

**Livelihoods Assessment in Concession
Communities
IN NIMBA, GRAND CAPE MOUNT, MARYLIAND
AND SINOE COUNTIES, LIBERIA**

**Under the UNPBF Project on
Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through
Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute
Resolution Mechanisms**

Implemented by UNDP, WFP and UN Women



With support from the Peace Building



Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
INTRODUCTION	9
Background	9
Project Context	10
PROJECT OVERVIEW.....	12
Project Theory of Change.....	12
Project Expected Outcomes and Outputs.....	13
Project Provisional Achievements	14
WFP Role in the Project Implementation	15
ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	15
Assessment Objectives	15
Approach.....	16
Sampling and Data Collection Methods.....	16
Data Validation and Analysis.....	17
Assessment Team and Timeframe.....	17
Assessment Limitations	17
ASSESSMENT FINDINGS	18
Quantitative Survey Findings	18
Household Demographics and Health Status	18
Natural Disasters and Household Access to Humanitarian Assistance	21
Nature of Household Agricultural and Livestock Production Activities.....	23
Household Income and Livelihood Sources	26
Household Livelihood Shocks and Coping Strategies	28
Household Asset Endowment.....	31
Focus Group Discussion Findings	32
Livelihood activities of affected communities prior to concession agreement.....	32
Expectations of community members of the presence of concession company	33
Livelihood activities of community members with existence of concession.....	34
Impacts of Concession Activities on Livelihoods of Affected Communities	35
Suggested Interventions for Restoring Livelihoods in Concession-affected Communities	37
Other groups (NGO, GOL, Private Citizen, Etc.) Providing Humanitarian Assistance	39

Key Informant Interview Findings.....	40
Community Livelihood System with Concession Existence	40
Concessions’ Responses to Community Grievances	41
Companies’ Views on Assertion of Lost Livelihoods Due to Concession Activities	41
Benefits of Concession Companies to Concession Communities	41
Suggestions for Alternative Livelihood Support	42
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	43
Conclusions	43
Recommendations	44
Reference	45
Annex 1: Focus Group Participants in Assessment Communities.....	46

ABBREVIATIONS

ARS	Agricultural Relief Services
CI	Conservation International
CLDMCs	Community Land Development and Management Committees
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAO	District Agriculture Officer
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GoL	Government of Liberia
GVL	Golden Veroleum Liberia
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LAC	Liberia Agriculture Company
LGA	Local Government Act
LLA	Liberia Land Authority
LMPTF	Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund
LRA	Land Rights Act
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection
MLDL	Mitigating Local Disputes in Liberia
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOPP	Maryland Oil Palm Plantation
MoU	Community and Mano Palm Oil Industries
MPOI	Community and Mano Palm Oil Industries
MSPs	Multi Stakeholders Platforms
NBC	National Bureau of Concession

NCCRM	National Center for the Coordination of the Response Mechanism
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBO	Peace Building Office
SADS	Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SPRC	Special Presidential Review Committee
TOC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WFP	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction/Background

WFP is jointly implementing the PBF-funded initiative “*Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms*”, with UNDP and UN Women. The aim of the project is to strengthen institutional capacities at national and sub national levels to implement the Land Rights Act and Local Government Acts, and to effectively prevent potential conflict triggers, including environmental hazards and limited livelihood opportunities, arising from concession operations areas. The project also seeks to help strengthen the capacities of existing semi-formal land disputes resolution bodies to provide a safe, effective, transparent and inclusive platform for stakeholders to resolve land disputes in a gender-and-youth responsive manner.

WFP’s role in this joint implementation framework is to help improve socio-economic security and peacebuilding and strengthen resilience of affected populations in the concession communities. WFP, specially seeks to (1) contribute to the peacebuilding efforts by using its resilience capacity to support affected communities address conflict triggers such as land disputes, youth agitation and unemployment, and (2) ensure that a community-based approach is put in place to safeguard the resolution of concession-related conflict shocks as well as transform conflicts into sustainably peaceful relationships. Key aspects of WFP interventions in the project include garnering environmental hazards and livelihood concerns in concessions areas, identifying agreeable solutions at community levels and creating livelihood opportunities and environmental coping mechanisms for affected communities.

In the context of output 2.4 (Enhanced Multi Stakeholders Platforms capacity to find agreeable solutions, propose alternative livelihoods and address the effects of environmental hazards) of this project, WFP in partnership with the National Bureau of Concession conducted a livelihood assessment in four concession-related conflict-prone counties in April 2021 to understand how existing concessions in the four project counties have affected livelihood sources in the affected communities. The assessment specially aimed at understanding changes in livelihood sources as a result of concession activities, and identifying the livelihood needs of the affected populations, including women, men and youth, in concession communities. The assessment was necessary to provide WFP and partners better insights into how activities of the existing concessions have affected the host communities and enable development partners devise appropriate interventions to support sustainable livelihood activities and strengthen resilience in the affected communities.

Methodology

The assessment team applied multiple approaches and sampling methods to conducting the study. The team used *community-led approach* that focused on interacting with women, men, boys, girls, local leaders and relevant company representative to assess changes to livelihood activities in the affected communities. The team also mainstreamed *human-rights-based approaches* throughout the assessment process by considering women's rights to participation

and how women, youth, girls and boys are treated in the distribution of community assets. For data collection, the assessment used a mixed-method approach that incorporated quantitative and qualitative elements. Qualitative data was collected using focus group discussions and key informant interviews in the concession-affected communities along with desk review of relevant publications and project documents. The quantitative assessment was done through a paper-based structured questionnaire administered to randomly selected respondents in 14 concession-affected communities in the four project counties. household income and livelihood sources; household livelihood shocks and coping strategies, and household asset endowment.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The assessment was conducted using survey questionnaires, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The following paragraphs provide the main conclusions of the findings of these exercises.

1. Concession activities have had both positive and negative impacts on host communities. The positive impacts include access to educational facilities, livelihood support opportunities created by concession companies, access to health and sanitation facilities, and other social services provided by concession companies; but there are also negative impacts such as loss of farmland through land expropriation, and environmental pollution resulting from concession companies' activities.
2. Households in concession-affected communities have limited income and livelihood sources. Most households in agricultural concession areas remain engaged in some forms of agricultural activities as main livelihood source. Households with land access are engaged in the production of vegetable crops (bean, peanut, bitter ball, tomatoes, okra, pepper, green, eggplant), and root and tuber crops, (cassava, sweet potatoes, eddoes, yam) on subsistence scales. The dominant sources of household incomes are agriculture, petty trading (small business management) and charcoal production.
3. Concession-affected community residents, especially those not directly benefiting from employment opportunities created by the concession, are vulnerable to diverse kinds of shocks to livelihoods. These shocks are dominated by sickness of household member, loss of employment/reduced income, and high food price. High food price remains the major shock to food supplies for communities in the south-eastern region where bad road network hinders the flow for food from the capital to those location, leading to large price differentials between areas accessible by road network and those inaccessible
4. Households in concession communities respond to livelihood shocks through diverse coping strategies, including purchasing food on credits; borrowing money to purchase food, and spending savings on food purchase. Other strategies include reducing spending on non-food commodities, reducing meal household size, reducing daily meal frequency, begging and withdrawing kids from school.
5. Majority of the respondents during the focus group discussions and key informant interviews indicated that the most affected groups are the women and youth. Women carry majority of the households burden in providing for their homes.

6. Most concession communities are prone to disasters, predominantly windstorms, triggered either by natural incidences or concession activities. In the surveyed communities, majority of the respondents reported experiencing some form of disasters over the last five years prior to the assessment and attributed the predominant hazard to the clearing of large tracks of land by concession companies for oil palm and rubber production and exposing communities to intense windstorm as a result of the destruction of high tree canopies which serve as wind breakers.
7. Humanitarian assistance for disaster victims remains scarce in the affected communities and are provided mainly by government institutions such as the National Disaster Management Agency of Liberia and the Liberia National Red Cross.
8. Most concession communities have not fully received benefits promised in concession agreements; some concession representatives acknowledged financial difficulties as main reason for not meeting some of the expectations of the affected communities.
9. Concession companies have diverging views on the impacts of their activities in host communities. While some argued that concession activities have resulted to livelihood improvements in host communities, others accept the fact that their activities have had some negative effects.

Recommendations

The findings of the assessment reveal several issues associated with the operations of concessions in host communities. Host communities in some concession areas have lost livelihood sources and become exposed to different kinds of hazards. Households in some concession communities are also reportedly being deprived of access to wetlands in concession parameters which are not being used by concession companies. The following actions are recommended to restore livelihoods in concession affected communities and remedy some of the negative externalities.

1. National Bureau of Concession should ensure compliance of concessions companies to corporate social responsibilities under the concession agreements to address some of the issues of lost livelihoods associated with concession activities. The entity should also strengthen monitoring of concession activities to ensure compliance with environmental standards to mitigate some of the hazards resulting from concession operations
2. National Bureau of Concession should rally government support to enforce development of out-grower schemes in concession communities to create income generation opportunities and restore livelihood sources in concession-affected communities
3. National Bureau of Concession should work with concession companies and host communities to resolve issues surrounding the use of unused swampland in concession communities to ensure community access to such land for agricultural production
4. WFP, UNWOMEN, UNDP and development partners should initiate and support programs for women empowerment in the concession affected communities. Such empowerment should include supporting women initiatives at community levels and enhancing women capacities to engage in productive activities.
5. Development partners should support swampland development in concession communities to enable community residents utilize such land for agricultural production for income generation to support household livelihoods.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Liberia has made significant strides towards consolidating peace and restoring livelihood sources following its emergence from civil conflicts witnessed between 1989 and 2003. In more than 70 years, the country observed its first democratic transfer of power in 2018 following twelve years of post-conflict democratic governance. In an effort to further consolidate the peace and restore the livelihoods of its war-affected population, the Government of Liberia (GoL) signed a number of concession agreements with Multinational Corporations (MNCs) to operate in the productive sector of the economy. The Government saw natural resource concessions as the fastest means of reviving the economy and achieving rapid economic growth, empowering rural communities through job creation, and spurring rural development. Major MNCs attracted to the country's mining sector include the Luxembourg-based ArcelorMittal, and the Hong Kong-based China Union, while the agriculture sector attracted the Malaysian-based oil palm giant Sime Darby¹, Sina Mar (Golden Veroleum) of Indonesia, and the British-owned Equatorial Palm Oil. The number of agricultural concessions granted in post-conflict Liberia, in addition to the already existing Firestone Natural Rubber Company (Firestone), the Liberia Agriculture Company (LAC), and other rubber concessions reportedly account for about 40-50 percent of Liberia's arable land area². Between 2006 and 2015, the oil palm sector alone attracted investments from three companies to convert over 478,000 hectares of farmland to oil palm plantation³.

While these concessions were good intentions of government to restore livelihoods in concession areas and speed up economic growth and rural development, land and boundary disputes, lawlessness, and concession-related tensions began emerging as the main triggers of conflicts, with aggrieved communities feeling their livelihood sources have been taken away by government. In some concession areas, disputes relating to overlapping boundaries, rightful ownership, and conflicting claims and accusations of land grabbing remain major obstacles to peace and stability, and the main source of conflict between concessions and communities. Most communities believe there are lack of transparency in the allocations of land to concessions by the government since the concession contracts are negotiated in Monrovia with little or no community consultations. Aggrieved communities also argue that government neither shares concession agreements with local community leaders for consent nor seeks their inputs during preparation of those agreements. For instance, locals of Bomi County living around the Sime Darby plantation (Mano Palm Oil Industry) expressed dissatisfaction with the government for

¹ Sime Darby sold out to Mano Palm Oil Industry in 2019

² Jamie Kalliongis 2017 Case Study of concessionaires in Liberia

³ The 3 concessions are GVL 220, 000 ha, Sime Darby (MPOI) 220,000 ha, and Equatorial Palm Oil 34,398 ha

giving so much land to the plantation without their knowledge, which resulted to citizens preventing the expansion of the company's activities⁴. A 2018 assessment of concession activities in three counties—Maryland, Nimba and Grand Bassa—confirmed that concessions were granted without adequate inputs from community members, and that community farmland were taken over by concession companies without putting in place appropriate alternative livelihood support system for the affected community members⁵. In 2012, affected communities in the Sime Darby concession area in Grand Cape Mount complained that their “Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)” had not been sought in granting concession to the company, and, that the destruction of their farmlands by the company in order to plant oil palm was leaving them destitute⁶. Thus, instead of restoring livelihoods, most communities see concession activities as threats to their livelihoods, which have resulted to sustained conflicts between community members and some concession companies operating in the country. For example, in 2019, some communities in the Garaway, Wedabo, and Zoloken districts of Grand Kru County where Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) operates staged major strike actions against the operations of the company on allegations that their land was forcefully taken from them, and livelihoods destroyed by the company's activities. The mounting conflicts resulting from concession activities have led many to rate land dispute as the main threat to peace in post-conflict Liberia⁷.

Land ownership contestations have also led to heightened tribal tensions in concession and non-concession communities. In Grand Cape County, for instance, members of the Gola and Vai tribes were engaged in a fight over ownership of the Bea Mountain region in 2018, which resulted to injuries on both sides. Conflicts between the Mandingo and the Mano and Gio tribes in Nimba County over land ownership has also resulted to injuries and the destruction of properties and created tensions that threaten the peace and stability of the affected communities. In the South-eastern counties of Maryland and River Gee, land disputes among the people of Gbeabo, Barrobo, Pallipo-Killepo, Chedopo Geeken, Potupo Pelloken and Tienpo often resulted to conflicts that claimed the intervention of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Peace Building Office (PBO) of the government in 2020⁸.

Project Context

Liberia has attracted investments in key sectors of its economy, but land-related conflicts resulting from lost livelihoods continue to threaten community peace and stability. In a 2017 survey by the Liberian Peacebuilding Office, 57.8 percent of respondents identified land and boundary-related issues as the most significant driver of conflict⁹. The study found that in some

⁴ Baseline Evaluation 2020: Strengthening Inclusive Civic and Political Participation and promoting constructive pre-election campaigning for Sustained Peace in Liberia

⁵ USAID 2018, “Women's land rights in Liberia in Law, Practice and Future Reforms”,

⁶ A Field research conducted in February 2012 by Lomax et al on the Sime Darby concession in Grand Cape County

⁷ A study by Afro-barometer found 92 percent of respondents in River Gee county attributing community disharmony to land dispute

⁸ Liberia Early-Warning and Response Network (LERN): <https://pboliberiaewer.org/>

⁹ E. Mulbah and J. Dennis, 2017, “Mapping Opportunities for the Consolidation of Peace in Liberia: Voices from the Country-side”, Liberia Peacebuilding Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs

communities in Maryland County who depend on farming for livelihoods, all the farmlands were taken over by agriculture concessions, thus destroying the primary source of livelihoods for members of those communities. In an early study conducted in 2009, 62 percent of Liberians attributed violent conflicts in Liberia to contestable land ownership and distribution¹⁰. Besides contestable land ownership claims and counterclaims among residents, communities have further complained of their exclusion from concession negotiations and argued that such marginalization deprives them not just of the opportunity to protect their primary livelihood sources or negotiate proper compensation for lost livelihoods, but also prevents them from getting concessions to provide appropriate social services and alternative livelihood opportunities for the communities.

In an effort to resolve some of the concerns of rural community dwellers, the Government of Liberia enacted the Land Rights Act (LRA) and Local Government Act (LGA) in 2018. The Land Rights Act was promulgated *to ensure that all communities, families, individuals and legal entities enjoy secure land rights free of fear that their land will be taken from them, except in accordance with due process of law; and confirm, declare and ensure equal access and equal protection with respect to land ownership, use and management, including ensuring that Customary Land and Private Land are given equal legal protection and that land ownership is provided for all Liberians, regardless of identity, custom, ethnicity, tribe, language, gender or otherwise*¹¹. For the Local Government Act, the intent of the framers was to provide equal opportunity for all Liberians *to engage in the governance of the state through the devolution of certain administrative, fiscal and political powers and institutions from the national government to local governments*. In spite of the good intentions of these two legislations, delay in implementations have led to continuous discontentment and agitations among communities and concessions companies over land access and social services. In 2019, for example, aggrieved communities in Grand Kru County staged a strike action against GVL for allegedly forcibly taken away their land and destroying their livelihoods and sacred areas¹².

As part of effort to maintain the peace and avert potential conflicts in concession communities with propensity for nation-wide spillovers, the World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNWOMEN jointly launched a project on “*Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms*” under the United Nations Peace-Building Fund (PBF) to support the implementation of the Land Rights Act and Local Government Act¹³. The project covers 43 communities in four concession-related conflict-prone counties—Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe, Maryland and Nimba¹⁴. The joint implementation of the two Acts is expected to empower rural communities, including women and youth, to manage their land and land-based resources to advance their economic growth

¹⁰ Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 72, October 2009

¹¹ Liberia Land Rights Acts, 2018

¹² William Q. Harmon (2019) Locals Seek Justice Against Oil Palm Companies

¹³ Both Acts were passed by the Government in 2018 to respectively settle land ownership issues and give great fiscal authorities to local governments

¹⁴ Community distribution by counties: Grand Cape Mount (17), Sinoe (5), Maryland (5) and Nimba (16)

and development, and contribute to a reduction of land-related disputes as well as advance the economic wellbeing of community members.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Peace Building Fund (PBF)-funded initiative “*Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms*” project was launched on 30 January 2020, and it is expected to be completed by 15 January 2023. The project aims at strengthening institutional capacities to implement the Land Rights and Local Government Acts, and the capacities of Liberia Land Authority (LLA), National Bureau of Concession (NBC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to effectively prevent potential conflict triggers, including environmental hazards and limited livelihood opportunities, arising from concessionaires. The project also seeks to provide support for strengthening the capacities of existing semi-formal land disputes resolution bodies to provide a safe and inclusive platform for stakeholders to resolve land disputes in a gender-and-youth responsive manner¹⁵.

Project Theory of Change

The project has an underlying Theory of Change (TOC) that is explicitly formulated and fundamental not just to the maintenance of peace and security in Liberia but also to the creation of sustainable livelihood support systems in concession-affected communities. The project design was inspired by a well-established and functioning collaboration among the World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UN Women, and national institutions associated with conflict prevention and resolution. The project TOC assumes the existence of government commitment to implement the LRA and LGA at national and sub-national levels; government’s willingness to mainstream gender in their policies, rules and procedures; concessionaires’ willingness to deliver their commitments; targeted communities’ willingness to change attitudes towards women, youth and vulnerable group’s rights to land, and stakeholders’ (government, private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs), development partners) ability/willingness to coordinate to maximize the impact of their activities. With these assumptions, the TOC conjectures that IF customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties are aware of the LRA and LGA, existing land disputes resolution mechanisms, concession agreements, and their role, as well as have an improved understanding of women’s and youth rights to land; IF County land offices, county land boards, and Community Land Development and Management Committees in targeted counties have the capacity, procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects rights and needs of all community members; IF existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies (i.e. Multi Stakeholders Platforms (MSPs)) have the capacity to provide a safe and inclusive platform for communities, government, and concession companies to resolve disputes in a gender and youth responsive manner; IF communities including women and youth in targeted counties have the capacity and skills to participate in formal and informal land dispute mechanisms; IF institutional

¹⁵ The key stakeholders include the communities, government, and concession companies.

capacity of LLA/NBC/EPA are strengthened to effectively prevent potential conflict triggers arising from concessionaires; IF Early warning and response mechanisms become more sensitive to land disputes; then land management will be more effective and inclusive, and land disputes will be better prevented and managed in targeted counties. Based on these premises, the project was designed to support relevant government entities implement the LRA and LGA to create awareness among communities of their land rights as well as empower them place significant roles in the governance of the community resources.

Project Expected Outcomes and Outputs

The project has two key expected outcomes and nine outputs to help realize its TOC and achieve its objectives. These outcomes are the following:

Expected Outcome One: Authorities at national and local levels manage land allocation, registration and licensing processes in a more effective, transparent and inclusive manner that reduces conflicts. This outcome will be measured through the following five outputs:

- **Output 1:** Customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties are aware of the Land Rights Act, existing land disputes resolution mechanisms, concession agreements, and their roles as well as have an improved understanding of women's and youth rights to land
- **Output 2:** County land offices and county land boards in targeted counties have the capacity, procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects rights and needs of all community members
- **Output 3:** Community Land Development and Management Committees (CLDMCs) are established in targeted counties and have the capacity to initiate the formalization and recognition of their land rights
- **Output 4:** Early warning and response mechanism are engendered and integrate land disputes related data
- **Output 5:** Institutional capacity of LLA, EPA, NBC, and the Special Presidential Review Committee (SPRC) is strengthened to effectively prevent conflicts driven by the depletion of livelihood opportunities and environmental hazards

Expected Outcome two: Existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms are strengthened, more sustainable and able to reduce conflict in a more effective and gender-responsive manner.

- **Output 1:** Existing Semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies (CLDMC, SPRC, county peace committees, peace huts, multi-stakeholders' platform) have strengthened capacity to resolve disputes in a sustainable gender and youth responsive manner
- **Output 2:** Communities, including Women and youth, in targeted counties have the capacity and skills to participate in formal and informal land dispute mechanisms
- **Output 3:** Coordination between government agencies in charge of implementing the LRA and LGA, and development partners and CSOs is strengthened

- **Output 4:** Enhanced Multi Stakeholder platform capacities to find agreeable solutions, propose alternative livelihoods and address the effects of environmental hazards

Project Provisional Achievements

The semi-annual project report indicates remarkable progress made in overall implementation due to strong collaboration with government partners, including the LLA, NBC, National Center for the Coordination of the Response Mechanism (NCCRM) and PBO. Initial results show noticeable changes in the knowledge and capacities of government officials, while 43 (30 male and 13 female) early warning monitors, situational analysts and land experts working with these government agencies have now increased their knowledge and skills in areas of gender responsive early warning monitoring and the incorporation of gender-sensitive and land indicators in decision making from 6.1 percent to 45.5 percent over the implementation period. The following paragraphs summarize the key progress made under each of the two expected project outcomes:

Expected outcome one: The project has succeeded in enhancing awareness of the LRA among 150 community members in Nimba County (60 percent female, 40 percent male) of which 27 percent are youth; 85 percent of these community members also now have a better understanding of the existing concession agreements, and their role, and have strengthened understanding of the rights of women, communities and youth to land, and gender and masculinities. In addition, as a first step for customary land formalization, 700 community members (400 male ,300 female) in 10 communities in the four project counties are now aware of the customary land formalization processes. The project has also made progress in strengthening the capacity of county land offices and land boards to support the process of a human rights-based customary land formalization. Need assessment of county offices was completed, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) developed to support capacity enhancement of the LLA. A Gender Integration Strategy developed through the project was approved in early 2021, and now promotes gender equality, inclusion and equal participation of women by involving them in decision making processes in land governance and advocating for gender balanced staffing within LLA. The Liberia Land Authority has also been provided equipment to support proper functioning of the County Land Offices and Board Committees, and thirty staff (16 male,14 female) of the institution were trained in gender and human rights, and gender-responsive land dispute resolution. As part of efforts to strengthen capacity of government agencies to effectively prevent conflicts triggered by the depletion of livelihood opportunities and environmental hazards, a policy brief to support policy makers in the implementation of the FPIC principles was developed and disseminated at a high-level event organized in June 2021.

Expected outcome two: Limited progress has been made under outcome two. However, support provided through the project has enabled government partners to begin taking the lead in resolving land disputes. For instance, NBC led a negotiation between the Seeni Community and Mano Palm Oil Industries (MPOI) in Grand Cape Mount County that resulted to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to resolve an existing conflict between the two parties. NBC has also

established and profiled a gender and social inclusion unit to further support gender mainstreaming at the entity. Project activities in Nimba and Grand Cape Mount counties have also enabled 228 community members to have improved knowledge on existing agreements between the Government of Liberia and concession companies operating in their communities.

WFP Role in the Project Implementation

In the joint implementation of the project on “*Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms*”, WFP is responsible for helping to improve the socio-economic security, peacebuilding, and strengthening resilience of affected populations in the concession communities. Within the implementation arrangement, WFP specifically seeks to (1) contribute to peacebuilding efforts by using its resilience capacity to support the affected communities address conflict triggers such as land disputes, youth agitation and unemployment, and (2) ensure that a community-based approach is put in place to safeguard the resolution of concession-related conflict shocks as well as transform conflicts into sustainably peaceful relationships. Key aspects of WFP interventions in the project include garnering environmental hazards and livelihood concerns in concessions areas, identifying agreeable solutions at community levels and creating livelihood opportunities and environmental coping mechanisms for affected communities.

Within the implementation framework, Output 1.5 of the project focuses on strengthening institutional capacity of the Liberia Land Authority, Environmental Protection Agency, National Bureau of Concession and the Special Presidential Review Committee to effectively prevent conflicts driven by the depletion of livelihood opportunities and environmental hazards. In the context of output 1.5, WFP in partnership with the National Bureau of Concession conducted a livelihood assessment in the four concession-related conflict-prone counties in April 2021 to understand how existing concessions in the four project counties has affected livelihood sources in the affected communities. The assessment specially aimed at understanding changes in livelihood opportunities as a result of concession activities, and identifying the livelihood needs of the affected populations, including women, men and youth, in concession communities. The assessment was necessary to provide WFP and partners better insights into how the existing concessions have affected the host communities and enable these development partners devise appropriate interventions to support sustainable livelihood activities and strengthen resilience in the affected communities.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Assessment Objectives

The main objective of the assessment was to understand how the existence of concessions have changed livelihood systems in concession communities as well as identify the livelihood-support needs of the affected communities for appropriate interventions. Specifically, the assessment sought to understand the following:

1. Livelihood activities of affected communities prior to concession agreement
2. Expectations of community members of the presence of concession company
3. Livelihood activities of community members with existence of concessions
4. Impact (positive/negative) of concession activities on livelihoods of affected communities
5. Needed interventions to restore livelihoods of affected population in concession areas
6. Other groups (NGO, GOL, Private Citizen, Etc.) assisting affected communities, and
7. Concession companies' interventions to address grievances of affected communities

Approach

The assessment team applied multiple approaches to conducting the study. The team adopted *community-led approach* to assess changes to livelihood activities in the affected communities. This approach focused on interacting with women, men, boys, girls, local leaders and relevant company staff in concession areas during the data collection exercise. The Assessment team also mainstreamed *human rights-based approaches* throughout the assessment process by considering women's rights to participation and community assets. The team assessed how women, youth, girls and boys are treated in the distribution of community assets and livelihood opportunities at the community levels, and by concession companies in their communities. The assessment team also applied principles and methods that pay special attention to gender by including gender in the assessment questions and making sure that the assessment methodology and data collection method are gender responsive.

Sampling and Data Collection Methods

Sampling was necessary to ensure the representativeness of the information collected from the four conflict-prone concession counties. The assessment team chose a purposive but representative sample based on the number of concession-affected communities identified through the project baseline survey. The assessment targeted 32 communities out of the existing 43 concession-affected communities, and randomly selected 492 participants (213 male, 279 female) for focus group discussions¹⁶. For data collection, the assessment used a mixed-method approach that incorporated quantitative and qualitative elements. Qualitative data was collected using focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) held in the concession-affected communities, and desk review of relevant publications and project documents. Focus group discussions involved participants comprising of women, girls, community youth and men from the 36 selected project communities. Annex 1 provides a list of FGD participants per community disaggregated by gender¹⁷. Key informant interviews were held with relevant staff members of the concession companies in the affected communities, and local staff of the Ministry of Agriculture in the districts where the assessment was conducted. In Grand Cape Mount County, the assessment team had interviews with the Human Resources Manager (Female) and a male Operation Manager at the Mano Palm Oil Industries. The team also interviewed the District Agriculture Officer (DAO) assigned in the district in which the concession

¹⁶ The 32 communities covered four from Maryland County, three from Sinoe County, Nimba County 12, and Grand Cape Mount County 13.

¹⁷ The FGD participants included 207 from Grand Cape Mount; 192 from Nimba County; 39 from Sinoe County, and 54 from Maryland County

operates. In Nimba County, the team met with the Human Resource Manager at Nimba Rubber Incorporated (NRI), and the Livelihood Officer, Resettlement Supervisor, and Community Relations Manager at Arcelor Mittal. The desk review covered project-related documents and relevant publications and news articles on conflicts and land-related disputes.

The quantitative data was collected through a paper-based structured questionnaire administered to 334 respondents selected randomly from 14 affected communities in the four counties. These include 123 respondents from Garwula district in Grand Cape Mount County, 64 from Sanniquellie Mahn in Nimba County, 82 from Pleebo/Sodoken district in Maryland, and from Juarzon district in Sinoe County. The survey respondents comprised 137 female and 197 males, of which 25 percent were youth aged 17-34 years old. The survey instrument covered thematic areas broadly categorized into six to capture the assessment objectives. These include household demographic and health status; natural disasters and household access to humanitarian assistance; the nature of household agricultural and livestock production activities; household income and livelihood sources; household livelihood shocks and coping strategies, and household asset endowment.

Data Validation and Analysis

The assessment data was validated through internal and external exercises. Information gathered through focus group discussion and key informant interviews was organized by counties and communities and cross-checked internally by survey team members from each location. This was followed by corroborations with participating partners to ensure consensus on recorded responses. The quantitative information gathered through paper-based questionnaire administration was also organized and validated by team members and project staffs associated with the assessment. All quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and presented graphically.

Assessment Team and Timeframe

The assessment was conducted by team of 10 enumerators from WFP, NBC and VOSIEDA, a local implementing partner. The assessment started in Grand Cape Mount County on 2 April 2021 and ended in Nimba on 12 April 2021. Two separate teams were dispatched each to two counties. Team one covered Grand Cape Mount and Nimba counties while team two covered Maryland and Sinoe Counties. Team one conducted assessment in Grand Cape Mount County 2-7 April 2021 and traveled to Nimba where they worked 8-12 April. The second team worked in Maryland and Sinoe Counties 4-11 April 2021. Each team comprised male and female members from the three participating organizations.

Assessment Limitations

The successful completion of this assessment exercise faced a few challenges. These included difficulties in engaging some key informants, and inaccessibility of some affected communities in

the targeted counties. The assessment team had intended having interviews with key personnel aware of the concession agreements and commitments of concession companies to the communities under the concession agreements, but it was quite difficult meeting high-level concession management; and in cases where management agreed to meet, team members were referred to staff members who had marginal knowledge of the issues of concerns to the affected communities. It was also difficult meeting with multi-stakeholder platform members for participation in focus group discussions in most of the affected communities. In the remote southern counties of Maryland and Sinoe, bad road conditions coupled with difficulties in accessing fuel and a county-wide lockdown imposed following a protest in Maryland county impeded the movement of team members in some assessment locations. In spite of these constraints, the team managed to reach most of the targeted communities and held focus group discussions in key affected communities.

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

This section presents results of the assessment in three subsections. The first subsection presents the main results of the quantitative survey conducted in the affected communities through paper-based questionnaires administered to respondents. In the second subsection, the key findings of the focus group discussion held in the concession-affected communities are presented, while the final subsection presents the results of key informant interviews held with representatives of concession companies and other officials.

Quantitative Survey Findings

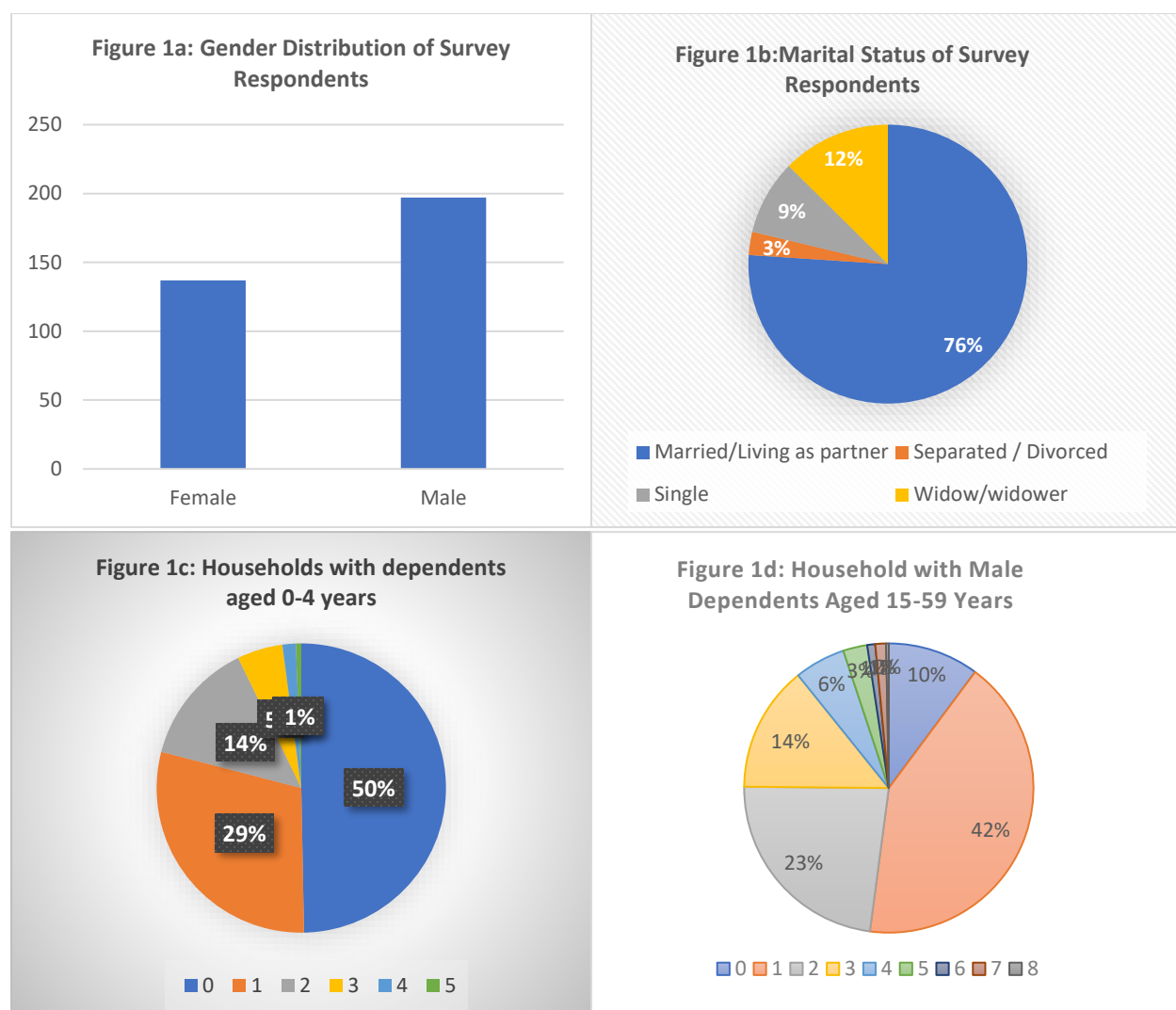
This section discusses key findings of survey covering six thematic areas—household demographic and health status; natural disasters and household access to humanitarian assistance; the nature of household agricultural and livestock production activities; household income and livelihood sources; household livelihood shocks and coping strategies, and household asset endowment. These themes are separately discussed in the proceeding sections.

Household Demographics and Health Status

The survey was conducted in predominantly rural communities with female respondents constituting about 41 percent. Majority of those surveyed lives in households that are male headed (59 percent), with 76 percent of respondents either married or cohabiting with partners (see figures 1a & 1b). Rural households with couples either in a marital or cohabitating relationship are important for sustaining livelihoods since both partners tend to contribute to creating values and managing household resources. In terms of size, the number of individual living in a household in the survey communities ranges from 2 to 31 with majority of households reporting 4-12 dependents. Survey responses also indicate that half of respondents live in households that have some dependents aged 0-4 years, while about 10 percent of households lacks a male member 15-59 years old (see figures 1c & 1d). The presence of adult male member in rural farming household is important because males tend to perform majority of the difficult tasks in farming. Rural households lacking male adult member have limited capacity to engage in

sustainable livelihood activities and are therefore usually poorer compared to others with adult male members.

Figure 1: Demographics and Household Conditions

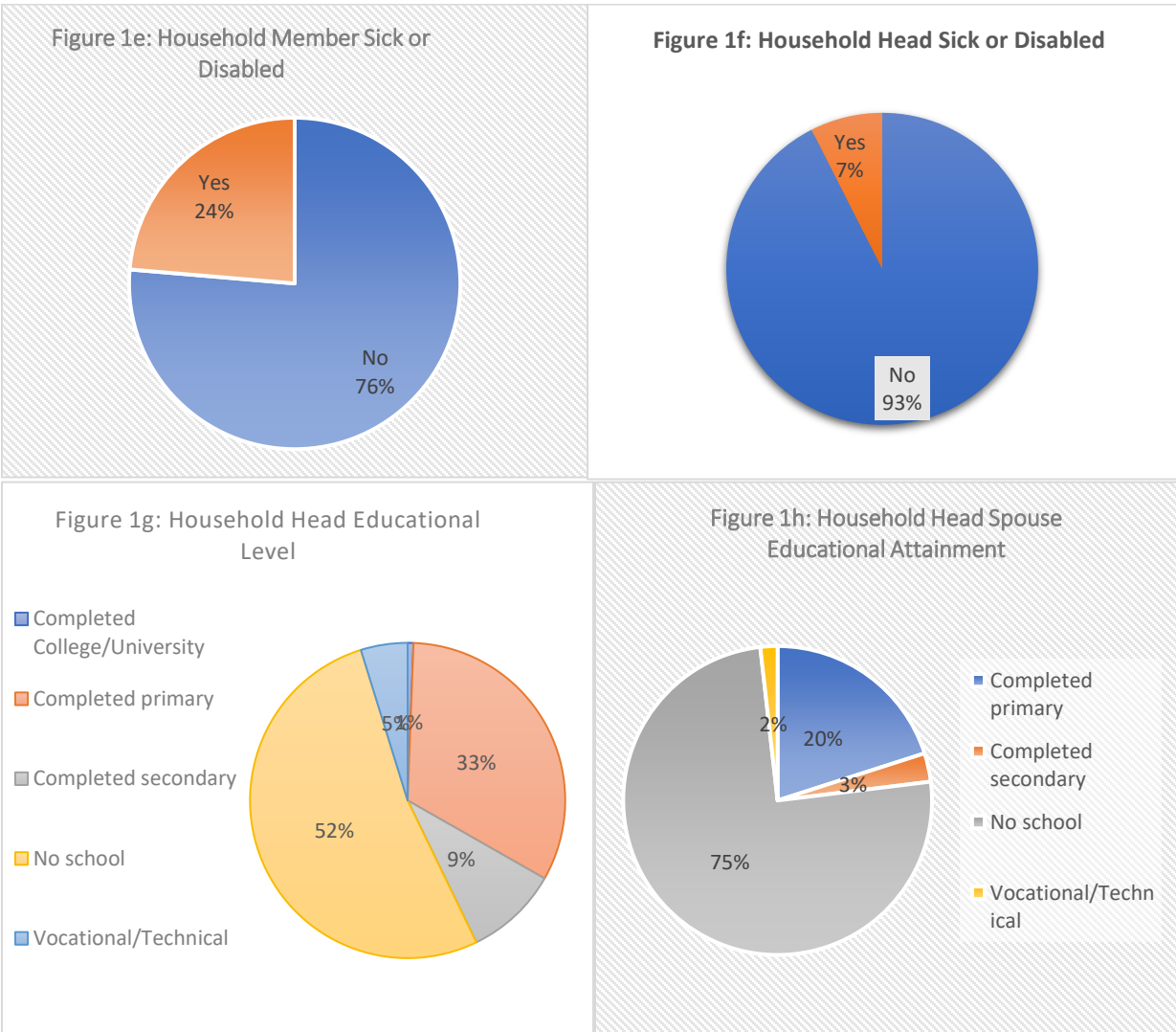


Source: Field Survey Data

With respect to disability and health status of household members, about 76 percent of respondents reported no disabled or sick household members, while about 7 percent reported household heads that are either sick or disabled (see figures 1e & 1f). While the percentage of

households with sick or disabled head may be low, those households are likely to be vulnerable to food insecurity and poverty given the significant role household heads play in livelihood generation. The survey further revealed low educational attainment among household heads and their spouses. According to respondents, only a little over one-third of household heads acquired primary education and only about 20 percent of the spouses of household heads completed primary education (see figures 1g & 1h). Majority of household heads and their spouses have never had any formal education, and those with vocational and tertiary education are either serving in some capacities with the companies in their communities or work for government institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture as local Agriculture Extension Officers or teachers with the Ministry of Education. Low or lack of education, which is typical of rural households, usually result to low productivity and often poverty among household members.

Figure 1: Demographics and Household Conditions

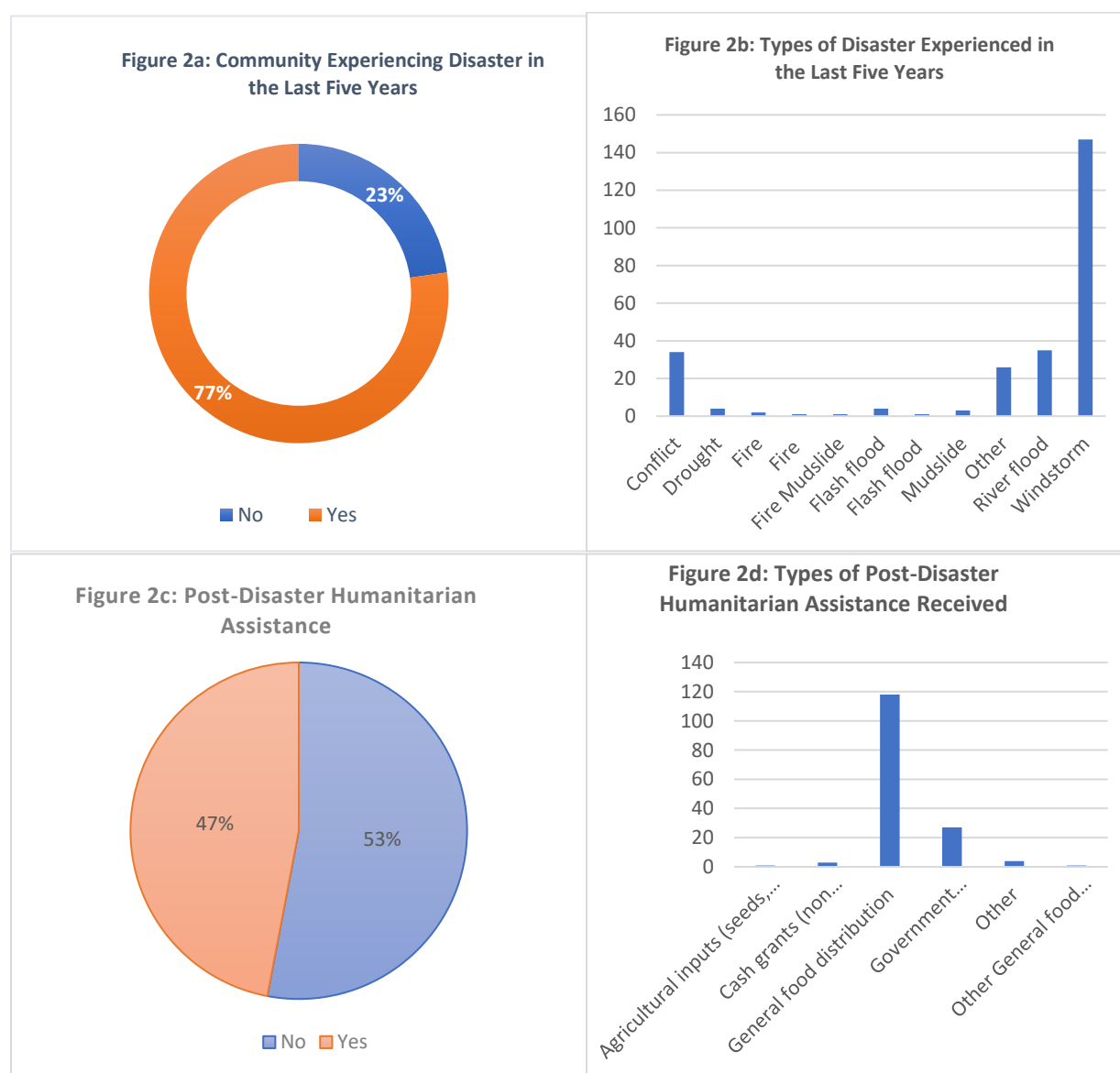


Source: Field Survey Data

Natural Disasters and Household Access to Humanitarian Assistance

The survey assessed the occurrence of disasters in the affected communities and the level of humanitarian response in cases of occurrence. From the survey results, most of the concession communities are prone to disaster triggered either by natural incidences or concession activities. In the surveyed communities, majority of the respondents reported experiencing some form of disasters over the last five years prior to the assessment. From the survey participants, windstorm is the predominant hazard occurring in these communities along with other forms such as flooding, drought, fire and mudslides. According to the survey findings, 77 percent of respondents experienced hazards or natural disasters with nearly 60 percent of respondents reportedly experiencing windstorm (Figure 2a & 2b). Respondents attributed the intense windstorms to concession activities such as clearing of large tracks of land for oil palm production which result the destruction of high tree canopies which serve as wind breakers. Two communities reported frequent occurrence of strong storms which usually result to property damage and displacement of community residents. In spite of the frequent occurrence of storms and other reported hazards, however, a marginal number of respondents reported leaving their homes as a result of home getting destroyed due to severe storms.

Figure 2: Hazards and Humanitarian Response in Affected Communities

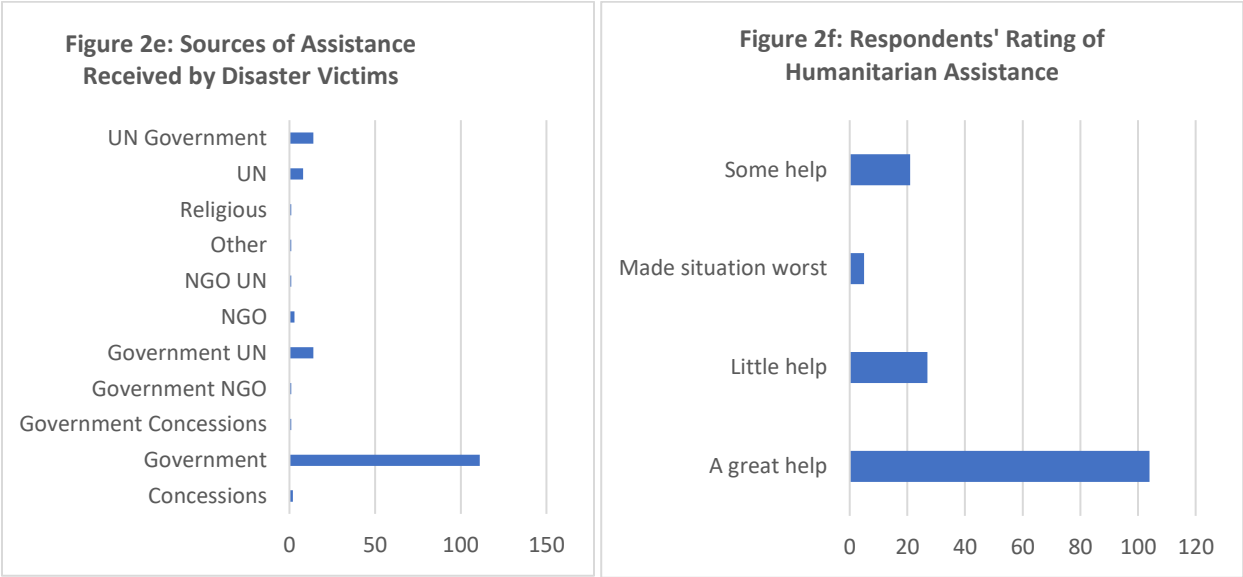


Source: Field Survey Data

Those leaving home as a result of home destruction spend more time away with family members and friends who provide shelters and other livelihood supports. Humanitarian assistance during disaster also remains scarce in the affected communities. From the surveyed respondents, more than half of those experiencing disasters reported receiving no assistance (figure 2c); and of those receiving assistance, 75 percent reported receiving general food assistance while 17 percent reported government compensation either in cash or in-kind. The in-kind assistance reportedly comes in the form of construction materials for the reconstruction of damaged infrastructures to restore community living facilities (see figure 2d). The assessment further revealed that government remains the main source of disaster response in the affected communities. Of those

receiving humanitarian assistance, over 70 percent attributed it to the government (figure 2e). The National Disaster Management Agency of Liberia along with the Liberia National Red Cross are the key government institutions reportedly providing emergency humanitarian aid to victims of disaster in the assessed affected communities. Those receiving humanitarian assistance showed appreciations for such assistance as majority of the respondents rated those assistance as being of great help to the household (Figure 2f).

Figure 2: Hazards and Humanitarian Response in Affected Communities



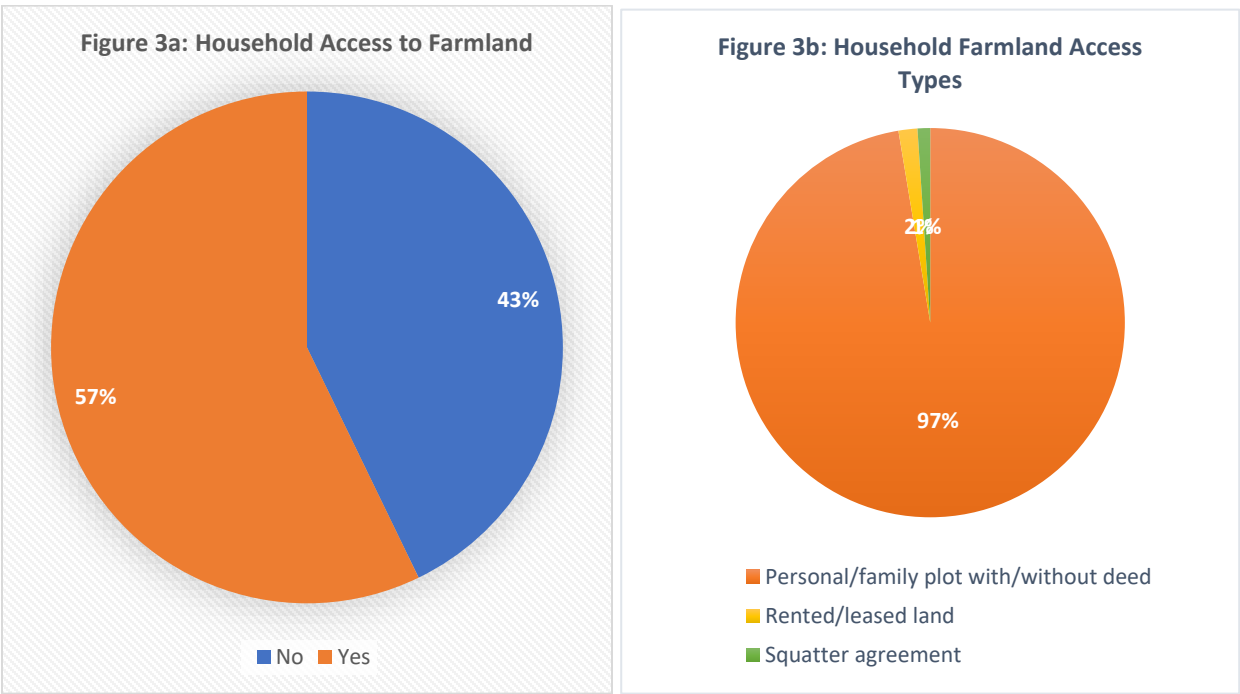
Source: Field Survey Data

Nature of Household Agricultural and Livestock Production Activities

Most households in agricultural concession areas remain engaged in some forms of agricultural activities. The survey assessed households' land access and nature of agricultural activities in the affected communities to determine the key livelihood sources and activities existing in those communities. The results indicate that majority of the respondents have some forms of access to farmland for agricultural activities despite the presence of the concession in their communities (Figure 3a). From the survey findings, 97 percent of those with access to farmland either own it personally or through family inheritance, or have been carrying on production activities on the land with neither proper entitlement nor title deeds (Figure 3b). Such pieces of farmland are either community owned or lowland areas within the concession parameters without any squatter agreements. In some communities in concession areas, there are reports that community members farming on lowland areas within the parameters of concession area are sometimes prevented from farming on such land by the company. In the Kohn-Zodua community in Grand Cape Mount County, for example, the Sime Darby concession reportedly prevented the community from using any of the lowland areas within the parameters of the company for fear that farming activities would result to fire that could cause destruction of crops on the plantation. There are also a few households engaged in production activities on farmlands with access

granted through informal rental or lease agreements that require the farmer surrender a share of harvest to landlords depending on the quantity of harvested crops.

Figure 3: Household Farmland Access and Agricultural Activities

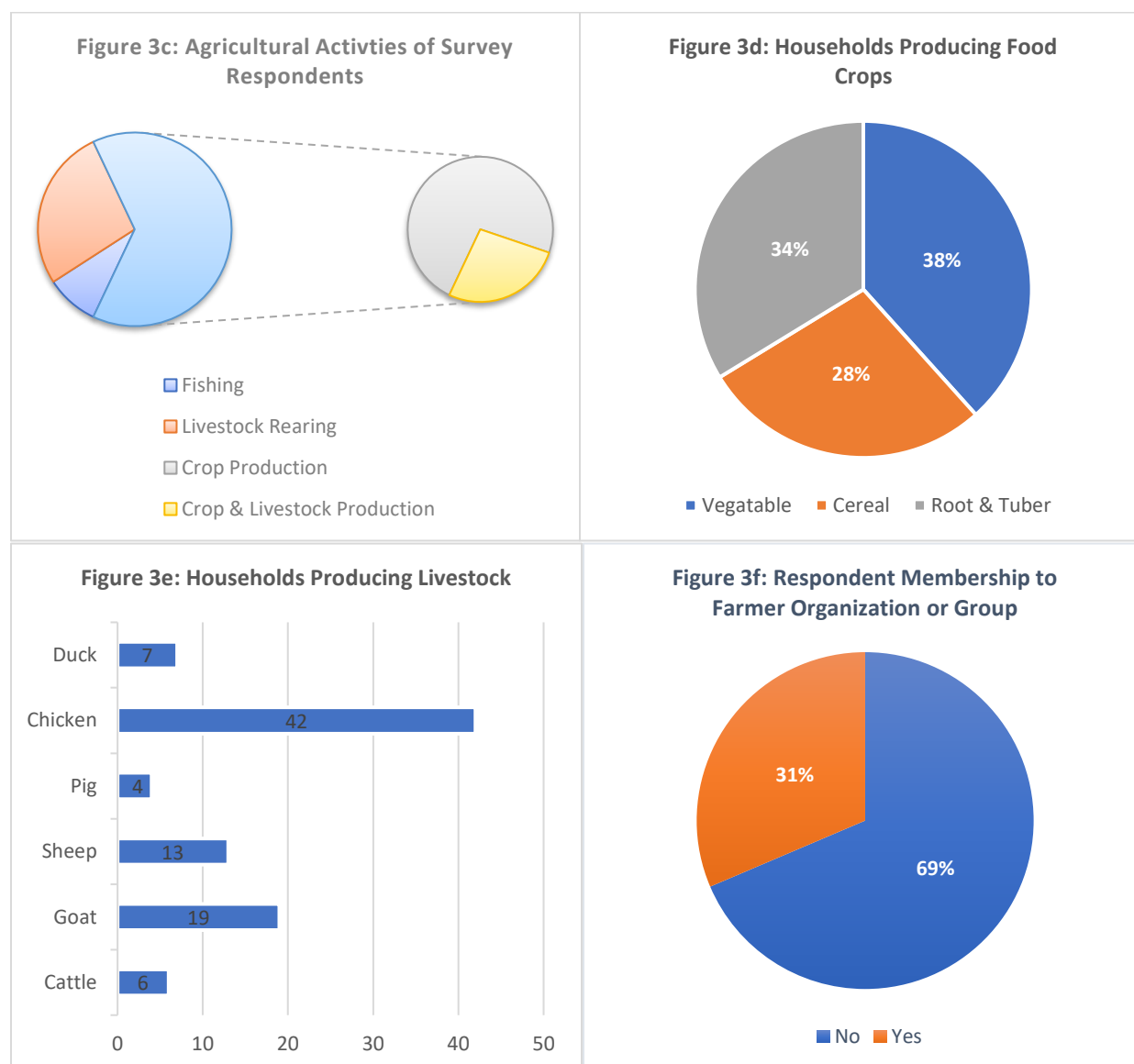


Source: Field Survey Data

The survey further assessed whether those with access to farmland are utilizing such land for livelihood activities, and the nature of such activities. Majority of households with land access in concession communities are engaged in agricultural activities. As depicted in Figure 3c, large share (64 percent) of respondents are engaged in a combination of crop and livestock production followed by crop production (47 percent) and livestock rearing accounts for 17 percent(Figure 3d). A greater proportion of those engaged in growing crops are involved with vegetable production (bean, peanut, bitter ball, tomatoes, okra, pepper, green, eggplant) followed by root and tuber crops, (cassava, sweet potatoes, eddoes, yam). Figure 3d further reveals that less than a third of the respondents are engaged in the production of cereal crop, mainly rice and corn (maize)—even though rice is main staple food in the country with its import bill constituting over 40 percent of Liberia’s food import bill in 2020.¹⁸ For those engaged in livestock production, subsistence chicken production dominates (Figure 3e). Majority of the households reported raising chicken at home for family consumption, but sometimes sell a few to generate income for some other household expenses.

¹⁸ Central Bank of Liberia Annual Report, January 2021.

Figure 3: Household Farmland Access and Agricultural Activities



Source: Field Survey Data

The survey also assessed whether those with access to farmland and engaged in agricultural activities are members of any farmer groups or organizations, as membership to such organizations doesn't only enable one have access to production resources but also enable knowledge development in farming communities through corporate training. Responses from survey participants show that a third of those with access to farmland and engaged in farming are members of 50 farmer organizations or groups located across the affected communities in the four counties (Figure 3f)¹⁹. However, membership to those groups or organizations have not resulted to capacity enhancement for many of the community members, except the case of

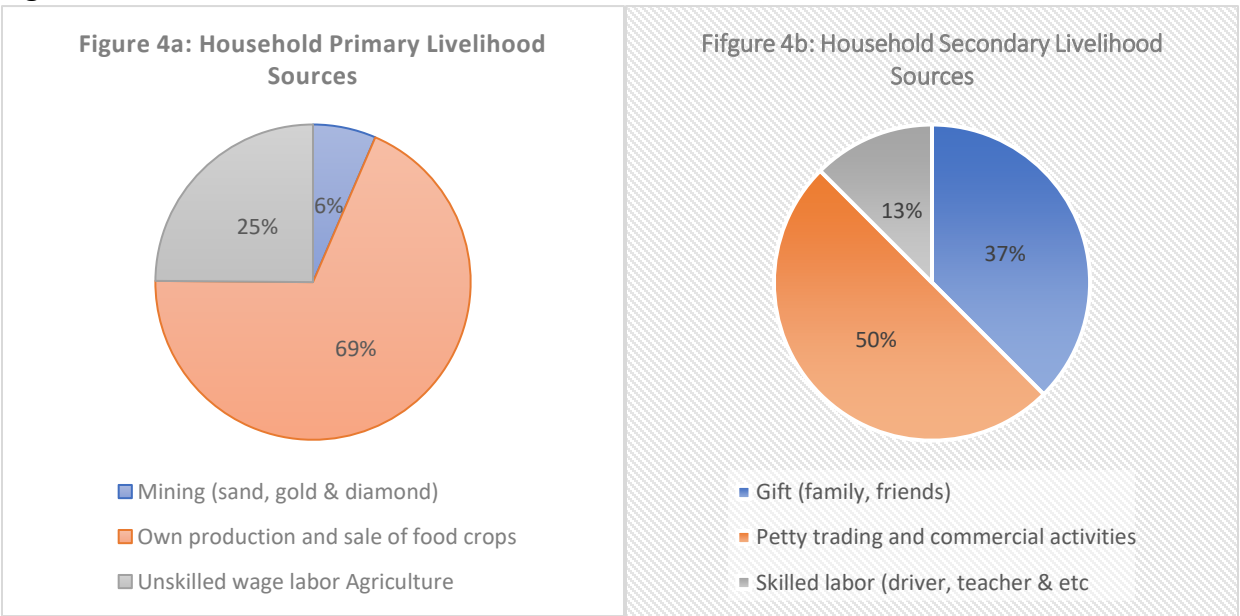
¹⁹ Respondents revealed membership to 50 groups ranging from village saving loan associations to Teacher's Club.

village saving clubs whose members reported borrowing from club to purchase some farm inputs. Most respondents indicated they have not had trainings or participated in any form of training organized by or for the group to which they are members.

Household Income and Livelihood Sources

In most of the concession communities, households have limited income and livelihood sources. The survey asked respondents to name the income generating and livelihood activities of their households in three categories—primary, secondary and tertiary. The activities at these three levels were then ranked according to the top three activities. The results in Figure 4 depict that the dominant sources of income and livelihood in affected communities are agriculture, petty trading (small business management) and charcoal production. For most households, agricultural activities remain the primary source of income generation and livelihoods. Majority of respondents reported own production and sales of food crops as the primary source of household incomes and livelihoods (Figure 4a). According to respondents, though engaged in subsistence farming, households usually manage to sell a portion of harvested crops to generate income for expenditures on household necessities such as clothing, family medicals, education and other food and non-food essentials. For half of the survey respondents, petty trading and commercial activities remain the predominant secondary source of household livelihoods and income generation (Figure 4b). Households reportedly engage in commercial activities along with farming and other activities for livelihood support. Some households also depend on gifts from friends and family members to supplement primary income and livelihood source, while a few utilize income from skilled labor such as teaching and driving for livelihood support.

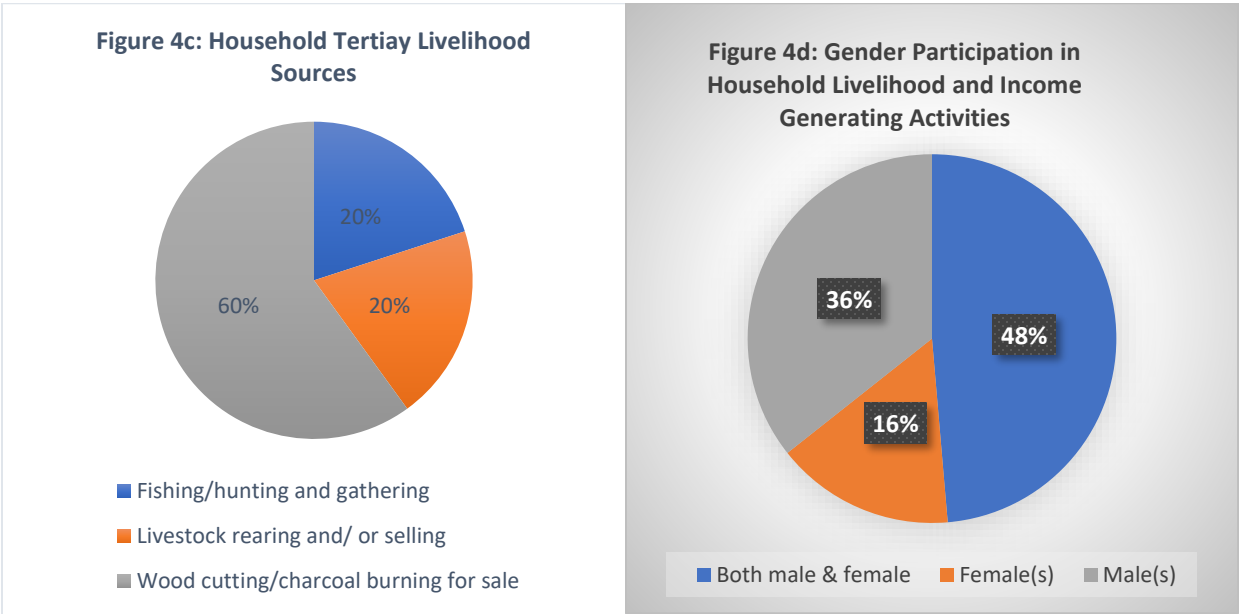
Figure 4: Income Generation and Livelihood Activities of Households in Affected Communities



Source: Field Survey Data

Besides the key activities classified by households as primary and secondary sources of income and livelihoods, households also engage in other activities for livelihood support. For majority of the respondents, charcoal production is the main tertiary source of income and livelihoods (Figure 4c). 60 percent of the respondents ranked wood cutting/charcoal production as the main tertiary activity while 40 percent of respondents equally share livestock production and fishing/hunting as households’ tertiary source of income and livelihood support. In terms of gender participation, activities that allow both male and female participation dominate followed by male-dominated activities (Figure 4d). For instance, in most communities, both male and female household members engage in farming activities, while hunting and charcoal production are carried out predominantly by male household members.

Figure 4: Income Generation and Livelihood Activities of Households in Affected Communities



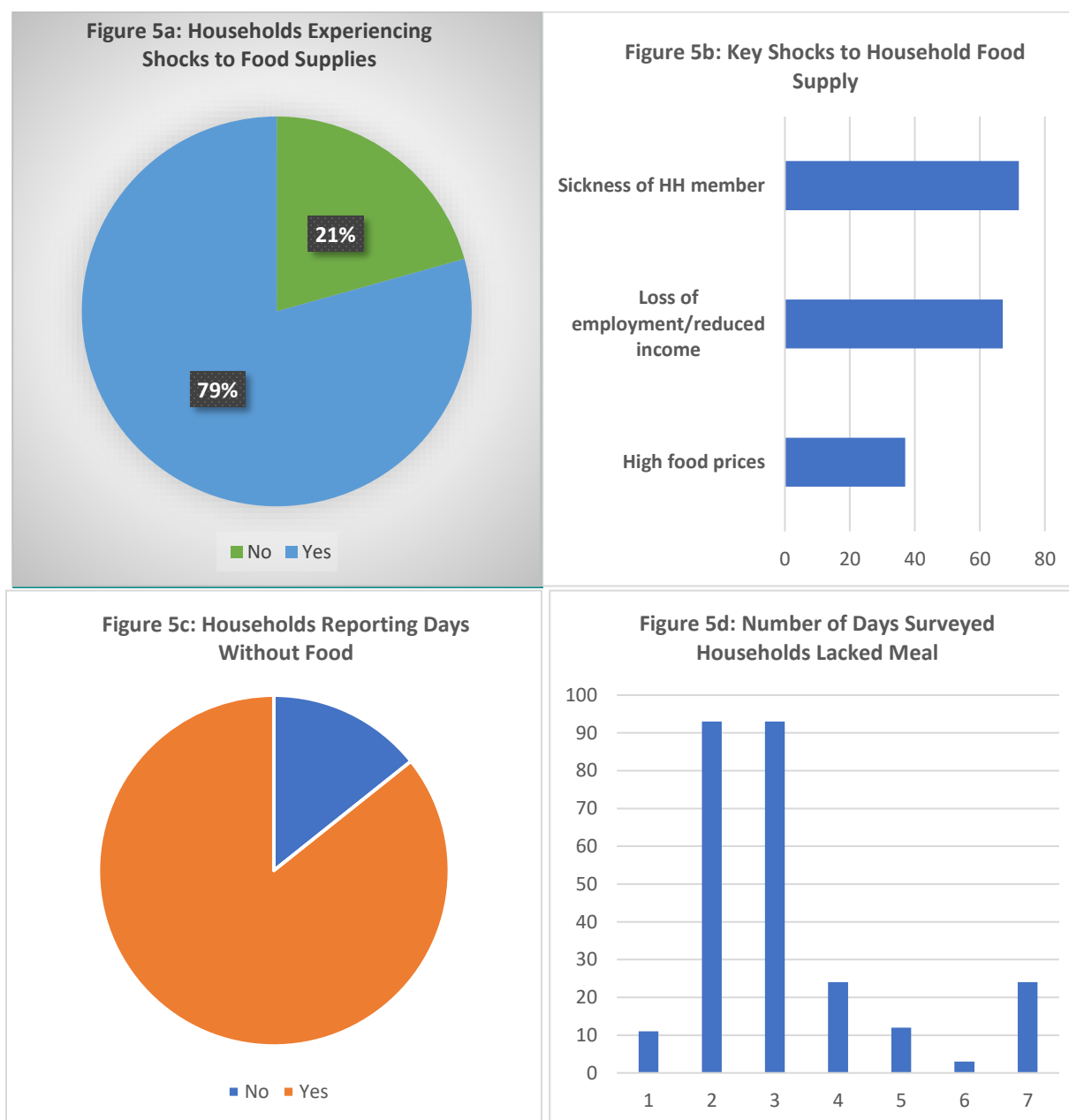
Source: Field Survey Data

Household Livelihood Shocks and Coping Strategies

Households in concession-affected communities, especially those not directly benefiting from employment opportunities created by the concession, are vulnerable to diverse kinds of shocks to livelihoods. In an effort to understand the shocks or risks community members have experienced to their livelihood support system, the survey asked respondents whether their households have, in the past six months, experienced any shock that resulted to difficulties in meeting household food needs. Responses from surveyed community members indicate that more than three-quarters of households faced shocks to food supplies (Figure 5a). The assessment further sought to understand the main challenges or shocks to household food supplies experienced over the last six months prior to the survey²⁰. Of the numerous risks mentioned, sickness of household member, loss of employment/reduced income, and high food price ranked the top three (Figure 5b). About 41 percent of respondents reported *sickness of household member* as the major shock to household food supply during the period, followed by loss of employment/reduced income with about 38 percent.

²⁰ HH named the main risks as animal pest destruction of crops; COVID-19 pandemic, crop failure, death of HH member, debt, heavy rain/floods, high food prices, high fuel/transport costs, damaged house, limited access to markets/bad roads, loss of employment/reduced income, and sickness of HH member.

Figure 5: Household Livelihood Shocks and Coping Mechanisms



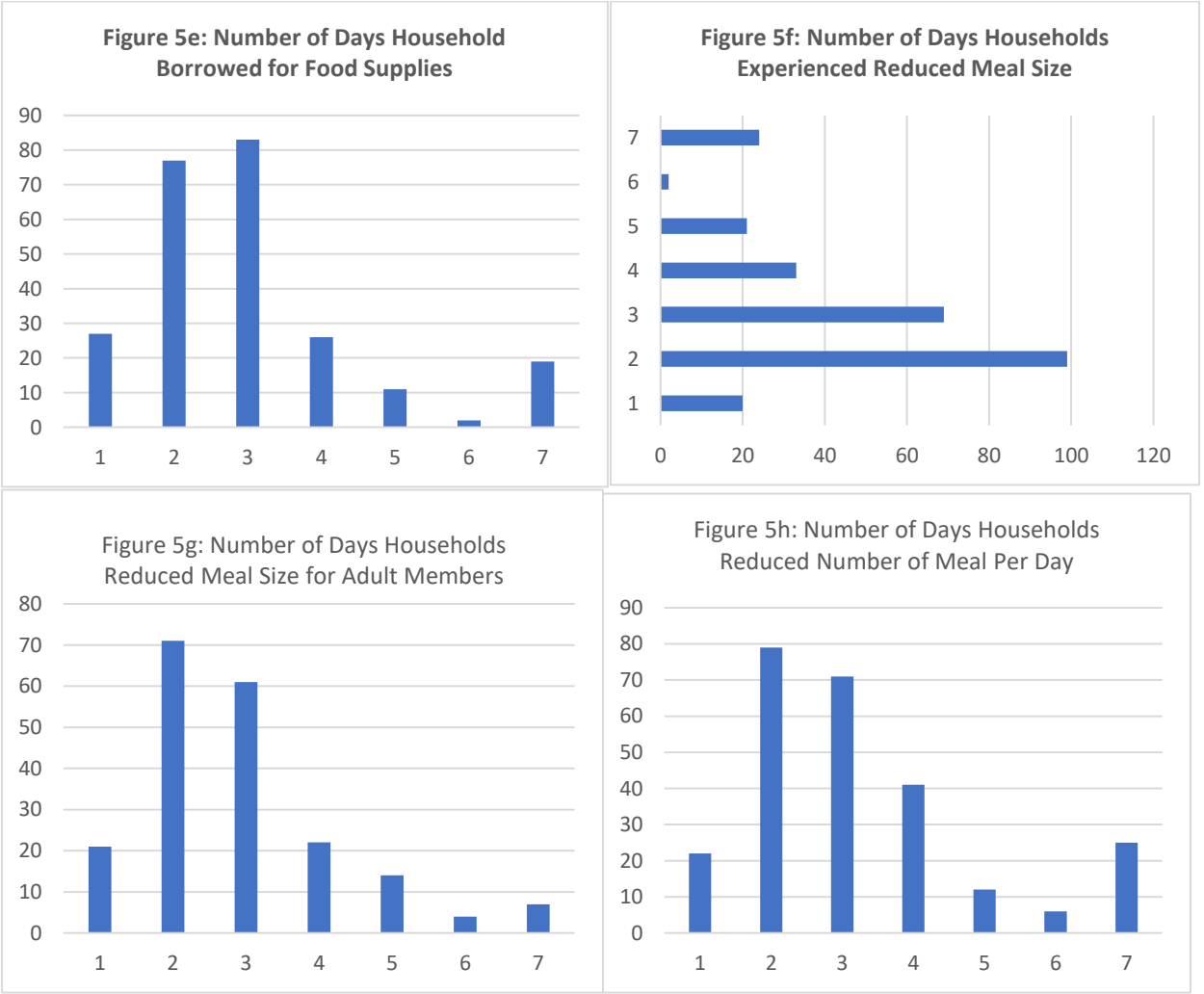
Source: Field Survey Data

High food price was the main shock to household food supplies for communities in the south-eastern region where bad road network hinders the flow of food from the capital to those locations and thus lead to large price differentials between areas accessible by road network and those inaccessible. The risks to food supplies resulted to many households going for days without having a meal. Responses provided by survey participants revealed that about 86 percent of households experienced food shortage as a result of the shock (Figure 5c), while majority of

households experienced 2-3 days of limited food supplies or no meal with some experiencing up to seven days of household food shortage (Figure 5d).

The limited food supply resulted to household taking a series of actions as coping or mitigating measures. For the surveyed population, majority of households either purchased food on credits or borrowed money for food purchase, while others spent their savings to provide household meals. According to the survey respondents, majority of households borrowed to provide meal for 2-3 days while some borrowed for up to seven days (Figure 5e). Households also reduced meal size for adult members to increase food consumption by younger members during the food constrained period (Figure 5f). Similarly, some households reported coping with the constrained food situation by either reducing overall meal size for the household or reducing the frequency of household daily meal (Figure 5g & 5h).

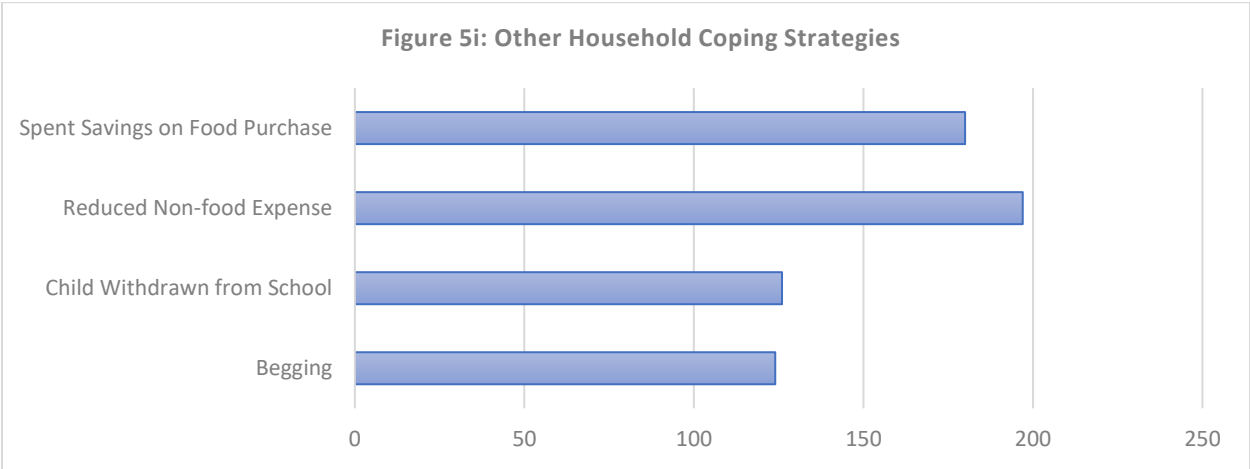
Figure 5: Household Livelihood Shocks and Coping Mechanisms



Source: Field Survey Data

In addition to the coping strategies aforementioned, some households further responded to the food shocks by reducing expenses on non-food commodities while others had to withdraw kids from school as a result of the lack of food, or the lack of money to purchase food (Figure 5i). For households with savings prior to the food shock, they spent such savings on food purchase as coping mechanism while some household resorted to begging.

Figure 5: Household Livelihood Shocks and Coping Mechanisms

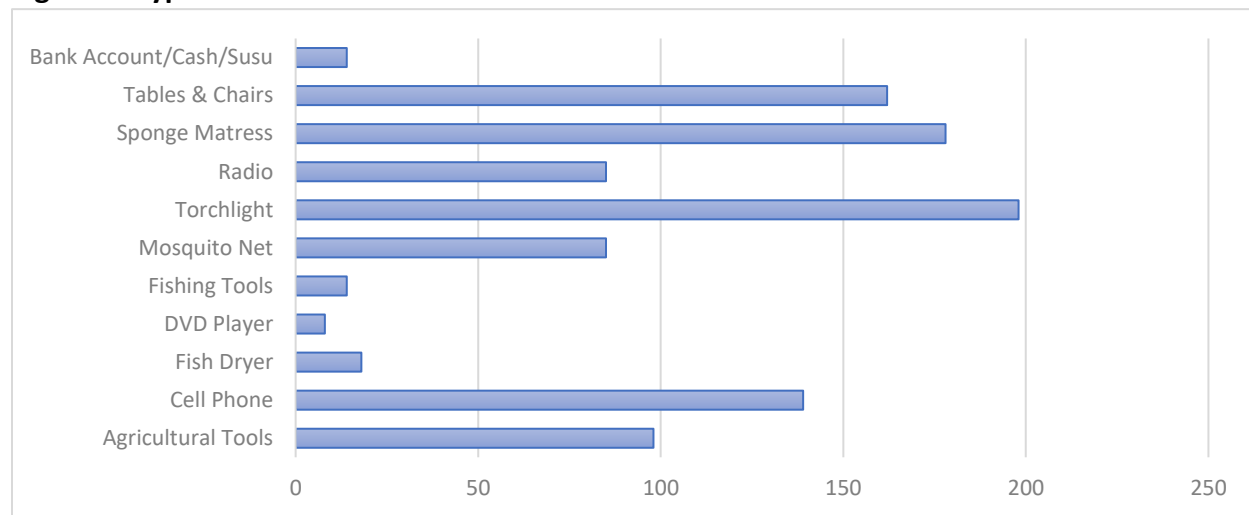


Source: Field Survey Data

Household Asset Endowment

In addition to access to farmland reported by more than half of the survey respondents, households in the concession-affected communities own several tangible assets for household use. These assets range from basic household utilities such as DVD plyers used for household comfort, to farm inputs used for agricultural production to support livelihood activities. Though a typical household in these communities own a combination of different assets, Figure 6 highlights the key assets reported by respondents. According to the survey findings, majority of the surveyed household own torchlight, sponge mattresses, table & chairs and cell phones along mosquito nets and radios. Households also own production-support inputs such as agricultural tools, fishing tools and fish dryers. Few households further reported financial assets in the form of bank accounts, cash holdings and membership to susu clubs or village saving loan associations (VSLA).

Figure 6: Types of Household Assets



Source: Field Survey Data

Focus Group Discussion Findings

The assessment team held 32 focus group discussions in the in the four project counties with 492 participants comprising 57 percent females. The discussions focused on the six thematic areas covering livelihood activities of community members prior to concession activities; expectations of community members of the presence of concession company; livelihood activities of community members with existence of concession; impact of Concession activities on the livelihoods of affected communities; needed interventions to restore livelihoods of affected population in concession areas, and other groups (NGO, GOL, Private Citizen, Etc.) providing assistance to affected communities. The following paragraphs present results from the discussions.

Livelihood activities of affected communities prior to concession agreement

Agriculture was the primary livelihood activity of dwellers of agricultural concession communities prior to concession agreement. Other activities such as charcoal production and petty trading served as alternative sources. In Grand Cape Mount County, the affected population primarily engaged in the production of food crops such as rice, cassava, potatoes and vegetable along with fishing and hunting for livelihoods. They also extracted wood from forest for charcoal production, and engaged in petty trade as alternative livelihood sources. Though the concession-affected communities in Nimba also engaged in agricultural activities along with charcoal production and petty trading, perennial crop production dominates their agricultural activities. They engage largely in the production of cash crops such as rubber, cocoa, coffee, and oil palm as well as fruit crops such as orange, plantain, banana and avocados for income generation. They also produced food crops such as rice, cassava, sweet potatoes and eddoes, and engaged in livestock production along with fishing and hunting for livelihood. Although the affected communities in both counties

engaged in farming prior to the establishment of concessions in their communities, those in Nimba engaged in more long-term husbandry practices than their counterparts in Grand Cape Mount. Agricultural activities were also key livelihood activities for affected communities in Maryland and Sinoe Counties. In Maryland County, community members engaged predominantly in the production of rubber, sugar cane, cocoa, and coconut along with food crops such as rice, cassava and plantain for livelihood. They also practiced cattle rearing along with fishing and hunting as alternative livelihood sources, while In Sinoe, the main livelihood activities are farming, hunting and fishing.

Expectations of community members of the presence of concession company

The concession-affected communities reported being very optimistic upon hearing of the possibility of establishing concessions in their communities, and expected to benefit in five areas: education, employment creation, better healthcare services, and improved sanitation and road infrastructure.

- **Education:** Given that concession agreements impose some responsibilities on concessions in the form of corporate social responsibilities, some communities saw the establishment of the concessions as opportunities for their kids to have access to quality education as reward or benefit for hosting the concession. Interviewed community members cited the case of the Firestone as the basis for the expectation of better education for their kids, as the Firestone School System has been one of the best in providing primary and secondary education in the country. These communities expected to benefit from employment with the companies to enable their kids go to the company-sponsored schools.
- **Employment opportunities:** Formal employment opportunities remain limited in most rural communities in Liberia. With the presence of a concession, community members had high expectations of employment opportunities for themselves and their children, which would have resulted to improvement in livelihood situations in their communities. Some community members said they felt job opportunities created by the concession would have enabled them transition from the hard labor and low output associated with subsistence farming to formal employment, which provides a more stable and sustainable source of livelihood.
- **Better healthcare services:** Most rural communities, especially in the remote concession areas, lack functioning healthcare delivery systems. With the establishment of a concession, most of the affected communities had hoped the presence of the concession would have created the opportunity for community members to access better healthcare services through the intervention of the concession. Some FDG participants even cited the Du-side Hospital run by Firestone as an example of how concessions could contribute to efficient and effective healthcare delivery just for company employees but also community members even if they have to pay; and said they had expectations of similar healthcare service delivery in their communities.
- **Improved water and sanitation facilities:** Water and sanitation facilities remain weak, and most often lacking in most rural communities, especially in remote communities that are usually attracted to agriculture concessions. Affected communities narrated that they expected the establishment of concession in their communities to be accompanied by the construction of hand pumps and latrine facilities for the community.

- **Improved road networks:** Bad-road condition remains key obstacle to sustainable livelihoods in most rural communities. Bad roads prevent farmers' access to market for their products as well as deprive them of access to critical farm input and food commodities during wet seasons when most remote communities are cut off. The expectation of most of the concession communities was that their roads would be built or rehabilitated with the arrival of the concession.

The focus group discussions revealed that most of these expectations have not been met in some of the affected communities. In the key informant interviews findings presented in the final section, some concession representative acknowledged financial difficulties as main reason for not meeting some of the expectations of the affected communities.

Livelihood activities of community members with existence of concession

The presence of concession has changed livelihood sources assessed in communities. Even though agricultural activities remain prominent in the concession-affected communities, most of the communities now engage in both agricultural and off-farm activities for livelihood supports.

- **Agricultural Activities:** most residents in the affected communities still depend on subsistence agriculture along with fishing and hunting as main livelihood source. Vegetable gardening and cassava production dominate farming activities in Grand Cape Mount where some farmers reported paying rental fee of LD\$2,500 to facilitate production activities. Affected communities also engage in cassava value addition in the form of gari and fufu for income generation and household consumption, and practice livestock production for family consumption. In Nimba county, however, agricultural activities are characterized mostly by cash-crop production along with vegetables and staple food crops. The affected communities predominantly cultivate sugar cane for the production of a locally consumed rum, cane juice, along with rice, cassava, plantain and banana. They also grow perennial crops such as rubber and cocoa for income generation. In the south-eastern counties of Maryland and Sinoe, subsistence farming is also practiced by some residents of affected communities but on a very low scale due to limited farmland access.
- **Off-farm Activities:** Most affected communities engage in activities such as casual contract employment with the existing concession company, small-business management (petty trading), commercial motorbike transportation, and charcoal production for livelihood support.
 - *Contract employment:* In Grand Cape Mount County, some households reported having one member being hired by the company²¹. This was confirmed through by KII with MPOI Human Resources Manager who informed the team members that the company hired 609 persons (one person per household) from affected communities. Some residents of concession-affected communities in Nimba and the south-eastern counties also reported having temporary and long-term employment contracts with the existing concession company to generate income for livelihood support.

²¹ FGD participants reported that the company community empowerment strategy allows employment of one member of affected households

- *Small business management:* In addition to employment with concession companies, affected community residents also engage in small business management such as provision shops, “table market”, food sales (“cook shops”), and other petty trading activities for livelihood support.
- *Charcoal production:* Most residents in concession-affected communities reported charcoal production as the key household livelihood source. In Nimba county, however, charcoal production tends to supplement household income, but not primary income source.
- *Commercial motorbike transportation:* Motorbike transportation has become key income generating activity in most rural communities in Liberia. In the concession-affected communities assessed in Nimba County, FGD participants reported commercial motorbike transportation as the primary source of livelihoods for some community members.

Impacts of Concession Activities on Livelihoods of Affected Communities

The presence of concessions in the assessed communities has had both positive and negative impacts on community residents. Focus group discussions revealed the positive impacts as access to educational facilities, livelihood support opportunities created by concession companies, access to health and sanitation facilities, and other social services provided by the existing concession companies. But there are also negative impacts such as loss of farmland through land expropriation, and environmental pollution resulting from concession companies’ activities.

Positive Impacts:

- **Educational facilities:** In Grand Cape Mount County, the presence of concession companies resulted to the construction of a school for seven concession-affected communities, and scholarships for some students from affected communities to study at secondary and tertiary institutions in and out of the county²². Affected communities in Nimba also reported having access to some educational facilities and scholarships as a result of the presence of concession companies. Concession companies also constructed elementary, junior and senior high schools in affected communities in Maryland and Sinoe counties, and provided scholarships for affected community members’ children to study at various secondary and tertiary institutions.
- **Livelihood opportunities:** The presence of concession companies in the assessed communities has created livelihood opportunities for some community members. In some affected communities in Grand Cape Mount County, for example, MPOI hired 609 members of affected and trained some youth community members in hand pump repair. FGD participants in Nimba County also mentioned job opportunities created by existing concession company, and the enhancement of life skills for some member as positive impacts of the presence of concession companies. The Maryland Oil Palm Plantation (MOPP) and Golden Valorem Liberia (GVL) are said to have provided employment and short-term contracts for some citizens from the affected communities in Maryland and Sinoe Counties.

²² The seven beneficiary communities are Senii, Damah, Timbo, Sengamah, Johnson town, Lain and Deniwea

Besides receiving employment opportunities to support livelihood activities, payment made by concessions to community members for damaged crops or properties also enable community members engage in other productive activities to support their livelihoods.

- **Health and sanitation facilities:** FGD participants in the affected communities mentioned the construction of clinics, hand pumps, and pit latrines as benefits from concession companies in their communities. Affected communities in Grand Cape Mount County expressed appreciations for hand pumps and clinics constructed by concession companies, but some complained that only company employees are allowed access to the health facilities. The concession companies also rehabilitated existing hand pumps in the communities to provide safe drinking water.
- **Other social services:** Some FGD participants also reported that concession companies in their communities provided entertainment such as DSTV channels, rehabilitated some road networks, distributed food and cash to some vulnerable community members, provided loan to small businesses, provided medical supplies to local clinics, and supported pilgrimages of some Muslim community members to Mecca.

Negative Impacts: Though the presence of concessions has created some positive impacts on host communities, two key negative impacts were highlighted by participants of the focus group discussions:

- **Loss of Farmland through expropriation:** Government granted concessions in most rural communities without proper engagements with community members. Affected communities complained that expropriation of their farmlands by government deprived them of the opportunity to engage in sustainable livelihood activities. All assessed concession-affected communities complained of the dispossession of their farmland, and that most communities now lack land for farming. A participant of the focus group discussion in Grand Cape Mount County complained they “took our farmland” and now there is “no land for farming” in the community. FGD participants in Nimba also complained that “our land was forcefully taken from us” and there is “no more land for farming”. In communities where compensations were paid for land expropriated, some recipients complained of low payment, while others complained of no or low compensation for crops damaged by concessions. In some communities in Nimba County where the concession company agreed to pay rental fees to communities for expropriated land, FDG participants complained of either delay or failure to pay. The KII with NRI representative confirmed delay in the payment of land rentals to community members.
- **Environmental pollution:** The presence of concessions has resulted to some environmental pollutions in the concession communities. Chemical discharge during company operations has resulted to water pollution in most affected communities, and contaminated fishes in some creeks in concession-affected communities in Grand Cape Mount and Nimba Counties. The contamination of fishes in rivers and creeks as a result of concession activities post health threats to community residents who depend on fishing for livelihoods. In Maryland County, FGD participants complained that chemical applied by MOPP in its operation area has led to contamination of the creek that serve as drinking water source thereby resulting to the death of some farm animals. Some affected communities also complained about sound pollution caused by moving train and large trucks conveying company’s cargo. Polluted wetlands

caused by chemical discharge as a result of concession activities also create health hazards for community residents and farm animals.

- **Intense windstorms due to concession activities:** Majority of focus group discussants complained of intense windstorms in their communities resulting from the destruction of trees by concession companies to plant oil palm and rubber. The destruction of trees which serve as wind breakers has exposed some communities to windstorms which have reportedly resulted to the destruction of homes and caused damages to valuable properties. This complaint was further confirmed the survey where majority of the respondents ranked windstorm as the greater risk to livelihood in their communities.
- **Other negative impacts** reported include long probational period (up to six months) practiced by some concession companies; high speed in concession areas resulting to death of citizens; increased criminal activities in concession communities, and lack of resettlement benefits for communities displaced by concession activities.

Suggested Interventions for Restoring Livelihoods in Concession-affected Communities

Most of the initial expectations of concession-affected communities are yet to be fully met. Focus group discussions with affected community members show that infrastructure constraints, limited healthcare facilities and educational services remain primary concerns for some communities while others are requesting assistance to restore livelihood support capabilities. This section summarizes the needs of concession-affected communities as revealed by FGD participants.

- **Capacity Development:** In most concession-affected communities, farming was the predominant source of livelihood for community members. Most families in those communities engaged in subsistence crop and livestock production for livelihood. However, with the concession companies taking over farmlands previously used by community members, most are now seeking alternative activities that support their livelihoods. FGD held in the MPOI concession area revealed that all the affected communities need some form of capacity building to strengthen their resilience and coping capacities. While the form of capacity-building need varies across communities, the dominant need is empowering women with life skills such as tie-dyeing, tailoring, soap making, pastry, country-cloth making, and entrepreneurial skills development. In Nimba County, only Gipo Town in Saclepea district highlighted women empowerment through skills development for the affected communities.
- **Educational facilities and supports:** Basic educational facilities and support services are still lacking in some concession-affected communities. In the Butaw, Bioh, Shakpeh, and Pobleh communities of Sinoe County, FGD participant raised the need for the construction of junior and senior high schools. The communities narrated that most students completing elementary education have no opportunity for further advancement, and thus have to result to either farming or find short-term contract employment with the concession company. Two communities in Grand Cape County, Deniwea and Kanga in Garwula district along with Gayblin in Nimba stressed the need for the construction of vocational schools for training over-aged students in life skills. FGD participants in the Flumpa community requested support for educational supplies for their school-going children, while the participants in the Korsin communities need scholarships from the concession to have their kids in school.

- **Support agricultural activities:** Agriculture remains an integral part of livelihood activities in most concession-affected communities. In some agricultural concession operating communities, there is potential to develop lowland ecosystem given the concession already occupies the highland, while some communities in mining concession areas have greater potential for agricultural production. In Grand Cape Mount County where MPOI has taken over the highland for its oil palm plantation, some affected communities see potential in lowland development for livelihood support. In the communities of Johnson, Lein, Deniwea, Kohn Zudua and Konjah in Grand Cape Mount County, FGD participant requested empowerment for swampland development for rice production, while affected residents of the Faile and Kinjor communities requested support for vegetable and poultry production. In Nimba County, affected communities in the Arcelor Mittal concession area requested the supply of agricultural tools and machineries for expansion of farming activities. FGD participants in Garyehbo community need assistance with developing oil palm plantation, while Gbapa FGD participants need assistance in post-harvest technology for the preservation of fruits and other farm products.
- **Water and Sanitation facilities:** Water and sanitation facilities remain key challenges in concession communities, but with varying severity across regions. In the south-eastern counties of Maryland and Sinoe, FGD participant raised the lack of safe drinking water and latrine facilities as a serious community health challenge. In some communities where hand pumps were constructed, some residents complained such facilities have got damaged but not been repaired. In Gewloken and Besseken communities, FGD participants asserted that the hand pump constructed by the company has since got damaged, and they called for assistance for the construction of new hand pumps. In old Sodoken and New Sodoken in Maryland County, participants complained that the sources of drinking water were destroyed through concession activities. The company did not provide them hand pumps; they explained they rely on boreholes (wells) for primary drinking water, and call for interventions to construct new hand pumps for community use. Similar concern was raised by FGD participants in Bioh, in Sinoe County, and Torkopa and Meekor in Nimba County who requested assistance for the construction of hand pumps. The construction of latrine was a major concern raised by FGD participants in Gbar, Grand Cape Mount County; Flumpa in Nimba County as well as in Old Sodoken and New Sodoken in Maryland County. These communities requested that the concession company build latrine facilities for the general welfare of their residents.
- **Healthcare facilities:** Healthcare service delivery remains weak in some concession-affected communities, while others lack facilities to provide healthcare services. In Grand Cape Mount Country, the Damah, Timbo, Deniwea, and Gbar communities in the Mano concession area lack healthcare facilities, and they requested that the concession should construct clinics and health centers in their communities. In the Flumpa community in Nimba county, FGD participants narrated the existing of a health center in the community, but the lack of medical drugs makes it difficult for residents to access healthcare services. In the south-eastern counties, healthcare services are more limited in the concession-affected communities in Sinoe County than in Maryland County. At the focus group discussions in Sinoe County, participants in the Butaw Butaw, Shakpeh and Pobleh communities lamented the lack of healthcare facilities as the key threat to their livelihoods. They narrated instances where a

sick person had to be taken over long distances to seek medical attention, and requested the construction of clinics in these locations.

- **Road infrastructures:** Road networks are either non-existing or in deplorable conditions in most concession-affected communities. Focus group discussions in three communities in Nimba County—Meekor, Torkopa, and Sehyigeh—revealed bad road condition as a key constraint to livelihood activities in those communities. The lack of road network was also identified as a key constraint during the FGDs held in the Old Sodoken and New Sodoken communities in Maryland County, while participants in all four communities in Sinoe County—Butaw-Butaw, Bioh, and Shakpeh & Pobleh—expressed the difficulties they encounter accessing market and essential commodities due to deplorable road conditions. They thus requested that efforts be made to construct critical roads (in the case of communities in Maryland), and rehabilitate existing road networks to alleviate constraints to their livelihood activities.
- **Employment opportunities:** Youth unemployment has been one of the key drivers of hostilities in most concession areas. During the focus group discussions held in concession-affected communities, creating employment opportunities for the youth emerged in all counties. In some communities, FGD participants complained that concession company hires only a person per house, even if there were more than one family per house, and most residents were qualified or capable for either contract or full employment. In the FGDs here in four communities in Sinoe County, all participants complained that GVL provides only limited employment opportunities for community residents. The FGD participants complained that employment opportunity created by MOPP is not only low but usually has very short duration (about 3 months). In five of the concession-affected communities in which focus group discussions were held in Nimba County, the predominant complaint was lack of job opportunities for community youth. FGD participants from concession-affected communities where youth unemployment was raised as major threat to livelihood therefore called on concessions to create employment opportunities for the youth in those communities.

Other groups (NGO, GOL, Private Citizen, Etc.) Providing Humanitarian Assistance

Humanitarian activities are present in some of the concession-affected communities, but limited or non-existing in others. In Grand Cape Mount County, besides the COVID-19 stimulus package provided by the Government of Liberia in partnership with WFP, the UNDP was involved with the training of women in Senii in 2015, and provided them LRD200,000 and four boxes for their village saving loan. UN women also supported the village saving loan scheme in Kohn Zodua community in 2019, while Conservation International (CI) helped with agricultural tools and farm inputs, and paid community volunteers and rangers for a year for forest protection. Oxfam also built seven hand pumps in the Kinjor community. In Nimba County, nearly all of the affected communities have enjoyed some levels of development activities. In Flumpa, UN Women provided human right training for women while MLDL provided training in managing land disputes. Living Water, a Christian NGO, installed two hand pumps in Gipo. FAO has also been involved with facilitating food processing activities in Makinto 1 community, and constructing poultry production structures for some community members in Zolowee. In Camp 4, the Forestry Development

Authority (FDA), a state-owned enterprise, began assisting with livestock restocking by providing four pigs to the community, and hired 21 community members to serve as community watch over the forest. Agricultural Relief Services (ARS) also supported the community by providing pig feed and supporting the village saving loan scheme. BRAC Liberia has also been engaged in helping build the community's capacity in village saving loan scheme by providing training and giving them seed money, while SADS provided improved cocoa seedlings to some farmers to support their production activities. In the south-eastern counties, however, the only reported humanitarian activity was the COVID-19 stimulus package provided by the Government of Liberia in partnership with WFP.

Key Informant Interview Findings

The assessment conducted key informant interviews with representatives of concession companies and relevant stakeholders in the affected communities to confirm some of the information provided during the focus group discussions. The assessment team had discussions with designated concession staff around the following themes: the main livelihood of community since the existence of the concession; concession companies' responses to community grievances; concession companies' views on assertion that their presence has resulted to livelihood loss; host communities' benefits from concession activities, and concession companies' suggestions for alternative livelihoods in affected communities. In Grand Cape Mount County, the team had interviews with the Human Resources Manager (Female) and a male Operation Manager at the Mano Palm Oil Industries. The team also interviewed the District Agriculture Officer (DAO) assigned in the district in which the concession operates. In Nimba County, the team met with the Human Resource Manager at Nimba Rubber Incorporated (NRI), and the Livelihood Officer, Resettlement Supervisor, and Community Relations Manager at Arcelor Mittal. The proceeding paragraphs discuss how concession companies addressed these issues during the interviews, with specific emphasis on responses from representatives of concession companies in Grand Cape Mount County and Nimba Counties.

Community Livelihood System with Concession Existence

Concession representatives interviewed affirmed creating employment opportunities as livelihood source for affected communities. According to the Human Resources Manager of MPOI, there are 1,450 personnel working for the company. The company hired 609 of these employees from households in concession-affected communities in Grand Cape Mount County to serve in various positions. 300 of the 609 are women serving in various capacities. In an event where any member of the 609 employees from the affected communities dies, he/she is replaced with another capable individual from the same household. In the case of dismissal for misconduct, however, households do not enjoy such replacement privilege. In the case of NRI, most of those living in the concession area still rely on agricultural production as the main source of livelihood. Some community members engage in lowland rice production while other engage in small scale production of rubber, cassava and plantain to support household livelihoods.

Concessions' Responses to Community Grievances

Most residents in concession-affected communities complained that concession activities have resulted to the pollution of creeks previously used for drinking water. Some also complained of damaged hand pumps or the lack of any in the communities to fetch drinking water. However, the management team at MPOI informed the assessment team that the company has erected pumps in all 17 concession-affected communities in Grand Cape Mount County. Management also mentioned instructing the company's water and sanitation (WATSAN) team to ensure pumps and latrines communities are functional. For communities in the NRI concession area, residents complained of non-payment of land rental and the loss of cultural and burial sites. NRI management acknowledged the community grievances and confirmed that most of the benefits promised in the concession agreement have not been fulfilled due to financial challenges faced by the company. Management however informed the assessment team that negotiations were ongoing between the communities and company management to address some of the grievances of the communities.

Companies' Views on Assertion of Lost Livelihoods Due to Concession Activities

Most concession communities complained of lost livelihood sources due to concession activities. They specifically highlighted the destruction of crops, loss of farmland, settlements, sacred sites and access to natural resources. Some also complained about the displacement of wildlife and pollution of fresh water for fishing and safe drinking water. But the management at MPOI refuted these views and counterargued that the company's presence has instead improved livelihood situation in the communities. The company's designated staff argued that affected communities have been trained in various skills to strengthen their capacities to engage in sustainable livelihood activities. Unlike MPOI, however, the representative of the Nimba Rubber Incorporated empathized with the communities and acknowledged that the company's activities have had some negative impacts on livelihood activities in the communities in the parameter of the concession. He promised to elevate community grievances to top management for redress.

Benefits of Concession Companies to Concession Communities

Concession companies view their presence in the host communities as mutually beneficial to both parties. According to MPOI, the host communities have benefited in several ways. Besides job creation that resulted to the hiring of 609 members of communities in the concession area, the company also paid compensation to affected communities for crops lost through concession activities. For those employed, the company provides them four 25kg-bags of rice to support livelihoods at the household level. The company also trained those hired from the affected communities in various skills useful for supporting livelihood activities. In addition to the direct individual benefits, the company also constructed schools in affected communities to support the education needs of families of both employees and non-employees of the company who reside in the communities. The company constructed a school in Senii for seven communities in the concession area and help with the maintenance of a school in the Kohn Zodua community. The company has also built a clinic in the concession area to provide healthcare services to its employees and their dependents; and provides ambulance and mobile health services to some affected communities. In addition, the company provides compensation for teachers in the

school constructed for the seven communities as well as supports village saving loan and micro-finance activities in some communities. The new management team has also promised to create more employment opportunities for members of the affected communities.

For affected communities in the NRI concession area, while the management acknowledged that most of what was promised the affected communities remain “theoretical”, the company supported the construction of a GSM Tower to improve residents’ network access as well as constructed a school in the Yehyibo community to provide educational services for school-aged children of the community and those of surrounding communities. The company further made direct cash distribution of LRD96,000.00 (Ninety-Six Thousand United States Dollars) to households in the affected communities, and provided scholarships for some citizens of the affected communities to acquire higher education and return to the communities for possible employment with the company.

In the Arcelor Mittal concession area, residents of affected communities have also benefited from school construction, tuition payment and distribution of school supplies for 100 community youths. In addition, the company developed and facilitated an education enhancement program in the communities and provided toolkits for trainees in mechanics, engineering, welding and tailoring. The company has also constructed hand pumps and wells for residents along the Nimba-Buchanan railroad as well as provided support for agricultural activities in some affected communities. For some affected communities, the company also trained women in small business management, and provided rice and other household materials to support vulnerable groups in affected communities.

Even though, comments were not generated from concessionaires in the GVL operated areas at the time of the assessment, the General Manager for sustainability of GVL indicated during the livelihood assessment report validation that the company provides support to education (provides salaries for schools teachers, has annual budget of USD 100,000 for scholarships for students up to university level), pays to the community development fund, builds community roads.

[Suggestions for Alternative Livelihood Support](#)

The key informant interviewees have diverse views on livelihood alternatives for concession-affected communities. The management of MPOI in Grand Cape Mount County feels supporting out-growers Schemes in agricultural concession communities and upgrading small farms or cooperative will provide better livelihood alternatives for affected communities. The role of the concessions would be to provide the needed technical supports to farmers engaged in the scheme. The company representative also spoke of the need for a Cultural Endowment Fund to be established for the purpose of providing loan assistance for women empowerment. The DAO in the host district of the concession called for the rehabilitation swampland to support communities’ involvement with rice production. For livelihood alternatives in the concession-affected communities in Nimba County, NRI management called for creating more employment opportunities and supporting livestock production for affected community members.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The WFP in partnership with the National Bureau of Concession conducted this livelihood assessment in the four concession-related conflict-prone counties in Liberia in April 2021 to understand how concession activities in the four project counties have affected household livelihood sources in the affected communities.

Conclusions

The assessment was conducted using survey questionnaires, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The following paragraphs provide the main conclusions of the findings of these exercises.

1. Concession activities have had both positive and negative impacts on host communities. The positive impacts include access to educational facilities, livelihood support opportunities created by concession companies, access to health and sanitation facilities, and other social services provided by concession companies; but there are also negative impacts such as loss of farmland through land expropriation, and environmental pollution resulting from concession companies' activities.
2. Households in concession-affected communities have limited income and livelihood sources. Most households in agricultural concession areas remain engaged in some forms of agricultural activities as main livelihood source. Households with land access are engaged in the production of vegetable crops (bean, peanut, bitter ball, tomatoes, okra, pepper, green, eggplant), and root and tuber crops, (cassava, sweet potatoes, eddoes, yam) on subsistence scales. The dominant sources of household incomes are agriculture, petty trading (small business management) and charcoal production.
3. Concession-affected community residents, especially those not directly benefiting from employment opportunities created by the concession, are vulnerable to diverse kinds of shocks to livelihoods. These shocks are dominated by sickness of household member, loss of employment/reduced income, and high food price. High food price remains the major shock to food supplies for communities in the south-eastern region where bad road network hinders the flow for food from the capital to those location, leading to large price differentials between areas accessible by road network and those inaccessible
4. Households in concession communities respond to livelihood shocks through diverse coping strategies, including purchasing food on credits; borrowing money to purchase food, and spending savings on food purchase. Other strategies include reducing spending on non-food commodities, reducing meal household size, reducing daily meal frequency, begging and withdrawing kids from school.
5. Most concession communities are prone to disasters, predominantly windstorms, triggered either by natural incidences or concession activities. In the surveyed communities, majority of the respondents reported experiencing some form of disasters over the last five years prior to the assessment and attributed the predominant hazard to the clearing of large tracks of land by concession companies for oil palm and rubber production and exposing

communities to intense windstorm as a result of the destruction of high tree canopies which serve as wind breakers.

6. Humanitarian assistance for disaster victims remains scarce in the affected communities and are provided mainly by government institutions such as the National Disaster Management Agency of Liberia and the Liberia National Red Cross.
7. Most concession communities have not fully received benefits promised in concession agreements; some concession representatives acknowledged financial difficulties as main reason for not meeting some of the expectations of the affected communities.
8. Concession companies have diverging views on the impacts of their activities in host communities. While some argued that concession activities have resulted to livelihood improvements in host communities, others accept the fact that their activities have had some negative effects.

Recommendations

The findings of the assessment reveal several issues associated with the operations of concessions in host communities. Host communities in some concession areas have lost livelihood sources and become exposed to different kinds of hazards. Households in some concession communities are also reportedly being deprived of access to wetlands in concession parameters which are not being used by concession companies. The following actions are recommended to restore livelihoods in concession affected communities and remedy some of the negative externalities.

1. National Bureau of Concession should ensure compliance of concessions companies to corporate social responsibilities under the concession agreements to address some of the issues of lost livelihoods associated with concession activities. The entity should also strengthen monitoring of concession activities to ensure compliance with environmental standards to mitigate some of the hazards resulting from concession operations
2. National Bureau of Concession should rally government support to enforce development of out-grower schemes in concession communities to create income generation opportunities and restore livelihood sources in concession-affected communities
3. National Bureau of Concession should work with concession companies and host communities to resolve issues surrounding the use of unused swampland in concession communities to ensure community access to such land for agricultural production
4. WFP and development partnerships should initiate and support programs for women empowerment in the concession affected communities. Such empowerment should include supporting women initiatives at community levels and enhancing women capacities to engage in productive activities.
5. Development partners should support swampland development in concession communities to enable community residents utilize such pieces of land for agricultural production for income generation to support household livelihoods.

Reference

Baseline Evaluation (2020): Strengthening Inclusive Civic and Political Participation and promoting constructive pre-election campaigning for Sustained Peace in Liberia

Central Bank of Liberia (2021) Annual Report 2020, https://www.cbl.org.lr/doc/annualreport_2020.pdf

E. Mulbah and J. Dennis, (2017), “Mapping Opportunities for the Consolidation of Peace in Liberia: Voices from the Country-side”, Liberia Peacebuilding Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs

Lomax, T. Kenrick J. and Brownell A. (2012), Sime Darby oil palm and rubber plantation in Grand Cape Mount County, Liberia

Land Disputes in Liberia: Views from Below (2012) Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 72

Liberia Early-Warning and Response Network (LERN): <https://pboliberiaewer.org/>; last visited 25/08/2021

Jamie Kalliongis (2017), Case Study: Large scale concessions in Liberia violate women’s land and resource rights and fail to deliver promised benefits

USAID (2018), “Women’s land rights in Liberia in Law, Practice and Future Reforms

William Q. Harmon (2019) Locals Seek Justice Against Oil Palm Companies

Annex 1: Focus Group Participants in Assessment Communities

Grand Cape Mount County

Community	District	Male	Female	Total
Darmah	Garwula	6	8	14
Timbo	Garwula	8	12	20
Lein	Garwula	6	8	14
Kohn Zodia	Garlawu	7	9	16
Kinjor	Golakoneh	8	11	19
KonJah	Garwula	6	8	14
Gbar Town	Garwula	8	10	18
Feilie Zodia	Garwula	8	9	17
Kayia	Garwula	7	8	15
Kanga	Garwula	7	9	16
Daniwea	Garwula	7	9	16
Johnson Town	Garwula	6	8	14
Senii	Garwula	6	8	14
		90	117	207

Nimba County

COMMUNITY	DISTRICT	Male	Female	Total
Flumpa	Saclepea	7	9	16
Gipo Town	Saclepea	7	11	18
Torkopa	Saclepea	6	9	15
Garyehbo	Saclepea	6	10	16
Gbayblin	Saclepea	6	7	13
Sehyigeh	Sanniquillie Mah	7	9	16
Korsin	Saclepea	6	9	15
Makinto	Sanniquillie Mah	7	9	16
Zolowee	Yasoneh	7	9	16
Gbarpa	Yasoneh	8	10	18
Camp #4	Yasoneh	6	10	16
New Yekepa	Yasoneh	7	10	17
		80	112	192

Maryland & Sinoe Counties

Community	District	Male	Female	Total
Tambo & Keken	Pleebo Soloken	7	8	15
Gewloken & Besseken	Pleebo Soloken	10	13	23
New Sodoken	Pleebo Soloken	4	4	8
Old Sodoken	Pleebo Soloken	4	4	8
Butaw- Butaw	Pleebo Soloken	6	7	13
Shakpeh& Pobleh	Tarjuowon-	6	7	13
Bioh	Tarjuowon-	6	7	13
		43	50	93
Total Participants		213	279	492