

ActionAid Liberia (AAL) Research Consultancy

Report from Study on
Unpaid Care Work
Conducted in Bong County, Republic of Liberia
(August 25 – 28, 2021)

Consultants

Horace P. Nagbe (B.S.Th, MA)
Lead Consultant

Tonieh A. Talery-Wiles (B.Sc., LLB, MA)
Co Consultant



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	ActionAid
AAL	ActionAid Liberia
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
COVID 19	Corona Virus Disease
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DWA	Decent Work Act
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOL	Government of Liberia
HOR	House of Representative
HOS	House of Senate
ILO	International Labour Organization
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LEP	Liberia Employment Policy
LISGIS	Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LNAP	Liberia National Action Plan
LNGP	Liberia National Gender Policy
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
VAW	Violence against Women
UCW	Unpaid Care Work

Executive Summary

Several studies have shown that women and girls are spend a tremendous amount of time carrying out unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) daily. In Liberia, unpaid care work is unevenly distributed between women and men, and women do on average four times as much unpaid care work. Their services remain unrecognized and undervalued as such men receive a larger share of income and recognition for their economic contributions. In addition, time spent by women and girls on domestic chores limits their opportunities to participate in the labor force or to engage in economic activity¹

The study on unpaid care work (UCW) in Bong County is based on ActionAid's quest to map out current practices and existing policies in the labor market and identify policy gaps and recommendations to inform the organization's Gender transformative approaches to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women in Liberia.

This study is in response to the need to address unpaid care work in Liberia at all levels of the households and communities but with a specific focus on the households. It seeks to establish the platform for a new debate on care work provided by women and girls, mainly at the household level. In an effort to do this, the study revealed the type of work women and girls are doing with respect to unpaid care work; the extent of such work on their persons; the changing nature of such work, and the effect such work is having on women and girls. At the same time, the study assessed the knowledge of women and girls in terms of policies and programmes aimed at addressing such workload they carry, and of course looked at the COVID-19 pandemic and the nature of their work.

The study was undertaken as part of ActionAid Liberia's efforts in promoting gender equality and equity across Liberia, including conducting further assessment on gender power relations and sexuality. Most importantly, the outcome of this research will help guide further policy engagements, campaigns and interventions with duty bearers and other stakeholders in Liberia.

The study used a mixed method approach: qualitative and quantitative of field research.

Data was collected from the field using key informant interview (KII) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The study was keen on the roles and responsibility played by men, women, boys and girls at the level of the household.

The study involved the conduct of desk review, which included the review of several national and international instruments that Liberia has committed to in terms of decent work and best labor practices and social protection measures including sexual and reproductive health rights and services

The study also specifically conducted an evaluation of the economic value of unpaid care and domestic work, including analyzing the extent to which women and girls suffer SGBV, especially domestic violence as a result of unpaid care work.

¹ Action Aid Liberia-Terms of Reference-RFP-Study-Unpaid Care Work in Bong County.

The total number of key informants were thirty-six (36): eighteen (18) females and eighteen (18) males respectively, while the total number of participants in the focus group discussion was seventy-two (72): fifty-five (55) females and seventeen (17) males. Participants at the focus group discussion were drawn from the sample size perspective of communities within Bong County, while the key informants included a broad spectrum of personalities including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and Government Officials with knowledge and experience in labor and labor-related activities as well as human rights and social development issues.

The findings from the study are summarized below:

Key Informant Interviews -Key Findings

- 75% (n=27) of the respondents mentioned that women and girls do home care work, while 15% (n=5) of respondents said women and girls do community service.
- 94% (n= 34) of respondents think that women and girls are not paid for the work they do in the home and community, while 6% (n=2) said women are recognized in formal ways through gifts
- 67% (n=24) of the respondents mentioned that women and girls are recognized and appreciated by the presentation of gifts by their partners, while 33%(n=12) mentioned that women are recognized by the establishment of businesses, especially by their partners
- 41% (n=15) said women's home care work has less value in home and communities
- 38% (n=14) of the respondents think that women and girls are valued for the care work they provide through appreciation by words of mouth from their spouses and fathers.
- 49% (n=17) of the respondents mentioned that men in general are the ones that distribute tasks everywhere.
- 65% (n=23) of respondents recommended that there should be equal responsibility in term of the distribution of tasks and also women must participate in programs that will ensure the fulfillment of their rights

Focus Group Discussions- Key findings

- 49% (n=27) of the respondents mentioned that unpaid care work burden on women and girls are mainly from the level of the home, with 12% (n=7) indicating a greater burden in terms of farm work and the preparation of food.
- All the respondents 100% (n=55) mentioned that women and girls are not paid for home care work they do.
- All respondents 100%(n=55) agreed that women and girls are not recognized for the home care work they do
- 75% (n=25) of respondents agreed that women and girls do home care work such as washing, cooking, fetching of water, giving of care to children, husbands, the elderly and the sick.
- 40% (n=22) of the respondents mentioned that the value attached to women and girls work in the home and community is by mere words of appreciation.

- 31% (n=17) respondents reported that it is the sole responsibility of women and girls to do home care work and 19% (n=11) believe that they do so because of tradition.
- 80% (n=44) of respondents said, men have traditional responsibility to take decisions regarding home care and community service work

Challenges faced by the study team

1. The team was challenged with the issue of bad road, and therefore could not complete all the eight communities recommended by ActionAid Liberia. However, of the eight communities, the team successfully completed seven. The eighth community that could not be accessed due to bad road condition is David Deen Town.
2. Also, the team was challenged, in terms of the mobilization of the communities and participants. That is, most of the communities were mobilized during the conduct of the study; something that took more time in the field and delayed the team in conducting the various interviews.

Conclusion

The study in Bong County shows that women and girls carry the burden of home care work with low representation in the form of employment or office work. This situation manifests itself in Bong County, where men's lives are deeply rooted in patriarchy, where tradition demands women and girls to bear the load of child care, household chores and everything that comes with it. What complicates their situation even further is that they are not compensated for the work they do. In some isolated cases, women receive gifts which do not commensurate with the effort they apply in caring for the home from their spouses as compensation for their work at home but in reality that is a normal marital duty. For example, some men buy slippers for their wives when they visit market days as a part of their marital duty but consider it as a deliberate pay for home care duties performed by women.

The study also showed unequal roles in the distribution of home and community service work. Decision making rests squarely with men. This leaves women with no option but to accept the traditional roles assigned to them by men. This situation is denying women opportunities for decent work, leisure and rest while subjecting some women to emotional and psychological distress and thereby limiting their ability to compete with their male counterpart.

The gendered division of labor at home and the community level is also reinforcing these patriarchal values into the next generation and preparing boys and girls to enter a world in which home care and community service work continues to be unequally distributed. If this situation continues in Liberia, the country will not be able to attend to Policy priority areas and strategies set in the National Gender Policy, or achieve goals set in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) relating to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls by 2030.

Therefore, gender responsive actions, including efforts to reduce women's unpaid care work and legislation (where possible) are needed to help women pursue work that is rewarding and fulfilling, thereby claiming their economic, social, civil and political rights. Bridging these equality gaps would also help the county's full recovery from COVID-19.

Recommendations from the analysis to address the burden of unpaid care work

Below are some recommendations from analysis made concerning findings from the study conducted:

1. That awareness on the burden of unpaid care work is carried out at the household level and attracts the involvement of men and boys, in order to help reduce such burden on women and girls. At the same time, the study proposes that the appreciation of the women by their partners and community leaders be complimented by programmes that will ensure it is turned into payable services in the home and community in an effort to reduce the work load on women and girls.
2. As revealed by the study that the distribution of tasks at the community level is the responsibility of the chiefs (mainly men), there should be awareness targeting the traditional leaders, community men, and boys to ensure that women form part of decision making in order to ensure the equal distribution of tasks, especially at the household level.
3. The study revealed that men and boys are aware that women and girls are heavily engaged with care work at home for the family and community but traditionally they believe that it is the role of women; and in this light, awareness need to be created to have a change of this mind-set and efforts made to get men and boys involved in such work, in fact it was also revealed by the study that some of the respondents are already aware that men and boys can do the work women and girls do. In furtherance of this, men and boys should be involved to reduce the burden of unpaid care work done by women and girls, especially at the household level.
4. According to findings from the study conducted, women and girls have the feelings that culture and traditions have compelled them to such care work without being recognized, paid or appreciated; hence, it has become a norm for some of them. To this end, the need for robust awareness cannot be overemphasized. Such awareness will need to include women and girls so that they too would get to know that the work they do at the household level can be done by men and boys so as to enable a change of such mind-set within them, towards informing and bettering generations of women and girls to come.
5. There is also the need for awareness programmes that will target the men and boys, to ensure that women and girls become part of decision-making, including being given positions within the leaderships of communities. This recommendation is as a result of finding that shows that women and girls continue to be excluded from decision-making, especially at community levels, in spite of the existence of gender and gender-related policies and programmes being carried out by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development and other partners.
6. Feedback from respondents informed the study that women's home care work is not well appreciated or valued in homes and communities. Therefore, the study recommends investment in estimating the value in financial terms, of unpaid home care work. There should be a show of the contribution of unpaid care for household, community and country development. This will influence policy makers to better

understand the level at which unpaid care work should be cared for and the community members will value it and collectively promote it.

7. The development or review of child care policies and infrastructure development such as Early Childhood Centers and the promotion of community based ECDs should not be overlooked. Government of Liberia and development partners should prioritize and invest in Early Childhood Education and development.

1.0 Background/introduction

1.1 Background and Rational of the Study

“How society addresses the issue of care has significant implications for the achievement of gender equality, by either broadening the capabilities and choices of women and men, or confining women to traditional roles associated with femininity and motherhood.”

Focus on unpaid care work as a gender and social issue has come about largely, and this is due largely to criticism made by feminist scholars and movements against national thoughts that prioritize and value the production of goods and services, but at the same time dismisses care work overwhelmingly performed by women and girls; something that provides for the sustainability and productivity of societies in terms of functional economic growth.² Research shows that most governments have failed to adequately address the interconnected interests and trade-offs of women as care-givers, including being unable to recognize the contributions made by women to the wholesome nature of societies, even though the care work provided by them seems to fall outside the market economy of those governments.³ Even though care work done by women and girls contributes to the growth of societies, such growth perspective only emphasizes and promotes the dimensions of gender equality that are instrumental to achieving other development goals, but fails to recognize the economic contributions of such care work to the societies. The growth perspective further neglects the impact of unpaid care work on the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality in those societies. Including Liberia, research shows that women and girls do undertake the bulk of unpaid care work than men.⁴ This is in spite of substantive increase in female labor force participation, especially in the agricultural sector. Notably, this socially ascribed responsibility undermines women and girls' rights and opportunities, as well as limits their capabilities and choices.

By definition, unpaid care work refers to non-market and unpaid work carried out in households and primarily by women, but also to varying degrees by girls, men and boys. It includes both direct and indirect care of persons, such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water and fuel, etc. Even though these activities are recognized as work, but they are typically not included in the national economic systems. Meanwhile, in the case of activities like fetching water/fuel they are theoretically included but often not well documented or accounted for.⁵ Globally, women and girls spend two to ten times more hours on unpaid care work than men.⁶ As in the case of Liberia (as seen below), majority of the women living poverty life and in a very poor society have always been involved in carrying heavier burdens of household care work responsibility as compared to men. Giving the essential nature of care provision, women have often viewed such work as positive, and this is besides the way in which patriarchal society considers it. The problem however has been the level of under-recognition associated such work. This is coupled

² Lopita Huq-Research Fellow, Center for Gender and Social Transformation: Review of Literature on Unpaid Care Work in Bangladesh, December 2013.

³ Ibid

⁴ UN Women Gender Monitor: <https://data.unwomen.org/country/liberia>, accessed September 18, 2021

⁵ Enabling Women's Economic Empowerment: A new approach to unpaid care work in developing countries, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/4d0229cd-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/4d0229cd-en>, source of information, accessed September 18, 2021

⁶ [https://seepnetwork.org/files/galleries/LEO_SEEP_Brief_1_Unpaid_Care_Work_FINAL_logos_002_\(1\).pdf](https://seepnetwork.org/files/galleries/LEO_SEEP_Brief_1_Unpaid_Care_Work_FINAL_logos_002_(1).pdf), source of information, accessed September 8, 2021

with the issue of the unequal distribution of such work as in the homes and communities. Notably, women are being excluded from the economic gains coming from care work, and they have far less access to decent work and participation in the paid work sector. This is based on the unequal distribution of caring responsibilities within the society.

Care work done by women and girls is often unrecognized, unpaid for and undervalued, whereas men receive a larger share of income and recognition for their economic contributions. Additionally, women and girls spend more time on domestic chores, which thereby limits their opportunities to participate in the labor sector. Furthermore, the measures taken to tackle the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic have even heightened the burden of women's unpaid care work. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, burden of unpaid care work on women is coupled with the closure of public services such as schools/daycare center, hospitals, and recreational centers. For the most part, the coverage of social protection is in many cases tied to employment status, and this has put many women in an even more volatile and vulnerable situation.

Statistics show that in countries, where women spend an average of five hours daily on unpaid care work activities, fifty percent of them (in working age) are actively involved in working outside their homes. That is, some are employed while others are seeking job. Meanwhile, in countries, where women spend three hours daily on unpaid care work activities, sixty percent of them are actively involved within the labor force of their respective societies.⁷ Women's unequal share of unpaid care work has long been recognized by women's rights advocates as a key dimension of gender inequality; and it is now increasingly recognized in mainstream economic policy discussions as a constraint to the economic growth and empowerment of women.⁸ Throughout its work across Liberia, ActionAid Liberia (AAL) has engendered some improvements in recognizing the significance of the human rights and dignity of women, girls, and marginalized groups. This has been due to its series of policy engagements at both national and international levels, as well as through feminist driven agendas and interventions.

Whilst these advantages have been realized to a certain degree, AAL gathered that unpaid care work and violence against women (VAW) remain prevalent in the Liberian society further preventing women and girls from claiming their economic, social, civil, and political rights. Unpaid care work is a human rights issue, as well as an economic development issue. Investing in care work attracts contribution to long-term economic development through contributing to the quality of human resources and the development of human capabilities, including creating sustainably high-quality jobs.⁹

Being a social justice related issue and in the case of Liberia, ActionAid Liberia demonstrated interest in ensuring that the issue of unpaid care work is adequately addressed and in a timely manner. In order to identify relevant measures aimed at recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work, it is important that one ascertains a clearer understand of the magnitude,

⁷ [https://seepnetwork.org/files/galleries/LEO_SEEP_Brief_1_Unpaid_Care_Work_FINAL_logos_002_\(1\).pdf](https://seepnetwork.org/files/galleries/LEO_SEEP_Brief_1_Unpaid_Care_Work_FINAL_logos_002_(1).pdf), source of information, accessed September 8, 2021

⁸ Enabling Women's Economic Empowerment: A new approach to unpaid care work in developing countries, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/4d0229cd-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/4d0229cd-en>, source of information, accessed September 18, 2021

⁹ Ibid.

dynamics, and impacts of unpaid care work. This includes ensuring that the recovery from COVID-19 builds back better, and that existing structural inequalities are properly addressed. It is also significant to address the burden of unpaid care work, as a means towards achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment. In regards to this, the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, which was established in September 2015, highlights the need to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work as one of seven key drivers of the economic empowerment of women.

In the case of Liberia, addressing and measuring the economic empowerment is critical to the overall wellbeing of women in Liberia, especially in advancing inclusivity in national development programmes, including reducing poverty on women. Intently, this study draws the attention of policy and development practitioners to the critical importance of unpaid care activities, in spite of the limited existing evidence-base and the demystification of the perceived complexity of achieving the advancement of women and girls. As part of its overall goal, the study sought to establish the ground for the reduction of the negative impact of unpaid care work on women and girls, including promoting the debate (unpaid care work) in the work of gender analysis throughout the Liberian society. The study also proposes to influence the redirection of policy support towards the empowerment of women and girls, including exploring conditions of the political economy and its actors. It also intends to provide guidance to policy engagements, campaigns and interventions with duty bearers and other relevant stakeholders.

1.1.2 Purpose of the Study

As indicated above, the study was commissioned for the purpose of assessing the impacts of unpaid care work on women and girls in Liberia, with particular reference to households and communities. Outcomes from the study were achieved through the collection and analysis of appropriate data on the issues, as well as the mapping of current practices and existing policies on unpaid care work. Meanwhile, the proffering of appropriate recommendations are key, and it is aimed at developing the debate towards adequately addressing the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women and girls through campaigns and strategic interventions with duty bearers and other relevant stakeholders within the Liberian society. The report is also intended to form part of baselines to be used by ActionAid Liberia in the development of strong advocacy strategies on recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid labor, in the interest of women and girls across Liberia, the sub-region and Africa at large.

Significantly, the study seeks to present a clearer understanding and documentation of the nature and types of unpaid care work being experienced by women and girls, especially at the household and community levels, including providing an understanding of the magnitude, dynamics and impact of unpaid care work on them. At the same time, the study further seeks to assess existing policies in Liberia, including identifying policy gaps in Liberia's labor sector of as well as within social protection institutions. Resultantly, a list of policy recommendations are made towards addressing issues of the unpaid care work, including formulating social protection programmes for ActionAid's engagement with policy makers and development partners/donors.

1.1.3 Objectives of the study

The study has two objectives – the main objective and the specific objectives. The main objective of the study is to identify issues, gaps and constraints faced by women and girls in the provision of care work, in order to provide guidance for further policy engagements, campaigns and interventions with duty bearers and relevant stakeholders. Specifically, however, the study is posited to:

- Provide a clear understanding and as well document the nature and type of the unpaid care work women and girls experience at the formal and informal levels, but mainly at the level of the households and communities;
- Have an understanding about the magnitude, dynamics, and impacts of unpaid care work; and
- Assess existing plans, policies and programmes, including identifying gaps within the labor sector of Liberia.

1.1.4 Methodological Approach

In an effort to achieve its desired results, the study employed the conduct of desk review, which resulted to the mapping of existing policies and gaps relative to the processes that culminated into the formulation and implementation stages of those policies. This exercise included the review of several national policy instruments such as the Liberian National Gender Policy (LNGP) document and related action plan, which includes but not limited to; the Decent Work Act (DWA) and social protection measures; and the Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) rights and services. Importantly, the mapping exercise took into consideration Liberia's commitment under the Decent Work Act, including progress and gaps, as well as the recently signed ILO Convention 190 on Violence against Women (VAW) in Workplace. At the same time, the mapping exercise witnessed the identification of a suitable policy package for Liberia in the context of recommendation, so as to reduce the burden of unpaid care work for women and girls, while at the same time promoting decent work environment for women, girls and the vulnerable population of the country.

At the same time, the mapping exercise included a broader list of policies currently in place, including narrowing down on a set of realistic policy recommendations. Hence, the study conducted an evaluation of the economic value of unpaid care and domestic work in Bong County, including conducting a cost-benefit analysis of the policy recommendations to be developed. Towards achieving this, the Safeguarding Unit of AAL provided its support during the conduct of the field research, which included the process of data collection. The purpose of this union is to ensure that members of the research team were in compliance with AAL's safeguarding policies.

Importantly, the study adopted a mixed method which was inclusive of the integration of the quantitative and qualitative methods of field research. This was intended to ensure the achievement of the objectives of the study, which includes the review of related literatures; the collection of data from the field; and a well-guided engagement with relevant stakeholder individuals and groups earmarked. The adaptation of this mixed approach witnessed the conduct of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders of the county; the conduct of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with direct beneficiaries, especially women; as well as the inclusion of survey questions. At the same time, the study employed the use of observation, especially

during the process of data collection. The observation method was employed on grounds that others are unable to clearly voice out their sentiments and issues, but convincingly do that through body languages and facial expressions. The employ of such method witnessed an immense contribution to the achievement of the overall objectives of the study.

Meanwhile, the study employed the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which witnessed the successful collection of relevant information that is used for the analysis. The methodology also encouraged and supported participants in providing the relevant information. Notably, the overall analytical approach of the study employed a gender lens, which allows the field team to have an in-depth understanding of the issue of equity and equality in the context of unpaid care work. Also, in an effort to gather the relevant data, the study employed a sampling process that contributed immensely to achieving its objectives, in spite of the challenges encountered.

1.1.5 Limitation of the study

As part of the limitation of the study, the team did not reach all the eight communities identified by ActionAid's programme team, and this is due to the limited number of days given for the field research which was also coupled with the bad road conditions in the county. The study was also limited, in terms of access to some relevant stakeholders, especially county superintendent. The inability of the study to interact with the superintendent is due to political engagements on the part of the superintendent. Consequently, the study engaged with a member of the superintendent's office staff. At the same time, the unwillingness of women to speak out during heterogeneous discussions limited the team in terms of gathering important information relating to study. This was due to culture and tradition, which challenge women to speak against their husbands while they are present. In an effort to address this cultural issue, the team established a homogeneous discussion with women, during which time they spoke out freely and provided information relating to the purpose of the study.

1.1.6 Brief History of Bong County

Situated in the north-central region of Liberia, Bong County is one of the fifteen political subdivisions of the country, and was established in 1964 during the regime of former President William V.S. Tubman, Sr., and it is comprised of what is termed as the first level of administrative division. As a county, it is amongst the first four densely populated counties in Liberia and has a large land space, occupying a total area of 3,358.81 and a total acre of 2,149,645.7.10 Notably, Bong County is named after Mount Bong, which is situated within the southern portion of the county and is bordered by Lofa and Gbarpolu Counties in the north, Margibi and Montserrado Counties in the West, Grand Bassa County in the south, and Nimba County in the East. At the same time, the northeastern portion of Bong is bordered with the Republic of Guinea. Administratively, Bong County is headed by a superintendent, who is currently a female, Hon. Esther Walker.

The population of Bong County is estimated at of 333,481, according to the National Population and Housing Census conducted by the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information

¹⁰ Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services: County Profile, accessed September 7, 2021

Services (LISGIS) in 2008. Of this population, the male is comprised 164,859, while the female is comprised 168,622;¹¹ thus indicating that the females are more than the males.

1.2 Introduction

Statistics show that unpaid care work has been given global attention since the 1960s and the 1970s, especially following thorough research of the agenda of mainstream economics and sociology. For a protracted period of time, economists and sociologists have different views of the issue unpaid care work. For the economists, they have equated the act of work with paid employment, while on the other hand those sociologists, who are specialized in the issue of labor have concerned themselves with the sociology of families. Research provides that after thirty years, the issue of unpaid care work became a heated discussion at the global scene, and this was realized from two different world conferences of the United Nations held at separate places and times. The first of the two conferences was the Social Summit held in March of 1995, while the second was the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995. Importantly, these conferences brought together diplomats of governments, as well as lobbyists from the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) circles. These various groups of people did not only seek to negotiate languages on the measurement and valuing of unpaid care work, but they also sought to agree on a new way of looking at such act of work at the global level, including at national levels.

The consequences of this new debate have been hardly explored in processes emanating from the two world conferences held, and not even in Liberia, even though it (Liberia) is a state-party to the various conferences. In Liberia, unpaid care work seems a fairly new debate, and this is besides the fact that the thought of is enshrined in major national policy instruments such as the Liberia Employment Policy (LEP) and the Liberia National Gender Policy (NGP) for example. Meanwhile, the issue of unpaid care work in Liberia should be an integral part of socioeconomic policy-making and implementation; but, unfortunately this has not been adequately discussed. This report therefore attempts to set the stage for a robust debate on unpaid care in Liberia, in an effort to inform strategies for policy formulation and implementation to ensure gender equality in Liberia.

Section I of this report presents the background of the study, in terms of its rationale, objectives and purpose. It also presents the methodological approach employed by the research team, as well as the limitation of the study, relative to sample-size. At the same time, the background section of the report presents a brief historical background of the study location (Bong County), with consideration to the gender disaggregated nature of the population of the county. The background highlights need for the study. Section II of this report presents summaries of important policy-related information on the issue of unpaid care work from the perspective of various documents, including national policy instruments and research reports. Notably, the margins of unpaid care work are influenced by market forces that determine the range of the private sector, as well as by political and budgetary factors, which determine the range of the public sector. Information provided in this section shows the level at which public policy

¹¹ Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services: 2008 Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report on Population Size and Composition, September 2011, accessed September 8, 2021

instruments in Liberia have considered unpaid care work; whereas information from research instruments demonstrates the level at which unpaid care work should be considered. As part of this section, the issue of COVID and the act of unpaid care work was seen from the perspective of a research report, highlighting the importance of both paid and unpaid care work especially for a wholesome functioning society and economy. It is revealed in this section that the burden of unpaid care work has increased dramatically during the COVID period, especially for women and girls – whether a lone parent or nurse. Even though such work done mainly by women and girls was applauded, yet it is amongst the most disadvantaged and unpaid care work.

Section III presents analysis of data gathered from the field study conducted in Bong County. It is presented from the perspective of the field questionnaires developed, approved and administered. The questionnaires had six contents and was administered to relevant actors in two separate contexts – focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Considering its six contents, the analyses are drawn from point of view of the nature and types of care work being done by women and girls in Bong County; the magnitude of such work being done by them, and the dynamic nature of the work. The analysis is also focused on the impact of the work on the livelihoods of women and girls in the county, as well as their knowledge of policies and programmes that are related to the work they do. Finally, the analysis gives consideration the ongoing COVID pandemic, which is life-threatening, with focus on the continuation of the work by women and girls, or whether they were required to stop because of the nature of the pandemic, or whether some level of care is being given them as they give care.

The analysis in this section shows the major type of care work being done by women and girls across Bong County (from the perspective of the sample conducted); the level of compensation given; including factors and persons responsible for the apportionment of such work to them. From the perspective of the magnitude of the care work, this section presents the differences in the level of care work done by women and girls on the one hand, as well as men and boys on the other hand. It also considers the ability of the women and girls to do such work as presented in the type of care work done, considering the enormity and pressing nature of the work. Giving the enormity and pressing nature of the work being done by women and girls, the question of dynamism was presented. It prevails on the need for an even distribution of care work between women and girls and men and boys, based on the impact of the work and COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the analysis, the satisfaction-nature of the work being by women and girls is presented as gathered from the field study. Importantly, the analysis presents the knowledge level of women and girls in terms of policies and programmes put in place and implemented by the government especially on the issue of gender equity with focus on care work done by them.

Section IV presents challenges experienced by the research team before, during and after the field research, as well as recommendations for the current and future research work; whereas section V presents the conclusion of the report. Challenges presented in this section IV are mainly field-focused, yet with some level of them faced following the field work.

2.0 Literature Review

This section of the report presents summary information that are relevant to purpose of the study. Relevant policy and research documents reviewed include but not limited to the Liberia National Gender Policy (NGP); the Liberia National Action Plan (LNAP) of the UN Resolution 1325; and the Liberia Employment Policy. Other policy documents reviewed are the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD); and the Food and Agriculture Policy and Strategy of Liberia (FAPS). At the same time, this section of the report presents relevant information and knowledge that are documented and shared by other professional individuals and organizations, relative to the nature and content of the study (unpaid care work by women). Importantly, this portion of the report presents a conceptual understanding of unpaid care work (UCW) as well as its varying forms and/or types, and especially those done by women and girls.

Conceptual Understanding of Unpaid Care Work

Studies on unpaid care work show that it is derived from the concept of work, which is a key term within the whole. Research also shows that the term ‘care’ is comprised of an orchestrated group of activities intended to provide services to people towards ensuring their overall wellbeing. Such care activities are accordingly given through households, communities, as well as the market or government settings; and this is done through a combination of activities that are worth being paid for, and perhaps those that might not be paid for. Conceptually, unpaid care work has to do with the followings: 1) direct care of people such as child-care and/or adult-care; 2) housework such as cooking, cleaning of home, washing, fetching of water and firework; and 3) community work undertaken on behalf of friends, relatives, neighbors, or distant families. Importantly, unpaid care work activities are undertaken out of the sense of responsibility to homes, communities and people and of course on a voluntary basis.

Such ideology of unpaid care work has to do with time and energy, which in often case are supposed to be paid for. For example, the provision of care support and maintenance to the home and general society, including market environments are all work being done, since in fact they consume the time and energy of the person providing such care. Although time spent on care responsibilities is rarely counted; however, it occupies the majority of work hours for rural families, and this work of work falls mostly on women. Notably, this design of care responsibility is molded by power relations and social norms, which often define caring as a native characteristic of women.

By strong indication, unpaid care work is both an important aspect of economic activity, and an indispensable factor that contributes to the well-being of individuals, their families and societies.¹² Every day of their lives, women and girl spend time carrying out basic household chores such as cooking, cleaning and caring for children, the ill and the elderly. In spite of the important nature and wellbeing of such unpaid care work done, especially in the home, it is

¹² https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf, source of information, accessed September 13, 2021

commonly left out of policy agendas, and this due largely to a common misperception. Unlike standard measurement of market work, unpaid care work is too difficult to measure and therefore becomes less relevant for policy enactment. At the same time, paying lip-services to unpaid care work leads to incorrect inferences about levels and changes in the wellbeing of individuals, including the value of time, which in turn limits policy effectiveness across a range of socio-economic vicinities, importantly in the area of gender inequalities in employment and other areas of socioeconomic empowerment.

Typically, women spend disproportionately more time on unpaid care work than men.¹³ On account of gendered social norms that view unpaid care work as a female prerogative, women across different regions, socio-economic classes and cultures, and especially in Liberia spend important portions of their day on meeting the expectations of their domestic and reproductive roles. On some occasions, it is in addition to their paid activities; something that henceforth creates 'double burden' of work for them (women and girls). The method devised by policy makers and the general society do have a critical role to play, in terms of achieving the goal of gender equity/equality, especially in Liberia. Such methods would either expand the choices and capabilities of women or better still confine them to the traditional nature of roles associated with femininity and motherhood. Thus, the unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men represents an infringement of women's rights (UN, 2013), as well as a brake on their economic empowerment

Unpaid work consists of time used as an input in non-market production processes. It is discovered to be part of a particular 'mode of provision' for human needs. Being true that unpaid work is work that, in principle could also be done in the context of an alternative mode of provision by a paid worker, it is understood then, by implication that the monetary value of unpaid work can be imputed. Notably, it is an essential element in the social fabric, as well as an important factor relative to living a quality life. As a point of importance, unpaid care work consists of time used as an input in non-market production processes. The overall division of the use of time between paid and unpaid work seems to be highly dependent upon many factors such as age, gender, and type of household structure. It is also concerned with the nature of social class, geographic location, and the presence of children.

According to a statistical report by the Policy Integration and Statistics Department of the International Labour Office in Geneva, dated May 2009, the young people that are capable of purchasing substitutes in market places, those with few or no children, as well as those that are not single heads of households on the overall devote less of their time to unpaid tasks. It is realized that the development of a country's economy is also affected by the distribution of time between paid and unpaid work, including the allocation of unpaid work time among variety of activities. Among other realizations is that amongst those that work part-time or not at all, more time is devoted to subsistence production or fetching of firewood for example, and that public

¹³ https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf, source of information, accessed September 13, 2021

sector infrastructures and state provisioning regimes determine social service delivery; and this is something that plays an important role in the specific allocation of time among variety of unpaid works.

As established from the various professional reports reviewed, the free access to health services, child and elder care, as well as the delivery of water to one's doorstep universally reduces the amount of time needed for taking care of family and/or household members at home, as well as the act of gathering and transporting water; something that has always been done by females. Despite the above mentioned differentiating elements, a most striking and well-known feature of unpaid care work discovered by the desk review is that women, as compared to men, perform such task disproportionately in developing and developed countries alike such as Liberia. To this effect, two assumptions were discovered.

The first assumption is that unpaid work provides care when the activity is devoted to those who cannot care for themselves due to their age (too young or too old to care for oneself) or due to a temporary or permanent ailment/disability (e.g. feeding a child, bathing a sick person, cleaning the room of an elderly person, etc.), and yet to feed a child, one must prepare the food; and this is allotted to a female and of course not paid for. Also, unpaid work provides a sanitary and healthy environment for everyone in the family irrespective of age and health status. But, unpaid care work obscures the fact that the daily social reproduction of all members of a society and the generational reproduction and upbringing of children is achieved through unpaid care work.

And, the second assumption realized during the desk review relates to access to intermediate inputs that are necessary for the provisioning of unpaid care work. Across countries, households differ substantially in terms of the required, and the minimum number of hours a household must spend to transform raw materials to consumable goods, including providing for a clean and healthy environment. For example, the time women allocate to fetching water, a vital input for all sorts of unpaid work (from production of staple food, to processing of food, to cleaning) ranges from zero minutes per day in developed countries, to thirty-two minutes in their rural parts including Madagascar as nation, and to over an hour in Benin.

Unpaid Care Work and the COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the Country Manager of Last Mile Health in Grand Bassa County, women continue to bear the brunt of COVID-19 and even in that they are called to give care to children and families, following the closure of schools and other public facilities. At the same time, the Country Manager lamented that such burden on women has had huge impact on their emotional and psychological well-being.¹⁴ With the vulnerability of men and boys to the disease, study shows that it is likely that the pandemic will take a greater toll on women, who are somehow bind to attend to their husbands and sons. With its attending consequences of the forceful closing

¹⁴ <https://lastmilehealth.org/2020/08/06/gendered-impacts-of-covid-19/>, source of information, accessed May 27, 2022

down of schools, the disruption of employment, and ensuring that all persons keep indoors, women were seen shouldering additional caregiving and household responsibilities, thereby increase their burden of caregiving. This, thereby limit their potential to generate income, including increasing their risk of being infected during the process of care-giving. Not only that they risk being infected by the disease, women were seen having less access to routine health services, including essential medicines, vaccines as well as maternal and reproductive healthcare. This issue of women further exacerbated due to the reprioritization of resources to address urgent health emergencies in Liberia.¹⁵

In Liberia, women are afraid of being infected at health facilities. As a result, they employed a delay tactic and avoided seeking care that would increase their risk of maternal morbidity and mortality. Early estimates of the indirect effects of COVID-19 in Liberia show devastating of the disease on maternal mortality, with the expected of death of nearly 60,000 women. In the context of decision-making, the study realized that decision makers at the level of the households and communities are mostly men. Even during the Ebola crisis, community engagements were focused mainly on men as what is termed as ‘gate-keepers’, thereby excluded the voices and leadership of women. This act further resulted to inequitable responses to the pandemic. Currently, women are unacceptably underrepresented in decision-making roles.

In reality, the report suggests a change of such assumption, and that it be done as soon as possible. One of the major factors provided for contributing to the gender pay gap is the large burden of unpaid care work that so many women take on at home. The report indicates that care responsibilities are holding back women’s job prospects and influencing the choices they make in their professional lives; something that is not the case for most men. More women according to the report work part-time and they are more likely to work in temporary and low-paid jobs. They are also poised to being under-represented in big firms and at managerial levels. While the consequences of the pandemic are still unfolding, it is clear that the distribution of care work, whether it be paid or unpaid, is one of today’s most significant challenges for gender equality, and this something that needs to be put at the centre of COVID-19 response strategies, according to the report.

Conceptual Understanding of Gender and Gender-related Terms

Gender Mainstreaming

As provided for by the European Institute for Gender Equality, as well as an internationally accepted understanding and norms, gender mainstreaming is a strategy that is hypothesized towards ensuring equality between and amongst women and men across all sectors within societies. Towards achieving equality between women and men, the mainstreaming of gender involves the integration of gender perspective (such as in unpaid care work) into the preparation, design and implementation, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of policies and their implementation, regulatory measures, and spending programmes, with the view to promote the

¹⁵ Ibid.

needed equality between women and men, and towards combating and conquering discrimination in societies.¹⁶

Gender inequality

It is defined as the unequal access to and control over the various material and non-material resources and assets of a society. Notably, the role of women as in all societies is the inferior to that of men. It is difficult to find a country in the world, where women have equal access to power and decision-making, including to decent and well-paid jobs as compared to men.

Gender equality

This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

Gender gap

The gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits.

Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Liberia

Liberia is a signatory to many international instruments aimed at ensuring gender equality and the economic empowerment of women through mainstreaming. Some of these instruments are the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality signed in 2004; the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action in 1993; the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People adopted in 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly; the African Union Gender Policy in 2009; the African Charter on Human and People's Rights in 1981; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2003; and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women adopted in 1979 by the United Nations among others.

Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD)

On engendering the idea of empowering women and girls as indicated in the PAPD, studies were done to determine the level of empowerment to be given women and girls. As part of results from the studies done, it was discovered that Liberia ranks among the lowest 10 countries on the Gender Inequality Index (GII), thereby reflecting pervasive disparity across political, social, and economic dimensions. Hence, a revised gender policy has been prepared and made available to

¹⁶ <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>.

guide the mainstreaming of gender issues in all sectors of the Liberian society. At the same time, the PAPD indicates that several reports on the domestication and implementation of international treaties, including those related to women and girls, have been drafted and validated. Therefore, the government commits to using the findings and recommendations to inform an update to the guide that enforces the mainstreaming gender issues across every facets of the society.¹⁷

The PAPD further indicates the government's determination to address the act of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), which includes the lack of recognition, payment and some form of valuing women and girls for care work done in both communities and households. At the same time, the PAPD provides that the government has made this legal, as well as a major component of Pillar Three interventions shows the short, medium priority interventions for women empowerment.

Liberia National Gender Policy (NGP)

According to the 2009 Abridged Version of the Liberia National Gender Policy (NGP), women make 54% of the labor force in the formal and informal sector of the country. In spite of this reality, women and men are not equally distributed across the productive sectors, neither are they equally remunerated. The National Gender Policy is drafted in line with the Constitution which is the supreme law of the land establishing a framework for government purpose of promoting unity, liberty, stability, equality, justice and human rights with opportunities for social, economic and political advancement of the whole society, irrespective of gender and for posterity.

Notably, it is one of the numerous and major policy instruments passed by the national government to adequately address the needs and challenges faced by women across the country. It confirms the government's unequivocal commitment to taking actions that will stimulate equality between women and men in the Liberian society with focus on household work and remunerations.

Rationally, the policy considers promoting gender equality as a globally accepted strategy for reducing poverty levels amongst women and men, including improving the livelihoods and living standards of women as well as enhancing their efficiency of public investment.¹⁸ Described as an instrument of change and illustrating the GOL's bold step in breaking with the past, which spells marginalization and discrimination of women, the NGP provides an overall context for mainstreaming a gender perspective into Liberia's national development agenda through labour.

Generally, the NGP seeks to achieve the following:

The promotion of gender equitable, socioeconomic development; enhancement of women's and girls' empowerment for sustainable and equitable development; enhancement of gender mainstreaming in the national development processes, as well as the creation and strengthening of gender responsive structures, processes and mechanisms for development in which both

¹⁷ Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), July 2018-June 2023, accessed July 12, 2021.

¹⁸ Liberia National Gender Policy (Abridged Version of 2009), accessed July 12, 2023.

women and men participate equally, have access to, control and benefit from all the country's resources on an equal basis.

In this regard, the policy document gives a clear mandate to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all sectors of government's operations. The document further sets basic priority areas of action for the process at all levels of the Liberian society; including at national, sectoral, district and community levels with emphasis on planning, resource allocation and implementation of development programmes thereby redressing gender imbalances and acting with a gender perspective. Though developed in 2009, this instrument is yet active and plays a major referential role in the current national gender debate.

The NGP provides that women make up 55.57 percent of work force in unpaid care work within families, while men make 37.47 percent. This statistic provides that women are more involved and play active role in family and household works as compared to men, and yet they (women) are not paid for such work. In the category of self-employed and without other employees to assist women make 33.27 percent, while make 29.11 percent. This category explains that women are mostly involved in self-employment and yet without the economic ability to hire others to assist them in the discharge of the duties of work they take on, whereas men always have other employees hired to assisting them, only because they have the economic powers to paid those hired by them, unlike women, who do not have the economic powers to employ others.

Due to the gendered division of labor at home, where women carry out a larger share of unpaid family work, they are therefore less able to remain in full-time employment across major sectors of the country. For example, men are more than three times likely than women to be employed by the Civil Service, NGOs, International Organizations or Public Corporations. For instance, the manufacturing sector hires men at a rate of 2 men for every 1 woman. In mining and panning, more than 9 men are hired to every 1 woman, while within the forestry sector the ratio of men to women is 4 to 1 and in the services sector it is 3 to 2, men to women respectively.¹⁹ As noticed, the agricultural and fishery sectors are the only sectors in which women and men are noticed of being employed on an equal basis.

Liberia National Action Plan (2019-2023)

To note, Liberia has developed a revised version of the Liberia National Action Plan (LNAP), and yet with a reflection of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent UN resolutions on Women Peace and Security (WPS), regional commitments and instruments, national policies and strategies, as well as action plan for the implementation of the LNAP on the UNSCR 1325 and consultative meetings held with stakeholders within the timeframe of November to December 2018, and February and May 2019 respectively. Within its new five years mandate, the LNAP highlights many priorities and gaps during the many consultations made, and this was accordingly intended to have a realistic and measurable plan.

¹⁹ Liberia National Gender Policy (Abridged Version of 2009), accessed July 12, 2021,

To this effect, a number of more critical and strategic objectives at the output level have been included, which are meant to contribute to the expected outcome level of the document (LNAP). The LNAP also has developed activities that are meant to be implemented in order to achieve its overall goal, which include ensuring that the safety of women and girls, as well as their physical and mental health and security are fully protected under such and other legislation and policies that promote their full participation at all levels of the society, including their empowerment and in building sustainable and inclusive, peace and security in Liberia.²⁰ These are indicted to be conducted mainly through line ministries as part of their ongoing plans. Notably, participants at the preparation of the reformed LNAP included the government of Liberia (GOL), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), women and youth groupings, and media professionals.

Liberia Employment Policy (LEP)

In 2009, the Government of Liberia (GOL) developed the Liberia Employment Policy (LEP) through the Ministry of Labour (MoL), with technical assistance from the International Labour Organization (ILO). As part of its focus, the policy seeks to address the disadvantages faced by women in term of access to paid work and formal education, with specific emphasis to the labour market access and economic opportunities. It also recognizes and seeks to address the precarious forms of employment and unpaid work women are confined to; something that yield low and uncertain income for them, and thereby offers little or no social security benefits for them. At the same time, the LEP reinforces the priority attached to achieving gender equality as indicated in the NGP, the PAPD and other policy documents.

As part of strategies to achieving the goal of gender equality in Liberia, the LEP proposes the enhancement of employability of women and girls through reforms, in order to give special attention to marketable skills of women and girls. It also seeks to develop the monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the government especially on gender employment, and paid work for women and girls, including at household level. Moreover, the LEP seeks to identify structural inequalities in the labor market structures, with focus on gender pay gaps and the impediment to the advancement of women in decision-making positions within the employment sector.

3.0 Findings and Analysis

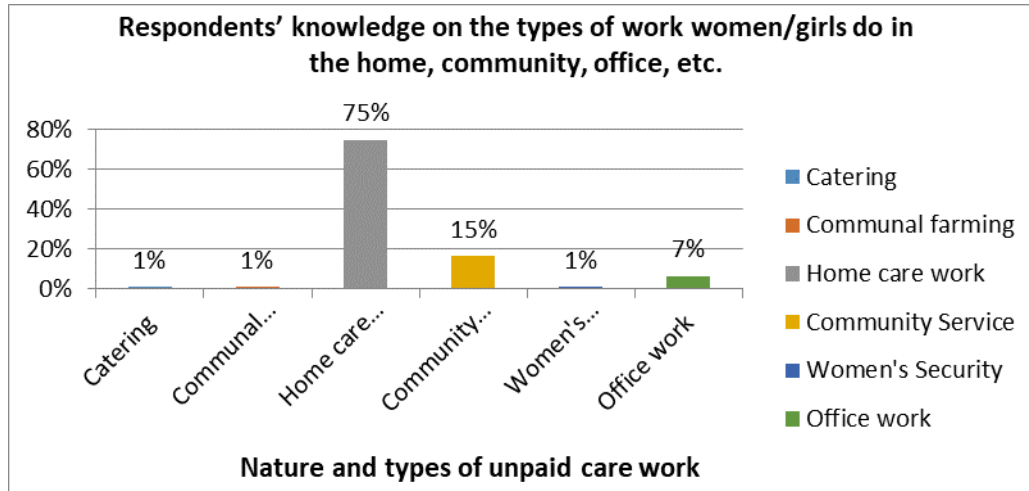
This portion of the report presents the analysis of findings gathered from the entire field study. This is done basically in six contexts: 1) nature and type of unpaid care work; 2) magnitude of unpaid care work; 3) dynamism of unpaid care work; 4) impact of unpaid care work; 5) policies and programmes on unpaid care work; and 6) unpaid care work and the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis takes into consideration responses from key informant interviews as well as the focus group discussions conducted.

²⁰ Liberia National Action Plan (2019-2023), accessed July 13, 2021.

Key informant interviews conducted

Nature and types of unpaid care work women and girls do

Figure 1. Type of unpaid care work



This chart shows respondents' knowledge about the type of unpaid care work women and girls do at the household and community levels. 75% (n=27) of the respondent mentioned that women and girls do home care work, while 15% (n=5) of respondents said women and girls do community service. 7% (n=3) mentioned office work, while the rest of the respondents mentioned catering, communal farming and security work for women.

Figure 2. Whether women and girls are paid for the care work they do

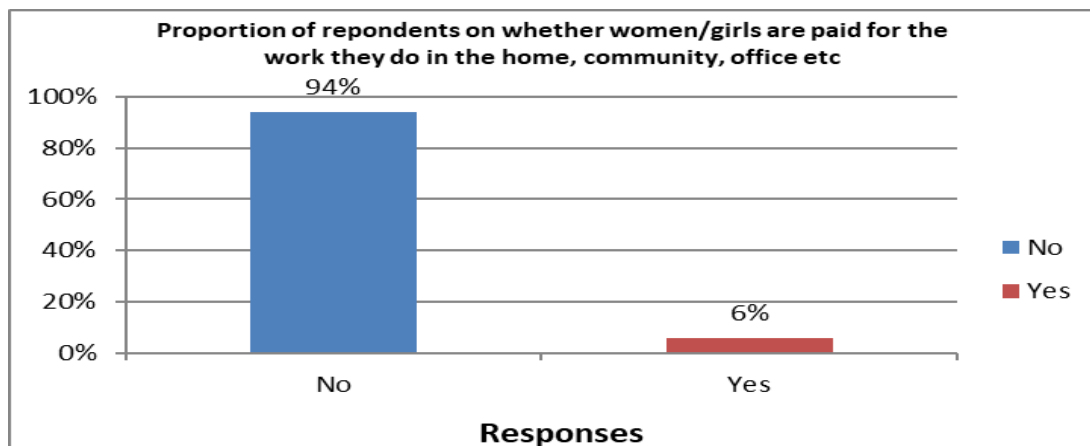
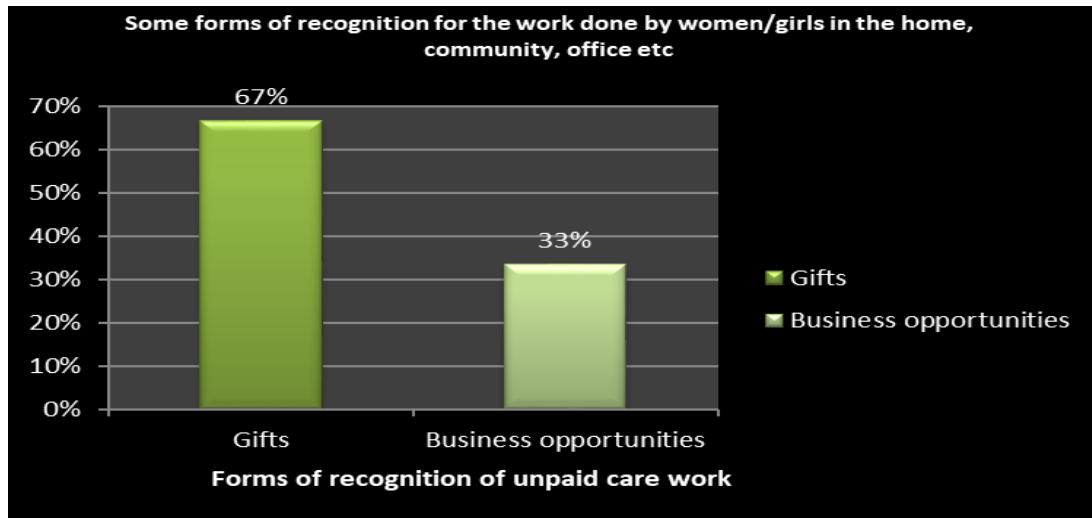


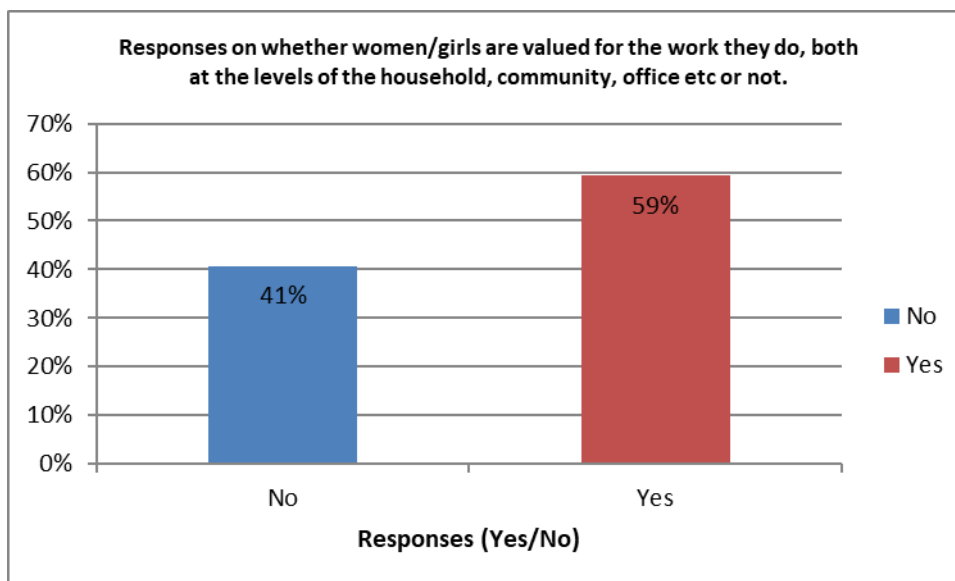
Figure 2 shows 94% (n= 34) of respondents who said that women and girls are not paid for the work they do in the home, community, office etc., while 6% (n=2) mentioned that women are recognized in some ways as seen in table 3.

Figure 3: Some forms of recognition women and girls get for unpaid care work they do



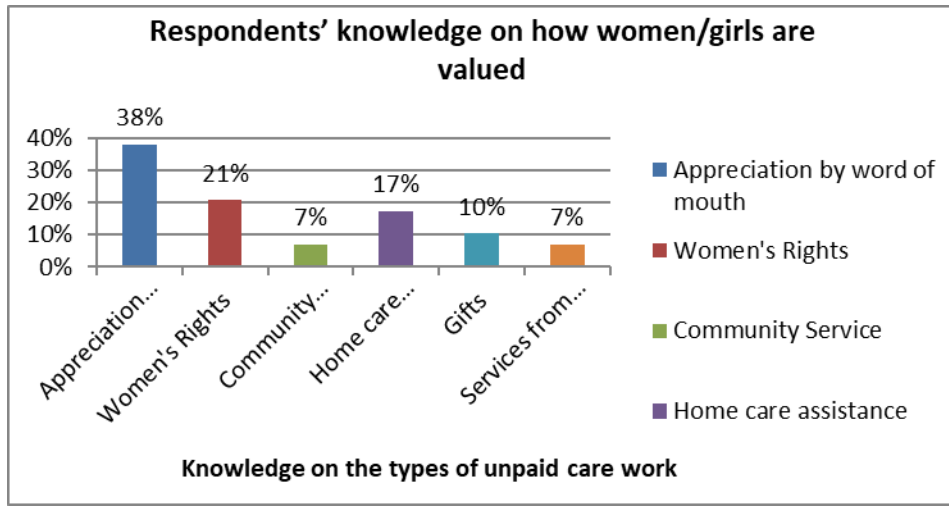
As seen in the above figure, 67%(n=24) of the respondents said that women and girls are recognized and appreciated by the presentation of gifts by their partners, while 33%(n=12) mentioned that women are recognized by the establishment of businesses, especially by their partners.

Figure 4. Whether women and girls are valued for the care work they provide



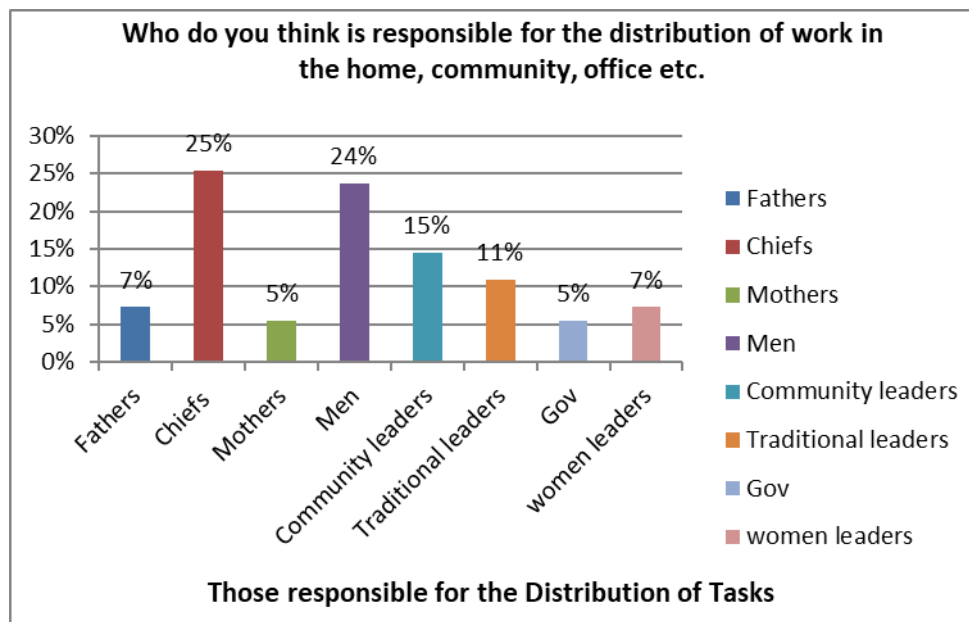
As seen in this table, 59%(n=21) of respondents said that women and girls are valued for the home care work they do, both at the levels of the household and community, while 41% (n=15) said women are not valued.

Figure 5. Means by which women and girls are being valued for the care work they provide



As seen in the chart, 38% (n=14) of the respondents said that women and girls are valued for the care work they provide through appreciation by words of mouth from their partners and fathers, while 21% (n=8) mentioned that women are being valued by allowing them to experience their rights in the home. At the same time, 17% (n=6) said that women and girls are valued by the home care assistance from husbands in some home chores, while 10% (n=4) believes that it is done through the presentation of gifts. The remaining 14% (n=4) said that women and girls are being valued through services from other women and community service respectively

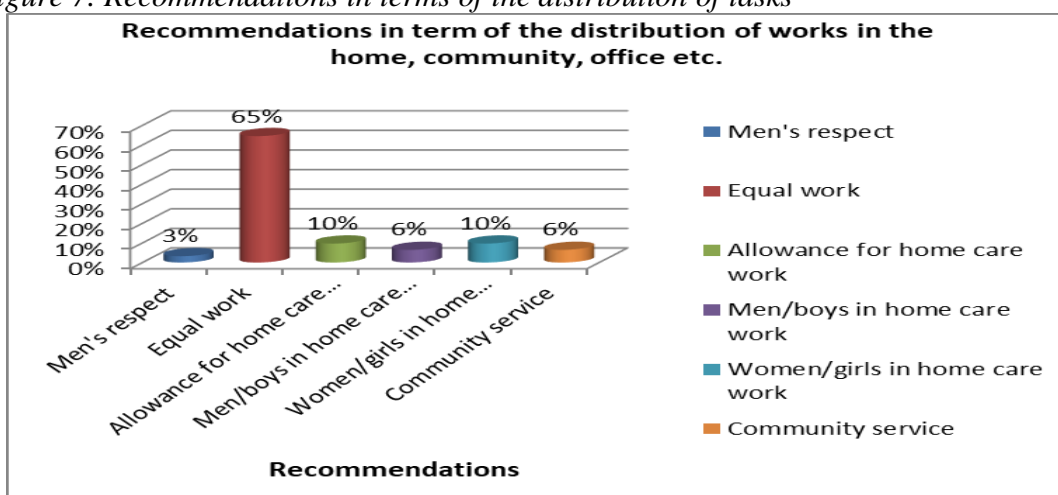
Figure 6. Knowledge of those responsible for the distribution of tasks



As seen in this chart, the chiefs, mostly men) have the highest responsibility for the distribution of tasks at the community levels making up 25% (n=9) of respondents' views, while 24%(=8) of respondents expressed that men in general are the ones that distribute tasks everywhere. Also, the chart shows that 15% (n=5) of respondents said that community leaders, most of whom are men are given the traditional responsibility to distribute tasks at the community level, while 11% (n=4) of respondents provided information that traditional leaders are the ones responsible for the distribution of tasks. Meanwhile, 7%(n=3) of respondents said it is the women leaders and fathers (amongst children) of the home that are responsible for the distribution of tasks especially when it comes to the provision of care work at the community and household levels

Also, information was gathered from 5%(n=2) respondents, mentioned that local officials (e.g. town chief, paramount chief, clan chief), most of whom are men, are responsible for the distribution of tasks

Figure 7. Recommendations in terms of the distribution of tasks

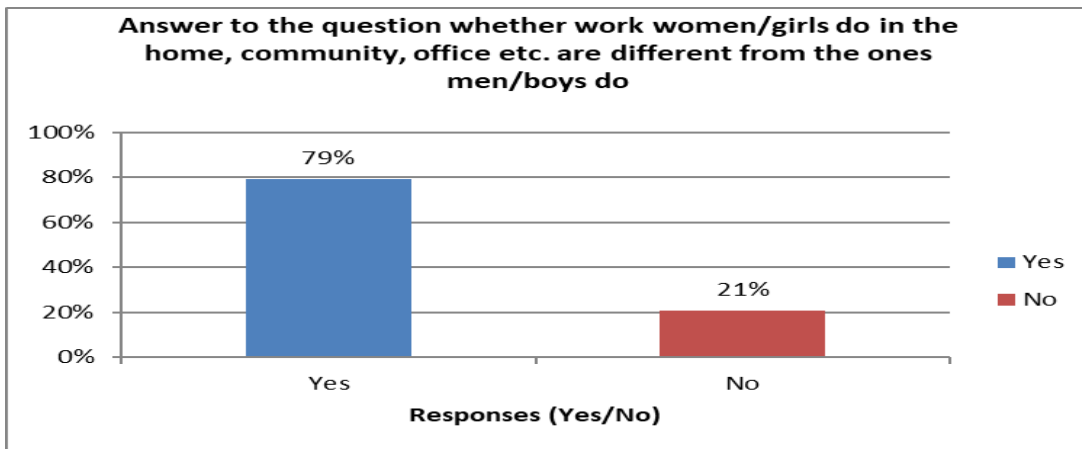


As seen in this chart, 65%(n=23) of respondents recommended that there should be equal responsibility in term of the distribution of tasks and also must participate in every area of life, followed by 10% (n=4) that said there should be allowance given to women and girls for home care works, while 10% (n=4) said that women and girls should participate in every area of life both in the home and community. Meanwhile, 12%(n=2) of respondents and 3% (n=1) said that men and boys should be involved in home care work and women and girls should provide community service and also that men should be respected by women and girls

Magnitude of unpaid care work

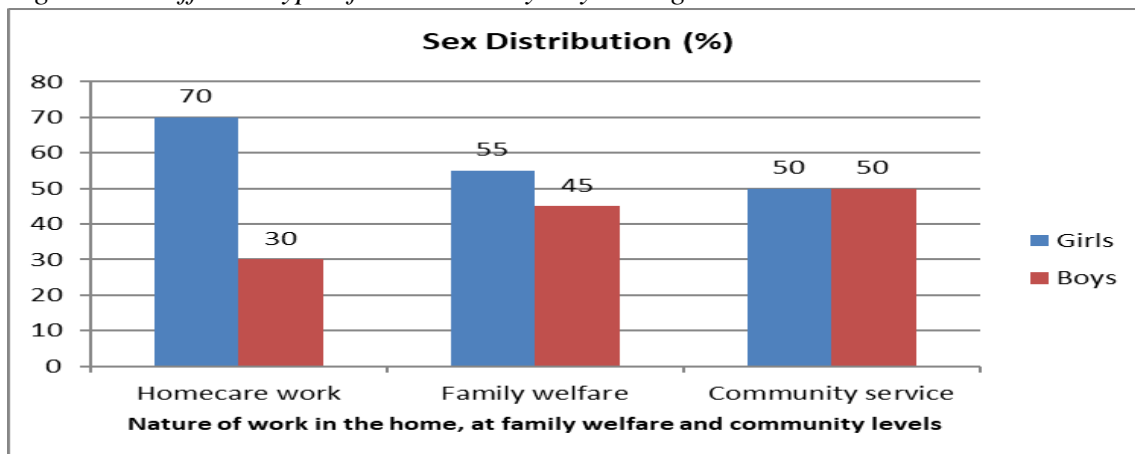
This portion of the analysis is focused on the magnitude of unpaid care work done by women and girls across Bong County, based on the sample size study conducted. It encapsulates the questions of whether women and girls have the strength to do the type of unpaid care work they do; whether men and boys should assist them in doing such work, coupled with recommendations on what should be done, in order to ensure that the burden of care work on women is reduced through distribution between women and girls on the one hand, and men and boys on the other hand. Prior to discovering the type of work by women and girls as different from those done by men and boys, the knowledge of the different types of work was explored

Figure 8: The different types of work done by women and girls, and men and boys



Data in the above table gives feedback on responses by 36 persons to the question of whether work women and girls do in the home and community is different, 79% (n=28) of respondent said yes, while 21% (n=8) of respondents said no.

Figure 9a. Different type of work done by boys and girls



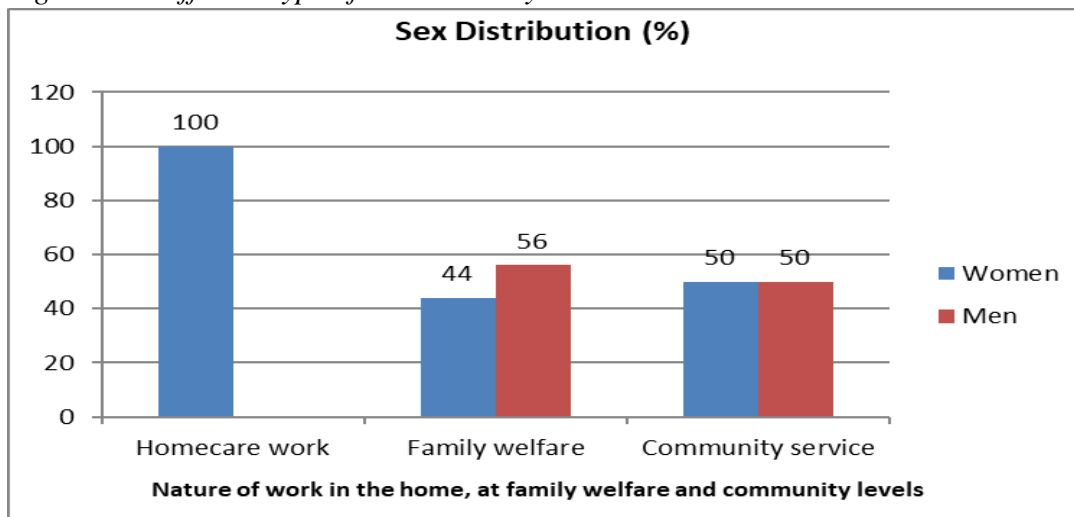
Separate interviews were conducted to know the nature of work done by girls and boys. The focus was on home care work, Family Care and Community service. The data shown in the chart above reveals that 70% (n=25) said home care work should be primarily for girls and 30% (n=11) said boys should form a part of home care work. Also, 55% (n=20) said that girls should be involved in work related to family welfare and 45% (n=16) of the respondents said boys should be involved in family welfare related work and community service. This

means that girls are heavily engaged with work at the three levels. For community service, 50% (n=18) and 50% (n=18) of the respondents said both girls and boys should be involved in community service. As seen in the chart, this means that boys do less work than girls at the three levels.

Table 1b. Different type of work done by women and men

Type of work	Number		Sex Distribution (%)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Homecare work	8	0	100	0
Family welfare	8	10	44	56
Community service	3	3	50	50
Number, Total	19	13		
Percent, Total			59	41

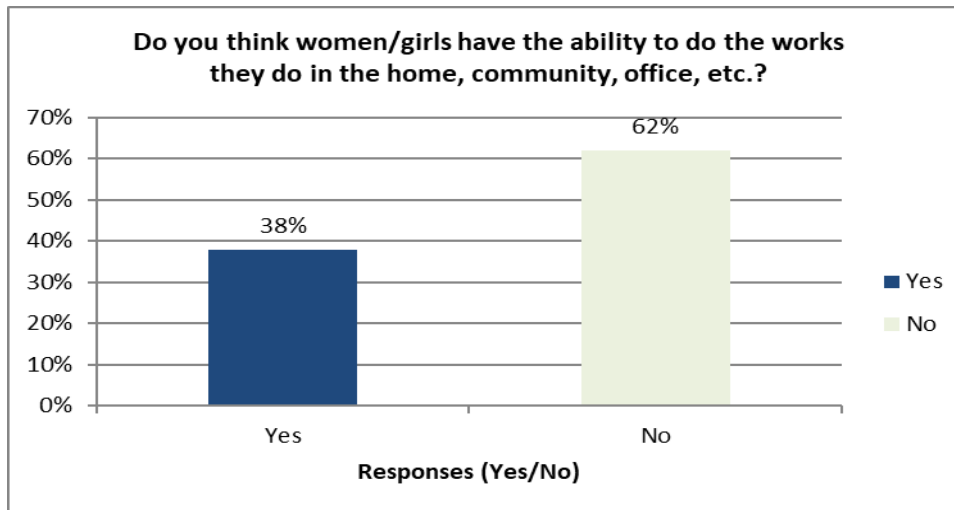
Figure 9b. Different type of work done by women and men



As shown by the chart and table above, comparing the work women do to the work men do, 100% (n=36) of the respondents said homecare work is primarily the responsibility of women, meaning that women, like the girls are heavily engaged with care work at home while men do nothing as gathered from the responses, at the family welfare level, 44% (n=16) of the

respondents mentioned that women do family welfare work and 56% (n=20) said men do family welfare activities to provide support to their family. Some of the family welfare mentioned are paying school fees and providing food money. For community welfare services, 50%(n=18) responses for men and 50%(n=18) for women indicates that the two groups are equally involved in community service work.

Figure 10: Knowledge of the ability of women and girls to continue doing the unpaid care work



As indicated above, 62% (n=22) of the respondents reported that women do not have the ability to continue doing the type of work they do, while 38% (n=14) said that women have the ability to do such work.

Figure 11: Respondents' answers to why they assume that women have the ability as expressed in the preceding chart

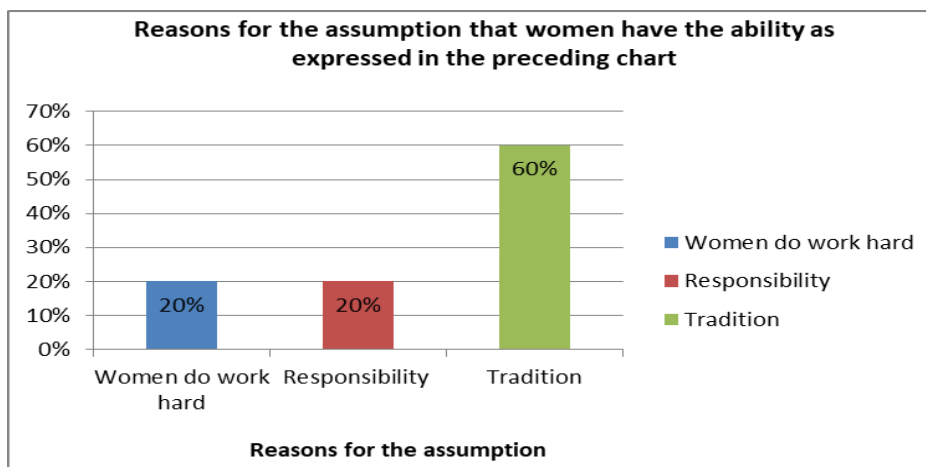


Chart 11 shows the thought of the various respondents, relative to whether women and girls have the ability to continue doing the work they do. As shown, 60%(n=22) expressed that women and girls are compelled by tradition to do the work they are doing, and 20%(n=7) of

the respondents said women are hard-working, and another 20%(n=7) said women bear responsibility or duty to do such work; hence, no matter the condition, they would do them.

Figure 12: Reasons why women and girls are considered having the ability to the work they do

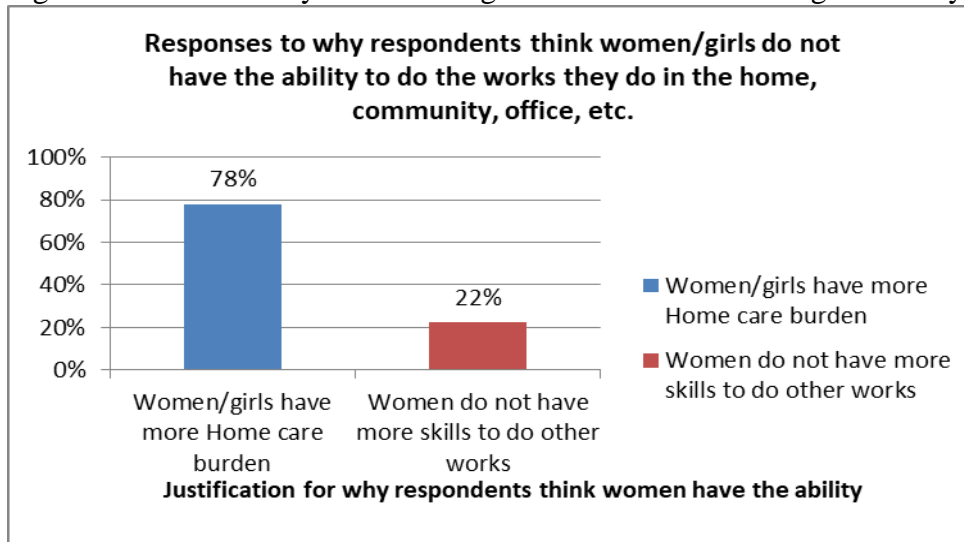
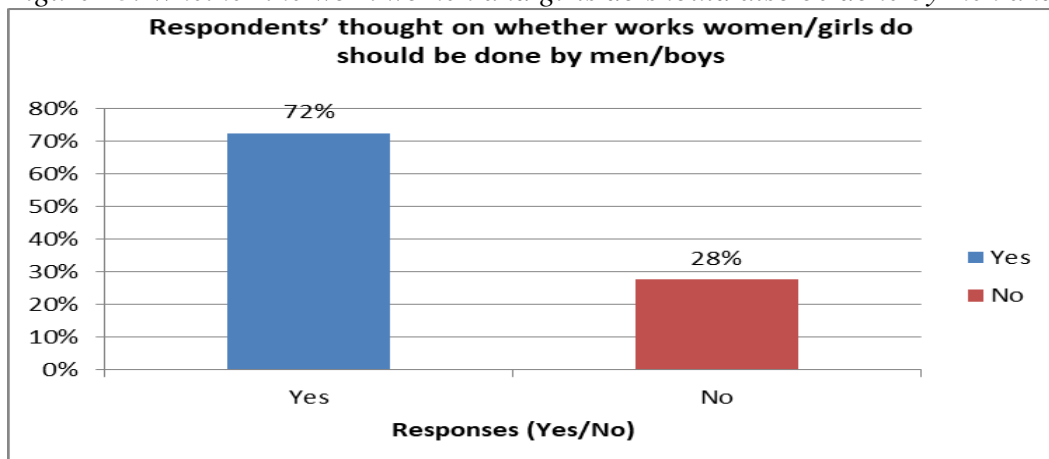


Chart 12 shows respondents’ opinion on why they think women and girls do not have the ability to do the type of work they do. Out of the total respondents to this question, 78%(n=28) mentioned that women and girls have the skills required to do such work, in spite of the enormity giving, the strength they apply is given by God, who knows that it is their responsibility. On the other hand, 22% (n=8) said that women do not have the skills, and that what they do is not because God has given them the ability to do so. They expressed that the burden being carried by women is a result of cultural/traditional thought and actions.

Figure 13. Whether the work women and girls do should also be done by men and boys



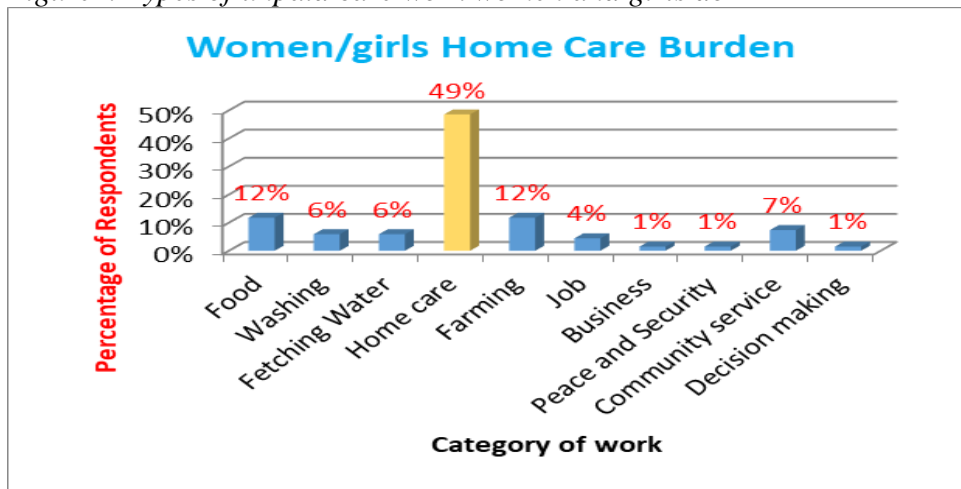
Responding to the question of whether men and boys should also do the work women and girls do, especially in the home, the chart above shows 72% (n=26) said that men and boys’ involvement would reduce the burden of unpaid care work done by women and girls in the home. On the other hand, 28%(n=10) mentioned that men and boys should not get involved

with works that is to be done by women and girls; instead, they should be concerned with what they are to do. In such case according to them, everyone will acknowledge their responsibilities. In others, the 28% (n=10) of the respondents see the work done by women and girls as a “responsibility” and not a choice.

Focus group discussions

Nature and types of unpaid care work women and girls do

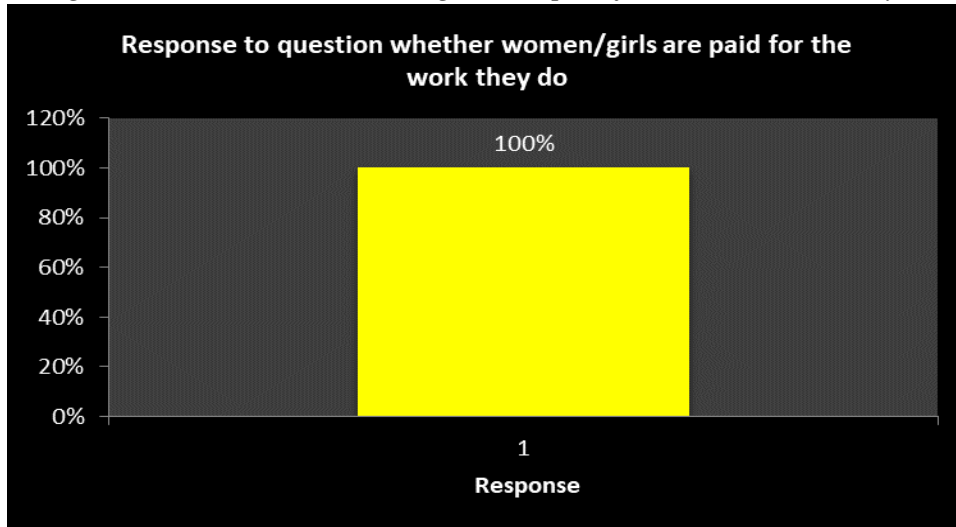
Figure 1. Types of unpaid care work women and girls do



- Responses seen in the chart above are results of a question on the particular type of work women and girls do in the home and community; such that are considered burdensome on them. 49% (n=27) of the respondents said that unpaid care work burden on women and girls are mainly from the level of the home, with 12% (n=7) mentioned a greater burden in terms of farm work and the preparation of food.
- The main areas women and girls are considered the least in the community as shown by the survey findings are decision making, peace and security and business with 1% respectively.
- All the respondents in the seven focus groups 100% (n=55) that women and girls are not paid for the work they do.
- Similarly, all the respondents 100% (n=55) said that women and girls are not recognized for the work they do; this also followed in the same trend in figure 4 that there is no value attached to women and girls for the work they do.
- 75% (n=25) of respondents agreed that women and girls do home care work such as washing, cooking, fetching of water, giving of care to children, husbands, the elderly and

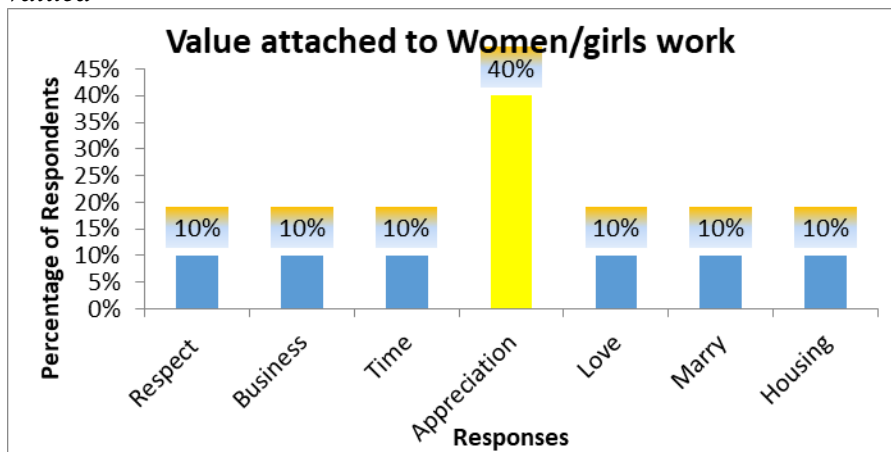
the sick, and ensuring to take children to and from school. At the same time, 16% (n=9) of the respondents said that women and girls do community services, which include the cleaning of the town and palava-huts; while 7% (n=4) said that they (women and girls) do office work; 1% agrees that they do security work, and 1% provides that they engage into communal farming.

Figure 2. Whether women and girls are paid for the care work they do



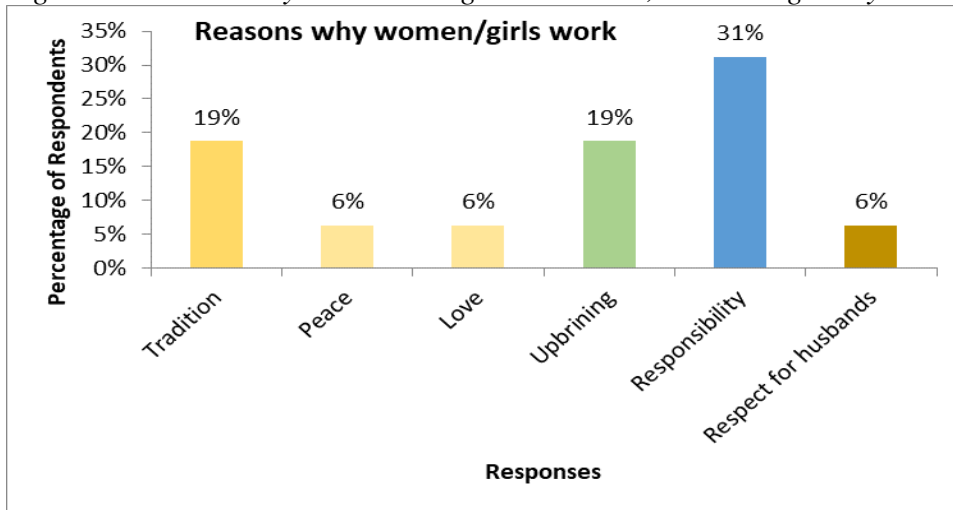
This chart describes questions 2 to 4 in the questionnaire. In the above figure, 100% (n=55) said “No” when asked whether women and girls are paid for the work they do. This means that respondents are with the knowledge that women and girls are not paid for the work they do. Similarly, the respondents said 100% (n=55) “No” to the question if women and girls are recognized for the work they do, and also, all the respondents think 100% that there is no value attached to the work women and girls do.

Figure 3. Whether women and girls are valued for the care work they do, and how they are valued



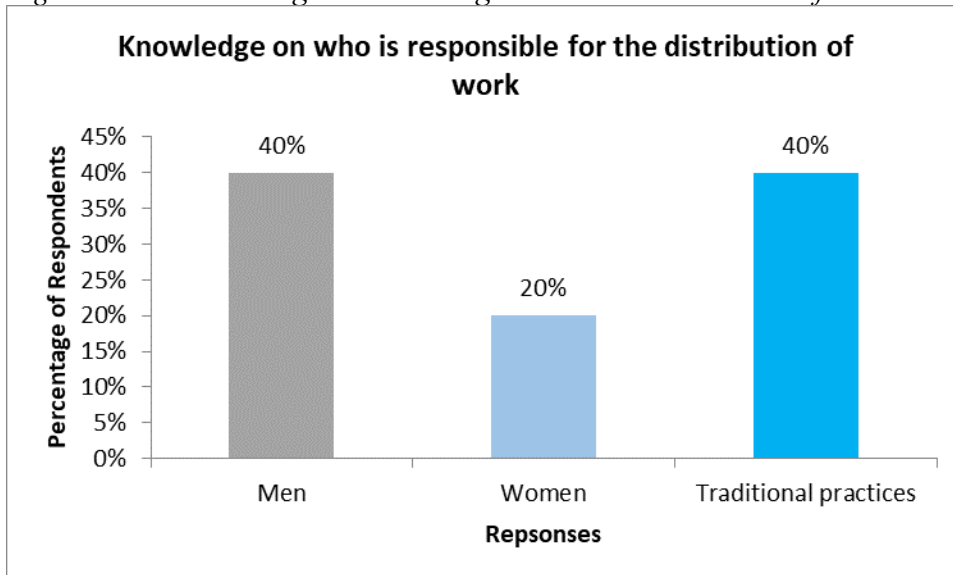
The analysis for the chart in figure 3 above shows that 40% (n=22) of the respondents said that the value attached to women and girls, as they do the work in the home, community, etc. is appreciation.

Figure 4. Reasons why women and girls still work, even though they are not valued



In figure 4, the responses gathered from the respondents in the chart above show that about 31% (n=17) respondents mentioned that the reason why women and girls work is that it is their responsibility to work, while about 19% (n=11) said women do so because of tradition and upbringing, which is 19% (n=11) respectively. The rest of the respondents mentioned peace, love and respect for husbands.

Figure 5. Women and girls' knowledge about the distribution of care work at households

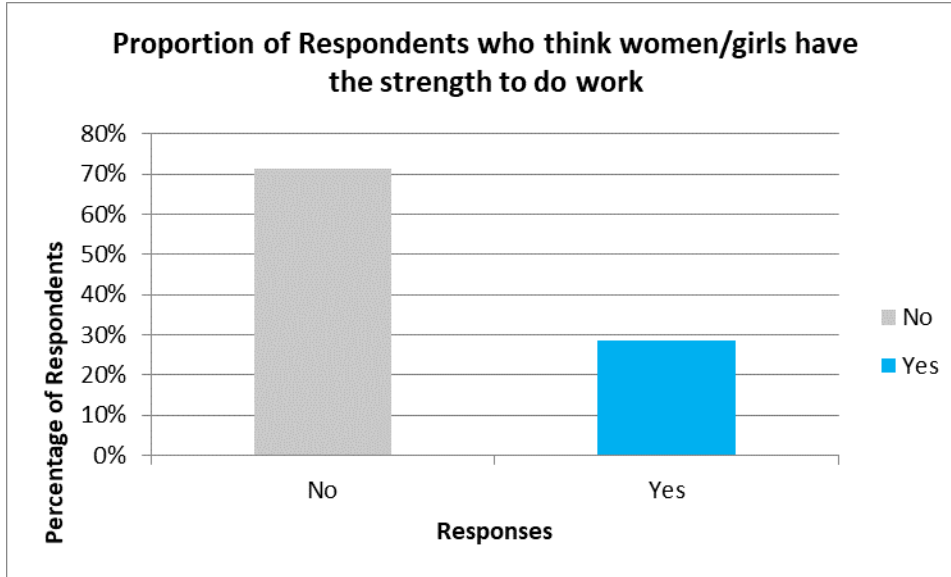


In this chart on assessing knowledge on who is responsible for the distribution of work, 80% (n=44) of respondents said, it was the men and traditional practices were responsible

for it respectively, while 20%(n=11) of the respondents mentioned that women are responsible.

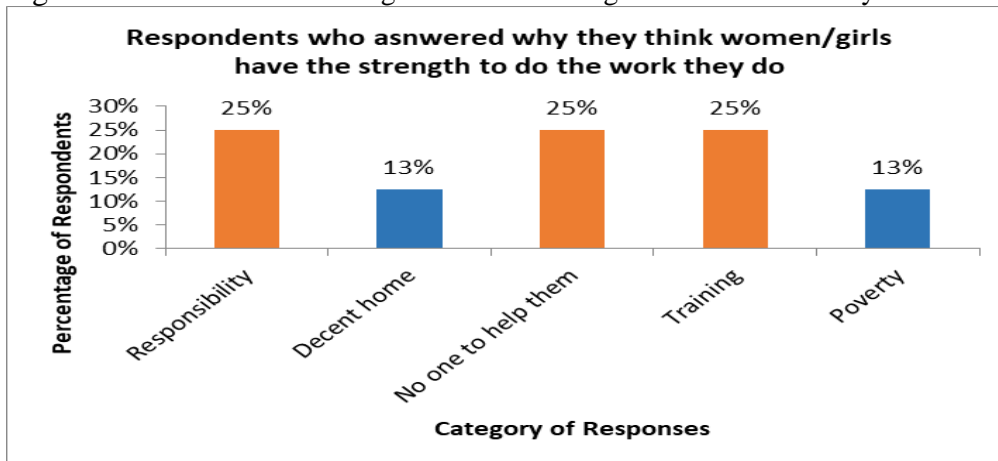
Magnitude of unpaid care work women

Figure 6. Whether women and girls have the strength to do the type of care work they do



The analysis of the responses in this chart show that there were 71% (n=39) of the respondents who said women and girls do not have the strength to do the work they do, while 29%(n=16) said women and girls do have the strength.

Figure 7. Whether women and girls have the strength to do the work they do



Focus group discussion participants were asked to give their opinions on why women and girls have the strength to do the work they do. 75% (n=41) of the respondents mentioned training, responsibility and said there is no one to help the women. The rest, 26%(n=14) of the respondents mentioned poverty and the desire to maintain a decent home.

4.0 Challenges and Recommendations

This portion of the report presents challenges faced during the conduct of the study, including recommendations for way forward in future projects. The challenges include the following:

4.1 Challenges

Road Condition

The team was challenged with the issue of bad road network, and therefore could not complete the eight communities recommended by ActionAid Liberia. However, of the eight communities, the team successfully completed seven. The eighth community that could not be accessed due to bad road condition is David Dean Town.

The Mobilization of Communities and Participants

Also, the team was challenged, in terms of the mobilization of communities and participants. That is, most of the communities were mobilized during the conduct of the study; something that took more time in the field and delayed the team in conducting the various interviews.

The acquisition of data from field enumerators

At the same time, there was a challenge of acquiring field report from the field enumerators; something that resulted to the delay in presenting the draft report.

Recommendations from the analysis to address the burden of unpaid care work

Below are some recommendations from analysis made concerning findings from the study conducted:

1. That awareness on the burden of unpaid care work is carried out at the household level and attracts the involvement of men and boys, in order to help reduce such burden on women and girls. At the same time, the study proposes that the appreciation of the women by their partners and community leaders be complimented by programmes that will ensure it is turned into services in the home and community, in an effort to reduce the work load on women and girls.
2. As revealed by the study that the distribution of tasks at the community level is the responsibility of the chiefs (mainly men), there should be awareness targeting the men and boys to ensure that women form part of decision, in order to ensure the equal distribution of tasks, especially at the household level.
3. The study revealed that men and boys are aware that women and girls are heavily engaged with care work at home for the family and community; and in this light, awareness need to be created to have a change of this mind-set and efforts made to

get men and boys involved in such work, in fact it was also revealed by the study that some of the respondents are already aware that men and boys can do the work women and girls do. In furtherance of this, men and boys should be involved to reduce the burden of unpaid care work done by women and girls, especially at the household level.

4. According to findings from the study conducted, women and girls have the feelings that culture and traditions have compelled them to such care work without being recognized, paid or appreciated; hence, it has become a norm for some of them. To this, the need for robust awareness cannot be overemphasized. Such awareness will need to include women and girls, so that they too would get to know that the work they do at the household level can be done by men and boys. And the awareness will have to target women and girls particularly, so as to enable a change of such mind-set within them, towards informing and bettering generations of women and girls to come.
5. There is also the need for awareness programmes that will target the men and boys, to ensure that women and girls become part of decision-making level, including being given positions within the leaderships of communities. This recommendation is as a result of finding that shows that women and girls continue to be excluded from decision-making, especially at community levels, in spite of the existence of gender and gender-related policies and programmes being carried by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development and other partners.
6. Feedback from respondents informed this study that women's home care work is not well appreciated or valued in homes and communities. Therefore, the study recommends investment in estimating the value, in financial terms, of unpaid home care work. There should be a show of the contribution of unpaid care for household development, community and country development. This will influence policy makers to better understand the level at which unpaid care work should be cared for and the community members will value it and collectively promote it.
7. The development or review of child care policies and infrastructure development such as Early Childhood Centers and the promotion of community based ECDs should not be overlooked. Government of Liberia and development partners should prioritize and invest in Early Childhood Education and development.

5.0 Conclusion

The study in Bong County shows that women and girls carry the burden of home care work with low representation in the form of employment or office work. This situation manifests itself in Bong County, where men's lives are deeply rooted in patriarchy, where tradition demands women and girls to bear the load of child care, household chores and everything that comes with it. What complicates their situation even further is that they are not compensated for the work they do. In some isolated cases, women receive gifts from their spouses without labeling them as compensation for their work at home but as a marital duty. For example, some men buy slippers for their wives when they visit market days as a part of their marital duty but necessarily a deliberate pay for home care duties performed by women.

The study also showed unequal roles in the distribution of home and community service work. Decision maker rests squarely with men. This leaves women with no option but to receive and accept the traditional roles. This situation is denying women opportunities for decent work, leisure and rest while subjecting some women to emotional and psychological distress.

The gendered division of labor at home and the community level is also reinforcing these patriarchal values into the next generation and preparing boys and girls to enter a world in which home care and community service work continues to be unequally distributed. If this situation continues in Liberia, the country will not be able to attend to the Policy priority areas and strategies set in the National Gender Policy, or achieve goals set in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) relating to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls by 2030.

Therefore, gender responsive actions, including efforts to reduce women's unpaid care work and legislation (where possible) are needed to help women pursue work that is rewarding and fulfilling, thereby claiming their economic, social, civil and political rights. Bridging these equality gaps would also help the county's full recovery from COVID-19

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ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Agenda for training of field enumerators

Agenda for the training of Enumerators
Action Aid Liberia Research on Unpaid Care Work in Bong County
Venue: WEEL Head Office, 19th Street, Sinkor
Monrovia, Liberia
Date: Friday, August 20th, 2021

No.	Item	Time Allocation	Responsible Person
Part I			
1.	Registration and Breakfast	9:00a.m-9:30a.m	WEEL Secretariat
2.	Opening prayer	9:30a.m-9:33a.m	Volunteer
3.	Welcome remarks	9:33a.m-9:50a.m	Tonieh A. Talery-Wiles-Co-Consultant
4.	Remarks and overview of Action Aid Liberia, and the Unpaid Care Work	9: 50a.m-10:00a.m	Representative of ActionAid Liberia
5.	Overview of the Field Research work	10:00a.m-10:15a.m	Horace Nagbe- Lead Consultant

6.	Presentation of research schedule & Other housekeeping matters	10:15-10:25am	Tonieh A. Talery-Wiles-Co-Consultant
Environmental break-10:15-10:20			
Part II -Training Session			
6.	Training Objectives	10:25-10:35	Horace P. Nagbe-Lead Consultant
7.	Safe Guarding Rules of ActionAid Liberia	10:35-11:35am	Representative of ActionAid Liberia
8.	Questions and Answers	11:35-11:50am	Facilitator & Participants
7.	Presentation on Community Entry and Mobilization	11:50a.m-12:35p.m	Horace P. Nagbe-Lead Consultant
8.	Questions and Answers	12:35-1:50p.m	Facilitator & Consultants
9.	Presentation on Data Collection and Management	12:50-1:35p.m	Harrison Cole
10.	Questions and Answers	1:35-1:50pm	Facilitator & Consultants
LUNCH TIME		1:50-2:50pm	Kitchen Staff & Participants
11.	Review of Field Research Tools (KII/FGD Questionnaires)	2:55-3:40pm	Harrison & Horace
11.	Feedback from enumerators	3:40-3:50pm	Enumerators & Facilitators
12.	Pre-testing of the Field Research Tools-practical session	3:50p.m-4:35p.m	Harrison & Participants
13.	Feedback from enumerators	4:35pm-4:50p.m	Enumerators & Facilitators
14.	Wrap Up	4:50p.m-5:00p.m	T-wiles- Co- Consultant
15.	Closing remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ActionAid Liberia • Participants • Consultants 	5:00p.m-5:15pm	Stakeholders on the study
Departure: 5:15p.m			

Annex 2: List of Key Informant Interviewed during the study

ActionAid Liberia (AAL)
Study on Unpaid Care Work by Women and girls

List of Key Informants Interviewed during the study

No.	Name	Sex	Community	Position	Date of interview
Traditional/Cultural Sector					
1.	Alphonso Juah	M	Belefarnai	Clan Chief	8/26/2021
2.	Stanley Kollie	M	Zowenta	Clan Chief	8/27/2021
3.	Joseph Friday	M	Gbarmu	Zoe	8/26/2021
4.	Flomo Weah	M	Belefarnai	Chief Elder	8/26/2021
Religious Sector					
5.	David K. Gokenneh	M	Belefarnia	Pastor	8/26/2021
6.	Alhaji Abu Sackor	M	Gbarnga	Chief Imam	8/27/2021
7.	Comfort V. Mccarthy	F	Gbartalah	Pastor	8/28/2021
8.	Edwin O. Leo	M	Gbarmu	Pastor	8/26/2021

9.	Pst. Joseph S. Nukolo	M	Zowenta	Pastor	8/27/2021
10.	Yakuba Toure	M	Palala	Chief Imam	8/27/2021
11.	Nancy G. Wiles	F	Palala	Pastor	8/27/2021
12.	Samuel Sinnatuah	M	Sergeant Kollie Town	Pastor	8/25/2021
Social Context (Community Leadership – Chairmanship, Youth and Women Groups)					
13.	Garma Koko	F	Belefarnia	Women Leader	8/26/2021
14.	Williams P. Garmue	M	Belefarnia	Town Chief	8/26/2021
15.	Hellena Dolo	F	Zowenta	Youth Girl	8/27/2021
16.	Henry R. Vali	M	Zowenta	Town Chief	8/27/2021
17.	Gormine Korkollie	F	Zowenta	Women Leader	8/27/2021
18.	Yassah Tokpah	F	Gbalatuah	Youth Girl	8/26/2021
19.	Roland Kerkulah	M	Gbalatuah	Head of the elder Council	8/26/2021
20.	Esther Loila	F	Gbalatuah	Women Leader	8/26/2021
21.	Edwin Miller	M	Gbarnga	Chairman	8/27/2021
22.	Mary Flomo	F	Gbartalah	Women Leader	8/28/2021
23.	Thomas Binda	M	Gbartalah	Town Chief	8/28/2021
24.	Weedor Kollie	F	Gbartalah	Traditional Leader	8/28/2021
25.	Precious Nimely	F	Gbarmu	Youth Girl	8/26/2021
26.	Williams K. Kapkay	M	Gbarmu	Town Chief	8/26/2021
27.	Victoria Gbarajah	F	Palala	Women Leader	8/27/2021
28.	Peter J. Flomo	M	Sergeant Kollie Town	Town Chief	8/25/2021
29.	Esther G. Dennis	F	Sergeant Kollie Town	Women Leader	8/25/2021
30.	Mary Howard	F	Palala	Town Chief	8/27/2021
31.	Bendu Walker	F	Palala	Youth Girl	8/27/2021
Political Sector					
32.	Sayblee Weyea	M	Gbarnga	Labor Commissioner	8/27/2021
33.	Hon. Esther walker	F	Gbarnga	Superintendent	8/27/2021
Social Context (Civil Society Organizations)					
34.	Klubo Flomo	F	Gbarnga	Social Worker	8/27/2021
35.	Ma Musu Barto	F	Gbarnga	President, Rural Women	8/25/2021
36.	Mary Mallia	F	Gbarnga	President, Rural Women	8/28/2021

Annex 3: Statistics of Focus Group Discussion attendants

ActionAid Liberia (AAL)

Stupaid Care Work by Women and girls

Statistics of Focus Group Discussion Attendants

No.	Name	Sex	Contacts	Date of discussion
Belefarnai Community				
1.	Johnson T. Flomo	M	0886318365	August 26, 2021
2.	Prince Sackie	M	0880104418	
3.	Ojuku N. Dakolomah	M	0886988056	
4.	Grace G. Flomo	F	0886918209	
5.	Dinah M. Togbah	F	0555592499	
6.	Blessing N. Waisay	F		
7.	Nyampu Musu	F		
8.	Garmai Koko	F		
9.	Felecia Flomo	F		
10.	Esther Diasha	F	0888492733	
11.	Marie Latkey	F	0886878484	
12.	Junior P. Gborlawoe	M	0880985907	
Gbartala				
13.	Musu F. Kamara	F		August 28, 2021
14.	Mary Singbeh	F	0888111306	
15.	Dorcas G. Quemenie	F	0888037633	
16.	Bendu T. Mulbah	F	0775551214	
17.	Siah S. Varney	F	0880384793	
18.	Musu Dennis	F	0880373278	
19.	Cecelia K. Sumo	F	0881302760	
20.	Weedor Kollie	F		
21.	Mary Flomo	F	0880029840	
22.	Musu Morris	F	0888195350	
23.	Musu Paypaye	F		
24.	Yarmah Gbongbah	F	0880253010	
25.	Mamayah Kromah	F		
26.	Kumba Tamba	F		
Sergeant Kollie Town				
27.	Edna T. Menklee	F	0880295820	August 25, 2021
28.	Esther G. Dennis	F	0886193760	
29.	Fatu Flomo	F	0555404640	
30.	Musu Kollie	F		
31.	Samuel Sinnatuah	M	0888147614	
32.	Hawa Sayvay	F		
33.	Bendu Sumo	F	0886511928	
34.	Marie Sumo	F	0555668704	
35.	Annie Sumo	F	0555841920	
36.	Princess Sumo	F		

37.	Getee K. Mulbah	M	0880857998	
38.	Moses Karmon	M		
Zowenta Community				
39.	Henry K. Vali	M		August 27, 2021
40.	Joseph Y. Gekpelee	M	0886645592	
41.	Gormie Korkulue	F	0880115297	
42.	Philip P. Kermue	M	0886661912	
43.	Joseph S. Nakolo	M		
44.	Emma Vah	F	0880736564	
45.	Stanley Kollie	M		
46.	Helena Dolo	F	0880477085	
47.	Patience Cooper	F	0888527944	
48.	Mary Nukolo	F		
49.	Patience Gelah	F	0555884880	
50.	Beatrice Gartah	F	0888627786	
51.	Jonathan K. Narmia	M	0555247771	
Gbarmu				
52.	B. Austin Laeyne	M	0880592624	August 26, 2021
53.	Darius Jackson	M	0555501435	
54.	Helena Friday	F	0881563931	
55.	Precious Nimely	F	0888504105	
56.	Oretha Flomo	F	0881293944	
57.	Annie Bondo	F	0881091473	
58.	Patience Zuah	F	0886571530	
59.	Annie Cooper	F		
60.	Annie Togbah	F	0886186560	
61.	Nowai Gibson	F		
62.	David Dolo	M	0880667891	
63.	William Kotogboe	M	0880369338	
64.	Martha Davis	F	0886002390	
65.	Gbarmah Flomo	F		
Gbarnga Community				
	Margrett M. Kermue	F	0886841497	August 27, 2021
	Olivia J. Weetoe	F	0886426308	
	Alice B. S. Garmo	F	0886435969	
	Mary N. Miller	F	0886516551	
	Rena T. Howard	F	0880419181	
	Irene P. Dennis	F	0886944255	
	Eletha S. Sheriff	F	0886477350	

Annex 4: Statistics of study conducted

ActionAid Liberia (AAL)

Study on Unpaid Care Work by Women and girls

Statistics of Study Conducted in Bong County

Community	Category of work	Type of FGD	FGD participants		KII & Participants		Total
			Male	Female	Male	Female	
Sergeant Kollie Town	Focus Group Discussion	Heterogeneous	3	9			12
	Key Informant Interview				2	1	3
Gbarmu	Focus Group Discussion	Heterogeneous	4	10			14
	Key Informant Interview				2	2	4
Belefarnai	Focus Group Discussion	Heterogeneous	4	8			12
	Key Informant Interview				4	1	5
Gbalatuah	Focus Group Discussion	Heterogeneous	4	8			12
	Key Informant Interview				1	2	3
Zowenta	Focus Group Discussion	Heterogeneous	6	7			13
	Key Informant Interview				3	1	4
Palala	Focus Group Discussion	Homogeneous		12			12
	Key Informant Interview				1	4	5
Gbarnga	Focus Group Discussion	Homogeneous		7			7
	Key Informant Interview				1	4	5
Gbatala	Focus Group Discussion	Homogeneous		14			14
	Key Informant Interview				1	3	4
Grand total			21	75	15	18	129