoring forest management tool.

Speaking at the roundtable discussion Renee Gibson RICCE program Manager highlighted the gross gender inequality in forest management leadership, the high rate of SGBV including SEAH happening across the concession areas particularly at the Mano Plantation in Cape Mount and Bomi and GVL areas in Sinoe and Grand Kru counties. Renee expressed that inequality in decision making about natural resources reinforces and perpetuate existing gender inequalities, exclusion, discrimination, and poor service delivery. She noted that inclusive governance is critical to ensure that natural resource wealth is managed sustainably in a way that benefits every citizen, men, women, boys, girls, and people with disabilities. It can be recalled Liberia natural resource governance bodies such as the CFMBs, CMCs, CFDCs and communities level decision makings bodies are largely dominated by men leaving women issues unaddressed, women stories, and women contributions towards natural resource management untold and undocumented. She further lamented that such exclusion makes

women who have very close relation with the forest extremely vulnerable to policies which does not address issues that affect women and girls including people with disabilities. Example the Community Rights Law of 2009 gave rights to communities to manage their forest however, the only direct mention of women is in section 4.2 (a) which state” a five-member community Forestry Management Body shall manage the day-to-day activities of the community forest resources. At least one member of the body shall be a woman’. With this write out, the representation of women has remained exactly one female member in member position.

Women and girls continue to suffer the outcome of gender imbalance policies and projects which did not consider gender analysis as unique tool to address inequalities in the forest sector.

Given this situation it can be concluded that the call for gender inclusive forest / natural resources governance is still a nightmare and needs more policy actions to achieve gender inclusive forest governance in Liberia.

In support of the call to action for gender- just forest governance, Madam Musu Fahnbulleh, a member of the Women Advocacy Movement set up RICCE during in GLA 2.0 representing Bomi and Cape Mount Counties lamented the discrimination against women and girls in decision making about their resources. Rural women depend on natural

resources and are most affected when natural resources are exploited; however, women are completely left out of decision making and their needs and concerns are not prioritized by the male dominant policy decisions. She called on the lawmakers and stakeholders to review existing policies including concession agreements that are gender bias and ensure that women are given space at the decision-making table to contribute to how their resources are used, distributed, or allocated. She explained the devastating state of women and girls within the concession areas due to power imbalance, lack of income and livelihood opportunities which have rendered women and girls' vulnerability to concession workers with little or no access to justice. She called on the lawmakers to compel companies to adhere to the social agreement and respect communities' rights

The Gender Focal Person at the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), Madam Nornor Bee also asserted that the rights of women in concession areas need to be respected, promoted, and protected at all levels of the Liberian society.

"This should include prevention of violence against women and girls, protection of victims and ensure the prosecution of perpetrators. Women in concession areas are usually abuse, disrespected, moved into bad labor and other unwholesome activities against their rights," Madam Nornor Bee said.

She wants increase focus on women's economic

independence and their roles as workers in those plantations always respected.

Other GLA partners and members of the CSO-OPWG made affirmation of gender inequality and violations taking place around oil palm concessions in Liberia especially within GLA project landscape with testimonies from representatives from project affected communities (PACs). Including Grand Cape Mount (Mano Oil Palm Plantation), Bomi (Mano Oil Palm Plantation), Grand Bassa (Equatorial Palm Oil-EPO), Sinoe and Grand Kru (Golden Veroleum Liberia).

As a way forward to addressing the challenges in the concessions the Civil Society Oil Palm Working Group (CSO-OPWG) showcased the CBM tool and its usefulness to document and address challenges within forest management in Liberia: conflicts, non-compliance issues and violations occurring within the concession areas.

The CSO-OPWG is a group of CSO organizations working to advocate for communities' rights within concession areas and to ensure that concession companies adhere to international best practices and national laws and policies. RICCE and all GLA partner organization are member of the CSO-OPWG.

The CBM is critical to people-centered approach to

forestry which in turn can reduce inequality recognizing local communities as key forest stakeholders and promoting their involvement in decision making and sustainable management to generate positive outcomes for livelihoods, development, and conservation.

At the close of the forum the following recommendations were presented to the lawmakers:

- Strengthen existing laws and policies and make them more gender inclusive. How to do this is review existing gender bias national laws and policies and inject gender balance clauses to make it legitimate One of the laws to look at is the Community Rights Law of 2009 particularly section 4.2 that speaks of participation in forest governance.
- Legislate gender analyses as a tool for all forest and natural resource management activities including, projects, and programs to inform the design of interventions to reduce the current gender gaps within the forest/ natural resource governance.
- Review existing concession agreements which are with companies in the country. “The current agreements violate our constitution, and we shouldn’t be comfortable with it.” those companies should ensure the right to food and

livelihoods; saying the people in those concession areas have nowhere to make their farms.

- Compare companies to comply to environmental standards and social obligations to communities – there are numerous violations taking place in concession areas, invite the managements to provide answers and put in place standards that maintains respects for peoples right including a gender responsive labor and monitor the performance. Affected communities should be given space at the table during the revision of the agreements with companies in the country. This representation should be gender inclusive.

Speaking on behalf of the lawmakers, Honourable Jim W. Tornolah chairman of the committee on Forestry, Agriculture and Concession lauded the CSOs for the impressive presentations and for their dedication to seeking the welfare of affected communities. He welcomed the brilliant recommendations put forth and assured that the house will review the issues and make the appropriate adjustment for the benefit of the community people. Other members of the legislature in attendance pledged their unwavering support to the process noting that they prefer that concession agreements rather benefit the communities than to cause more harm. They

		<p>pledged to work with the CSOs and the OPWG in ensuring that these recommendations are actualized.</p> <p>Member of the House standing committee present at the forum include:</p> <p>House of Senate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jim W. Tornolah – Chairman 2. Jonathan Boye Charles 3. Botoe Botoe Kanneh 4. Jonathan Kaipay 5. Simeon b. Taylor 6. Wellington Geevon Smith 7. Numene T. H Bartekwa <p>House of Representative:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tilberosa Tanpoweh 2. Moima Briggs- Mensah 3. Rustolyn Suacoco Dennis <p>CSOs Actor: 13 persons representing the 13 CSO members of the CSO Oil Palm Working Group.</p>
T	Describe obstacle(s), if any, and how they were addressed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Getting law makers to attend CSO meeting is a challenge in Liberia,they see CSOs as rival that put public attention on thier performance shortfalls by the awareness public on government function. Due to their weak oversight role over the executive which the public thinks is responsible for the backwardness of Liberia, they have always tried to avoid interaction with CSOs. The way we overcame the perception was been persistence and building relationship with the secretariat inadvance; our

	<p>persistance and commitment to advocacy over the year also built trust among them.</p> <p>3. GLA partners were hesitant on gender issues from the begining of our engagement based on general perception of gender and they were reluctant to committ to realistic actions therefore delaying the development their GAPs but, after team reflection meetings and several follow ups, they thanked RICCE for supporting them to develop their GAPs. They are very grateful for the opportunity to learn basic gender issues that impact staff performance on the job, and promote staff motivation and social cohesion in the work environment and have committed their organizations' committment to policy development to improve inclusion, protection and employees welfare.</p>	
<p>Summary of results</p>	<p>Planned number of women reached: 10 Planned number of men reached: 15 Panned number of boys reached: 10 Planned number of girls reached: 10 Planned number of CSOs and CBOs reached: 5 Planned number and names of communities reached: 5</p> <p><i>Separate reporting according to GLA indicators will be requested at a later date</i></p>	<p>Number of women reached so far: 15 Number of men reached so far: 19 Number of girls reached so far: 17 Number boys reached so far: 17 Number of CSOs and CBOs reached so far: 8 Number and names of communities reached so far: 10</p>

<p>Reflection and outcomes</p>	<p>What are your key insights and observations on the outcomes of the activities for GLA-2 partners in your country and the women, men, and the communities that you are engaging with in general? What was the situation and context like before and how did this change or not?</p> <p>One key insight and observation of the outcomes is that GLA-2 has improved coordination and collaboration among partner organizations and strengthens knowledge sharing and teamwork among partners. RICCE and the GLA partners jointly planned the legislative engagement alongside the CSOs-OPWG.</p> <p>The GLA project is making significant progress in raising awareness on communities' rights and strengthening communities to claim their rights. More so promoting gender inclusive forest governance is resonating and community women are leading the change they want to see. At the just ended joint advocacy meeting, community women groups who were mentored by RICCE came in number and put forth their cases and demanded the legislature for intervention. In the past the women did not have such opportunity to have open discussion with the legislature as a body to put forth their concerns, this project gave them such leverage.</p>
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3. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Outline any specific or overall challenges you faced, lessons learned that you learned, and any improvements that you think can be made, what solutions or changes do you propose? Add to the table below.

Challenge	Lessons learned / solutions and improvements
	<i>Zoom meeting has serve as channel for training and information sharing especially during the global, COVID crisis where in person interaction is difficult. It is helpful for quick meetings and information or skill sharing. However, in technology poor countries like ours, zoom meetings can be difficult as internet servers are poor thereby making it impossible to remain connected. As always done, please share the presentation and recording from the meetings or trainings with partners</i>
	Knowledge is indeed power, the Gpower app and team reflection meetings at group and institutional level have increased partners knowledge on organizational gender responsiveness and mainstreaming gender in programs for realistic outcomes
	The willingness of GLA partner organizations to acknowledge gaps identified in the gender self –assessment and develop gender related policies to improve their organization is a big take away from 2.0. However, some partner institutions are small and do not have the structure and capacity to implement GAP so must of the issues in the GAP are not applicable to them. Example; CS-IFM, LFMW
	We at RICCE recommend that GLA 2.0 should add other CSOs working in the natural resource sector especially within the project landscape to current list of partnership in Liberia for bigger impact and strengthen their capacity on gender responsive programming and organization development.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

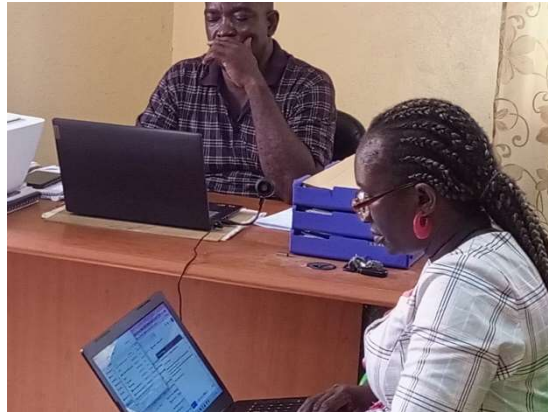
How did you communicate about your activities and/or the programme? On your website, in mainstream media, social media etc. For example, you can include press clippings or screenshots of social media posts or of posts on your website.

We would also very much like to receive photos and videos that tell us more about the work being done by the community/women’s groups, with their consent. Please attach high quality photos as separate files in an email as jpeg, jpg or png files. Please include the photo credit (name of the person/organisation who took the photo) as well as a caption, which answers who is in the picture, the name of community/region/ women’s group, what they are doing? why are they doing it, what has just happened in the photo and what is the context or story behind it.

We do communicate our activities on our website, Facebook page and in the local publications.



Follow up meeting with GLA partners with CS-IFM



Mr. Wilfred Gray Johnson, SDI Executive Director in conversation Renee during follow



Photos from the legislative engagement held on July 15, 2022 organized by CSO-OPWG and GLA partners with the joint committee on concession, Forestry and Agriculture of the Liberian Legislature



Madam Konah Harris, Clan Chief of Zebeh clan, Bomi County explaining the impact of MANO oil palm on the women and pleading with the legislature to take quick action to protect them as women are really suffering





Hon. Jim Tonnorlah, chair of the committee making opening statement followed by Hon. Jonathan Sogbe, committee member



Renee presenting findings of gender analysis and case conducted by RICCE and called on them to take immediate actions to protect women and girls from all forms of violence and abuse

