United Nations Human Rights

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Evaluation of the project "Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights in Liberia"

Final Evaluation Report

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A team of external consultants has prepared this report. The views expressed herein are those of the consultants and therefore do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of OHCHR.

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Acronyms

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CO	Country Office
CBO	Community Base Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
BOC	Board of Commissioners
DEXREL	Donors and External Relations Section
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ESC	Economic, Social and Cultural
ET	Evaluation Team
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FOTCD	Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
GOS	Government of Sweden
HRAP	Human Rights Advocacy Platform
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRPU	Human Rights Protection Unit
HQ	Headquarters
INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Queer
LNAP	Liberia National Action Plan
MDA	Ministries, Department, and Agencies
MOGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
NAP	National Action Plan
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PPMES	Policy, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation Section
PWD	People with Disabilities
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
TOC	Theory of Change
TOT	Training of Trainers
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TL	Team Leader
TM	Team Member
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WACPS	Women and Children's Protection Section
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security

Executive Summary

Background

Today the two conflicts which took place from 1983 to 1997 and from 1999 to 2003 in Liberia where over 250,000 people were killed, and grave human rights violations were perpetrated remains alive in the consciousness of the Liberian people. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in Accra, Ghana in 2003 ended the second Liberia civil war and acknowledged the dire need for the promotion and protection of human rights. The CPA called for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and an Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR). The TRC investigated gross human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred between January 1979 and 14 October 2003, including massacres, rapes, unlawful killings, and economic crimes. The INCHR was set up with a broad human rights mandate with a significant role to play to ensure that the recommendations set forth by the TRC would be implemented. In 2017, the INCHR in Liberia was accredited with "A" status by the Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) demonstrating their alignment with the Paris Principles.

Programme Background

The Government of Sweden provided funding for a three-year project (2018-2021) to the OHCHR Liberia CO aimed to strengthen the INCHR to conduct its human rights mandate. [1] With five key outcomes, the support capacitated and strengthened the INCHR both at the headquarters level and throughout all fifteen counties in Liberia. Support was also provided to civil society actors focused on improving the trajectory of women, minority groups, and key vulnerable populations who suffer severe victimization and discrimination at the hands of the Government and other non-state actors. Support was provided to ensure that the INCHR was strengthened to conduct human rights-related activities throughout the country. The activities have brought together national institutions, CSOs, and government ministries and agencies to work together to protect and promote human rights in Liberia.

Evaluation Background

This formative evaluation examined and assessed the project's progress and results. It generated substantial evidence to inform future policy choices and best practices. Findings, challenges, lessons learned, good practices, conclusions, and recommendations found in this project are aimed to improve future programming and foster organizational learning and accountability. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be used by the OHCHR Geneva and the OHCHR Liberia CO to further refine their approaches towards supporting the INCHR, other relevant human rights institutions, and civil society actors to become more visible and impactful nationwide in the promotion and protection of human rights. The results of the evaluation will be accessible to the donor and through the OHCHR reporting system to inform global learning.

Methodology

Between November 2021 and January 2022, a two-person evaluation team (ET) consisting of an international and a national team member, evaluated the OHCHR Liberia CO's support for the Swedish funded project, "Strengthening the Independent National Commission on Human Rights" which began in 2018 and ended in December 2021. Field work took place both remotely and in person. The ET held virtual meetings with Geneva-based OHCHR staff and in Monrovia with government and non-

[1] This also was the bulk of the OHCHR Liberia CO office budget.

governmental actors. Field-based research was conducted in five counties including Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Cape Mount, and Bomi Counties. The methods for data collection included an extensive desk review, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. The ET engaged 152 people, including 82 men and 70 women, through both KIIs and FGDs with mixed groups of men and women and same-sex groups. There were challenges the ET faced in engaging with the INCHR Headquarters staff, but the challenges were mitigated through triangulation of approaches.

Main Findings and Conclusions

Relevance

Working on transitional justice, and other human rights issues relevant to Liberia's post-conflict environment makes OHCHR Liberia CO a well-placed and relevant institution to continue to address Liberia's human rights challenges through support to its human rights institutions. The OHCHR Liberia CO is especially relevant given its global mandate supporting National Human Rights Institutions and its close link with the Human Rights and Protection Section of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, which worked closely with the INCHR including involvement in the project's development until they left in 2018.

The first three years of the project have supported identifying the INCHR's capacity needs and the human rights needs of the country. The project results have laid out the capacity gaps that the INCHR needs to build on to become a more robust institution, enabling it to promote and protect human rights in Liberia. This project showed that, along with support to the INCHR, civil society actors also need support to monitor human rights and put pressure on the government to respond, and not leave the burden on the INCHR alone.

Over the next period, it will be important for OHCHR Liberia CO to collaborate with all relevant human rights actors, including other UN and international actors, government, and civil society actors throughout the country to create an even broader base of support further enabling a human rights environment to flourish.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

The project remained on track in 2018 and 2019, successfully achieving results and contributing to greater visibility of the INCHR in Liberia, especially in the areas outside of Monrovia. There was a direct impact on pre-trial detainees with the release of at least seventy-seven because of the INCHR's advocacy efforts linked to the project. The INCHR produced the 2021 annual human rights situation report and also contributed to the Universal Periodic Review process, legal reform including the passing of the Domestic Violence Law, and the government's commitment to overturning the death penalty.

In 2020, the project changed course in response to increasing human rights violations resulting from the extended countrywide lockdown because of the State of Emergency imposed by the government of Liberia, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift in activities was done in consultation with the donor, with a plan for previously planned activities to be conducted at a later date. The OHCHR Liberia CO worked with a range of stakeholders, including civil society actors, the UN, and government agencies, to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the OHCHR Liberia CO's engagement, human rights were elevated to the centre stage of the response. The OHCHR Liberia CO also collaborated with CSOs to produce two COVID-19 related reports, and, in December 2020, further support was provided to the INCHR to monitor the senatorial elections.

In mid-2020, coinciding with the ending of the tenure of the INCHR Acting Chairperson, the INCHR HQ almost ceased to function, negatively affecting the relationship with the OHCHR Liberia CO. However, throughout the project period, OHCHR Liberia CO maintained links with the INCHR human rights monitors paid by the Swedish project and supported their work. In 2021, Liberia welcomed a new INCHR Board of Commissioners with OHCHR Liberia CO providing the support needed to ensure a smooth transition.

Impact and sustainability

There is evidence that the project has strengthened the capacity of both duty bearers and rights holders, especially in the areas outside of Montserrado county. Duty bearers such as prison staff and the staff of the Women and Children Protection Section of the Police acknowledged a shift in their attitude towards rights holders, which they attributed to the training and capacity building support and the constant presence of the INCHR human rights monitor in their areas. Women and girls also showed an increased willingness to pursue cases of rape and sexual violence instead of compromising because of family pressure. There was also evidence that attitudes were changing among traditional women about FGM and other harmful traditional practices.

The evidence gathered also shows that with OHCHR's continued guidance and support, the INCHR can progressively move towards the full realization of human rights in Liberia. Critical to this is for the INCHR leadership to continue taking on the prescribed capacity building measures identified in the first phase of the project, which aims to build both its institutional and human rights capacity with OHCHR's support.

Critical to the sustainability of the INCHR's presence in the fifteen counties is ensuring that the INCHR works as one. This means that the INCHR headquarters should support the INCHR human rights monitors in the counties and treat them as valued members of the team. It is especially important that the INCHR HQ attempt to follow up on human rights cases that have been identified by the INCHR human rights monitors to ensure that the INCHR fulfills its human rights mandate and does not risk becoming a "toothless bulldog."

The sustainability of the project's results also relies heavily on the INCHR's commitment to continue building its capacity both at the headquarters and county levels. Identifying and building the capacity of rights holders and duty bearers is also necessary. The key rights holders include CSOs such as the Transitional Justice Working Group and the Human Rights Advocacy Platform, which have offices throughout the country. The duty bearers that need further support for capacity building include the MOJ, the judiciary, the police, and the legislature.

Gender Equality and Human Rights (Disability Inclusion)

Because of this project, the INCHR now has a gender unit at the national level. Work has been done to ensure that gender, disability, and human rights considerations have been integrated into the project design and budget. A gender department was established, a gender and inclusion advisor was hired, and a draft gender policy was developed. Human rights issues that disproportionately impact women and girls, such as sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, remain challenges in Liberia. The INCHR human rights monitors regularly report on these issues and conduct activities that contribute to GBV prevention.

Through field-based evaluation, findings have found that these issues have been mainstreamed through ensuring that trainings are balanced in number between men and women, that People with Disabilities (PwD) take part in the training and that awareness is raised about their rights to address the shame,

stigma, and harassment they face. There is a clear awareness of gender and disability issues. However, further streamlining is needed to ensure the sex-disaggregated data is integrated. The INCHR or other actors have not addressed children with disabilities.

Recommendations

The evaluation team is proposing two overarching recommendations which include 1) continuing capacity-building support to the INCHR, and 2) the development and implementation of a new comprehensive human rights strategy for Liberia that considers the human rights needs of the country and the comparative advantage of all the principal actors.

The first part will focus on an explanation of what the evaluation team feels should be done. The second part will follow with specific recommendations for the OHCHR Liberia CO, the INCHR, CSOs and development actors.

1. ***Support to enable the INCHR to create and implement a new strategic plan with a continued focus on capacity-building through:***

- **Implementing** the matrix of institutional **capacity building recommendations**.
  - ✓ An individual with the requisite skills should be hired to work with the INCHR under the supervision of the OHCHR Liberia CO to ensure the full implementation of the matrix of institutional capacity-building recommendations. They should develop a TOR for a set period to ensure all the recommendations within the matrix are implemented. The individual would also take part in the regular meetings between the INCHR and OHCHR.

- Further **strengthening** the INCHR DCIM to better **support field monitors.**
  - ✓ The INCHR HQ should designate a DCIM staff with specific responsibilities to support the INCHR human rights monitors. The designated staff would attend the bi-monthly technical meetings between OHCHR and the INCHR HQ and regularly provide feedback. As part of the work plan of the DCIM staff, a regular skill assessment of the INCHR human rights monitors will be done with feedback sessions built in to ensure that all the INCHR human rights monitors maintain a minimum skill level for human rights investigation and documentation work. The DCIM should work with the Department of Administration and Budget to set a salary structure for the INCHR human rights monitors that consider both skill level and experience.

- **Developing and piloting** an effective **human rights follow-up mechanism**.
  - ✓ Guidelines for follow up on human rights complaints, investigations, and documentation by the INCHR and CSOs with support from OHCHR Liberia CO should be developed. The human rights violation follow-up mechanism should be created as a task force with representation and participation of the INCHR HQ and the INCHR human rights monitors, CSOs and OHCHR Liberia CO and members of the UN human rights working group. A regularly established meeting would be set and would require mandatory participation. Training would be provided to participants to ensure awareness of roles and mandates. Government agencies would be engaged, including but not limited to, the Human Rights and Protection Unit of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP), and the Women and Children's Protection Section of the Police at the discretion of the task force.

2. ***The development and implementation of a new comprehensive human rights strategy***

The evaluation team recommends that the development and implementation of a new comprehensive human rights strategy and work plan for Liberia should follow the key guiding elements:

- **Participation and representation** should be at the centre of the development of the new strategy, bringing together a range of relevant actors including the INCHR, relevant government agencies including the MOJ, the Police, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the legislature and CSOs (the Liberian Bar Association, The Human Rights Advocacy Platform, the Transitional Justice Working Group, media, and others) with representation at the national and district levels.

- The development of the strategy should **complement** and be **aligned with** the NHRAP (2019-2024) and other relevant government and UN programs and strategies to prevent duplication of efforts.

- The **decentralization** of human rights activities should be central to the strategy. This includes continuing to build upon the setting up of regional offices and deploying the requisite staffing at the county and district levels to promote and protect human rights. A key aim would be to further increase the capacity and visibility of the INCHR throughout Liberia. Other government agencies and CSOs would also be supported.

- Ensuring that **understanding of comparative advantages** of relevant actors is considered**.** Determining the comparative advantage should be done by incorporating best practices, such as determining the strengths and weaknesses of the relevant institutions, including but not limited to the geography/location, human resource capacity, and political will.

The new comprehensive human rights strategy should include the following key aspects but are not limited to:

- Developing **a reimagined theory of change**. The development of the theory of change should start with a review of the previous project's theory of change to understand its strengths and weaknesses. The overall theory of change would consider the realities, risks, and assumptions of the human rights situation in Liberia.

- Including an **advocacy component** with a focus on human rights monitoring/reporting and legal reform, starting with but not limited to:
  - ✓ Amendments to the 2005 INCHR Act, including reducing the number of the INCHR BOC from seven to five. Further clarifying the roles between the INCHR BOC and the INCHR Secretariat.
  - ✓ Passing the FGM bill by strategically targeting lawmakers from districts where there is a high prevalence of FGM.
  - ✓ Advancing legislation on the war and economic crime court
  - ✓ Advancing legislation on business and human rights.

- Including a **training component** that draws on and uses the training content and approaches used by OHCHR Liberia CO and includes a focus on both **awareness-raising** and **skill-building** that would include but not be limited to:
  - ✓ Human rights training curriculum developed and streamlined into all training institutes for civil servants, beginning with the police, army, and legislature.

- ✓ Training of trainers targeting CSOs to build their capacity for documentation and investigation of human rights violations.
- ✓ A focus on further capacitating CSOs to conduct advocacy aimed at ensuring that the INCHR and other government agencies are fulfilling their obligations.

- Including a focus on implementing **the TRC recommendations** which would include, but are not limited to:

  - ✓ Re-establishing the Working group on transitional justice that is composed of a core group of key actors, including the OHCHR Liberia CO, the INCHR, CSO representation, and the Human Rights and Protection Unit of the Ministry of Justice.
  - ✓ Developing a TOR and work plan to guide the work and the goals needed to take the work forward. Mandatory and regular participation would be central features of the group.
  - ✓ Taking stock of all the workshops and other activities that have taken place to date focused on transitional justice and implementing the TRC recommendations would be the first step.

- **Develop and incorporate M & E framework and a participatory budgeting** process as part of the strategy to ensure the process stays on track and is conducted transparently. This would be done by following key steps which include but are not limited to:

  - ✓ Developing a project outcome, outputs, activities, and an M &E framework that incorporates lessons learned from the evaluation.
  - ✓ Developing a participatory budgeting process that involves all key actors.
  - ✓ Putting together a joint implementation team that comprises representatives from the INCHR, relevant government institutions and civil society actors facilitated by OHCHR Liberia CO.

<u>The Evaluation team directs specific recommendations to the following set of stakeholders, which include:</u>

1. **To the OHCHR Liberia CO**

- **To continue to support the capacity development of the INCHR through**:
  - ✓ Identifying and managing an individual with the requisite skills to work with the INCHR to ensure the matrix of capacity building recommendations is implemented. OHCHR would develop a joint TOR in consultation with the INCHR and they would help to guide the work of the individual and then would update OHCHR Liberia CO regularly.
  - ✓ Continuing to hold bi-monthly meetings between OHCHR and the INCHR and ensure representation from the DCIM regularly and ensure that feedback on the situation of the INCHR human rights monitors is discussed and issues addressed.
  - ✓ Ensuring the development and piloting of an effective human rights follow-up mechanism through working with the INCHR HQ and other key stakeholders.

- **Support the development and implementation of the new comprehensive human rights strategy by**:
  - ✓ Seeking funding support to ensure that the INCHR can continue to benefit from capacity building the INCHR and for the development and implementation of a new comprehensive human rights strategy from the Embassy of Sweden and other development partners in Liberia.
  - ✓ Encouraging and inviting UN human rights working group members to be part of the development and implementation of the new human rights' comprehensive strategy.

- ✓ Continuing to engage in discussions with UN agencies and donor agencies about further support for the decentralization of activities.
- ✓ Playing a facilitating and management role in creating the new comprehensive strategy through a workshop and ensuring its implementation by helping to manage the modalities of implementation.

2. To the INCHR

- To continue to work closely with the OHCHR Liberia CO to ensure the:
  - ✓ Implementing the matrix of institutional capacity building recommendations
  - ✓ proper support is provided by the INCHR human rights monitors, and they are provided with the support they need to do human rights investigation and documentation work.
  - ✓ The development and piloting of the human rights follow up mechanism is effective. The INCHR should commit to engaging with the process consistently.
  - ✓ The gender policy is completed and the INCHR staff implement the policy.

3. To the UN Human rights working group

- Consider taking part in the development of the new comprehensive human rights strategy process and aligning programs accordingly to avoid duplication.
- Consider supporting the further decentralization of human rights activities by providing inputs and capacity building support throughout Liberia.

4. To the Swedish government and other development partners

- Consider providing core support to further capacitate the INCHR and facilitate the development and implementation of the revised overarching human rights strategy and work plan.

I. Introduction

1.1. Country Context

Liberia is still significantly affected by the impact of the two conflicts which it endured from 1983 to 1997 and from 1999 to 2003, during which over 250,000 people were killed, and grave human rights violations were perpetrated, including sexual violence. There has been no accountability within Liberia for human rights violations committed during these conflicts, nor any comprehensive reconciliation process. Demands for justice for past violations and transitional justice initiatives have reemerged since 2019, with growing economic and social claims and protests against corruption.

The creation of the national human rights institution of Liberia and the Act that established Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), was an outcome of the 2003 Accra Peace Agreement. The TRC report, finalized in 2009, recommended the need for criminal accountability, reparations, memorialization, reconciliation, and institutional reforms. A key recommendation was that an extraordinary tribunal or domestic Economic War and Criminal Court to prosecute individuals who committed gross human rights violations, crimes under international humanitarian law, and economic crimes be established. Recommendations also included the use of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms through a "Palava Hut" approach; the establishment of a Reparations Trust Fund; the observance of a national memorial and unification day; and called for renewed commitments aimed at the protection and promotion of the rights of women and children. The establishment of the INCHR was also aimed at addressing the disregard for human rights from the 14-year Liberian civil crisis and the mandated agency to ensure the implementation of the TRC recommendations.

According to the 2005 Act, the INCHR is supposed to comprise seven full-time Commissioners including a chairperson, a vice-chairperson- and five other Commissioners, to ensure implementation of the mandate. The President of the Republic of Liberia appoints the Commissioners, on recommendations of an Independent Committee of Experts (ICE) constituted by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia in consultation with civil society organizations. Except for the chairperson who serves a six-year tenure, all six commissioners, with the consent of the Senate serve a tenure of five years each. The Act also states that commissioners must be Liberians of good social standing. The appointments are to reflect the diversity of the Liberian society with due attention paid to NGOs and professional organizations with a history in human rights advocacy and protection. In 2021, the third Board of Commissioners was appointed.

Since the creation of the INCHR, it has gone through three cycles of appointments of the Board of Commissioners in 2010, 2016 and, most recently, in 2021. The second group of commissioners, appointed in 2016, coincided with the period under review During the tenure, only an Acting chairperson of the Board of Commissioners served without an official chairperson ever being appointed.

The Human Rights and Protection Section (HRPS) of UNMIL supported the INCHR with capacity building and funding including providing technical support; ensuring compliance with international human rights principles; training monitors in monitoring and reporting human rights violations, on implementing the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) and advocated with the national authorities to increase budgetary support. The UNMIL HRPS were also instrumental in helping to develop the strategy to support the INCHR.

1.2. Programme Background

The work of OHCHR Liberia Country Office (CO) is financially supported by the Government of Sweden (GOS) up to a maximum amount of SEK46 million covering 2018-2021. The OHCHR Liberia CO through the funds committed to capacitating and strengthening the INCHR in Liberia, as well as supporting civil society actors focussed on advocating for improving the trajectory of women, minority groups, and vulnerable key populations who often suffer severe victimization and discrimination at the hands of Government and other non-state actors. Through the INCHR, human rights-related activities have been conducted throughout the country, including processes that call for accountability through the establishment of an economic and war crimes court in Liberia. The activities conducted have brought together national institutions, CSOs, and government ministries and agencies to work together in the protection and promotion of human rights in Liberia.

The first three years of the project also coincided with the INCHR Strategic Plan (2018-2021). The support is focussed on strengthening the INCHR, the importance of which was highlighted internationally through the Human Rights Committee (HRC) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).[2] The focus of the support is also reflected in the outcome of a self-assessment exercise conducted in the framework of the tripartite agreement between UNDP, OHCHR, and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), to ensure the responsiveness of the INCHR for greater respect, protection, and fulfilment of human rights in Liberia.

The focus of the project has been to increase the capacity of the INCHR to monitor and report on human rights violations, to increase the capacity of CSOs to help strengthen the work of the INCHR, to increase the reach of the INCHR by ensuring they are present throughout Liberia, and to ensure gender and attention to disability is mainstreamed throughout their activities.

OHCHR's technical cooperation with the INCHR includes but is not limited to, support to:

- ✓ monitor human rights violations in the fifteen counties of Liberia through fact-finding missions.
- ✓ report to the international HR mechanisms and engage in review processes.
- ✓ strengthen the capacities of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDA).
- ✓ conduct a joint assessment of CSOs and develop a partner strategy
- ✓ conduct organizational and staff needs assessments for greater capacity building.
- ✓ draft a thematic report on GBV; and,
- ✓ mainstream gender quality and disability inclusion throughout the work.

The OHCHR Liberia CO served as the lead agency responsible and accountable to coordinate the implementation of the project.

An overview of the outcomes of the project is highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of the project outcomes

Outcomes	

[2] The Human Rights Committee at its 3519th meeting (CCPR/C/SR.3519) held on 23rd July 2018 issued Concluding Observation on Liberia's initial report and specifically mentioned the INCHR in paragraphs 8 and 9. The Committee encouraged Liberia in paragraph 9 to among other things; 'seek technical assistance from the OHCHR to improve the capacity of the INCHR to investigate human rights violation'. Similarly, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Concluding Observation on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Liberia (CEDAW/C/LBR/7-8) at its 1339th and 1340th meetings in 2015, specifically mentioned the INCHR in paragraphs 15 and 16 referring to its lack of capacity and need for support.

Outcome 1	INCHR has increased capacity to fulfil its mandate to monitor and report human rights concerns and enhance the accountability of duty bearers and access remedy for rights holders.
Outcome 2	INCHR has enhanced capacity to engage and collaborate with CSOs so that the voices of marginalized and discriminated groups are heard and with relevant government departments to facilitate cooperation with and among them
Outcome 3	INCHR has increased country-level presence with qualified, trained, and well-resourced field staff.
Outcome 4	INCHR has increased capacity to mainstream gender and ensure greater visibility to the rights of women and girls in its advocacy, policies, operations, and activities
Outcome 5	INCHR has increased internal institutional capacity to improve accountability and transparency

It was projected that after the first three years starting in 2018, OHCHR Liberia CO would transfer the human rights monitoring roles to INCHR HQ and field presences. Therefore, the focus has been on the INCHR to be able to provide human rights oversight and to demand accountability and speedy remedy for human rights violations from the government.

1.3. Evaluation Background

As a formative evaluation, this evaluation examined and assessed the project's progress and results. The evaluation generated substantial evidence to inform future policy choices and best practices. The evaluation identified findings, challenges, lessons learned, good practices, conclusions, and recommendations to improve future programming and foster organizational learning and accountability.

Stakeholders will use the evaluation findings to:

- Enhance INCHR's technical capacity to monitor, report, and advocate human rights, conduct human rights promotion and protection activities at the national and county level,
- Enhance the capability and impact of the INCHR at both the national and sub-county levels to strengthen the implementation of its mandate as spelt out in the Commission 2005 Act, as required by the Paris Principles, and the monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP), the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security, and recommendations from different Human Rights regional and international mechanism including the UPR and Special Procedures.
- Support the strengthening of the INCHR Board of Commissioners' engagement and relationship with other government stakeholders including the National Legislature, Judiciary, the Executive, and relevant National Institutions, to ensure the INCHR's participation in key decision-making structures, laws, and policies.
- Enhance INCHR engagement with CSOs and relevant government departments, mainstream gender, and improve its accountability and transparency mechanisms.

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this evaluation will also be used by the OHCHR Geneva to further refine its approaches toward supporting other relevant human rights institutions and civil society actors to become more visible and impactful nationwide in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The main intended users of the evaluation findings are OHCHR (CO Liberia, FOTCD's Africa Branch, DEXREL, and PPMES), internal stakeholders and partners in Liberia, and the Donor (Sweden). The results of the evaluation will be accessible to the donor and through the OHCHR reporting system to inform global learning.

The standard OECD/DAC criteria were used with a focus on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, human rights, and gender equality. [3]

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

a. Assess the **relevance** of the intervention, strategy, and approach in the implementation of the project.
b. Assess the **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the project towards the achievement of impact results.
c. Assess **sustainability** and **impact** orientation of the project's achieved results.
d. Determine whether the **human rights approach and gender equality** principles were integrated into the project.
e. Assess the **sustainability** of the results about advancing gender equality and the promotion, protection, inclusion, and participation of marginalized groups, including youth, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minority groups, and the LGBTIQ population.
f. Identify and validate important **lessons learned**, best practices and, strategies for replication and provide actionable recommendations for the design and implementation of future interventions.
g. Identify and validate **innovative approaches** in all aspects of the project

The Evaluation Team (ET) included a Team Leader (International) and Team Member (National), who were contracted by OHCHR to conduct the evaluation. The evaluation started on 12 November 2021 and took place through February 2022.

The evaluation covered the implementation period of the project (2018–2021). The ET assessed the project at two levels of the programme. At the national level field work was conducted in Monrovia and at the county level by engaging with stakeholders in five counties including Nimba, Lofa, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, and Bassa. The ET analyzed achievements over the three years of implementation to understand the successes, opportunities, challenges, and constraints encountered.

II. Methodology

The evaluation methodology included seven sequential and interrelated processes designed to enable the ET to respond fully to each of the Evaluation Questions (EQs). These included: 1) desk review; 2) The inception report and tools; 3) Inception feedback; 4) Data collection (including KIIs, FGDs); 5) data analysis and drafting of the report 6) validation of the preliminary evaluation findings to OHCHR and feedback, and 7) report writing and presenting of the final report.

Data collection took place in Geneva, Monrovia, and five counties in Liberia between November 19, 2021, and January 15, 2022. The methods for data collection included a desk review, Key Informant Interviews (KII) (in-person and remote) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Table 1 provides an overview of the types of methods, location, and numbers of people engaged. Overall, a total of 152 people were engaged including 70 women and 82 men.

Table 2 Overall Data Collection

Location	No. of Persons	Sex		Mode of Data Collection		Government Personnel		CSO/CBO & Community	
		Female	Male	FGD	KII	INCHR	Others	CSO	Com.
Geneva	7	3	4	7					
Monrovia	24	8	16	24					

[3] http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

Cape Mount County	32	15	17	4	8	1	19	5	7
Bomi County	16	5	11	3	1	1	4	3	8
Grand Bassa County	14	11	5	2	2	2	6	4	2
Nimba County	29	17	11	3	2	14	3	4	8
Lofa County	30	11	19	3	3	1	6	3	20
Total	152	70	82	46	16	19	38	19	45

Desk Review

The desk review was conducted throughout the evaluation period. The main purpose of the desk review was to triangulate findings from the KIIs and FGDs. Besides programme and project documents received during the inception phase, the ET received additional documents from both OHCHR and INCHR. The main documents reviewed included programme documents, assessment reports, organizational policies, workshop reports, and thematic human rights reports. An overview is included in Annex III below.

KIIs were conducted with a range of stakeholders at the international, national, and county levels. These included the OHCHR Liberia CO team, OHCHR Geneva CO, INCHR BOC, Secretariat, and UNDP. Representatives from Sweden, and four CSOs including the former head of the TJWG, two members including the Secretary-General (SG) of the Human Rights Advocacy Platform, and four members of the Liberian government including representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) and, the Human Rights and Protection Unit (HRPU) of the Ministry of Justice.

Field work and data collection took place between December 1 and December 19, 2021. KIIs were also conducted in the five counties with INCHR human rights monitors, government representatives, and CSOs. Focus group discussions were conducted with four stakeholder groups in each of the counties. The list of individuals who were engaged in the evaluation are listed in Annex II below.

The TM worked with OHCHR- Liberia CO, INCHR, and other partners- especially CSOs, to set up the FGDs. The FGDs were centred around a standardized set of questions. FGDs were conducted with mixed groups of men and women, women-only groups, and male-only groups. There did not appear to be any power dynamics where one individual or group were silencing any members and, therefore, not a concern of potentially biasing results. The protocols and guiding questions are included in Annex IV below.

A one-hour virtual validation meeting with OHCHR Geneva and the OHCHR Liberia CO was held on 12 January 2022. The ET presented initial findings in a document that was provided before the meeting. The OHCHR Liberia CO provided feedback on the document and the validation meeting centered on discussing the feedback. The feedback was incorporated into the draft final evaluation report. On 2 March, a webinar was held with the ET presenting the conclusions and recommendations to both the OHCHR Liberia CO and OHCHR Geneva staff.

All data collected was triangulated between sources to minimize biases. Data triangulation was achieved by interviewing a range of stakeholders from a variety of institutions. A draft evaluation report, including an executive summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations, was submitted to OHCHR on 20 January 2022, and the final report was delivered on 14 March 2022.

Limitations in the review

Causality and attribution are often difficult to establish as one moves up the logic chain, since there may be a direct link between the actions of a UN organization and a national government agreeing to a particular norm, many factors beyond the control of the organization come into play in determining the extent to which the government translates the agreed norm into national policies, legislation, and action

on the ground. The outcomes and impact of most normative work often depend on the enabling environment and a host of complementary actions by the government, UN agencies, and others. This is particularly relevant when attributing findings of the passing of laws, which is often a group effort over an extended period, and therefore it is difficult to attribute to just one individual or group.

Field work covered five of the fifteen counties, which included1) Cape Mount County 2) Bomi 3) Nimba 4) Lofa, and 5) Grand Bassa. Therefore, the southeast was not covered by a field visit; however, the ET did engage with INCHR human rights monitors from these areas. While in Nimba County, TM's visit coincided with training that was being conducted with INCHR human rights monitors. Having all the monitors in the same location provided the ET with an opportunity to engage in an FGD and hear from INCHR human rights monitors from a wider geographical area.

Access to reliable internet was a challenge even in the capital of Monrovia and therefore this limited remote data collection to KIIs. It also prevented the ET from communicating regularly while the TL was conducting field research. Not having the daily contact and feedback meant there was not an opportunity to see if the KIIs were catching all the information needed to answer the questions.

A limited number of INCHR HQ staff were consulted. While efforts were made to meet INCHR HQ staff, the ET was only able to meet with two former INCHR BOCs and four from the INCHR Secretariat, including one that was a former staff member. The ET was unable to engage with the key INCHR staff including the current INCHR Executive Director, the Gender officer, or any staff from the Department of Complaints, Investigation, and Monitoring (DCIM), the Department of Legislative Assistance, Treaty Matter, and Law (DLTL), the Department of Education, Training, and Information (DETI), or the Department of Administration and Budget (DAB). Therefore, one way the ET addressed this was by concentrating on information gathered from engagements made with the OHCHR staff, the INCHR human rights monitors, and CSO representatives.

A key challenge, especially in speaking with INCHR staff, was the fact that the views about the project and the OHCHR's support for the project appeared to be influenced by the political lines that had developed within the INCHR. There appeared to be one side that was supportive of the project and OHCHR's support. There were also staff who held negative views both about OHCHR and the project itself which permeated responses to questions. The ET took this dynamic into account when writing up the findings.

During the field work in the counties, the TM faced challenges engaging INCHR human rights monitors, especially those being paid directly by the project. There was a misunderstanding about whether they were able to speak to the ET. In the end, once the authorization came from INCHR HQ, the ET was able to meet INCHR human rights monitors, including one who had been paid by the project. Also, the timing was so close to the Christmas holidays that it was difficult to meet high-level county government officials because they had left for Monrovia for official functions. Those that were present declined to be interviewed because they did not have sufficient knowledge about the project. The timing issue also impacted the TL's ability to engage with stakeholders, which meant that the virtual field work also took place in January 2022.

Although efforts were made by the ET during the inception phase to further consolidate the evaluation questions, the questions remained as in the TOR. In the report, the ET grouped questions that were similar together or appeared to fit together to help with the logical sequence when reading the report. The ET referred to the OHCHR's *Guidance on Writing an Evaluation Report* and did its best to take into account the evaluation questions. During the inception phase, ET met with the donor, who also emphasized what they were most interested in the ET focusing on and therefore efforts were made to ensure that these were taken into account.

Ethical Considerations, Human Rights and Gender Equality
All stakeholders interviewed were assured confidentiality. At the beginning of all KII and FGDs, stakeholders were assured that whatever they say was confidential and would make no reference to them in the report. Direct quotes from individuals are referenced, according to the type of individual and place, but no name has been supplied to protect the identity of the individual providing the information. Written sources are fully referenced, and a complete list of documents consulted is included.

The evaluation report will be subjected to UN-SWAP on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women quality scoring and therefore it demonstrates evidence of gender integration in the evaluation process and report. The ET included a focus on gender equality and disability influence the evaluation design and the recommendations included in it. The ET will further ensure attention to gender considerations at every step of the evaluation process. Both men and women were interviewed and part of the FGDs. The approach and analysis of the review reflect mainstreaming of gender concerns and findings, conclusions, and recommendations are disaggregated by sex where appropriate.

III. Main Findings

3.1. Relevance

The extent to which the objectives of the project are consistent with INCHR evolving needs and priorities as well as the extent to which beneficiaries, partners, and stakeholders' human rights concerns are aligned with the project, Government human rights priorities, as well as the UN policies and strategies.

R5. How does the project reflect and align to Liberia's national agenda, commitments, priorities, and needs of the target groups in the area of human rights? How relevant is the work of the project in support of INCHR to the CO's mandate, OHCHR Country Programme priorities, and OHCHR's comparative advantages?

The relevance of the INCHR's work to the national agenda
The Independent National Commission on Human Rights has been involved in the past development and current NHRAP (2019-2024), and the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (2018-2023). It is particularly relevant to the NHRAP which describes Liberia's responsibilities in the area of human rights, the long-term objectives of the Government and the roles of various actors regarding work on human rights at the national level. It highlights priority areas where attention is needed to improve the level of promotion and protection of human rights and indicates how the Government intends to work with issues such as human rights education, children's rights, and women's rights. The INCHR is part of the process and mandated to ensure the implementation of the NHRAP.

The INCHR's work is also relevant and aligned with the UN Sustainable Cooperation Framework (2020-2024), and Liberia's National Action Plan (LNAP) on Women's Peace and Security. The work of the project is also aligned with two of the Liberian government's key strategy documents: Vision 2030 which aims to ensure that Liberia achieves middle-income status on a basis of national reconciliation, cohesion, and the rule of law. Additionally, given INCHR's role as the organization designated to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations the work of the INCHR is well aligned to the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation—a strategy heavily supported

by the United Nations Mission in Liberia/Human Rights and Protection Section (UNMIL/HRPS).[4] The UNMIL's past support for the INCHR has also been instrumental in the development of the current project strategy. The National Steering Committee for the Business and Human Rights National Action Plan was established in 2018. The Human Rights Protection Unit of the Ministry of Justice (HRPU of the MOJ) was the overall coordinator while the INCHR provided technical assistance and advisory support has been provided by OHCHR Liberia CO.

The INCHR was accredited with 'A' status in 2017 by the GANHRI. As the review takes place every five years, it will be reviewed again in 2022.[5] Being recognized with an 'A' status enables institutions privileges such as being able to vote on human rights issues in the Human Rights Council (HRC). The 'A' status also has a broader benefit to the Liberian government as it demonstrates the country's progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Relevance of the work of OHCHR

Thematically, the work of the OHCHR Liberia CO falls under five pillars, in line with OHCHR's overall global thematic priorities: 1) Strengthening rule of law and accountability for human rights violations; 2) Enhancing equality and countering discrimination; 3) Increasing implementation of international human rights mechanisms' outcomes; 4) Enhancing and Protecting Civic Space and People's Participation, and 5) Integrating human rights in sustainable development. In the context of the accountability pillar–and across the other thematic pillars - strengthening the capacity of the national human rights institution–INCHR - is a priority of the OHCHR Liberia (CO) and makes up a major part of its work.

OHCHR Liberia CO works on a range of human rights issues including transitional justice, rule of law, women's rights, countering discrimination, addressing SGBV, business and human rights, election monitoring, and, most recently, COVID-19 human rights monitoring. The human rights themes have been addressed in the context of the support to INCHR but also independently with CSOs. The OHCHR Liberia CO provides support for the engagement with the international human rights mechanism including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the NHRAP, and the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow Up (NMRF)-all linked to providing support to key government agencies including both the INCHR and the HRPU of the MOJ.

The OHCHR Liberia CO is also receiving support from the Spotlight Initiative which focusses on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, the Liberia Multi-partner Trust Fund focussed on Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative and Civic Engagement, and the Peacebuilding Fund - Advancing implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security. [6] The funding from the Swedish project makes up the bulk of OHCHR Liberia CO funding currently. There are synergies with the Swedish project and coordination meetings are held between the OHCHR and the INCHR at the two levels further reinforcing coordination between all projects.

[4] There are at least three staff of the OHCHR Liberia CO who had been working with UNMIL previously and one staff who had been a member of the INCHR Secretariat as Executive Director.

[5] An 'A' status rating means that a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) is aligned with the Paris Principles. The Paris Principles are Principles relating to the Status of NHRI adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993. The principles list includes that 1) the institution shall monitor any situation of violation of human rights which it decides to assume. 2) the institution shall be able to advise the Government, the Parliament and any other competent body on specific violations, on issues related to legislation and general compliance and implementation with international human rights instruments. 3) the institution shall relate to regional and international organizations. 4), the institution shall have a mandate to educate and inform in the field of human rights. and 5) institutions are given a quasi-judicial competence

[6] The financial resources for the OHCHR Liberia CO come from these four sources including the Swedish project, which is the bulk of their budget, for more information see OHCHR Start-up evaluation of the Programme of the Liberia Country Office Final Report June 2020 p. 16

The OHCHR Liberia CO is part of the UN Human Rights Working Group active in the UNCT and the Head of Office of the OHCHR Liberia CO is a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). The OHCHR Liberia CO also takes part in the United Nations Gender Working Group. The OHCHR Liberia CO leads on pillar three on peace, security, and the rule of law. [7]

The host country agreement establishing the OHCHR Liberia CO allows it to exercise a full human rights promotion and protection mandate. The OHCHR Liberia CO provides support in Liberia through capacity building, monitoring, advocacy, mainstreaming, and prevention where it has a comparative advantage. Comparative advantage also extends to providing support to National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) with a department in Geneva devoted to supporting NHRIs. There is an option for the INCHR or the OHCHR Liberia CO to request support giving them significant expertise to draw from. There is also significant relevant experience in the OHCHR Liberia CO in supporting NHRIs. At least one of the OHCHR Liberia CO staff members worked within the INCHR Secretariat. Likewise, at least three members have worked with UNMIL providing support to the INCHR. Still, other OHCHR Liberia CO staff members have experience working with or on behalf of other NHRIs making the staff of the OHCHR Liberia CO well positioned in their work supporting the INCHR. Along with the HRPU of the MOJ, the INCHR also plays a role in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Both the HRPU of the MOJ and the INCHR collaborated with other stakeholders to draft the 2020 UPR report.

An overview of synergies from other programmes and projects that the INCHR has benefitted from and also linked to the OHCHR Liberia CO are included in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Examples of the INCHR linkages to programmes

Relevant Programmes being implemented at the country level	Links with the programme
National Human Rights Action Plan	UNDP, MOJ, Law Reform Commission (LRC)
Justice and Security Joint Programme (2019-2020)	UNDP, MOJ
Work on compliance with International Regional and National human rights obligations	MOJ, LRC, MOFA, Legislature
Implementation of TRC recommendations	CSOs
National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights	MOJ
Prison Monitoring	MOJ, UNDP
The Spotlight Programme	UNWOMEN, MOG, CSOs
Magistrate Sitting Programme	UNDP, MOJ

R2 What are the key issues and concerns about the human rights context of Liberia within the INCHR scope that the project contributes to?

Across the country due process violations including prolonged pretrial detention, overstay in police custody, poor prison conditions because of overcrowding, lack of healthcare and proper feeding are major human rights concerns. Cases of violence against women and children including rape, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse (SEA), and harmful traditional practices are chronic human rights issues across the country. These issues were further exasperated during the COVID-19 pandemic with lockdowns and the inability of citizens to access health, reproductive health, mental health, and other services.

[7] OHCHR Start-up evaluation of the Programme of the Liberia Country Office Final Report June 2020 p. 14

Harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation (FGM) are also widely practised. Other harmful traditional practices included ritualistic killings, accusations of witchcraft, and trial by ordeal. [8] Right to life issues including murder and ritualistic killing are mostly concentrated in the southeast and Montserrado.

Protection issues related to business and human rights concerns have been highlighted as a major concern, especially in areas where there are large concessions such as in Cape Mount County.

In the counties, there are significant challenges with little overall capacity among justice actors. Access to justice issues persists for a range of reasons including poor police conduct, the absence of county attorneys and public defenders [9] Cases of rape and domestic violence were difficult to address because of the women's reluctance to report. Family and community pressure often leads to cases being compromised making prosecution challenging. Family and community pressure also influenced police response. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in schools persisted because of the lack of action taken by the schools. Police rarely investigate and bring perpetrators to justice in these cases. Police's reluctance to investigate rape, murder, and disappearances is because of a lack of resources to investigate cases, or a lack of leadership to take cases forward.

Among rights holders' human rights awareness is low. There is also a lack of understanding of the government's role in preventing, protecting, and promoting human rights. There have been significant developments in addressing various human rights and rule of law issues since the war ended. The Civilian Complaints Review Board monitors the conduct of the police. The Judiciary Inquiry Commission monitors and investigates complaints against judges. The Grievance and Ethics Committee review the unethical conduct of lawyers. The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission reviews cases against public officials. It makes sense for these institutions to be on the INCHR radar given the potential for overlap in the work.

The INCHR human rights monitors-- work along with OHCHR Liberia CO, and CSOs to investigate, and register human rights complaints. In 2019 the INCHR recorded 130 recent cases, 60 were investigated and 23 cases were resolved.[10] The cases most relevant to the work of the INCHR have been with pretrial detainees whose advocacy resulted in the release of seventy-seven (77) in 2019. [11]

Feedback from KIIs and FGDs reveals that the INCHR human rights monitors also focus on SGBV, SEA, and harmful traditional practices. Findings revealed they participated in resolving or helping to resolve family disputes and simple GBV cases through conflict resolution. One of the INCHR human rights monitors from Lofa said, "*I have been involved in around 25 simple GBV cases that have been resolved out of court*." There was also feedback from CSOs and prison staff that the presence of the INCHR human rights monitors helped to serve as a deterrent, especially in prisons and detention centres where the INCHR staff conducted trips regularly.

[8] Trial by ordeal is commonly called "Sassywood," which is a way to establish guilt or innocence that takes different forms. Reported incidents of trial by ordeal included drinking a concocted liquid, heating a metal object until it glowed red and then applying it to the accused's skin, beatings, inserting sharp objects into bodily orifices (including the vagina), and forcing women to parade naked around the community.

[9] In both the 2019 and 2020 US State Department Annual Human Rights Reports on Liberia reported these human rights violations.

[10] Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Funding proposal to the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia Annual donor report 2019

[11] Ibid, p. 4

Another major issue is the lack of accountability for the war crimes from the 14-year conflict. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report was completed in 2009 and provides a clear framework of recommendations to remedy these issues. To date, there has been no accountability or reparations. Approaches to reconciliation such as the Palava hut programme and efforts to build memorials have started but the efforts have been piecemeal.

Without accountability for war crimes, there is a concern that there will be a continual erosion of justice and the rule of law if they do not address these issues.[12] There is also concern that Liberia will not be able to fully develop without reckoning with the past. The INCHR has a key role to play concerning the implementation of the TRC recommendations given that it was created with this purpose in mind as part of the CPA that ended the conflict in 2003.

There have been universal jurisdiction cases of Liberians living outside of Liberia with the Government of Liberia allowing foreign investigations to take place in Liberia.[13] However, to date, no one has been tried in Liberia for crimes committed during the conflict making the implementation of the war crimes court even more relevant.

During the project period, there have been developments toward the establishment of a war and economic crime court. For instance, President Weah requested the House of Representatives to research the possibility of creating a special war and economic crimes court. This announcement was followed by 51 of the 73 members of the House of Representatives voting to support a resolution to establish a court meeting the two-thirds majority of votes needed to move the bill to the Senate. However, the Speaker of the House prevented the petition from being added to the agenda.

Additionally, according to the INCHR's strategic plan (2016-2021), a tripartite relationship with various institutions including line Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions (MACs), civil society actors and non-governmental organizations have been established to facilitate and support its work. A working group on transitional justice was created to work with key national institutions and CSOs to discuss transitional justice issues as articulated in the Truth and Reconciliation Report (TRC), and the Reconciliation Roadmap and Agenda for Transformation to decipher concrete and practical actions for the implementation of thematic areas and recommendations.[14] However more is needed to ensure the implementation of these efforts.

R1 How relevant and what contributions have the planned programmatic interventions made to how advocacy has been approached, how law and policy reform has been done, and what has been INCHR's role in this area?

R3 To what extent has the project planned results been catalytic in addressing the root causes of the INCHR capacity needs, looking specifically at 1) monitoring, reporting, and advocating human rights issues and concerns and 2) Concerns and participation in major decision making concerning human rights promotion and protection?

On page 12 Table 1 provides an overview of the five outcomes. All five outcomes are relevant to building the capacity of the INCHR. Outcomes 5, 3, and 1 have been the most central as they focus on institutional

[12] The TRC Report recommendations for accountability include creating an Extra-ordinary Criminal Tribunal to try all persons recommended by the TRC for the commission of human rights violations including violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, war crimes and economic crimes including killing, gang rape, forced recruitment, sexual slavery, and forced labor.

[13] For more information see https://civitas-maxima.org/

[14] The INCHR strategic action plan (2016-2021)

capacity building and helping to increase the INCHR's presence throughout the country most directly. The outputs in Outcome 5 included self-assessment exercises conducted in the framework of the tripartite agreement between UNDP, OHCHR, and the Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) helping the INCHR identify their policy, programme, and systematic gaps. Further capacity-building support came from a visit from two members of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) who spent a week working with the INCHR HQ and produced a report and a matrix of recommendations for implementation. The KNCHR assessment found that the roles were blurred between the INCHR Secretariat and the INCHR BOC and this was creating inefficiencies within the INCHR. The KNCHR highlighted that the role of the BOC is for policy making, decision making, oversight and representation. While the INCHR Secretariat should implement its mandate through the following five departments which include:

- Department of Legislative Assistance Treaty Matter and Law,
- Department for Education, Training, and Information,
- Department of Planning, Internal Monitoring and Evaluation,
- Department of Complaints, Investigation and Monitoring, and
- Department of Administration and Budget.

Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) conducted an audit that summarized the gaps in the INCHR's finance and accounting systems. All the assessments were comprehensive and looked at the INCHR fully as an institution producing an array of recommendations. The OHCHR Liberia CO worked with INCHR to develop an overall matrix of capacity building recommendations directed at each of the five INCHR departments.

Table 4 summarizes the capacity-building assessments done during the period of the project and their relevance to the outcomes of the project.

Table 4: Overview of needs assessments conducted

Assessments	Outcomes
INCHR/GANHRI Capacity Gaps Assessment Report September 2018	Outcome 5
KNCHR Technical Visit Report July 2019	Outcome 5
PWC INCHR System Audit Report February 2020	Outcome 5
Matrix of capacity building recommendations 2021	Outcome 5
INCHR Needs Assessment in seven counties [15] 2019	Outcomes 1 and 3

Throughout the project, the INCHR has been capacitated to engage, address, and improve the human rights situation in a way that is relevant to the needs of the Liberian context. Through the outputs in Outcomes 1 and 3, the INCHR's capacity to monitor and report on human rights has been the focus. Additionally, under Outcome 1 the focus has been on building the capacity of the INCHR to provide technical support to the government especially focussed on strengthening the international human rights mechanisms. Building the capacity of the INCHR to engage with CSOs and rights holders for monitoring and advocacy work was the central focus of Outcome 2. The main activities conducted under Outcome 3 include training and support to INCHR monitors by OHCHR Liberia CO and are aimed to increase their capacity to monitor, investigate and document human rights violations throughout the 15 counties. In 2019 the INCHR and OHCHR Liberia CO conducted a field assessment in seven of the 15 counties to evaluate the capacity of the INCHR in the field and made recommendations related to human and material resource needs. The assessment included a focus on the number of field staff

[15] Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Kru, Maryland, Montserrado and Grand Gedeh

deployed, office space, logistics, equipment, and supplies including motorbikes, office supplies and vehicles.[16]The focus on gender highlighted in Outcome 4 is also highly relevant given the high prevalence of SGBV and other human rights violations that impact women and girls disproportionately. Outcome 4 is covered more extensively in the chapter on gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion below.

One area that did not receive attention despite its importance was a focus on furthering the INCHR's role in implementing the TRC recommendations.

3.2. Effectiveness

The extent to which the project's objectives were achieved or are expected/ likely to be achieved

E 1 What has been the progress made towards the achievement of the expected outcomes and results? What results were achieved?

The progress made toward each outcome and results for 2019 and 2020 is highlighted in each section. The narrative donor reports for 2021 will be completed in June 2022 and therefore are not part of this evaluation. However, the information that was gathered from KIIs and could be verified is included. The indicators of each of the outcomes and their results are highlighted along with an overview of the status of each output. See Table 5 below for more details.

Table 5 2018-2021 status of the results framework

2018-2021 Result Framework	Status
Outcome 1: INCHR has increased its capacity to fulfil its mandate to monitor and report human rights concerns and enhance the accountability of duty bearers and access remedy for rights holders. **Indicator 1:** Extent to which NHRI has been established and/or works in conformity with international standards. **Indicator 1.1** Number of allegations of human rights violations or cases registered, investigation, and adjudicated. **Target: 23 previous cases Achieved: 130 cases recorded, 60 investigated, and 23 concluded.** **Indicator 1.2:** Number of training sessions held to strengthen the capacities of INCHR staff to engage with international human rights protection mechanisms and the number of INCHR staff supported to engage with international human rights mechanisms. **New NHRAP 2019-2024 launched in December 2019. Eight training sessions were held to strengthen the capacity of INCHR staff and CSO members on international human rights mechanisms, and 415 (198 females and 217 males). Seven INCHR staff, two CSO members, and two staff of the Ministry of Justice were supported to engage with the international human rights mechanism by attending workshops and training in different countries.**	
Output 1.1 INCHR staff capacities strengthened to monitor, investigate, document, and draft evidenced-based human rights reports to inform institutional accountability and effective remedies for an allegation of human rights violations (2018-2021) **Output 1.1a** INCHR HQ and Field Staff have enhanced capacity to monitor, document, and advocate human rights concerns and issues arising	Regarding Indicator 1: The INCHR maintained its 'A 'status throughout the project period. However, there is a concern that the INCHR will lose the 'A' status when are assessed in the second half of 2022. Both Output 1.1 and Output 1.2 were achieved in 2019. Activities under Output 1.1a were conducted in response to COVID-19 with pre-agreement with the donor. Activities under Output 1.2, Output 1.3. and 1.4 did not take place in 2020 because of the change in the

[16] The INCHR Needs Assessment in seven counties 2019

<table>
<tr><td>from the COVID-19 pandemic and Liberian Government Response (2020)
Output 1.2: INCHR staff capacities are strengthened to provide technical support to Government and CSOs on the implementation of NHRAP and follow up on the implementation of recommendations from treaty bodies/ UPR and other human rights mechanisms (2018,2019)
Output 1.2: Support national and regional security forces, law enforcement agencies, and non-state actors to integrate human rights and follow Human Rights Due Diligence policy (2020,2021)
Output 1.3 Human Rights curriculum in Criminal Justice Programme and other institutions advocated for (2020,2021)
Output 1.4 Capacity of Law enforcement strengthened to integrate HRBA (2020,2021)
Output 1.5 Development of Business and Human Rights National Action Plan (NAP) Supported (2020,2021)</td><td>programme with the likelihood that they will take place in 2022. [17] Activities under Output 1.5 may have taken place under Outcome 2 according to reports. [18]</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Outcome 2: INCHR has enhanced capacity to engage and collaborate with CSOs so that the voices of marginalized and discriminated groups are heard and with relevant government departments to facilitate cooperation with and among them
Indicator 2: Number of CSOs and marginalized groups' rights holders especially women and discriminated groups whose capacities have been strengthened to claim their rights.
Reported to have been completed.
Indicator2.1: INCHR has formal regular engagement with CSOs and marginalized groups at the national and sub-national levels to raise awareness on rights and responsibilities.
According to reports, it states that INCHR CSO strategy completed, 3 regional sessions, validation pending.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Output 2.1: INCHR-CSOs engagement strategy is completed, validated, and operationalized (2018,2019)
Output 2.1: Capacity of national Institutions to address issues of ESCR and the right to development (2020,2021)
Output 2.2 Capacity of CSOs to negotiate, monitor, investigate, train, report, and address HR issues supported (2020,2021)
Output 2.3 Capacity of national institutions to conduct UPR and treaty body reporting obligations including implementation of NHRAP, UPR, and treaty bodies recommendations enhanced (2020,2021)</td><td>Regarding Output 2.1 (2018.2019) An MOU between CSOs and INCHR was signed in February 2019. However, feedback from CSOs was that a comprehensive partnership strategy had not been developed with the two main CSO networks. However, there were examples of engagement with CSOs during the project including the COVID-19 response that resulted in two COVID-19 Rights Watch reports. Concerning the elections, the INCHR produced a thematic report detailing the human rights issues in elections. Output 2.2 and 2.3 were achieved with the work supported around the UPR taking place in 2020.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Outcome 3: INCHR has increased country-level presence with qualified, trained, and well-resourced field staff.
Indicator 3: INCHR institutional capacities (human resources and field presence) strengthened to accomplish human rights promotion and protection mandate.
Indicator 3.1. Some trained INCHR staff engaged in human rights monitoring, investigations, and adjudication of human rights complaints/ violations.
Achieved: 30 human rights field monitors from the 15 counties, two Commissioners, and four staff from headquarters involved in human rights monitoring, investigations, and adjudication of human</td></tr>
</table>

[17] Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Funding proposal to the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia 2018-2021. P. 3

[18] Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Funding proposal to the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia Annual donor report 2020 p. 5

rights complaints and violations. Fifteen trainings organized to enhance the capacity of INCHR and CSO Monitors and journalists on human rights monitoring, investigation, receiving, and recording of human rights complaints.	
Output 3.1: INCHR staff capacities strengthened to apply human rights knowledge to monitor, investigate and adjudicate allegations of human rights complaints/violations. (2018,2019) **Output 3.1** CSOs and CBOs actors' capacity to investigate and provide redress to victims of human rights violations supported and strengthened (2020,2021) **Output 3.2** Periodic monitoring and evaluation of project conducted (2020,2021)	Output 3.1 however is unclear if output 3.1 focussed on CSOs and CBOs took place 3.2. as it is likely that these were not conducted as a result of focusing on the COVID-19 response. An M and E field visit exercise was planned for (April 2021), however, the INCHR no longer had a functional BOC to the INCHR commission the exercise as the terms of office for BOC had expired pending a new BOC.
Outcome 4: INCHR has increased its capacity to mainstream gender and ensure greater visibility of the rights of women and girls in its advocacy, policies, operations, and activities **Indicator 4:** INCHR staff capacities strengthened to mainstream gender aspects in its policies and plans in line with international human rights standards and principles. **Achieved** **Indicator 4.1.** Number of INCHR staff trained on gender mainstreaming in policies, plans, and programmes **Achieved**	
Output 4.1: INCHR staff capacities strengthened to mainstream gender in its policies, plans, and human rights work. (2018,2019) **Output 4.1:** Capacity of INCHR to align internal regulations, policies, and programmes with gender strategy strengthened (2020,2021)	Output 4.1was achieved. It was achieved by the recruitment of one gender and diversity officer and the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill which was passed into law in August 2019. In 2020 the donor annual report stated that the work on the INCHR's gender strategy was postponed because of the pandemic. The target in 2019 was for one Local gender expert to be hired to strengthen the gender unit and for one international gender expert to provide technical backstopping and supervision to the INCHR gender staff. OHCHR said the recruitment of a consultant is still pending.
Outcome 5: INCHR has increased internal institutional capacity to improve accountability and transparency **Indicator 5: Number of recommendations made by INCHR to Government Ministries, Agencies and Corporations positively responded to by state authorities.** **Indicator 5 was achieved with three (3) of the five (5) recommendations addressed to State authorities and the three recommendations to Government ministries, agencies, and corporations, and the recommendations received positive responses. [19] INCHR also issued six press releases and five legal opinions on the human rights situation in Liberia.** **Indicator 5.1** Number of INCHR staff and field offices furnished with basic equipment (computers and motorbikes), programming software, furniture, and other office supplies. **Output 5.1 targets were to obtain a set of assets including computers and motor bikes. In 2020 progress was made on output 5.2 with LGBTQ legislation discussed that OHCHR advocated on. On output 5.1 considerable progress has been made with a review of INCHR's internal policies. In 2020 to add to the other assessments conducted, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) also conducted an assessment that focussed on management gaps**.	

[19] Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Funding proposal to the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia Annual donor report 2020 p.10

Output 5.1 INCHR technical personnel capacities strengthened to install applicable software to enhance its operations (2018,2019) **Output 5.1** Police and other relevant law enforcement institutions supported in developing and implementing a Human rights policy (2020,2021) **Output 5.2** SOGI and other relevant laws and legislation reviewed and Human Rights Compliant (2020,2021) **Output 5.3** INCHR internal institutional accountability and good governance practices enhanced (2020,2021) **Output 5.4** Publicity and visibility of INCHR and OHCHR increased (2020,2021)	Indicator 5 was a new indicator as it was not part of the original results framework. The original results framework only had one indicator: **Indicator 5.1** Number of the INCHR staff and field offices furnished with basic equipment (computers and motorbikes), programming software, furniture, and other office supplies. Unclear if Output 5.1was conducted as there were no reports of applicable software included. Also unclear how Output 5.1 and Output 5.2 are relevant to Outcome 5.

Ef-3: Have the outputs been delivered on time? Were there any limitations? R-3 How adaptably and rapidly did the project react to changes in the country context to remain relevant?

Following the project start date in November 2018 and throughout 2019 the project moved forward on track with the planned outputs delivered on time. Later the main challenges that impacted the achievements of results were because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The other main issue that impacted the project was the lack of a fully functioning INCHR BOC. Throughout the tenure, there was only an Acting chairperson as part of the INCHR BOC. Without a substantive chairperson representing the INCHR, the lack of leadership negatively impacted the overall coordination, effectiveness, and performance of the INCHR. This challenge was raised by OHCHR Liberia CO staff in KIIs and highlighted in their narrative annual reports to the donor. The other concern raised by the INCHR and OHCHR and highlighted throughout their minutes and in narrative reports were procurement delays because of having to go through UNDP impacting the delivery of services.

Change in the work plan because of the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2020 the work plan for the project changed to respond to the situation that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to the revised Output 1.1a *INCHR HQ and Field Staff have enhanced capacity to monitor, document, and advocate human rights concerns and issues arising from COVID-19 pandemic and Liberian Government Response (2020- in response to COVID-19*). OHCHR Liberia CO made this decision with the agreement of the donor. The readjustment of the project activities meant suspending activities planned for 2020 to be implemented at a later time. The overall outputs that had to be changed are included in Box 1 to the left.

Box 1
Outputs postponed per outcome

Outcome	Outputs
Outcome 1	1.2, 1,3. 1.4. 1.5
Outcome 2	2.1
Outcome 3	3.2
Outcome 4	4.1
Outcome 5	5.3

In 2020 in direct response to the increase in human rights violations which resulted from the extended countrywide lockdown and the public health emergency the OHCHR Liberia CO, shifted to focus on monitoring the impacts of the pandemic.[20] The OHCHR Liberia CO ensured human rights formed part of the response to the pandemic and were effectively addressed by all partners.

[20] A state of an emergency was initially called on the 9 April 2020 and lifted on the 21 July 2020.

At the start of the pandemic, OHCHR Liberia CO and the INCHR leadership agreed to a budget of $50,000 for activities to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. When it came time for implementation the INCHR leadership refused to cooperate with OHCHR Liberia CO. Therefore, the funds were diverted to CSOs and other human rights government institutions including the HRPU of the MOJ to monitor the Covid-19 response. This included convening coordination meetings with CSOs to monitor and document violations and abuses by law enforcement officers during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

This period marked an escalation in the deterioration in the relationship with the INCHR BOC, especially the acting Chairman. The OHCHR Liberia CO continued to engage with the INCHR human rights monitors, whose salaries were being paid by the Swedish project. The INCHR human rights monitors were supported with fuel, and they continued to conduct monitoring activities including forwarding reports to the OHCHR Liberia CO for further action.

The OHCHR Liberia CO also collaborated with the HRPU of the MOJ to advocate for SGBV issues following the anti-rape protests in the streets.[21] Also, in December 2020 Liberia held midterm senatorial elections that the OHCHR Liberia CO through partners helped to monitor to ensure that the human rights of voters were respected. The INCHR who conducted election monitoring in areas throughout Montserrado County found that they were peaceful and there were no major human rights violations committed in the context of the election.[22] This was also consistent with the findings of the US Embassy and reported in their 2020 State department annual human rights report. [23] The OHCHR also produced two reports on COVID-19 human rights issues.[24]

2021 activities

Activities conducted in 2021 centred on ensuring that steps were taken to change the INCHR BOC leadership whose terms had expired. To address this, the project provided technical and material support to the Independent Committee of Experts (ICE) appointed by the President through the office of the Chief Justice. [25]The ICE's role was to vet and interview individuals to fill the position of the chairperson and other commissioners whose terms of office had expired. Later this was extended as the remaining commissioners' terms expired, and their replacements needed to go through the same process.

By 2021 there was a new five-person INCHR BOC which included the chairperson and four other commissioners in place. The 2005 Act establishing the INCHR mandates seven commissioners including the Chairperson. In response to the gap in appointing a full commission civil society actors called on the President to appoint the remaining two commissioners. [26] However, to date, the appointment of the BOC remains at five. Additionally, feedback during key stakeholder interviews revealed that it will be unlikely that the remaining two will be appointed.

Civil society actors also raised concern about the potential lack of independence of the INCHR BOC appointments as they are all from the same political party as the President. Gender balance was also

[21] Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Funding proposal to the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia Annual donor report 2020.
[22] The INCHR Midterm Elections & Referendum Monitoring Report, December 8, 2020
[23]According to the US State department human rights annual report of 2020 "Both international and domestic observers noted the Senate midterm elections and referenda overall were peaceful, although there were some reported instances of vote tampering, intimidation and harassment of female candidates, and election violence.
[24] Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Funding proposal to the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia Annual donor report 2020
[25] The ICE was comprised of CSOs.
[26] Liberia: CSOs Human Rights Advocacy Platform Wants All Seven Commissioners of INCHR Appointed – FrontPage Africa (frontpageafricaonline.com).

highlighted as a concern with only one female commissioner. The lack of human rights experience among the INCHR appointments, except the Chairperson, was also raised as a concern by civil society actors.

The INCHR staff members raised concern about the lack of funding provided by the government making it difficult for the INCHR to conduct its mandate. The government just paid salaries. Other government actors interviewed including the MOGCSP, the foreign ministry and the MOJ staff all recognized that the INCHR was severely underfunded.

In 2022 the INCHR will be reviewed by GANHRI to determine if it will keep its 'A' status that it received in 2017. Stakeholders think it is unlikely that the INCHR will maintain their status because of the perceived lack of independence, not meeting the 2005 Act and also because of the continued capacity-related issues. Overall, it is clear that the credibility of the INCHR among government and civil society actors is at stake.

E-4 Does the project has effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards the achievement of results. Have they been used for decision-making?

R4 Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended outcomes or impacts? Do they address the problems identified by applying a theory of change?

A closer look at the results framework shows that the results framework is clear however, the ET did observe inefficiencies highlighted in the section below.

First, in 2019, the reporting under each indicator highlighted clearly which targets had been achieved. This was followed up with a section that outlines the activities undertaken. However, in 2020, the section only provides the activities undertaken but did not state which results had been achieved.

Second, there are at least two areas where there was a duplication of outputs under different outcomes. Under Outcome 2, output 2.2 *Capacity of CSOs to negotiate, monitor, investigate, train, report, and address HR issues supported* is like output 3.1 *CSOs and CBOs actors' capacity to investigate and provide redress to victims of human rights violations supported and strengthened under* Outcome 3.

There was another duplication of outputs under Outcome 1 and Outcome 5. Output 1.4 *Capacity of Law enforcement strengthened to integrate HRBA* is like output 5.1 *Police and other relevant law enforcement institutions supported in developing and implementing a Human rights policy*. It was also not clear why a focus on building the human rights capacity of the police was an activity under Outcome 5: *INCHR has increased internal institutional capacity to improve accountability and transparency*.

Third, it is unclear why indicator 5: *Number of recommendations made by INCHR to Government Ministries, Agencies and Corporations positively responded to by state authorities* was under Outcome 5. This indicator would have been relevant under Outcome 1. This indicator was not a part of the original results framework and therefore it is not clear when and why it became an indicator under Outcome 5. There are also no subsequent inputs in place to support it.

Fourthly output 5.2 *SOGI and other relevant laws and legislation reviewed and Human Rights Compliant* also does not fit under Outcome 5. It would more logically fit under Outcome 4 *INCHR has increased its capacity to mainstream gender and ensure greater visibility of the rights of women and girls in its advocacy, policies, operations, and activities*. To be as effective and efficient as possible it will be important that outcomes, outputs, and activities align for maximum impact. More effort should be made in the next project to ensure there is no duplication.

E-5 To what extent are the project approaches and strategies for the achievement of results effective? What are the unsuccessful practices?

The main project approaches and strategies used for the achievements of results included convening, workshops and training, fact-finding, peer mentoring, and community dialogues. There was also support for material resources such as vehicles, office materials, the payment of salaries, and consultancy support. Table 6 summarizes the support provided.

Table 6 Overview of types of support provided

Types of practices	Targets
Convening	National level CSOs, Duty bearers, and the INCHR HQ
Training/workshops	The INCHR, CBOs, Duty Bearers Members of the community
Peer to Peer mentoring	The INCHR human rights monitors
Community Dialogues	The INCHR, CBOs
Fact-Finding Missions	The INCHR human rights monitors, CBOs, INCHR Director/BOC
Support for logistics	Provision of hardware, consultancy services, payment of salaries,

Workshops, and forums

Workshops have come under Outcome 1 primarily. There has been a business and human rights forum, debates, and discussions on transitional justice, debating bills such as the domestic violence act, and the death penalty bill. These types of forums especially taken at the national level with government stakeholders and civil society actors have been an effective approach to addressing certain issues. One representative from the INCHR gave an example of where convening is an excellent strategy. He said, "*Bringing groups together—who don't always see eye to eye- in one room to debate and discuss important human rights issues has been critical.*" He also said that "*These convenings are an important part of a long-term process so results may not be found after one meeting they need to be considered that they are part of the relationship building and coming together on issues.*"

Feedback from the HRPU of MOJ also highlighted how important convenings were, although recognized that there was a high price tag, and they did not always have an immediate impact. The representative gave the example of issues such as the Affirmative Action bill or FGM bill that gave room for these issues to be discussed. The HRPU representative said. "*As these are not issues that are of most importance to lawmakers—as the lawmakers comprise of men- so they are not always interested in taking issues focussed on FGM or affirmative action forward. Therefore, having the support from outside the government is key otherwise these issues would not be discussed."*

Examples of workshops and forums supported through the project are highlighted in Table 7 below.

Table 7 Examples of workshops and forums hosted by conducted

Topic	Attendees	Outcome
Business and Human Rights	INCHR, MOJ, CSOs	Awareness for creating a national business and human rights action plan
Anniversary of Pre-trial detention day	INCHR, judiciary	Strengthening the relationship between the judiciary and the INCHR ended in the release of pre-trial detainees.
National Colloquium on the implementation of the TRC recommendations	INCHR, CSOs, MOJ	A draft bill for the establishment of the economic and war crimes court
Special INCHR Retreat	INCHR BOC and Directors	Relationship building between the BOC and Directors

Trainings and workshops for awareness-raising and skill-building

Trainings and workshops conducted under outcomes 1, 2, and 3 were focused on building the awareness or skills of the INCHR human rights monitors, civil society actors, government actors, and community people. These were conducted in both Monrovia and the counties. An overview of the themes of the trainings divided between awareness-raising and skill-building that coincided with the training topics shared in KIIs and FGDs and outlined in the 2019 narrative donor annual report. These topics are highlighted in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Overview of Topics

Type	Topics
Awareness	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Human Rights Law, child rights, peacebuilding, right of LGBTQ, transitional justice processes, SGBV, the National Action Plan. Women's rights, citizen's roles, and responsibilities, due process, SEA, Inheritance rights,
Skill building	human rights reporting, human rights advocacy, collaboration with the police, human rights monitoring, conflict resolution strategies, community leadership, human rights compliant and reporting of human rights complaints

Overall, the feedback on the trainings was extremely positive. The INCHR human rights monitors were most consistently engaged in the trainings. One of the INCHR human rights monitors from Lofa said, *"It has been useful in that it helps me to analyse the conflict issues and find solutions. It put me in a better position to build peace within my community*." Another one of the INCHR human rights monitors from Bomi highlighted the skills he learned in report writing and reviewing human rights complaints saying these as the most valuable training he had received to conduct his work. Similarly, the INCHR human rights monitor from Nimba said the training was the best part of the job—as he learned so much and improved his human rights knowledge and reporting skills. Government staff and civil society actors who were interviewed spoke about how their awareness of human rights had increased which is further elaborated on in the section on impact.

The participation of the INCHR human rights monitors in workshops with the presence of local and national government staff was considered highly effective. These joint workshops have helped strengthen the INCHR's legitimacy among other stakeholders. The OHCHR Liberia CO's presence in these workshops, also proved to workshop participants that they back the INCHR which also brought greater validity to the human rights work. These groups seeing the INCHR in a new light has also helped to improve its visibility. Another benefit was that the workshops were a useful platform for relationship building between duty bearers and rights holders.

There was concern among at least two different civil society actors from Grand Bassa and Bomi respectively who thought that people from different areas should not be attending workshops in the locations where they did not live. There was a feeling that the potential spots for people in their area were being given to people from elsewhere, and it was better if people from the area were present so relationships could be built among people in the community. [27]

Training focussed on building the capacity of the INCHR staff and CSOs on the international human rights mechanism was also done under Outcome 2.[28] These trainings only benefited a small number of people and therefore it was difficult to ascertain the level of effectiveness.

[27] It may have been an issue of discrimination but was not in the context to fully assess this.

[28] These countries included South Africa, USA, UAE, Egypt, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, and Senegal.

Fact-finding
Fact-finding missions involved human rights monitoring, investigations, and adjudication of human rights complaints. Fact-finding was the process used to collect information to feed into the INCHR annual human rights situation reports. OHCHR Liberia CO provided technical support to the Civil Society Organisations Human Rights Advocacy Platform (CSO-HRAP) to conduct fact-finding missions together with the INCHR. [29] Occasionally, the INCHR BOC and the INCHR HQ staff also joined the fact-finding missions.

Peer to peer mentoring
*T*he OHCHR Liberia CO staff used peer-to-peer mentoring to support the INCHR human rights monitors while they were on the job including receiving individual feedback on their work through peer-to-peer mentoring. These methods helped to increase the skills of the INCHR human rights monitors to be better equipped at collecting human rights information, writing more clearly, and deepening their understanding of the human rights issues they were monitoring. One of the INCHR human rights monitors from Nimba talked about how he benefitted from it and he said, "*During the peer-to-peer mentoring training, we share knowledge on the INCHR reporting template and how it conforms to international reporting standards; we also derive human rights issues from paragraphs. I have learned human rights reporting templates and steps in reporting."*

Providing support for logistics and salary support
OHCHR Liberia CO provided logistical support to the INCHR including vehicles, motorbikes, computers, gas, office equipment and the payment of salaries. The support provided to the INCHR human rights monitors enabled the INCHR greater visibility in the counties as highlighted above through the training support most directly. It was more difficult to assess the impact of the support provided to the INCHR HQ. The ET was not clear on how the resources were divided between the INCHR HQs and the INCHR human rights monitors in the counties and how it added value to the headquarters' work. There was a concern raised among the government paid the INCHR human rights monitors that they did not receive any other support besides their salary which is further discussed later in the report.

Procuring the equipment assumed a significant amount of OHCHR Liberia staff time and was out of their area of expertise. There was a reflection about whether their time would have been better spent just focussing on supporting the INCHR in their human rights work. It was recommended that in the future that either this comes from the UNDP directly or the INCHR be supported to procure vehicles, computers, and other office equipment as a capacity building exercise with support from UNDP who would be more equipped to carry this out.

E1-To what extent are INCHR staff and management satisfied with results? [30]

Among the INCHR staff, there were a variety of different views of the work and levels of satisfaction with the results of the project. A main point of contention from the INCHR perspective was the frustration of not being provided funding directly through the Swedish grant. Instead, all the funding including for hardware such as vehicles, computers, and motorbikes had to be procured by the OHCHR Liberia CO through UNDP and then handed over to the INCHR as was highlighted earlier. This arrangement impacted the relationship between the INCHR and OHCHR Liberia CO from the first day of the project. Over time the relationship worsened with a lack of trust between the two institutions. By mid-2020 the OHCHR Liberia CO and a few members of the INCHR leadership were no longer communicating. However, the OHCHR Liberia CO did maintain a relationship with one or two members of the INCHR staff and

[29] Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Funding proposal to the Embassy of Sweden in Liberia Annual donor report 2019.
[30] This assumes INCHR staff and management and not OHCHR.

continued to work with and support the INCHR human rights monitors, especially those whose salaries were paid for by the project.

Having to go through the UNDP led to bureaucratic delays that also impacted the project results. There were examples of where travel had to be postponed or cancelled when the INCHR did not meet a deadline for the submission of a request.

The INCHR human rights monitors, both those paid by the government and the ones directly paid for by the project, were satisfied with the support they received from the OHCHR Liberia CO. This support included the training and peer-to-peer mentoring discussed earlier. However, the INCHR human rights monitors were not satisfied with the support they received from the INCHR HQ. Across the board, the INCHR human rights monitors wanted more the fundamental issues they wanted support on were the protection risks they faced in their work and to ensure there was follow up on the human rights issues they were monitoring. The INCHR HQ staff were frustrated by the inferior quality of work of the human rights monitors. The INCHR HQ staff did not feel that the monitoring skills were sufficient to use the information to draft the annual human rights reports.

Tensions between the INCHR BOC and the INCHR Secretariat were highlighted in interviews the ET had with both the INCHR and OHCHR staff members and was also highlighted in the KNCHR assessment report. It was clear from reports that tensions arose from a lack of a clear division of labour between the INCHR BOC and the INCHR Secretariat with the INCHR BOC often getting too involved in the everyday work when their role was higher-level- strategy and policy. The KNCHR report recommended that an amendment to the 2005 Act was needed to remedy the issue.

The INCHR leadership were satisfied with the support from the OHCHR Liberia CO in helping with the report writing and participation in the UPR process. They also appreciated the support received from the KNCHR during their weeklong visit to support the INCHR HQ staff. The INCHR Secretariat recognized the need to implement the matrix of capacity-building recommendations and felt that they should be supported to do this in the same way that the INCHR human rights monitors were being supported—through peer mentoring. There was also a suggestion that part of the support in the future should be to help them become adept at procurement and finance so that instead of items being procured for them they should be supported to do this themselves. Therefore, they felt that part of the support should have helped them build their capacity to manage donor money.

There was also consensus among all the INCHR staff that more support is needed for the CSOs to play a more robust monitoring role.

E-6 How did the project contribute to INCHR field presence in the counties? How did INCHR headquarters support the INCHR monitors? What was the quality of their reporting and what kind of human rights issues did they report to monitors from INCHR HQ?

Table 9 Support to the INCHR to enhance field presence

The project contributed to the INCHR presence	Overall in the field
Resources[31]	Laptops, Motorbikes, Office Equipment
Training	Trainings targeting all the INCHR human rights monitors, duty bearers, and rights holders.

[31] Under the project the following items were procured: 3 Toyota Land Cruiser Jeeps, 7 Yamaha Motorbikes;10 desktops, 9 Office Desks; 9 Office Chairs, 9 Visitors Chairs, 5 Cabinets; Bulk Stationeries; pens, notebooks etc., 3 Photocopiers, 7 Voice Recorders; 3 Cameras;1 Camera Stand;7 Megaphones;7 Shredders;18 Gallons of Lubricants; 500 Gallons fuel and Renovations to the hearing room

Mentoring	Peer to peer training and fact findings missions, support, and feedback on monitoring reports
Human Resources	15 human rights monitors, three regional coordinators, gender and diversity officer

The project increased the number of the INCHR staff—especially outside of the capital Monrovia. The project paid for three regional coordinators and the 15 INCHR human rights monitors. Their presence in the counties helped bring greater visibility to the INCHR overall in Liberia. During the project period, the INCHR human rights monitors reported directly to the INCHR regional coordinators who were paid by the project. Once the project ended and support for the regional positions ended, the INCHR human rights monitors reported directly to the INCHR DCMI. The INCHR human rights monitors provided monthly reports to the DCMI. However, the INCHR human rights monitors were highly disappointed with the lack of support they receive from the DCMI. Instead, the INCHR human rights monitors relied on the support provided by the OHCHR Liberia CO staff through the peer-to-peer mentoring work.

All the INCHR human rights monitors interviewed by the ET felt a lack of support from the INCHR HQ.[32] They all complained that they did not:

- ✓ receive any feedback on their monthly monitoring reports.
- ✓ receive any follow up on the human rights cases they were monitoring.
- ✓ receive anything beyond their monthly salary including office space to work, laptops, or motorbikes.
- ✓ receive support to address protection issues in their work including that these concerns were not acknowledged.

Another salary-related concern was that the compensation did not consider education or level of experience. Instead, all the INCHR human rights monitors earned the same amount for their salary which was raised as a concern by at least half of the INCHR human rights monitors interviewed.

The lack of follow-up on human rights cases that the monitors were following cut to the core of the INCHR's relevance as a human rights institution in Liberia. INCHR human rights monitors said that the organization risked losing its relevance and being seen as a 'toothless bulldog,' unless more follow-up was done by the INCHR HQ. During an FGD held in Nimba where the 14 INCHR human rights monitors were present, one person said (and the rest all agreed), "*The INCHR is being ridiculed as a 'toothless bulldog' and the statement is a reality. In our respective communities, the general feeling externally about the INCHR is that there is so much that needs to be done within the organization, especially in field operations and administration. To overcome this there is much more we need to do to exert ourselves to help increase our relevance and clout in the community. As it stands now, the Commission lacks a robust feedback mechanism— this is not supported at all*."

The INCHR human rights monitors suggested that the INCHR BOC needed to be more present in the counties and come to the institutions where the human rights violations were being perpetrated. There needed to be an overall increase in the visibility of the INCHR through its leadership. They also suggested that an effective feedback mechanism be created that would engage both the CSOs and government agencies. So, if there was a human rights case such as prolonged pretrial detention, the INCHR and the CSOs would work together to raise these issues with the MOJ. However, as it stood, the INCHR human

[32]The ET engaged only one of the INCHR human rights monitor whose salary was compensated by the project and also had a motorcycle. The rest of the INCHR human rights monitors were paid by the government and they did not have any form of transportation for their work.

rights monitors would submit reports and not be provided with any feedback. With an effective feedback mechanism, the human rights cases highlighted in the monthly reports would be brought up to the relevant authorities by the INCHR HQ to be addressed. This information would be fed back to the INCHR human rights monitors and ideally, the human rights issues would be addressed.

Feedback from the INCHR HQ recognized this gap. However, their concern was the mediocre quality of the human rights reports they received and the lack of skilled human rights monitors. They recognized that the conditions of service (low salary and the requirement of having to live in the area where they were working) did not attract the most skilled staff.

Reviewing annual human rights and monitoring reports, the main human rights issues being monitored were rule of law, SGBV, and SEA issues. All the INCHR human rights monitors regularly visited prisons and schools and regularly engaged with the WACPS of the police where these issues were highlighted. There were economic, social, and cultural rights issues also being monitored such as lack of access to education and healthcare. However, these issues are much more difficult to monitor and provide remedies for.

E-7 What kinds of human rights information system exists for systematic documentation, analysis, follow-up, and human rights reporting of INCHR?

The ET received the 2018 and 2021 annual human rights situation reports, the December 2020 election monitoring report, the INCHR human rights monitoring reports, and a GPS report on massacres. [33] The OHCHR Liberia CO and the INCHR provided feedback to the ET that a database had been set up. However, the ET did not see evidence of a database system or any evidence of systematic documentation, analysis, and follow-up. Without a review of the process, it is difficult to make an analysis. The 2018 annual human rights situation report received support and feedback from the OHCHR both in Geneva and at the Liberia CO level. It was not clear if these reports have been made available to the public.

3.3. Efficiency

A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results

EF1. Has the project's organizational structure, management, and coordination mechanisms been effective in terms of project implementation? Are there any recommendations for improvement?

The ET understands that coordination for all projects that the INCHR and the OHCHR Liberia CO carried out jointly takes place on two levels. [34] The first is at the project management level with regular monthly meetings between the INCHR BOC and the leadership of OHCHR Liberia CO. The second is at the technical level with the INCHR Secretariat (Directors and technical staff) and OHCHR Liberia CO staff held twice a month. During these meetings, strategy and gaps are discussed. Minutes of meetings and action points to ensure issues are followed up take place. However, when the relationship broke down in 2020 between the OHCHR Liberia CO and the INCHR BOC, these meetings ceased. The OHCHR Liberia CO also provided direct support to the Swedish-funded INCHR human rights monitors through peer-to-peer review meetings and feedback on their monthly monitoring reports.

[33] The ET did not receive the human rights and gender checklist, the INCHR database, Complaint's handbook, Covid human rights reports, the pretrial detention thematic report, and the INCHR/CSO engagement strategy.
[34] The three other projects include: LMPTF, Spotlight and CDD

The gap in coordination between the INCHR human rights monitors and the INCHR HQ regarding the lack of support and follow-up was not raised in these meetings. This signifies a gap and a need for the INCHR human rights monitors to be represented at the technical meeting to ensure their concerns are addressed promptly.

There was also concern raised that the civil society actors were not represented in these meetings nor were there any regularly scheduled meetings between the INCHR and civil society actors. Starting in 2022 the OHCHR Liberia CO started to host regular monthly human rights meetings between the INCHR Secretariat, and civil society actors recognizing this gap.

EF4. Is the project and its components cost-effective? Could activities and outputs have been delivered with fewer resources without comprising project quality?
EF5. Have sufficient resources, including financial and staff, been allocated strategically to achieve project outcomes?

A review of the 2018 and 2019 budgets revealed that meetings, workshops, and consultations made up the majority of the budget under Outcomes 1 and 2. [35] Funds were budgeted for engagement with the international human rights mechanism (including international travel). There were also funds for the publication and launching of the annual human rights situation report that were not used. For Outcome 3, the budget focussed on training, supplies, and equipment. Under Outcome 4, human resources through consultant's fees and related travel consumed the budget. Allocations under Outcome 5 were for software, consultants, research, and supplies.

Determining cost-effectiveness and the efficiency of activities, the ET considered the level to which the outputs contributed to achieving results and sustaining long-term change. The institutional capacity-building support was considered cost-effective. Especially highlighted was the support provided by the KNCHR which was done through two staff members travelling to Liberia to support the INCHR Secretariat. Following a series of meetings, a report with a clear identification of the gaps and a matrix of capacity building recommendations to be implemented was produced. In contrast, in 2019, seven of the INCHR staff, two CSOs, and two staff of the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) attended workshops and training in different countries to engage in international human rights mechanisms. While these trips helped the INCHR achieve goals and can be hugely impactful to those that take part directly, it is not clear if this is cost-effective as it depends on what steps those individuals take because of their experience which was not clear.

Engagement in the UPR was also considered a cost-effective measure. This support helped the government meet its international obligations and also brought government agencies and CSOs together. It also resulted in the government committing to abolishing the death penalty.

Another factor when considering cost-effectiveness is how likely the support will lead to sustainable change in the long term. Human resources support played a vital role in giving visibility to the INCHR in the region. The training and peer mentoring were well appreciated by the INCHR human rights monitors who benefitted from it. However, the activity was extremely labour intensive taking up a significant amount of OHCHR staff time. The presence and support provided to the INCHR human rights monitors improved their visibility throughout Liberia.

[35] Some proportion of that was also on DSA

Monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation is a critical aspect of the INCHR's mandate. To further improve the efficiency of the work, the OHCHR Liberia CO's capacity building work with the INCHR human rights monitors on the human rights violations must be followed up with relevant government agencies to ensure the issues are addressed. To increase the efficiency of OHCHR's support, building DCIM's capacity to support the INCHR human rights monitors is critical to take place in the next phase of the project. The DCIM has to play a more robust role in fulfilling its mandate to follow up on human rights cases. This is the division within the INCHR that is responsible for creating an effective follow-up mechanism. The DCIM must be supported to further engage relevant government agencies including the HRPU of the MOJ, WACPS of the police, civil society actors and the UN human rights working group to ensure that human rights issues are effectively addressed and go beyond just the responsibility of the INCHR human rights monitors to report. OHCHR Liberia CO is ideally situated to help set up the follow-up mechanism and ensure that it runs effectively.

Under the Swedish project, key assets were procured to benefit the INCHR, including vehicles, motorbikes, and office supplies. In reviewing the INCHR records, it was unclear how these were divided up between the INCHR HQ and the counties. None of the INCHR human rights monitors whose salaries were paid for by the government had access to office space or a motorbike to facilitate the work. It is critical in the future that all the INCHR human rights monitors are provided motorbikes and can access an office to conduct their work.

Further funding could also have been spent on building the capacity of CSOs to improve their monitoring and reporting skills. CSOs exist throughout the country and therefore reach all parts of Liberia. Further understanding the comparative advantage of the CSOs in relationship to where they are located, and what their current capacity is to monitor and report on human rights is critical in the next phase so that CSOs can play a more robust monitoring role. The HRPU within the MOJ also has a key role to play in terms of engaging with the government on human rights issues and their role should become increasingly prominent moving forward.

3.4. Impact Orientation

The extent to which the strategic orientation of the project points toward making a significant contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable changes on human rights issues.

I2. Which groups in society have seen positive change (s) in their respective situations because of the project?

E3 To what extent have the capacities of relevant duty-bearers and rights-holders been strengthened?

Evaluation findings reveal that the project contributed to strengthening the capacities of duty bearers. It also empowered rights holders by raising awareness about human rights, especially in the counties.

Impact on duty bearers from the counties
With the training and the increased engagement with the INCHR human rights monitors, duty bearers that the ET engaged with included representatives from the WACPS within the police, magistrates, local government leaders, and a District Commissioner. Across the board within the five counties, they reported the impact of the project. There appeared to be an increased awareness of human rights issues, especially related to judicial processes, and greater awareness of gender, and people with disabilities (PWD). Duty bearers reported learning new skills and changes in attitude towards rights holders. They

also reported better coordination and collaboration, a greater willingness and interest in getting involved in trying to help address human rights issues, and a better understanding of the challenges of addressing human rights concerns, especially SGBV.

One staff member from the WACPS in Cape Mount County talked about how her attitude towards SGBV survivors and perpetrators had changed. She said, "*One of the most useful aspects of this project is that I reduced my level of harshness towards SGBV survivors and perpetrators and enhanced my respect for the rights, dignity, and views of all.*" A police officer from Cape Mount County said that it improved his relationship with the people he interacted with. A magistrate from Cape Mount County said that it increased his knowledge of human rights and the judicial process, which helped him do his work better. He found the information so valuable that he shared it with his staff to further increase their capacity. A District Commissioner from Cape Mount County said that he ensures that there is always a cross-section of members of the community together when he calls for a county sitting and that the project was helping to improve citizens' awareness of their rights.

Local government authorities in Cape Mount County found that, since their involvement in the project, they had seen improved relationships with the citizens. This improved relationship was helpful when pursuing human rights cases. One person in the group also observed that prison workers were treating inmates with more dignity. In an FGD with prison staff at the Robertsport Central prison, one member revealed he made sure his staff knew that there was no tolerance for SEA in the prison setting. Correction officers from Bassa County said that the training sessions gave them the skills to resolve conflicts among inmates and perform their duties better.

Impact on duty bearers from Monrovia

National level duty bearers' interviews were less clear about how the project had strengthened their work. Mostly, their feedback centred around their expectations of the role of the INCHR. All representatives expressed support for the INCHR and saw them as active participants in meetings on human rights issues, especially the current Executive Director. However, given the INCHR's independence, they thought they should do more to push the government to meet their human rights obligations. One government staff suggested that instead of getting treaty body training each year–which he felt most people engaged with human rights issues knew about- he thought it made more sense for government actors to learn more deeply about human rights including having a better understanding of their role as a human rights focal point in their government institution.

Impact on CSOs and rights holders in the counties

Engagement with CSOs, members of the traditional leadership, and other civilians found evidence that they had been empowered through the engagement with the project. There appeared to be a greater awareness of women's rights, including both harmful traditional practices and SGBV affecting both women and children most significantly. A female Zoe from Cape Mount County said that her engagement in the project had been significant and said, "*Being involved in the training changed our way of doing Sandi Society business. We have put restraining orders on Sandi's activities because of knowledge gained.*" A CSO leader in Cape Mount County said that "*The most valuable thing about the OHCHR/INCHR is the extent to which citizens, especially women's understanding of SGBV is increasing and this is helping to shape perceptions about it*" A group of women who were part of the FGD from Bassa County said that they learned how to engage justice actors related to SGBV. Targeting judicial actors had been especially effective in the project because it made them more aware of the situation of women.

FGDs with women in Nimba found three key changes. These included; 1) an increase in the number of women who reported SGBV cases to the police rather than compromising cases, 2) an eagerness from government officials to engage the SGBV referral pathway which encouraged more survivors to report,

and 3) a change in attitude among the Sande and Poro leadership that has led to a decrease in the time that boys and girls have to stay in the bush schools allowing them to go to a government school for longer periods.

Female CSO representatives also reported that their capacities had been strengthened. One group of women felt that the work on the OHCHR and the INCHR had had a change among women. One woman said, "*Nowadays women are less likely to compromise a case of domestic violence*." These women also saw their capacities develop to help women deal with issues through mediation where the cases were less severe.

Feedback from CBOs at the county level highlighted learning new skills. These new skills included monitoring, reporting, and following up on human rights cases. CBOs also reported learning more about different human rights issues and how to respond to them. Improved relationships with government actors were also noted. Feedback from an all-male FGD in Nimba found that "*We have used the knowledge from the training session together as CSOs in reducing the misunderstanding between government and CSOs. CSOs have found the facts about human rights issues, collaborating with the INCHR as a government institution, and CSOs have stopped putting their feelings into advocacy and have learned to evaluate cases and find facts.*"

I3. Is there evidence of contributions of the project to the promotion and protection of human rights in line with relevant international human rights standards (drafting and adoption of new policies, plans, and programmes in line with recommendations from human rights bodies)?

The engagement with monitoring and implementation of treaty obligations was considered instrumental in leading to a discussion on the death penalty. The INCHR led a discussion forum that later escalated a debate in parliament with the relevant human rights committee. There was evidence of contributions of the project to promote and protect human rights in line with the relevant human rights standards.

Recommendations made in the 2020 UPR are based on consultations with key stakeholders from a variety of government institutions and CSOs. These recommendations highlight the importance of enhancing the capacity of CSOs to monitor, report, and advocate for human rights. They advocate for the INCHR to implement its core mandate to enhance its human rights knowledge. It also highlights the importance of building the capacity of the judiciary, the police, and corrections officials. It means further strengthening the human rights focal points within the ministries and agencies on thematic human rights issues. The application of the human rights-based approach in development programmes was also highlighted as important. Providing logistical support to the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF) to facilitate compliance with international human rights treaty obligations, including treaty reporting, domestication, and implementation of the recommendations of treaty bodies and the UPR was another key recommendation.

3.5. Sustainability

The likelihood of a continuation of project results after the intervention is completed or the probability of continued long-term benefits

S1. What is the likelihood that the project results will be of use over the long term? What is the likelihood that the results from the project will be maintained for an extended period once the project ends?

11. To what extent is the project making a significant contribution to broader and longer-term enjoyment of rights? Or how likely is it will eventually make this contribution?

According to the project proposal, OHCHR is poised to engage with the INCHR for six years split into two phases. The first phase lasted from 2018 to 2021 coinciding with the end date of the INCHR strategic plan. During this period, the INCHR had two major outcomes including 1) to have successfully identified their institutional capacity gaps, especially at the headquarters level and 2) an increased presence around the country with relationship building at the county and community levels.

With the OHCHR Liberia CO's continued guidance and support, the INCHR has helped contribute to a fuller realization of human rights in Liberia. Critical to this is to ensure that the INCHR leadership continues on the capacity building path. This means incorporating the recommendations matrix from the assessment reports (from PWC, the KNCHR, and GANHRI) into a user-friendly plan that can easily be taken forward. If the INCHR implements these recommendations with the support of OHCHR, it will not only build the capacity of the INCHR sustainably but enable them to play a more robust human rights role in Liberia.

The focus on building the capacity of the INCHR human rights monitors throughout the fifteen counties helped to increase their visibility. However as already discussed the support to the INCHR human rights monitors from their HQ has not been sufficient. The INCHR human rights monitors raised concern that without follow-up on the human rights issues they are monitoring this will reflect poorly on the reputation of the INCHR, and people see it as a "toothless bulldog." A more sustainable approach is needed to address the gap between the INCHR HQ and the INCHR human rights monitors in the counties. For instance, in the Sierra Leone TRC, there is a department focussed specifically on the regions that are based in the head office. Other remedies could be to create a task force made up of INCHR staff, CSOs, and HRPU of MOJ to support the monitoring work overall.

The INCHR Act recognizes the importance of the INCHR engaging with stakeholders including government agencies, the UN, and CSOs. The INCHR can influence government policies and decisions and also public opinion. Examples provided included: the INCHR's input into the Government's National Agenda 2030 and also their report on prison conditions which led to the release of pretrial detainees and led to the judiciary instituting a working group that reviewed cases of pretrial detainees.[36] There was also feedback that the INCHR Commissioners and staff had access to members of government and could wield their influence because of these relationships. [37]

Likewise, the INCHR has a signed Memorandum of Understanding with CSOs including the Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia and the Transitional Justice Working Group. However, there was little evidence to show how that was working despite the MOU as civil society actors complained that the INCHR was not consistent or dependable in their communication. The INCHR also engaged with the government agencies and civil society actors in the development of the NHRAP and regularly attended and participated in meetings. All stakeholders including the INCHR were active in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. The MOGCSW has also said that the INCHR has been active in the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Working Group at the national level.

[36]Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and UNDP, Final Report Capacity Assessment of the Independent Commission of Human Rights (INCHR) Liberia, p .22.
[37]Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and UNDP, Final Report Capacity Assessment of the Independent Commission of Human Rights (INCHR) Liberia P 15

S2. Which components of the project are more relevant for future work and are there any recommendations for their improvement? Which positive /innovative approaches have been identified if any and how can they be replicated?

Support for the INCHR was central to each of the five outcomes and this impacted its overall efficiency and effectiveness. However, both OHCHR and the INCHR highlighted that the engagement with civil society actors was not as robust as it could have been. There could also have been greater efforts to strengthen duty bearers such as the HRPU of the MOJ -which would have led to better results than just focusing on support for the INCHR. Given the clear UPR recommendations highlighted earlier, the ET suggests that any new programme builds on what has been developed—such as continuing the capacity building support for the INCHR but also including equal support to civil society and key government actors to ensure their capacity is being built at the same time. It is believed that this will lead to greater sustainability.

Overall, it is suggested that the OHCHR Liberia CO is best placed to continue to play facilitating role by continuing to:

- Build the capacity for monitoring and reporting human rights violations through training, peer-to-peer mentoring, and fact-finding with both the INCHR human rights monitors and also civil society actors throughout the counties.
- Ensuring that capacity building is continuing at the INCHR HQ level to ensure that the INCHR works effectively as a whole to deliver on its mandate throughout Liberia.
- Support the development of human rights feedback mechanisms that brings together all actors including the INCHR, duty bearers, rights holders, and UN agencies to support where it is needed.
- Continue to build the capacity of the INCHR to produce human rights reports that are timely, quality standard, and meet human rights reporting standards.
- Support and recognize the comparative advantage of all actors.

OHCHR will continue to have an added value in supporting the mainstreaming of gender and disability inclusion, in coordination, maintaining links with all stakeholders, and ensuring the focus on transitional justice.

A suggested approach for a future programme would also have five outcomes that include the following set of outputs as suggested in table 10 below.

Table 10 Suggested approach for a future programme

Outcome	Innovate
Outcome 1	Direct support to Government human rights entities Ensure gender is mainstreamed Make coordination central
Outcome 2	Direct support to CSOs Ensure gender is mainstreamed Make coordination central
Outcome 3	Continue without the support directly Ensure gender is mainstreamed Make coordination central
Outcome 4	Focus on Transitional Justice and include the INCHR, Government agencies, and CBOs and make sure there is a focus on gender and coordination
Outcome 5	Ensure gender is mainstreamed Make sure there is a link between the INCHR HQ and the INCHR human rights monitors and the continual focus on the INCHR institutional capacity building.

3.6. Gender Equality and Human Rights (Disability inclusion)

Gender Equality and Human Rights (GE&HR): the degree to which a gender and human rights perspective has been integrated with the project, and the degree to which the results obtained have contributed to gender and human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, with emphasis on women rights and disability inclusion.

GE1. To what extent has gender and human rights considerations been integrated into the project design, budget, and implementation, with emphasis on women's rights and disability inclusion? S4. Did the intervention design include appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/ local ownership, use of local capacity, etc.) to support positive changes in Gender Equality and Human Rights after the end of the intervention?

The project dedicated Outcome 4 to increasing the INCHR's capacity to mainstream gender and ensure greater visibility of the rights of women and girls in its advocacy, policies, operations, and activities. The aim was for the gender perspective to be implemented throughout policy formulation, programme development, and activity implementation, including project monitoring and evaluation.

Because of this project, the INCHR now has a gender unit at the national level. Gender, disability, and human rights have been integrated into the project design, budget, and implementation. Under Outcome, the INCHR created a gender department, hired a gender and inclusion advisor, and developed a draft gender policy. However, gender focal points at the county level did not materialize. The main outputs include a gender and human rights checklist and a draft gender policy, which is due to be completed in 2022. The funding allocated to Outcome 4 supported human resources, including both staff and consultants.

From the field-based evaluation findings, gender has been mainstreamed by ensuring that trainings include representation from both men and women, that PwDs take part in the trainings and that awareness is raised about their rights to address the shame, stigma, and harassment they face. There is a section dedicated to the PwD in the 2021 Annual Human Rights situation report. At the national level, the INCHR has worked with the National Commission on Disabilities in Liberia.

According to the UPR, national report there have been awareness-raising programmes, workshops, trainings, and participation in conferences at international, regional, and local levels to ensure that the decision-makers and communities understand the rights of women. The establishment and support of women in the 15-counties, the support of the women's NGO's secretariat, the village saving loan association and the national women dialogue are noticeable steps taken by the government to promote and protect women's rights. Awareness of SGBV and other harmful forms of traditional practices targeting women was also done.

GE2. Were there any political, practical, or bureaucratic constraints to addressing GE&HR issues during implementation? If so, what level of effort was made to overcome these challenges, or what can be done in future interventions?

Findings from interviews and FGDs in the field highlighted challenges in working on key GE and HR issues.

These included:

- Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)
- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Sexual exploitation and abuse
The sexual exploitation and abuse of children is a pervasive problem in Liberia. The INCHR human rights monitors and CSOs monitored cases of sex for grades in secondary schools, where teachers force students to exchange sexual favours for passing grades. As the minimum age for consensual sex is eighteen, these cases are statutory rape. Rape has a stiff sentence of life imprisonment. Based on the cases that the ET heard about from the INCHR monitors and from reviewing the data except for one case in Cape Mount County where a teacher faced justice, there was little other evidence that the police or school authorities took these cases forward.

Instead, the approach is to make the girls aware that they can say no putting the onus on the potential victims to address the issue. High school students in Bomi County shared that SEA is a problem in their schools. Students are told to resist sexual relations with the school staff but want the school administrators to receive SEA training. They also wanted help in establishing SEA clubs in schools to serve as a watchdog and to incorporate human rights into the curriculum of schools.

These cases are not being dealt with as statutory rape or as a criminal matter. There were no cases of SEA in the 2020 UPR report or reported in the 2021 INCHR annual human rights situation report. All the INCHR human rights monitors reported on this issue.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
Findings from the feedback from KIIs and FGDs from stakeholders across the five counties highlight the following challenges in addressing SGBV

- There have been developments in government efforts to address SGBV including new laws
- Awareness-raising is helping to reduce cases that are compromised due to shame, stigma, and cultural and religious reasons.
- A lack of a functioning referral pathway including no available safe homes
- An increase in cases during the COVID-19 lockdown periods

Gains have been made in addressing SGBV by introducing the WACPS within the police and the Special Court for Sexual Violence Crimes. In 2020 the president declared a state of emergency to address the problem. The 2021 INCHR annual human rights situation report highlighted an increase in incidences of rape and also increased arrests. During the reporting period, it states, "*There were estimated over 500 inmates held in detention on allegation of rape in Liberia."* [38]

Despite the passing of the Domestic Violence Law in 2019, domestic violence remained a widespread problem with reports that 16 per cent of reported SGBV cases were for domestic violence. While the newly passed law strengthened penalties- with the maximum penalty for conviction of domestic violence a six months' imprisonment and provided support for a referral mechanism, the government did not enforce the law effectively. [39]

On a positive note, there was evidence that the awareness-raising efforts with the local and traditional leaders about reporting rape and sexual violence crimes were gaining traction. There were also recommendations such as doing advocacy to reactivate safe homes and staff them and increasing the number of SGBV special courts so that it functions throughout the country. The logic is that prosecuting cases in the communities where they are taking place can serve as a deterrent.

[38] The 2021 INCHR Annual Human Rights Situation Report
[39] US State Department Annual Human Rights Report 2020

The WACPS received reports on cases of domestic violence between January and September 2020, which showed a decrease in the cases reported during the same period in 2019. Government and civil society actors attributed the reduced reporting of cases to the COVID-19 pandemic, as movement restrictions delayed official reporting, support services were limited because of the lockdown, and victims were unwilling to identify perpetrators while still living in proximity under curfews and stay-at-home orders during the government declared state of emergency from April through July 2020. Civil society officials suggested that the lack of speedy trials led victims to seek redress outside the formal justice system.

Female Genital Mutilation

According to the 2019-2020 Demographic and Health Survey, 38 per cent of girls and women ages 15 to 49 had undergone FGM with a higher prevalence in the northern regions. FGM has not been criminalized and is widely practised throughout Liberia. At the field level, there appear to be efforts by UN Women to address the issue. Support was provided to the National Council of Chiefs and Elders and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, through the EU Spotlight Initiative. There was an agreement to suspend the activities of "bush schools" or traditional schools, like the Sande Society, in which girls learned to farm and household skills (often subjected to initiation rites, including FGM/C) for one year starting in June 2019. The suspension remained in place and has been enforced by the Traditional Council of Chiefs and Elders in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs. [40] However human rights organizations reported bush school activities and FGM/C continued, despite the ban. [41] In Cape Mount, UN Women is supporting the building of market halls that aim to provide alternative economic incentives to address the issue.

In January 2018 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf signed Executive Order No. 92 banning FGM for girls under 18 years of age as originally proposed in the Domestic Violence Act. The Executive Order expired in 2019 and there is now nothing enshrined into national law. [42] All references to FGM were removed from the Domestic Violence Act before its passing in 2019. Following intense political pressure and unease about prohibiting what are considered 'cultural traditions' regarding legislation, the FGM bill is still pending and unlikely to pass without concerted effort. Government actors engaged at the national level have suggested that more advocacy and civic engagement are needed. The main feedback was that a link needs to be made between lawmakers and the Zoes. The focus should be on ensuring there is greater awareness surrounding the dangers associated with FGM. One first step has been to encourage Zoes to take small steps to ban the practice.

GE3. Were the processes and activities implemented during the intervention free from discrimination to all stakeholders?

Findings from KIIs and FGDs with all the stakeholders in the five counties did not find any discrimination against any group. The feedback from the field research also showed that INCHR and OHCHR made concerted efforts to incorporate the inclusion of women and men into training and activities. Statements made by training participants used terms such as "to speak on behalf of all people." To describe the level of inclusivity that they found. There were also distinctions made about not discriminating based on religion, sex, or age. However, in following up with one stakeholder specifically on discrimination against the LGBTQ population he responded that even though he had not seen discrimination against LGBTQ people,

[40] The Sande (for females) and Poro (for males) societies–often referred to as "secret societies"–combine traditional religious and cultural practices and engage in FGM/C as part of their indoctrination ceremonies.

[41] US State Department Annual Human Rights Report Liberia 2020

[42] This allows FGM to be performed on women over eighteen who consent.

he recognized they hid. He said, "*I have not seen discrimination against this population because this population is hidden, and they are not usually part of our workshops*." [43]

In November 2020, OHCHR and UNDP launched the *Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Rights in Africa: Liberia Country Report.* [44] The report calls attention to challenges and abuses LGBTI individuals face in Liberia, including arbitrary detention, violence, discrimination, stigma, inequality, social exclusion, as well as the denial of rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly. The launch event was organized by the INCHR, with the approval of several LGBTI organizations. In the weeks following the report launch, several threats to the LGBTI community were reported, one allegedly emanating from a government official. The threats prompted several activists to seek relocation help.

According to reports, LGBTI victims were sometimes afraid to report crimes to the police because of social stigma surrounding sexual orientation and rape and the fear police would detain or abuse them because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The HIV/AIDS team of the police and the Solidarity Sisters–a group of female police officers–undertook outreach to key communities, resolved disputes before they escalated, and helped other police officers respond to sensitive cases.

Authorities of the police's Community Services Section noted improvements in obtaining redress for crimes committed against LGBTI persons because of several training sessions on sexual and reproductive rights. Police sometimes ignored complaints by LGBTI persons, but LGBTI activists noted improvements in treatment and protection from police after officers underwent human rights training.

LGBTI individuals faced discrimination in accessing housing, health care, employment, and education. There were several reports from LGBTI activists that property owners refused housing to members of the LGBTI community by either denying applications or evicting residents from their properties.

There were press and civil society actors' reports of harassment of persons based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, with some newspapers targeting the LGBTI community. Hate speech was a persistent issue. Influential figures such as government officials and traditional and religious leaders made public homophobic and transphobic statements.

Children with disabilities are stigmatized, abandoned, neglected, and purposely exposed to risks (including death). Persons with disabilities suffered torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The National Union of the Organization of the Disabled (NUOD) reported families sometimes abandoned or refused to provide medical care to children with mental disabilities because of the taboo associated with the conditions or fear that the community would label children with disabilities as witches.

GE4. Did the project address the specific needs of women, men, girls, and boys? For instance, taking into consideration age and sex? Are there disaggregated data of the project's achieved results based on gender?
GE5. How have the internal organizational structures/norms of INCHR and other stakeholders, both those directly and indirectly impacted by the project, improved to better address the human rights of women, girls, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups in society?

[43] UNDP and OHCHR *Research conducted Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Rights (SOGIR) in Africa: Liberia Country Report: A Participatory Review and Analysis of the Legal, Social and Human Rights Environment for People of Diverse Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity* December 2018 funded by USAID
[44] It had been published in late 2018 but there was a delay in the launch due to COVID 19 and other issues.

There was evidence that the project considered the specific needs of women, men, girls, and boys. Trainings conducted in the counties that targeted INCHR, government actors, CSOs, and rights holders, including students—focus on an array of issues relevant to the specific needs of separate groups. For instance, SEA is an issue in all the counties which cater to the needs of students, including girls. Harmful traditional practices that impact girls and boys were also highlighted. Issues of SGBV which disproportionately impacts women and girls were also central to the project. Advocacy regarding juveniles in detention without proper facilities disproportionately impacts boys. Overcrowding of prisons and prolonged pretrial detention and police detention impact men more than other groups.

Participant lists of trainings conducted on behalf of the project by OHCHR and narrative annual monitoring reports were disaggregated by sex. A review of INCHR's annual situation reports for 2018 and 2021 report the sex of the survivor or rights holder, however, overall statistics were not disaggregated by sex. Although not yet adopted, the INCHR's draft gender policy will require the use of sex-disaggregated data stating that. "… *INCHR approved activity and for reporting on results, including the generation and use of sex disaggregated as well as qualitative data*." [45]

IV. Lessons Learned

CSOs stepping up during the COVID-19 Response

The focus on human rights issues that arose out of the COVID-19 pandemic allowed OHCHR to support human rights CSOs' involvement in human rights monitoring, reporting, and documentation. CSOs exist throughout the country and play critical roles in their communities. Through this opportunity, the OHCHR could understand the capacity gaps of the CSOs through documentation and reporting, and the potential benefit of collaborating with them. Therefore, in the future, it makes sense for CSOs to be supported by the other human rights government actors, including INCHR and HRPU of MOJ. With a coordinated joint response, there could be even more robust attention to the human rights issues affecting Liberia.

The understanding mandates and comparative advantage to maximize efforts

INCHR also needs to further build its capacity for leadership and coordination at the national level. This must begin by understanding its comparative advantage vis-à-vis other government and civil society human rights actors. Considering this, the most relevant actors include the HRPU of the MOJ and CSOs. Currently, there is overlap in the work of the HRPU/MOJ and the INCHR at the national level. Therefore, to maximize the work of each of the institutions, greater efforts are needed to recognize their differing mandates and the comparative advantage of each. Similarly, a greater understanding of the complimentary role that civil society actors play, especially in the investigation and documentation of human rights, is also needed. There should be a greater reflection on the comparatively larger presence that civil society actors have throughout the country. This presence throughout the country, if supported, could help the INCHR significantly. Civil society actors also have an important monitoring role to play to help ensure that INCHR continues to follow its mandate.

Multipliers and TOTs over one-off trainings

OHCHR Liberia CO conducted a series of trainings in the counties targeting CSOs, INCHR, duty bearers, and rights holders. These trainings helped to raise awareness and build skills on human rights issues. One-off or awareness-raising training are not sustainable approaches. To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the interventions, multiplier approaches need to be incorporated. Training of Trainers (TOT) aims to not only leave skills behind but train people in a way that builds their skills to teach others. Other

[45] Draft Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) Gender policy Department of Legislative Assistance, Treaty Matter and Law INCHR September 2020

multipliers, such as targeting training institutes aimed at increasing the awareness of civil servants on human rights, are also important to ensure that any future human rights investments are sustainable.

V. Good Practices

Awareness-raising about the role of the INCHR throughout the counties
Training sessions included the participation of local and national government and CSO/CBO representatives. These were organized by the OHCHR Liberia CO to sensitize state and non-state actors about the work of the INCHR. This format provided space for interfacing and building synergies with all institutions across the country.

Involving the INCHR in workshops as facilitators
The INCHR's recognition is growing across the country, especially amongst local government officials, communities, and CSOs in the counties. The opportunities that arise from the INCHR staff taking part in workshops along with both government and CSOs in the counties have helped to build relationships between and among these groups that did not exist in the past. The presence of the OHCHR at these workshops where all stakeholders are present has also helped to bring greater legitimacy to the INCHR's work. The INCHR human rights monitors find that these workshops are not only providing an important platform for building relationships with duty bearers and rights holders but are helping these groups see the INCHR in a new light. This improves the visibility and respect for the INCHR overall.

Presence as a deterrent
The presence of the INCHR in the counties served as a deterrent. At first, the INCHR human rights monitors reported not being welcome and, sometimes, harshly treated. However, over time, staff better understand their role. However, the constant presence of the INCHR human rights monitors in the prisons and police stations is helping to change the attitudes and behaviours of duty bearers.

Getting buy-in and consultation at each stage of the process
In December 2019, OHCHR organized a retreat that involved the INCHR, relevant government departments, and CSOs to develop the 2020 annual work plan. Moving forward, this is good practice to ensure buy-in and consultation with all stakeholders.

Coordination is critical to avoid duplication
Ensuring that the UN Human rights Working Group (UNHRWG) and other coordinating mechanisms such as the Rule of Law Forum continue is critical. The OHCHR Liberia CO and other UN agencies, INGOs, and CSOs must continue to share information to avoid duplication in the work. Any training or other support planned especially by UNDP and UN WOMEN should also be included to ensure good coordination in the work and work is conducted in a complementary fashion.

Peer to peer monitoring
In 2019, the OHCHR Liberia CO staff strengthened the human rights investigation and documentation capacity through training and providing individual coaching to INCHR human rights monitors. This support entailed OHCHR staff working one on one in the field and then providing field back on their monitoring reports. The focus of the work was to help INCHR fulfil its mandate human rights reporting mandate. To date, the INCHR has produced annual human rights situation reports in 2018 and 2021.

V. Conclusions

By the end of the three-year project "*Strengthening the Independent National Commission on Human Rights in Liberia,*" it was envisioned that the results would show that INCHR was on a clear path to take over

human rights promotion and protection work in Liberia once the OHCHR Liberia CO's six-year tenure came to a close. To meet this expectation, the funding allocated by the Government of Sweden to the project was earmarked to strengthen INCHR both substantively and operationally to discharge its mandate in line with requisite human rights standards and the Paris Principles. The funds provided for this project were also OHCHR Liberia CO's largest project, contributing to almost one hundred per cent of their operational budget in Liberia. This meant that the OHCHR Liberia CO provided support to other government agencies and civil society actors. The bulk of OHCHR Liberia CO's work was supporting the INCHR both at headquarters and in the counties laid out in the five outcomes of the project.

Overall, the project outcomes were highly relevant to addressing the capacity needs of the INCHR and the human rights needs of the country. However, more support could have been provided to other actors to complement the work of the INCHR. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the effectiveness of the project implementation because project activities had to be put on hold. The lack of leadership and the internal struggles within INCHR impacted the relationship between OHCHR and INCHR leadership, which impacted the effectiveness of the project. The project results have contributed to greater visibility of INCHR in Liberia, especially in the areas outside of Montserrado county. There has been a direct impact on seventy-seven pretrial detainees who were released because of INCHR's advocacy. INCHR also monitors SEA and SGBV issues playing a vital role in addressing the less serious cases through conflict resolution.

Project results have laid out INCHR's internal capacity gaps that need to be addressed to become a more robust institution. Sustainability relies heavily on the INCHR's continued commitment to building this capacity. A matrix of capacity building recommendations at the INCHR headquarters level serves as a way forward. Steps are needed to address the lack of coordination between INCHR headquarters and the field. One of INCHR's biggest accomplishments is the increased visibility of INCHR throughout the country. However, follow-up on the investigation and documentation of human rights cases being monitored by INCHR human rights monitors must be done or INCHR risks losing its relevance overall.

The most effective aspects of the project have been the support provided by OHCHR Liberia CO to the INCHR human rights monitors, duty bearers, and rights holders in the counties. Fact-finding, peer-to-peer mentoring, and training were effective in raising human rights awareness and building the skills of the INCHR human rights monitors. However, significantly more effort to ensure that the INCHR meets its mandate to report on the human rights situation both annually and quarterly needs focus. Two human rights monitors operated in each of the counties, one that was paid for by Sweden and the other on the government payroll. Motorbikes and other inputs were provided to the Swedish-funded INCHR human rights monitors. However, the support provided to INCHR human rights monitors whose salary is paid by the government is limited. More efforts are needed to ensure that these monitors are further capacitated with laptops, office space, and motorbikes.

CSOs and INCHR signed a Memorandum of Understanding during the project period. Any further support must go beyond the MOU to strengthen this relationship. Not only is better coordination needed between the two entities, but CSOs also need further support to build their skills to play a more substantive role in the promotion and protection of human rights. Institutional capacity-building support and human rights monitoring and reporting skills will help CSOs to monitor government institutions, including INCHR, to ensure they implement their mandate. CSOs can take on issues that government agencies, including INCHR, are unwilling or unable to take on, such as business and human rights issues and advocacy to support a war and economic crimes court.

While duty bearers such as the MOJ, MOGCSW, the judiciary, police, and the legislature come together for specific projects and programmes, this project showed the need for even more joint programming and coordination on human rights work in Liberia. Given the overlapping mandates between the HRPU of the MOJ and the INCHR, they could benefit from a clearer division of tasks based on their comparative advantages. The lack of progress made in implementing the TRC recommendations is a major impediment to Liberia's future, and it is the responsibility of all actors, including the INCHR, to continue to advocate to move this forward. There is a clear awareness of gender and disability issues. However, further streamlining is needed. Issues such as discrimination against disabled children and the LGBTQI community must be addressed more proactively.

The OHCHR Liberia CO is uniquely placed to ensure all government and civil society actors in Liberia. play a role in the protection and promotion of human rights in Liberia. However, it is critical that continued support not only strengthens the INCHR but the broader human rights community in Liberia through a strategy that is developed by all actors. The generous support of the development actors, including the Swedish government, could consider engaging in a strategic planning process facilitated by the OHCHR Liberia CO and consider funding support for the strategy and work plan developed in a participatory manner.

VI. Recommendations

The first three years of the OHCHR's projected engagement with INCHR coincide with the INCHR Strategic Plan (2018-2021). The support focussed on strengthening the INCHR to build the capacity of the INCHR in Liberia. Through the project, the OHCHR Liberia CO also supported CSOs involved in advocating and demanding accountability for human rights violations in Liberia and assistance with technical expertise and capacity development to support the implementation of human rights standards on the ground.

The evaluation team is proposing two overarching recommendations which include 1) continuing capacity-building support to the INCHR, and 2) the development and implementation of a new comprehensive human rights strategy for Liberia that considers the human rights needs of the country and the comparative advantage of all the principal actors.

The first part will focus on an explanation of what the evaluation team feels should be done. The second part will follow with specific recommendations for the OHCHR Liberia CO, INCHR, CSOs and development actors.

1. ***Support to enable the INCHR to create and implement a new strategic plan with a continued focus on capacity-building through***

- **Implementing** the matrix of institutional **capacity building recommendations**.
  - ✓ An individual with the requisite skills should be hired to work with INCHR under the supervision of the OHCHR Liberia CO to ensure the full implementation of the matrix of institutional capacity-building recommendations. They should develop a TOR for a set period to ensure all the recommendations within the matrix are implemented. The individual would also take part in the regular meetings between the INCHR and OHCHR.

- Further **strengthening** the INCHR DCIM to better **support field monitors.**
  - ✓ The INCHR HQ should designate a DCIM staff with specific responsibilities to support the field based INCHR human rights monitors. The designated staff would attend the bi-monthly technical meetings between OHCHR and INCHR HQ and regularly provide feedback. As part

of the work plan of the DCIM staff, a regular skill assessment of INCHR human rights monitors will be done with feedback sessions built in to ensure that all INCHR human rights monitors maintain a minimum skill level for human rights investigation and documentation work. The DCIM should work with the Department of Administration and Budget to set a salary structure for the INCHR human rights monitors that consider both skill level and experience.

- **Developing and piloting** an effective **human rights follow-up mechanism**.
  - ✓ Guidelines for follow up on human rights complaints, investigations, and documentation by INCHR and CSOs with support from OHCHR Liberia CO should be developed. The human rights violation follow-up mechanism should be created as a task force with representation and participation of the INCHR HQ and field based INCHR human rights monitors, CSOs and OHCHR Liberia CO and members of the UN human rights working group. A regularly established meeting would be set and would require mandatory participation. Training would be provided to participants to ensure awareness of roles and mandates. Government agencies would be engaged, including but not limited to, the Human Rights and Protection Unit of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP), and the Women and Children's Protection Section of the Police at the discretion of the task force.

2. The development and implementation of a new comprehensive human rights strategy

The evaluation team recommends that the development and implementation of a new comprehensive human rights strategy and work plan for Liberia should follow the key guiding elements:

- **Participation and representation** should be at the centre of the development of the new strategy by bringing together a range of relevant actors including INCHR, relevant government agencies including MOJ, the Police, the Ministry of gender children and social welfare, and the legislature and CSOs (the Liberian Bar Association, The Human Rights Advocacy Platform, the Transitional Justice Working Group, media, and others) with representation at the national and district levels.

- The development of strategy should **complement** and be **aligned with** the NHRAP (2019-2024) and other relevant government and UN programs and strategies to prevent duplication of effort.

- The **decentralization** of human rights activities should be central to the strategy. This includes continuing to build upon the setting up of regional offices and deploying the requisite staffing at the county and district levels to promote and protect human rights. A key aim would be to further increase the capacity and visibility of the INCHR throughout Liberia. Other government agencies and CSOs would also be supported.

- Ensuring that **understanding of comparative advantages** of relevant actors is considered**.** Determining the comparative advantage should be done by incorporating best practices, such as determining the strengths and weaknesses of the relevant institutions, including but not limited to the geography/location, human resource capacity, and political will.

The new comprehensive human rights strategy should include the following key aspects but are not limited to:

- Developing **a reimagined theory of change**. The development of the theory of change should start with a review of the previous project's theory of change to understand its strengths and weaknesses. The overall theory of change would consider the realities, risks, and assumptions of the human rights situation in Liberia.

- Including an **advocacy component** with a focus on human rights monitoring/reporting and legal reform, starting with but not limited to:
  - ✓ Amendments to the 2005 INCHR Act, including reducing the number of INCHR BOC from seven to five. Further clarifying the roles between the INCHR BOC and the INCHR Secretariat.
  - ✓ Passing the FGM bill by strategically targeting lawmakers from districts where there is a high prevalence of FGM.
  - ✓ Advancing legislation on the war and economic crime court
  - ✓ Advancing legislation on business and human rights.

- Including a **training component** that draws on and uses the training content and approaches used by OHCHR Liberia CO and includes a focus on both **awareness-raising** and **skill-building** that would include but not be limited to:

  - ✓ Human rights training curriculum developed and streamlined into all training institutes for civil servants, beginning with the police, army, and legislature.
  - ✓ Training of trainers targeting CSOs to build their capacity for documentation and investigation of human rights violations.
  - ✓ A focus on further capacitating CSOs to conduct advocacy aimed at ensuring that the INCHR and other government agencies are fulfilling their obligations.

- Including a **focus on implementing the TRC recommendations** which would include, but are not limited to:

  - ✓ Re-establishing the Working group on transitional justice that is composed of a core group of key actors, including the OHCHR Liberia CO, INCHR, CSO representation, and the Human Rights and Protection Unit of the Ministry of Justice.
  - ✓ Developing a TOR and work plan to guide the work and the goals needed to take the work forward. Mandatory and regular participation would be central features of the group.
  - ✓ Taking stock of all the workshops and other activities that have taken place to date focused on transitional justice and implementing the TRC recommendations would be the first step.

- **Develop and incorporate M & E framework and a participatory budgeting** process as part of the strategy to ensure the process stays on track and is conducted transparently. This would be done following key steps which include but are not limited to:

  - ✓ Developing a project outcome, outputs, activities, and an M &E framework that incorporates lessons learned from the evaluation.
  - ✓ Developing a participatory budgeting process that involves all key actors.
  - ✓ Putting together a joint implementation team that comprises representatives from INCHR, relevant government institutions and civil society actors facilitated by OHCHR Liberia CO.

The Evaluation team directs specific recommendations to the following set of stakeholders, which include:

1. **To the OHCHR Liberia CO**

- **To continue to support the capacity development of the INCHR through**:
  - ✓ Identifying and managing an individual with the requisite skills to work with the INCHR to ensure the matrix of capacity building recommendations is implemented. OHCHR would develop a joint TOR in consultation with INCHR and they would help to guide the work of the individual and then would update OHCHR Liberia CO regularly.
  - ✓ Continuing to hold bi-monthly meetings between OHCHR and the INCHR and ensure representation from the DCIM regularly and ensure that feedback on the situation of the INCHR human rights monitors is discussed and issues addressed.
  - ✓ Ensuring the development and piloting of an effective human rights follow-up mechanism through working with INCHR HQ and other key stakeholders.

- **Support the development and implementation of the new comprehensive human rights strategy by**:
  - ✓ Seeking funding support to ensure that INCHR can continue to benefit from capacity building the INCHR and for the development and implementation of a new comprehensive human rights strategy from the Embassy of Sweden and other development partners in Liberia.
  - ✓ Encouraging and inviting UN human rights working group members to be part of the development and implementation of the new human rights' comprehensive strategy.
  - ✓ Continuing to engage in discussions with UN agencies and donor agencies about further support for the decentralization of activities.
  - ✓ Playing a facilitating and management role in creating the new comprehensive strategy through a workshop and ensuring its implementation by helping to manage the modalities of implementation.

2. To the INCHR

- To continue to work closely with the OHCHR Liberia CO to ensure the:
  - ✓ Implementing the matrix of institutional capacity building recommendations
  - ✓ proper support is provided by INCHR human rights monitors, and they are provided with the support they need to do human rights investigation and documentation work.
  - ✓ The development and piloting of the human rights follow up mechanism is effective. INCHR should commit to engaging with the process consistently.
  - ✓ The gender policy is completed and INCHR staff implement the policy.

3. To the UN Human rights working group

- Consider taking part in the development of the new comprehensive human rights strategy process and aligning programs accordingly to avoid duplication.
- Consider supporting the further decentralization of human rights activities by providing inputs and capacity building support throughout Liberia.

4. To the Swedish government and other development partners

- Consider providing core support to further capacitate the INCHR and also facilitate the development and implementation of the revised overarching human rights strategy and work plan.

Management response		
Evaluation of the project "Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights in Liberia"		
1. To continue to support the capacity development of the INCHR through:		
Recommendation 1-1: **Identifying and managing an individual with the requisite skills to work with the INCHR to ensure the matrix of capacity building recommendations is implemented**. OHCHR would develop a joint TOR in consultation with INCHR and they would help to guide the work of the individual and then would update OHCHR Liberia CO regularly.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Management comment: OHCHR-Liberia CO cannot implement this without additional funds/financial support		
Key Actions	**Responsibility**	**Time-frame**
1. Draft a TOR in consultation with INCHR for the recruitment of an individual Consultant with the requisite skills and ensure the implementation of the matrix of capacity building recommendations for INCHR 2. Recruit the individual consultant	OHCHR Liberia CO and INCHR	Q3/2022 EOD subject to additional funding
3. Support/provide oversight to the Individual Consultant to implement the task	OHCHR Liberia CO and INCHR	Q3/2022
Recommendation 1-2: **Continuing to hold bi-monthly meetings between OHCHR and the INCHR** and ensure representation from the DCIM regularly and ensure that feedback on the situation of the INCHR human rights monitors is discussed and issues addressed.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Management comment: Implementation on going since February 2022		
Key Actions	**Responsibility**	**Time-frame**

1. Monthly joint OHCHR-INCHR Technical committee meetings to continue	OHCHR Liberia CO programs staff & INCHR programs staff	Monthly
2. Quarterly joint OHCHR Liberia CO/INCHR Board of Commissioners meetings with a proviso to call for ad hoc management meetings when necessary	OHCHR Management and INCHR BOC	Quarterly
Recommendation 1-3: **Ensuring the development and piloting of an effective human rights follow-up mechanism** through working with INCHR HQ and other key stakeholders.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Management comment: To follow up by INCHR on the feedbacks from its field monitors. OHCHR, CSOs and INCHR will continue to conduct weekly monitoring, assessment, and advocacy visits on human rights issues begun February 2022.		
Key Action	**Responsibility**	**Time-frame**
1. Joint monitoring of detention facilities in Monrovia and other locations by OHCHR, INCHR and CSO Human Rights Platform	OHCHR Liberia CO, INCHR HQ and CSO Human Rights Platform	Weekly
2. Joint monitoring of the human rights situation in different counties outside Monrovia, mentoring and follow up field visits to the counties 3. Linking human rights monitoring outcomes at the county level to national advocacy and programmes.	OHCHR Liberia CO, INCHR and CSO Human Rights Platform	Monthly
2. To Support the development and implementation of the new comprehensive human rights strategy by:		
Recommendation 2-1: **Seeking funding support to ensure that INCHR can continue to benefit from capacity building and for the development and implementation of a new**		

comprehensive human rights strategy from the Embassy of Sweden and other development partners in Liberia.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Management comment: Accepted as it is part of our mandate to support NHRIs and therefore we will try to get support to continue to work with INCHR. However, the Government should also take concrete steps to adequately fund INCHR, in accordance with the relevant statues but also with the Paris Principles governing NHRIs. This recommendation will be articulated in the new project proposal to Sweden and other donors.		
Key Action	**Responsibility**	**Time-frame**
1. Engage INCHR and stakeholders in the development of 2023-2025 country human rights strategy	OHCHR Liberia CO OHCHR Liberia CO and OHCHR HQ	Q1/2/3/4 2022
2. Continue advocacy with other donors for financial support to OHCHR Liberia CO to more adequately support national partners	OHCHR	Q2/3/4 2022
Recommendation 2-2: **Encouraging and inviting UN human rights working group members to be part of the development and implementation of the new human rights' comprehensive strategy.**		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Management comment: Implementation of this recommendation will co-opt the United Nations Country Team		
Key Actions	**Responsibility**	**Time-frame**
1. Planning meeting with members of the UN human rights working group on development and implementation of the new human rights' comprehensive strategy for Liberia	OHCHR Liberia CO, OHCHR HQ	Q2/3/4 2022
2. Develop a new human rights' comprehensive strategy for Liberia and work plan for implementation	OHCHR Liberia CO and OHCHR HQ	Q3/4 2022
Recommendation 2-3:		

Continuing to engage in discussions with UN agencies and donor agencies about further support for the decentralization of activities.		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Management comment: Discussion ongoing at the UNCT. This recommendation seeks to ensure that OHCHR/INCHR's activities devolve/decentralise to reach other counties outside Monrovia. Currently, the UNCT is strongly considering pooled-decentralisation of its activities to catchment/specific counties and OHCHR is amenable to this proposal. As such, OHCHR will, depending on availability of resources devolve/decentralise it presence/activities when the decision is finally made by the UNCT.		
Key Actions	**Responsibility**	**Time-frame**
1. OHCHR Liberia CO is open to devolve to the county as soon the UNCT decides to and depending on availability of resources	OHCHR and UNCT	Q2/3/4 2022
2. Depending on availability of funding, OHCHR will continue to support INCHR to devolve and better strengthen its county offices and upscale existing "One Person/Human Rights Monitor office to a full-fledged county office	See 1	See 1
Recommendation 2-4: **Playing a facilitating and management role in creating the new comprehensive strategy through a workshop** and ensuring its implementation by helping to manage the modalities of implementation**.**		
Management position on recommendation: Accepted		
Management comment: This has already been articulated in recommendation 2.2		
Key Action	**Responsibility**	**Time-frame**
1. Carry out planning meetings and workshops to develop a new human rights comprehensive strategy for INCHR and COS partners.	OHCHR Liberia CO and OHCHR HQ	Q/3/4 2022